February 2025 current affairs

National news

1) Goa CM Inaugurates Sci-Fi Science Film Festival in Panaji

The Goa Chief Minister, Pramod Sawant, inaugurated **the Sci-Fi Science Film Festival of India** in Panaji **on January 30, 2025. The festival, organised by Vidnyan Parishad Goa**, celebrates science, innovation, and the spirit of curiosity, and is being held in **honour of Dr. M. Swaminathan, a prominent scientist.** The festival's theme this year, **"Green Revolution,"** aims to inspire young minds and promote the path to a sustainable future. **It is a 4-day event that emphasizes the importance of science and innovation for India's progress and encourages the youth to engage actively in scientific endeavors.**

Inauguration and Theme:

- **Date**: January 30, 2025.
- **Inauguration**: Goa's **Chief Minister Pramod Sawant** inaugurated the **Sci-Fi Science Film Festival** in **Panaji**, Goa.
- **Theme**: The theme for this year's festival is **"Green Revolution,"** which focuses on promoting sustainability and inspiring the next generation to pursue scientific endeavors aimed at achieving a **sustainable future**.

2) MoU Signed Between DIID, MoSPI & IIIT-Delhi to Enhance India's Statistical Ecosystem through Data Innovation Lab (DIL) Initiative

DIID, MOSPI & IIIT-Delhi Sign MoU to Strengthen India's Statistical Ecosystem On January 30, 2025, the **Data Informatics and Innovation Division (DIID), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** with the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology (IIIT-Delhi) under **the Data Innovation Lab (DIL) initiative to modernize India's National Statistical System (NSS).**

- **Parties Involved:** Data Informatics and Innovation Division (DIID), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), and Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology (IIIT-Delhi)
- **Objective:** The partnership aims to modernize India's National Statistical System (NSS) under the Data Innovation Lab (DIL) initiative.

3) IICA and CMAI Sign MoU to Strengthen Carbon Markets

On **February 4, 2025**, the **Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)** and the **Carbon Markets Association of India (CMAI)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** during the **IICA-CMAI Masterclass on Global & Indian Carbon Markets**, held as part of **India Climate Week 2025** (February 3 to 7, 2025) in **New Delhi**.

- **Objective**: The partnership aims to **strengthen carbon markets** and support **decarbonization** in India. It will equip industry professionals, policymakers, and academics with knowledge on navigating India's evolving carbon markets.
- **Key People**:
  - **Union Minister Nitin Jairam Gadkari**, Minister

for Road Transport & Highways (MORTH).
  - **Garima Dadhich**, Head of the School of Business Environment at IICA.
  - **Manish Dabkara**, President of CMAI.
- **Collaboration Areas**: The MoU will focus on **training programs**, **joint research**, **conferences**, and **policy advocacy** to advance carbon markets, low-carbon industrial solutions, and sustainable finance.

About Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)

- **Overview**: IICA is an **autonomous institution** under the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA)**.
- **Leadership**:
  - **Director General (DG) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**: Ajay Bhushan Prasad Pandey.
- **Headquarters**: **Gurugram, Haryana**.
- **Established**: **2008**.

4) Tata Elxsi & Garuda Aerospace to Boost India's UAV Sector

In a major step towards boosting India's self-reliance in **unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology, Tata Elxsi and Garuda Aerospace** have partnered to establish **a Centre of Excellence for drone design, engineering, and certification.** The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed at Aero India 2025, marking a crucial development **in India's UAV sector**. The collaboration aligns with the government's 'Make in India' initiative and aims to develop indigenous drone solutions for defence, agriculture, and smart city applications.

Overview of the Collaboration

- **Companies Involved:**
  - **Tata Elxsi** – Specializes in avionics, AI, and autonomous systems
  - **Garuda Aerospace** – Leading Indian OEM in UAV manufacturing
- **Event & Initiative:**
  - **MoU signed at Aero India 2025**
  - Establishment of a **Centre of Excellence for UAV design, engineering, and certification**

5) Inauguration of 'Utkarsh Odisha – Make in Odisha Conclave 2025'

In January 2025, Prime Minister (PM) of India, Narendra Modi inaugurated the **'Utkarsh Odisha – Make in Odisha Conclave 2025′ and the 'Make in Odisha Exhibition'** in **Bhubaneswar, Odisha.**

- **Date & Location:** January 28-29, 2025, in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- **Inauguration:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the event, marking a significant milestone for Odisha's industrial growth.

Key Highlights:

- **Participants:** Industry leaders, investors, and policymakers from over 16 countries, with partner countries Singapore, Malaysia, and Australia.
- **Purpose:** To explore and promote investment opportunities in Odisha across various sectors.

6) WhatsApp-Based 'Mana Mitra' to Offer 161 Govt Services in Andhra

The Andhra Pradesh government has launched **'Mana Mitra'**, **a first-of-its-kind WhatsApp Governance initiative**, making **161 civil services accessible via WhatsApp. Minister for IT, Electronics & Communication, and Real-Time Governance (RTG)** Nara Lokesh launched the service in Amaravati, emphasizing its goal of bringing government services directly to the people**. The initiative, developed in partnership with Meta, is set to expand further, integrating blockchain and AI technologies for seamless digital governance**

Overview and Significance:

- **'Mana Mitra'** is a pioneering WhatsApp Governance initiative launched by the Andhra Pradesh government.
- It represents the first instance globally where a state government delivers public services via WhatsApp.
- The initiative makes **161 civil services** accessible directly through the messaging platform, streamlining the interaction between citizens and the government.

7) Assam to Host World's Largest Jhumur Festival

Assam is preparing to host the **world's largest Jhumur dance performance** on **February 24, 2025**, as part of the upcoming **Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment Summit**. The event, announced by **Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma**, will be graced by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and aims to set a **Guinness World Record** with over **7,500 dancers**. Below is a detailed breakdown of the event and its significance:

1. Event Details
- **Date**: **February 24, 2025**.
- **Occasion**: Preceding the **Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment Summit** (February 25-26, 2025).
- **Venue**: **Guwahati, Assam**.
- **Chief Guest**: **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.

2. Jhumur Dance Performance
- **Scale**: The **world's largest-ever Jhumur (Jhumoir) dance performance**.
- **Participants**: Over **7,500 dancers**.
- **Objective**: To set a **Guinness World Record**.
- **Cultural Significance**: Highlights **Assam's rich cultural heritage** and serves as a **global platform** to attract investors.

3. Investment Summit – Advantage Assam 2.0
- **Edition**: Second edition, following its **2018 launch**.
- **Focus**: **Infrastructure development** and **investment**.
- **Expected Outcome**: Attract **national** and **global investors** to Assam.

4. Preparations for the Event
- **Master Training Workshops**: Conducted for dancers to ensure high-quality performance.
- **Rehearsals**:
  - **Constituency-level** and **district-level rehearsals**.
  - **Final rehearsals** in **Guwahati** to ensure smooth execution.

8) Karnataka Governor Launches Braille-Enabled Version of Indian Constitution

In **February 2025**, **Karnataka Governor Thaawar Chand Gehlot** launched a **Braille-enabled version** of the **Indian Constitution** in **Bengaluru, Karnataka**, to mark the **75th anniversary** of the Constitution.

- **Collaboration**: The initiative is a collaboration between **Sankara Eye Hospital, Bengaluru**, and **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Young Indians (YI), Bengaluru**.
- **Objective**: To empower individuals who are **blind** or have **low vision** by enabling them to read and understand their **rights** and **responsibilities** as citizens.
- **Key Points**:
  - **Distribution**: The Braille version will be distributed across key institutions to ensure broader access.
  - **Inclusivity**: The project aims to create a more **inclusive society** by making foundational national knowledge accessible to all, regardless of their vision ability.

- **Significance**: The launch represents a **monumental shift** in providing visually impaired citizens the opportunity to **independently engage** with their rights and responsibilities.

9) Odisha Launches 'Bikashita Gaon, Bikashita Odisha (BGBO)' Scheme

In **February 2025**, **Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi** launched the **'Bikashita Gaon, Bikashita Odisha (BGBO)' Scheme** with a budget of **₹5,000 crore** for **five years**.

- **Objective**: The scheme aims to enhance **basic infrastructure** and improve **connectivity** in rural areas of Odisha.
- **Key Features**:
  - **Scope**: Development activities in all **53,845 villages** of Odisha.
  - **Annual Allocation**: **₹1,000 crore** for the next five years (**FY 2024-25 to FY 2028-29**).
  - **Responsible Authority**: **Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department**, Government of Odisha.
  - **Fund Allocation**:
    - **35%** for road projects.
    - **40%** for blocks under the **Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA)**.
    - **5%** for new innovative community projects.

o **Focus Areas**: Linking unconnected roads, improving village roads, civic services, sports, education, and small-scale tourism.
o **Alignment**: Supports Odisha's goal of becoming a **developed state by 2036** and aligns with the national vision of **'Viksit Bharat by 2047'**.

10) Himachal Pradesh to Build North India's First Green Hydrogen Plant

On **February 5, 2025**, **Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu** laid the foundation stone for **North India's first 1-megawatt (MW) green hydrogen plant** in **Dabhota, Nalagath Tehsil, Solan district**.

- **Collaboration**: The project is a joint effort between the **Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (HPPCL)** and **Oil India Limited (OIL)**, with an estimated investment of **₹9.04 crore**.
- **Objective**: Aligns with HP's goal to become **India's first Green Energy State by March 2026**.
- **Project Specifications**:
o **Location**: **4,000 square meters** in Dabhota.
o **Technology**: Utilizes **renewable energy (RE)** sources to produce hydrogen through **electrolysis**, using an **alkaline potassium hydroxide solution** as the electrolyte.
o **Production Capacity**:
  ▪ **Daily**: Approximately **423 kilograms (kg)** of green hydrogen.

  ▪ **Annual**: **1,54,395 kg** of green hydrogen.
o **Resource Requirements**:
  ▪ **Water**: **13 liters** per kg of hydrogen, sourced from underground reserves via tube wells.
  ▪ **Electricity**: **52.01 units** per kg of hydrogen.

11) Kerala Secures Rs 2,424 cr World Bank Loan to Strengthen Healthcare System

The **Kerala Health System Improvement Programme (KHSIP)** is a landmark initiative by the **Kerala government** to strengthen healthcare infrastructure and improve public health outcomes. Approved on **February 7, 2025**, by the state Cabinet chaired by **Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan**, the project will be implemented with **financial assistance of ₹2,424.28 crore** from the **World Bank** under the **Programme for Results (P for R)** model. Below is a detailed breakdown of the programme's objectives, key focus areas, and expected outcomes:

Overview of KHSIP
- **Objective**: To enhance healthcare resilience, prevent diseases, and improve the overall quality of life for Kerala's citizens.
- **Funding**: ₹2,424.28 crore from the **World Bank** under the **Programme for Results (P for R)** model, which links disbursement of funds to the achievement of specific results.
- **Approval**: Granted by the Kerala state Cabinet on **February 7, 2025**.

- **Vision**: To build a **resilient healthcare system** that addresses Kerala's evolving demographic and epidemiological challenges while ensuring equitable access to healthcare services.

The primary objectives of the KHSIP are:

- **Higher Standard of Living**: Ensure a higher standard of living and increased life expectancy for Kerala's citizens.
- **Disease Prevention**: Help people lead a **disease-free life** by preventing diseases, accidents, and premature deaths.
- **Welfare of the Poor**: Focus on the welfare of the poor and marginalized sections of society.
- **Resilient Healthcare System**: Build a healthcare system capable of addressing Kerala's **demographic** and **epidemiological** challenges, including an aging population and the rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

12) NABARD Sanctions Projects for Himachal Pradesh

The **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** sanctioned **127 projects** totaling **₹903.21 crore** for **Himachal Pradesh (HP)** in the fiscal year **2024-25**.

- **Announcement**: **Chief Minister (CM) Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu** announced this during a meeting with **Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)** from **Kangra, Kullu, and Kinnaur districts** to discuss budget priorities for **2025-26**.

- **Breakdown of Approved Projects**:
  - **Public Works Department (PWD)**: **50 MLA-priority schemes** amounting to **₹412.75 crore**.
  - **Jal Shakti Vibhag**: **23 schemes** totaling **₹179.07 crore**.
  - **Other Allocations**:
    - **₹70 crore** for the beautification of **Palampur city**.
    - **₹135 crore** for sewerage schemes.
    - Funds for the construction of a **heliport** in the region.
- **Key Initiatives**:
  - **Dairy Processing Plant**: Establishment of a **1.5 lakh liter per day capacity** dairy processing plant at **Dagwar** in **Kangra district**.
  - **Electric Bus Charging Stations**: Installation of **96 charging stations** to promote eco-friendly transportation.

13) Haryana Launches 'Har Khet-Swasth Khet' to Boost Soil Health

The **Haryana government** has launched the **'Har Khet-Swasth Khet'** campaign to improve **soil health** and promote **sustainable farming practices**. The initiative involves **statewide soil testing** and issuing **Soil Health Cards** to help farmers make informed decisions on soil fertility and nutrient management.

Soil Sample Collection and Soil Health Cards

- **Statewide soil testing** for every **acre of farmland** in Haryana.
- **70 lakh soil samples** have been collected so far.
- **55 lakh samples** have been analyzed, and soil health cards have been distributed.
- **More than 86 lakh Soil Health Cards** issued to farmers.
- Work on the **remaining samples** is ongoing.

Infrastructure for Soil and Water Testing

- **17 new permanent** soil and water testing **laboratories** set up across Haryana.
- **54 small soil testing labs** established in **mandis (marketplaces)**.
- **240 small labs** set up in **senior secondary schools and colleges**, where students conduct soil testing as part of their education.

14) Odisha's Antyodaya Gruha Yojana: A Housing Initiative for Vulnerable Families

The Odisha Cabinet, headed by Chief Minister (CM) Mohan Charan Majhi, has approved the launch of the **Antyodaya Gruha Yojana,** a housing scheme aimed at providing pucca houses to eligible vulnerable families. **An outlay of Rs. 7,550 crores have been allocated for the implementation of the scheme.**

- Each beneficiary under this scheme will receive financial assistance of Rs 1.2 lakhs to build a 25-square-meter (sq m) pucca house (excluding the toilet area).
- Under the scheme, the Odisha government aims to build at least 2,25,000 houses over the next 3 years.

Objective:
Antyodaya Gruha Yojana aims to improve the standard of living for weaker sections of society in Odisha by providing them with permanent housing.

Note: This initiative complements the existing schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana- Gramin (PMAY-G) and the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN), reinforcing Odisha's commitment to affordable housing for all.

15) WhatsApp-Based 'Mana Mitra' to Offer 161 Govt Services in Andhra

The Andhra Pradesh government has launched **'Mana Mitra'**, **a first-of-its-kind WhatsApp Governance initiative,** making **161 civil services accessible via WhatsApp. Minister for IT, Electronics & Communication, and Real-Time Governance (RTG)** Nara Lokesh launched the service in Amaravati, emphasizing its goal of bringing government services directly to the people**. The initiative, developed in partnership with Meta, is set to expand further, integrating blockchain and AI technologies for seamless digital governance**

Overview and Significance:

- **'Mana Mitra'** is a pioneering WhatsApp Governance initiative

launched by the Andhra Pradesh government.

- It represents the first instance globally where a state government delivers public services via WhatsApp.
- The initiative makes **161 civil services** accessible directly through the messaging platform, streamlining the interaction between citizens and the government.

Technical Collaboration and Partnerships:

- **Partnership with Meta:**
  - The initiative was developed in collaboration with **Meta**.
  - A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with Meta in Delhi on **October 22, 2024**.
- **Meta's Contributions:**
  - **WhatsApp India Head Ravi Garg** highlighted the uniqueness of this single-platform service for governance.
  - **Meta India VP Sandhya Devanathan** committed to further enhancements, ensuring that the platform

continues to evolve with advanced features.

16) India with 89 Sites has the largest number of Ramsar sites in Asia

India has recently added **four new wetlands to the Ramsar Wetland Sites list**, bringing the **total number of Ramsar sites in the country to 89.** This makes India the third-largest country in the world in terms of Ramsar sites, after **the United Kingdom (175) and Mexico (142)**. India leads Asia in **the number of Ramsar sites, ahead of China (82 sites). Tamil Nadu has the highest number of Ramsar sites in India, with 20 sites.**

The four new sites are:

1. **Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu)**: A man-made tank from 1321 A.D., home to 116 bird species, including some near-threatened species.
2. **Therthangal Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu)**: Another man-made tank, home to 48 bird species, also important for migratory birds.
3. **Khecheopalri Wetland (Sikkim)**: A high-altitude lake surrounded by forest, hosting Trans-Himalayan migratory birds.
4. **Udhwa Lake (Jharkhand)**: A large lake connected to the Ganga River, home to 83 bird species, including endangered and near-threatened species.

17) India Gate Lighted to Mark World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day 2025

The iconic **India Gate** was illuminated on **30th January 2025** in vibrant hues of purple and orange colours on the occasion of **World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day**. The World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day is observed every year since

2022 on **30th January** to raise awareness about neglected tropical diseases.

On this occasion across the world, iconic landmarks are lit up to emphasize the importance of the world's collective action to combat these debilitating diseases.

Who organised the event in India?

- **The lighting of the India Gate** event on the **occasion of the World Neglected Tropical Disease** was organised by the **Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.**
- The special focus during the event was on **Lymphatic Filariasis and Visceral Leishmaniasis or Kala-Azar**, diseases that threaten **around 40 crore people in India**.
- The illumination of India Gate was accompanied by a street play focussed on these diseases and on the importance of eradicating these diseases through behavioral changes and mass participation in the Ministry's initiatives like Mass Drug Administration rounds for Lymphatic Filariasis.

18) Centre Allocates Rs 3,027 Cr for Disaster Mitigation

A High-Level Committee (HLC), chaired by **Union Home Minister Amit Shah**, has **approved a substantial allocation of Rs 3,027.86 crore for various disaster mitigation projects across different states in India.** The committee, **which includes key members such as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, and **the Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog**, reviewed and approved a range of projects aimed at addressing lightning safety, drought-prone regions, and forest fire management. **These projects are intended to strengthen**

India's disaster preparedness and reduce the impact of natural disasters.

Total Financial Approval: Rs 3,027.86 crore approved for various disaster mitigation projects across multiple states.

Committee Composition:

- Chaired by **Union Home Minister Amit Shah**.
- Includes **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, and **NITI Aayog Vice Chairman**.

19) Rise in Female Labour Force Participation Says Economic Survey

The Economic Survey for 2024-25 highlighted a significant rise in the **Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) in India**, driven **largely by women in rural areas joining the workforce**. This increase is considered a key factor contributing to the improvement of overall labour market indicators in the country. **The findings were presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on January 31, 2025, during the tabling of the survey in Parliament**. The surge in **FLFPR has been attributed to government schemes, women's entrepreneurship initiatives, and better inclusion of women in economic activities.**

Key Takeaways from the Economic Survey 2024-25:

1. **Increase in Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR):**
   - FLFPR rose from 23.3% in 2017-18 to 41.7% in 2023-24.
   - 21 states have FLFPR between 30% and 40%; 7 states/UTs report FLFPR

above 40%, with Sikkim leading at 56.9%.

2. **Rural Women's Participation:**
   - Rural FLFPR increased from 24.6% in 2017-18 to 47.6% in 2023-24.
   - Government schemes like Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY-NRLM) helped increase rural women's workforce participation.
3. **Government Initiatives:**
   - Skilling programs and better access to credit for rural women contributed to economic participation.
   - Women's entrepreneurship focus led to 73,151 start-ups with at least one woman director by October 2024.
4. **Challenges for Rural Women Entrepreneurs:**
   - Barriers include limited business skills, market access, technology gaps, and lack of mentorship.
   - Continued government support for credit, formalization of businesses, and service delivery is essential.
5. **Periodic Labour Force Survey:**
   - Survey conducted in districts of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh (November 2024) to capture more women in unpaid work.

20) Gender Budgeting in 2025-26: A Step Toward Inclusive Growth

The Union Budget 2025-26, presented by **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** on February 1, 2025, **has made significant strides in gender budgeting, increasing the share of the Gender Budget allocation to 8.86% of the total Union Budget**, compared to 6.8% in **FY 2024-25**. The allocation for women and girls has risen **to ₹4.49 lakh crore, marking a 37.25% increase from the previous year's ₹3.27 lakh crore.** Additionally, **49 Ministries/Departments and 5 UTs have reported gender-specific allocations, making it the highest number of contributors to the Gender Budget Statement (GBS) since its inception.**

Key Highlights of the Gender Budget 2025-26:

1. **Total Gender Budget Allocation:**
   - ₹4.49 lakh crore allocated for women and girls, a 37.25% increase from ₹3.27 lakh crore in FY 2024-25.
2. **Share in Union Budget:**
   - The share of the Gender Budget has increased to 8.86% of the total Union Budget, up from 6.8% in FY 2024-25.
3. **Number of Reporting Ministries/Departments:**
   - 49 Ministries/Departments have reported gender-specific allocations, an increase from 38 in FY 2024-25.
4. **Number of Reporting UTs:**
   - 5 Union Territories (UTs) have contributed to the Gender Budget Statement (GBS) for the first time.
5. **New Ministries/Departments Reporting for the First Time:**
   - New contributors include the Departments of Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Biotechnology, Fisheries, Financial Services,

Pharmaceuticals, Food & Public Distribution, Land Resources, and Water Resources, as well as Ministries of Food Processing Industries, Panchayati Raj, Ports, Shipping & Waterways, and Railways.

6. **Breakdown of Gender Budget Allocations:**
   - **Part A (100% women-specific schemes):** ₹1,05,535.40 crore (23.50% of total GBS).
   - **Part B (30-99% allocation for women):** ₹3,26,672.00 crore (72.75% of total GBS).
   - **Part C (Below 30% allocation for women):** ₹16,821.28 crore (3.75% of total GBS).

7. **Trends in Gender Budget Statement (GBS):**
   - Since its introduction in FY 2005-06, the Gender Budget has grown consistently.
   - The GBS as a percentage of total expenditure was 5% in FY 2019-20 and has now reached 9% in FY 2025-26.

21) PM-JANMAN Package for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups

The PM-JANMAN Package (Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan) was launched in November 2023 with the primary objective of improving the living conditions of **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India.** This initiative comes as a solution to the longstanding challenges faced by these marginalized communities. **The mission is designed to bring significant infrastructural and socio-economic**

improvements through a series of strategic interventions.

Objective: Launched in November 2023, the **PM-JANMAN Package** aims to uplift Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) by addressing their long-standing socio-economic challenges and improving living conditions. The initiative focuses on comprehensive infrastructural and welfare interventions for these marginalized communities.

22) India's First White Tiger Breeding Centre Approved in MP

The Central Zoo Authority (CZA) has approved **India's first white tiger breeding centre** in **Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district.** This initiative marks a significant step in wildlife conservation, especially since Rewa is historically linked to **the last known wild white tiger**. The project, initially approved in principle in 2011, **will be established in Govindgarh**, near **the state's only white tiger safari in Mukundpur**. The breeding centre is expected **to enhance biodiversity conservation, promote wildlife tourism, and create job opportunities for the local population.**

23) MeitY and IIT Indore Launch AgriHub for Agritech Excellence

The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) and **IIT Indore** have launched **AgriHub, a state-of-the-art AI-driven Center of Excellence (CoE)** aimed at transforming

Indian agriculture. **AgriHub** seeks to address **critical challenges in agriculture, such as drought, floods, and low productivity, through the integration of AI, Machine Learning (ML), and Deep Learning (DL).** The initiative will empower farmers, researchers, and agribusinesses by **fostering technological innovation, startup incubation, and industry collaborations.**

Collaborating Institutions:

- **IIT Indore:** A premier technological institute actively involved in research and innovation.
- **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY):** The government body responsible for promoting digital technology and innovation.
- **ICAR-IISR Indore:** The Indian Council of Agricultural Research - Indian Institute of Soil Science, contributing expertise in agricultural research.
- **ICAR-CIAE Bhopal:** The Indian Council of Agricultural Research - Central Institute of Agricultural Engineering, involved in technology and engineering aspects.
- **C-DAC Pune:** Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, contributing technological expertise.
- **Madhya Pradesh Government:** Local government participation to foster regional agritech development.

24) International Big Cat Alliance Now a Treaty Organization

The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) has officially been established **as a treaty-based intergovernmental organization,** with its headquarters in India. **The alliance focuses on the global conservation of seven iconic big cat species—tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, cheetah, jaguar, and puma.** It also aims to address issues such **as illegal wildlife trade, poaching, and climate change**. The IBCA was officially launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 9, 2023, during the 50th anniversary of India's 'Project Tiger'. As of January 23, 2025, the alliance gained full international legal status, with ratifications from five countries—**India, Nicaragua, Eswatini, Somalia, and Liberia. Several national and international organizations involved in wildlife conservation have also partnered with the IBCA.**

Overview of IBCA

- **Full Name:** International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)
- **Launch Date: April 9, 2023** (by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**)
- **Official Status: Treaty-based intergovernmental organization** as of **January 23, 2025**
- **Headquarters: India** (under the **National Tiger Conservation Authority**, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change - MoEFCC)
- **Objective:** Global **conservation of seven big cat species**
- **Budget: ₹150 crore (2023-2028)**

Species Covered Under IBCA

The alliance focuses on the **global conservation** of the following **seven iconic big cat species**:

1. **Tiger**
2. **Lion**
3. **Leopard**
4. **Snow Leopard**
5. **Cheetah**
6. **Jaguar**
7. **Puma**

Member Countries and Global Participation

- **Countries that have ratified IBCA (as of January 23, 2025):**
  1. **India**
  2. **Nicaragua**
  3. **Eswatini**
  4. **Somalia**
  5. **Liberia**
- **Countries Expressing Intent to Join: 27 nations**
- **Modeled After: International Solar Alliance (ISA)**

Focus Areas of IBCA

IBCA is committed to addressing **key conservation challenges** through **global collaboration** in the following areas:

Conservation of Big Cats & Their Habitats

- Implementing **habitat protection programs** to ensure the survival of endangered big cats.
- Strengthening **protected areas** like national parks, reserves, and corridors.

Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade & Poaching

- Enhancing **anti-poaching laws** and enforcement mechanisms.

- Strengthening **cross-border cooperation** to **curb illegal wildlife trade**.

25) Gujarat's Guneri Village: First Biodiversity Heritage Site

In a landmark decision to conserve unique ecosystems, **the Gujarat government** has **officially declared the inland mangrove in Guneri village, located in Kutch district**, as the state's first **Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS).** This move highlights the importance of preserving rare and fragile ecosystems that play a critical role in maintaining the region's biodiversity. **Guneri's inland mangrove is one of the last remaining of its kind in India and is globally significant, found in only eight locations worldwide.**

Key Features of Guneri's Inland Mangrove:

- Located **45 km from the Arabian Sea** and **4 km from Kori Creek**.
- Thrives in a **limestone-rich area**, ensuring **groundwater availability** for survival.
- Possibly originated during the **Miocene period** or near the **ancient Saraswati River**.
- One of the last **inland mangrove ecosystems** in India, found in only **eight locations worldwide**.

Ecological Importance:

- Supports diverse wildlife, including **chinkara, wild boar, blue bull, Indian fox, jackal, and Indian hare**.
- A vital habitat for various **bird species**, enhancing **avian biodiversity**.
- Maintains ecological balance through **limestone deposits** that regulate nutrients and water flow.

26) New Delhi host the 15th International Meeting of World Pharmacopoeias

The **15th International Meeting of World Pharmacopoeias** was held from **5-7 February 2025** in **New Delhi, India**, providing a platform for global pharmacopoeial leaders, regulatory authorities, and industry stakeholders to strengthen cooperation and improve public health outcomes.

Key Focus Areas:

- **Improving pharmaceutical standards**
- **Harmonization of pharmaceuticals**
- **Regulatory convergence**

About Pharmacopeia:

According to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, a **pharmacopeia** is a legally binding collection of standards and specifications for medicines, which includes tests confirming the **identity, purity, and strength** of pharmaceutical products.

Organizers and Inauguration:

- **Organized by:** WHO, hosted by the **Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC)** under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.
- **Inauguration: Anupriya Patel**, Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, inaugurated the event on **5th February 2025**.
- **Key Speakers: Dr. Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi**, Secretary-cum-Scientific Director, IPC, and Drugs

Controller General (India) were also present.

- **Minister's Address:** Anupriya Patel emphasized India's role as the **"Pharmacy of the World"**, being the largest producer of drugs and medicines globally and committed to ensuring access to high-quality medicines worldwide.

27) Army Partners with IIT Guwahati for Bamboo Bunkers

The Indian Army has partnered with **IIT Guwahati** to develop **bamboo-based composite bunkers as an alternative to traditional construction materials**. The project aims to enhance sustainability, reduce weight, and improve **deployability in high-altitude regions like Arunachal Pradesh**. The agreement aligns with the Army's 'Decade of Transformation' vision and represents a significant step toward military-educational collaboration.

Key Highlights:

- **Objective:**
  Develop **epoxy bamboo-based composite bunkers** to replace conventional materials, especially for **high-altitude Army installations** in regions like **Arunachal Pradesh**.

28) Govt. Enhances Haj Experience with 'Haj Suvidha App' & Healthcare Support

The Government of India has introduced the **'Haj Suvidha App'** to improve **the pilgrimage experience for Indian Haj pilgrims.** This app is designed to assist pilgrims throughout their journey, offering them essential services and ensuring **they have a smooth and fulfilling experience while performing the sacred rituals. The government's continued efforts to modernize the pilgrimage experience**

highlight their commitment to enhancing accessibility, support, and convenience for all Indian pilgrims.

Key Features of the 'Haj Suvidha App':

1. **Training Modules**:
   The app offers educational content that helps pilgrims understand and prepare for the rituals and practices of Haj.
2. **Accommodation and Flight Details**:
   Pilgrims can access information about their **accommodation** and **flight schedules**, allowing for efficient travel and stay planning.
3. **Baggage Information**:
   Includes baggage policies and **tracking features** to prevent lost luggage, ensuring a hassle-free experience.
4. **Emergency Helpline (SOS)**:
   A dedicated **SOS service** is available for emergencies, providing timely assistance when needed.
5. **Grievance Redressal**:
   Pilgrims can voice their concerns and feedback through the app, ensuring quick resolution of issues.
6. **Language Translation**:
   Language support tools assist pilgrims in communication during their stay in Saudi Arabia.
7. **Government Interface**:
   A special interface for government officials helps track operations, improving **efficiency** in **emergency management** and **coordination**.

29) Launch of "Watershed Yatra" Campaign

In **February 2025**, Union Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** of the **Ministry**

of Rural Development (MoRD) launched the **"Watershed Yatra"** campaign.

- **Objective**: To encourage **people's participation** and create awareness about **watershed development activities** under the **Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (WDC-PMKSY 2.0)**.
- **Key Announcement**: The Union Minister announced the **'Watershed-Janbhagidari Pratiyogita'** under WDC-PMKSY 2.0 for **2025 and 2026**.
- **Campaign Details**:
  - o **Van Movements**: The campaign will involve van movements for **60 to 90 days** across **805 projects**, covering **6,673 Gram Panchayats (GPs)** and **13,587 villages** in **26 states** and **2 Union Territories (UTs)**.
  - o **Watershed ki Panchayat**: Experts will discuss **sustainable soil and water management practices**.
  - o **Honoring Contributors**: Around **8,000 individuals** who contributed to the implementation of WDC-PMKSY works will be honored.

30) Shatavari for Wellness: Nationwide Campaign Launched

The Ministry of Ayush has launched a species-specific campaign, **"Shatavari – For Better Health,"** aimed at **raising awareness about the medicinal benefits of Shatavari**. The initiative was inaugurated by **Shri Prataprao Jadhav, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Ayush**, in the presence of key officials, including Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, and Dr. Mahesh Kumar Dadhich, CEO, National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB).

For Better Health Campaign

1. **Launch**:
   - o Inaugurated by Shri Prataprao Jadhav, MoS (Independent Charge), Ministry of Ayush.
   - o Key officials: Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha (Secretary, Ayush) and Dr. Mahesh Kumar Dadhich (CEO, NMPB).
2. **Objectives**:
   - o Raise awareness about Shatavari's medicinal benefits, especially for women's health.
   - o Promote cultivation and conservation of Shatavari.
   - o Strengthen traditional medicine and holistic well-being.
3. **National Goals**:
   - o Aligns with PM Modi's Panch Pran Goal for India's development by 2047.
   - o Focuses on improving women's health through Shatavari.

31) India Aims for Top 25 in Global Logistics by 2030

India is undertaking a massive transformation of its logistics sector, driven by strategic initiatives like **PM Gati Shakti** and the **National Logistics Policy (NLP)**. The goal is to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and position India as a global

logistics hub. By 2030, India aims to break into the **top 25** of the **World Bank's Logistics Performance Index (LPI)**, up from its current rank of **38th out of 139 nations**. Below is a detailed breakdown of the key aspects of this transformation:

1. Current Status and Goals
- **Current Rank**: India is ranked **38th** on the World Bank's LPI (2023), reflecting significant room for improvement in logistics efficiency.
- **Target by 2030**: To break into the **top 25** on the LPI, India is focusing on infrastructure development, policy reforms, and technological advancements.
- **Logistics Cost Reduction**: Currently, logistics costs account for **13-14% of India's GDP**, which is significantly higher than the global average (8-10%). The government aims to reduce this to **single digits** by 2030.

2. Key Initiatives Driving Transformation
a. PM Gati Shakti
- **Objective**: A **National Master Plan** for multi-modal connectivity infrastructure to integrate various modes of transportation (road, rail, air, and waterways).
- **Investment**: **434 projects** worth **₹11.17 lakh crore** have been identified under PM Gati Shakti.
- **Focus Areas**:
    - **Energy, mineral, and cement corridors**: To ensure seamless movement of critical resources.
    - **Port connectivity**: Enhancing last-mile connectivity to ports.
    - **High-traffic corridors**: Developing infrastructure to reduce congestion and improve efficiency.

b. National Logistics Policy (NLP)
- **Objective**: To streamline logistics operations, reduce costs, and improve India's global competitiveness.
- **Key Features**:
    - **Digital Integration**: Use of technology to create a unified logistics interface platform.
    - **Ease of Doing Business**: Simplifying processes and reducing bureaucratic hurdles.
    - **Skill Development**: Training workforce to meet the demands of a modern logistics sector.

3. Market Growth and Economic Impact
- **Logistics Market Size**: Expected to grow at a **CAGR of 8.8%**, reaching **$484.43 billion by 2029**.
- **Economic Growth**: India is projected to surpass **Japan** by 2026 and become the **4th largest economy** globally. A robust logistics sector is critical to sustaining this growth.
- **Job Creation**: The logistics sector is expected to generate millions of jobs, contributing to economic development.

32) Cabinet Extends Safai Karamchari Commission Tenure

The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, has approved the extension of the **National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK)** for an additional **three years**, ensuring its operations continue seamlessly **until March 31, 2025**. This move underscores

the government's commitment to improving the welfare of sanitation workers.

What is the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK)?

The **NCSK** was **established in 1993** under the **NCSK Act** to promote the welfare of **Safai Karamcharis (sanitation workers)** and address the challenges they face. Over the years, its tenure has been **extended multiple times** to continue supporting this marginalized community.

Key Functions of NCSK

1. **Recommending welfare programs** to eliminate inequalities faced by Safai Karamcharis.
2. **Evaluating and monitoring** the implementation of **social and economic rehabilitation** schemes.
3. **Investigating grievances** related to the **non-implementation** of welfare programs.
4. **Ensuring better working conditions**, including **health, safety, and wages** of Safai Karamcharis.
5. **Monitoring the implementation** of the **Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013**.
6. **Advising central and state governments** on matters concerning sanitation workers.

33) AI-Enabled National Consumer Helpline (NCH) Revolutionizing Consumer Grievance Redressal

The **Department of Consumer Affairs**, under the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**, has significantly enhanced the **National Consumer Helpline (NCH)** by integrating **AI-enabled technology**. This upgrade, known as **NCH 2.0**, aims to improve **consumer grievance redressal** by providing **sector-wise analysis** of complaints, ensuring **faster resolution**, and boosting **consumer confidence**. Below is a detailed breakdown of the initiative:

Technological Advancements & Impact
- **AI-Driven System**: The NCH now uses **AI-driven technology** to analyze grievances **sector-wise**, enabling more efficient handling of complaints.
- **Increased Call Volume**:
  - **December 2015**: **12,553 calls** received.
  - **December 2024**: **1,55,138 calls** received.
- **Surge in Complaints**:
  - **2017**: **37,062 complaints** registered per month.
  - **2024**: **1,12,468 complaints** registered per month.
- **Digital Grievance Registration**:
  - **FY 2023-24**: **54,893 digital complaints**.
  - **FY 2024-25**: **68,831 digital complaints**.

34) 75th Anniversary of the National Sample Survey (NSS): A Milestone Celebration

The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**, Government of India, celebrated the **75th anniversary** of the **National Sample Survey (NSS)** on **7th February 2025** at **Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi**. The event marked the beginning of a **nationwide series of initiatives** to highlight the NSS's critical role in **evidence-based policymaking**, raise awareness about **data-driven governance**, and engage stakeholders from diverse

sectors. Below is a detailed breakdown of the event:

Event Overview
- **Venue**: **Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi**.
- **Date**: **7th February 2025**.
- **Objective**: To celebrate the **75th anniversary** of the NSS and highlight its contributions to **evidence-based policymaking** and **data-driven governance**.
- **Activities**: The event featured **keynote addresses**, **expert discussions**, the **unveiling of Diamond Jubilee publications**, and **special performances** emphasizing NSS's fieldwork contributions.

. Inauguration and Welcome Address
- **Welcome Address**: **Smt. Geeta Singh Rathore**, **Director General (NSS)**, welcomed the attendees.
- **Inauguration**: The event was inaugurated by **Rao Inderjit Singh**, **Hon'ble Minister of State (MoS) for Statistics & Programme Implementation**.
- **Key Points from the Minister's Address**:
  - **Role of NSS**: Emphasized the NSS's role in shaping India's policy landscape across **employment**, **consumption**, **health**, and **education**.
  - **Government Commitment**: Highlighted the government's commitment to **innovation**, **technology adoption**, and **strengthening the statistical system**.

35) Zomato Rebrands to Eternal Limited

On **February, 2025**, **Zomato**, the leading Indian food and grocery delivery giant, announced its rebranding to **Eternal Limited**, accompanied by a new logo.

The rebranding reflects the company's evolution beyond its core **food delivery service** into a **diversified conglomerate**.

36) DPIIT & KOTI Ink MoU for Logistics & Infrastructure Growth

On **February 10, 2025**, the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Government of India**, and the **Korea Transport Institute (KOTI), Republic of Korea**, signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** at the **Sejong National Research Complex, South Korea**.

- The MoU was signed by **Mr. Youngchan Kim**, **President of KOTI**, and **H.E. Amit Kumar**, **Ambassador of India to South Korea**.
- The agreement aims to **enhance logistics efficiency, infrastructure planning, and promote sustainable economic development** through **technical collaboration and knowledge exchange**.
- This cooperation aligns with India's **PM GatiShakti National Master Plan**, which focuses on **infrastructure modernization and logistics cost reduction**.

37) Union Budget 2025-26: Focus on Nuclear Energy

On **February, 2025, Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Ministry of Finance (MOF)** presented the **Union Budget 2025-26**, highlighting a focus **on**

nuclear energy. Key focus is on developing indigenous nuclear technology, encouraging private sector participation, and making key investments in nuclear infrastructure.

Key Focus Areas:

- **Indigenous Nuclear Technology**: Emphasis on developing homegrown nuclear technology to reduce reliance on foreign expertise.
- **Private Sector Participation**: Encouraging private companies to invest and participate in the nuclear energy sector.
- **Nuclear Infrastructure Investments**: Significant investments in building and upgrading nuclear infrastructure to support long-term energy goals.

Key Announcements:

- **Ambitious Target**: India aims to achieve **100 Gigawatt (GW)** of nuclear power by **2047** as part of its long-term energy strategy.
  - **Purpose**: Strengthen energy security, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and support the vision of **Viksit Bharat (Developed India)**.
- **Nuclear Energy Mission for Viksit Bharat**:
  - A major initiative to promote **research and innovation** in nuclear power.
  - **Allocation**: Rs 20,000 crore (USD 2.6 billion) to develop **five indigenous Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)** by **2033**.
- **Capacity Expansion Plan**:

  - Current nuclear capacity (2024): **8,180 MW**.
  - Target by 2031-32: **22,480 MW**.

38) Over 54.5 Crore Jan Dhan Accounts Opened till Jan 15

As of **January 15, 2025**, the **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)** has crossed a major milestone with **54.58 crore bank accounts** opened. A key highlight of this achievement is that **55.7% of these accounts belong to women**, demonstrating the scheme's success in promoting **financial inclusion, particularly among marginalized communities**.

Since its **launch in August 2014**, PMJDY has evolved from being a simple financial access initiative to becoming the **foundation for multiple government welfare programs, social security schemes, and digital transactions**.

Evolution of PMJDY Over the Years

PMJDY began with the objective of providing:

- A **basic savings bank account** to every unbanked household.
- A **RuPay debit card** with **accidental insurance cover**.
- **Access to banking facilities** such as deposits, withdrawals, and remittances.

39) Govt Adds 10 New Commodities to e-NAM for Better Market Access

The Indian government has expanded the scope of **the National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)** by adding 10 new agricultural commodities for trading. With this inclusion, the total number of commodities on the **e-NAM platform has reached 231**. The move is aimed **at improving price realization for farmers and ensuring a**

more transparent and efficient trade system.

What Is e-NAM?

- **Launched**: April 14, 2016.
- **Objective**: To create a **unified national agricultural market** by integrating Agricultural Produce Market Committee (**APMC**) mandis across India.
- **Functionality**:
  - Provides a **competitive and transparent** platform for price discovery.
  - Facilitates direct transactions between **farmers, traders, and buyers**.
  - Ensures standardization of **grading, weighing, and quality parameters**.
  - Enhances market access for **small and marginal farmers**.

The 10 Newly Added Commodities on e-NAM

The latest expansion includes **both raw and value-added agricultural products**, boosting **trade opportunities for farmers and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)**.

List of New Commodities Added:

1. **Dried Tulsi Leaves**
2. **Besan (Chickpea Flour)**
3. **Wheat Flour**
4. **Chana Sattu (Roasted Chickpea Flour)**
5. **Water Chestnut Flour**
6. **Asafoetida**
7. **Dried Fenugreek Leaves**
8. **Water Chestnut**
9. **Baby Corn**
10. **Dragon Fruit**

40) India Sets New HS Codes for GI-Tagged Rice Exports

India, as one of the world's largest rice exporters, is taking significant steps to **streamline the export process** of **GI-tagged rice varieties** by introducing **new Harmonized System of Nomenclature (HSN) codes**. This move is expected to provide better recognition to **specialty rice types** such as **Red Rice, Black Rice, and Kalanamak Rice**, helping exporters overcome trade barriers and ensuring fair pricing for premium rice varieties.

Why is India Introducing New HSN Codes for GI-Tagged Rice?

Traditionally, India's rice exports have been classified under **broad HSN codes**, which do not differentiate between general rice and **specialty, GI-tagged rice varieties**. This lack of distinction has led to multiple challenges, including:

1. **Lack of Recognition for Specialty Rice**
   - Without unique HSN codes, premium GI-tagged rice varieties get classified under **generic categories**, reducing their **visibility and value** in the international market.
   - The new codes will ensure that varieties like **Red Rice, Black Rice, and Kalanamak Rice** get the recognition they deserve.
2. **Difficulty in Trade Policy Implementation**
   - During **export restrictions or tariff changes**, generic rice categories often face limitations.
   - Having **separate HS codes** will allow policymakers to

exempt specialty rice from unnecessary trade barriers.

3. **Fair Pricing and Market Access**
   - Exporters often struggle to get the **right price for premium varieties** because they are bundled with regular rice.
   - Dedicated HS codes will help in **better branding, pricing, and marketing** for Indian GI rice in global markets.

Key Policy Developments:

1. **September 2024:**
   - The Indian government **reduced export duty** on:
     - **Rice in the husk (paddy or rough), husked (brown) rice, and parboiled rice** from **20% to 10%**.
   - The **export duty on semi-milled or wholly-milled rice** (excluding parboiled and Basmati rice) was **completely eliminated**.
2. **October 2024:**
   - Further **boosting rice exports**, the government **removed export duty** on:
     - **Parboiled rice and husked rice**, making them **more accessible** in global markets.

41) India Surpasses 100 GW Solar Energy Milestone, Strengthening Global Renewable Leadership

In **February 2025, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi**, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) announced that India has achieved a **historic milestone of surpassing 100 Giga Watt (GW)** installed solar energy capacity. With this, India consolidates its position as a global leader in Renewable Energy (RE).

- This achievement reflects India's commitment to a cleaner, greener future and marks a major step toward realizing its ambitious target of **500 GW** of non-fossil fuel-based energy capacity by **2030** set by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**.
- As per MNRE, India's solar power sector has witnessed an **exponential increase of 3450%** in capacity over the last 10 years, increasing from **2.82 GW (in 2014) to 100 GW (in 2025)**.
- As of **January 31, 2025**, total installed solar energy capacity of India stands at **100.33 GW**, with **84.10 GW** under implementation and an additional **47.49 GW** under tendering.
- **Solar energy emerged as the key contributor to India's RE growth, representing 47% of the total installed RE capacity.**
- **Top 5 performing Indian states**, contributing significantly to India's total utility-scale solar installations are: **Rajasthan, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu (TN), Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh (MP).**

42) MoHUA Launches 'Culinary, Crafts & Clicks' Festival

The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**, in partnership with **MyGov**, has introduced the **'Culinary, Crafts & Clicks – Moods & Magic'** festival to celebrate India's rich cultural heritage. This festival aims to showcase traditional arts, crafts, cuisine, and photography, highlighting India's vibrant public spaces and artistic expressions.

The festival will take place at prominent locations such as:

- **Kartavya Path** (New Delhi)
- **Amrit Udyan** (Rashtrapati Bhavan Gardens)

This initiative is expected to bring together artisans, food enthusiasts, photographers, and the general public, fostering a deeper appreciation for India's cultural diversity and urban aesthetics.

Objective: The contest aims to showcase the dynamic relationship between people and urban spaces, encouraging photographers to highlight **candid moments, cultural expressions, and artistic compositions**.

Prizes and Recognition

An expert panel, comprising **renowned photographers and MoHUA officials**, will judge the entries. The **top three winners** will receive:

- **₹50,000** – First Place
- **₹30,000** – Second Place
- **₹20,000** – Third Place

Additionally, the **'Spotlight Awards'** will be given for:

- **Best Candid Moment**
- **Most Vibrant Mood**
- **Cultural Engagement**

Each 'Spotlight Award' winner will receive **₹5,000**.

44) 14AFAF 2025: Advancing Sustainable Fisheries in Asia-Pacific

Blue Growth in Asia-Pacific," will be held from **February 12 to 14, 2025**, at the **ICAR Convention Centre, Pusa Campus, New Delhi**.

This prestigious international event is jointly organized by:

- **Asian Fisheries Society (AFS)**
- **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)**
- **Department of Fisheries (DoF), Government of India**
- **Asian Fisheries Society Indian Branch (AFSIB)**

With participation from **over 1,000 delegates** from **24 countries**, including **scientists, policymakers, industry leaders, and stakeholders**, the forum will serve as a **global platform** for discussions on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development in the **Asia-Pacific region**.

45) President of India Inaugurates International Conference on Unani Medicine

On **February 11, 2025**, **President Droupadi Murmu** inaugurated an **international conference on Unani medicine** at **Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi**. The event was organized by the **Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM)** under the **Ministry of Ayush**.

The theme of the conference was: **"Innovations in Unani Medicine for Integrative Health Solutions – A Way Forward"**

The event coincided with **Unani Day celebrations**, focusing on the **importance of Unani medicine in modern healthcare** and ways to integrate it with contemporary medical advancements.

Significance of Unani Day

- **Unani Day is observed every year on February 11** to honor **Hakim Ajmal Khan**, a legendary Unani physician, freedom fighter, and educationist.

- **Hakim Ajmal Khan's contributions**:
  - Revitalized and modernized **Unani medicine** in India.
  - Established **educational and healthcare institutions**.
  - Played a significant role in integrating **traditional and modern medicine**.
- **First observed in 2016**, Unani Day recognizes the legacy of Unani medicine and its role in holistic healthcare.
- **President Murmu's tribute**:
  - Acknowledged **Unani medicine's historical significance**.
  - Emphasized **the need for innovation** to keep Unani relevant in modern healthcare.

46) PM Modi's Gifts to French President and First Lady Showcase India's Rich Traditions

Lok Sabha Speaker **Om Birla** announced the extension of **translation services** in the House to six additional languages—**Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, Manipuri, Sanskrit, and Urdu**. This initiative aims to promote **linguistic inclusivity, enhance accessibility for Members of Parliament (MPs), and strengthen democratic participation**.

Extension of Translation Services

Newly Added Languages:

- **Bodo**
- **Dogri**
- **Maithili**
- **Manipuri**
- **Sanskrit**
- **Urdu**

These languages have been incorporated **to ensure better communication** for MPs who prefer speaking in their native tongues.

Until now, Lok Sabha translation services were available in **10 languages:**

- **Assamese**
- **Bengali**
- **Gujarati**
- **Kannada**
- **Malayalam**
- **Marathi**
- **Odia**
- **Tamil**
- **Telugu**
- **Hindi and English** (primary languages of parliamentary proceedings)

With the addition of the new languages, the total number of languages with translation support in the **Lok Sabha now stands at 16**.

Future Plans for Expansion

- **Speaker Om Birla** emphasized that **eventually, all 22 languages recognized under Schedule 8 of the Indian Constitution will be included** in Lok Sabha translation services.
- **Implementation will depend on resource availability, technology advancements, and skilled interpreters.**
- This move aligns with India's **commitment to linguistic inclusivity and cultural diversity** in parliamentary proceedings.

47) India's Industrial Output Growth Slows to 3.2% in December 2024

India's **industrial output growth** slowed to **3.2% in December 2024**, down from **5% in November 2024**, according to the

Index of Industrial Production (IIP). The decline was primarily due to **weaker manufacturing performance**, while **electricity generation** showed strong growth. This slowdown raises concerns about **economic momentum** as India enters **2025**.

Key Factors Behind the Slowdown in Industrial Growth

The slowdown in **December 2024** was influenced by the **performance of key industrial sectors:**

(a) Manufacturing Sector

- The **manufacturing sector** (which has the largest weight in IIP) grew only **3%** in December 2024.
- In comparison, it grew **4.6%** in **December 2023**, indicating a decline in industrial momentum.

(b) Mining Sector

- **Mining output** growth slowed to **2.6%** in December 2024.
- This was **significantly lower** than the **5.2% growth** recorded in December 2023.

(c) Electricity Sector

- **Electricity generation** surged **6.2%**, much higher than the **1.2%** growth recorded in **December 2023**.
- This reflects **higher power demand**, possibly driven by industrial and infrastructure activity.

48) President's Rule Imposed in Manipur Following CM N. Biren Singh's Resignation

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

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

Resignation:

i. **N Biren Singh** resigned on **February 9, 2025**, nearly 21 months after ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities began in May 2023, which resulted in over 250 deaths and the displacement of thousands.
ii. He submitted his resignation to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla at the Raj Bhavan in Imphal, Manipur.
iii. He served as the **12th CM of Manipur** from March 15, 2017, to February 8, 2025.

Political Instability and Constitutional Deadlines:

i. Due to the growing political instability, the **Manipur Assembly**, with a tenure lasting until 2027, was placed under suspended animation.
ii. According to **Article 174(1)** of the Indian Constitution, state Assemblies must convene within **6 months** of their last session.
iii. The **Manipur Assembly was required to reconvene by February 12, 2025**, as the last session was held on August 12, 2024.

What is President's Rule?

i. Under **Article 356** of the Indian Constitution, President's Rule suspends the state government, and the Governor assumes executive powers on behalf of the President of India.
ii. Under President's Rule, the elected state

government is **dissolved**, and its powers are **suspended**.

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

49) Inauguration of RuTAGe Smart Village Center (RSVC) in Haryana to Boost Rural Innovation

In **February 2025**, the **Rural Technology Action Group (RuTAGe) Smart Village Center (RSVC)** was inaugurated in **Mandaura village, Sonipat, Haryana**. The inauguration was led by **Professor Ajay Sood**, the Principal Scientific Adviser (**PSA**) to the **Government of India (GoI)**, alongside key partners:

- **Commodore Sridhar Kotra**, Founder of the Modern Village Foundation, and
- **DP Goel**, Chairman of the Chaalis Gaon Vikas Parishad.
- The **RSVC** aims to bridge the gap between rural technological needs and cutting-edge innovations, promoting **sustainable development in rural areas**.

Key Features:

i. The **RSVC** serves as a **permanent hub** for technological integration at the **Panchayat level**, impacting **15-20 villages** over several years and offering a **comprehensive range of 12 technology tracks** to address diverse rural challenges.

ii. The center emphasizes **market linkages** through collaborations with platforms like:

- **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)**
- **Amazon.com, Inc.**
- **Market Mirchi** (a RuTAG innovation by **IIT Bombay** in Mumbai).

This ensures that **rural producers have access to larger markets** and can **sell their goods effectively**.

50) Madhya Pradesh Becomes First Indian State to Launch Global Capability Centre (GCC) Policy 2025

Madhya Pradesh (MP) has become the **1st state in India** to introduce a dedicated **Global Capability Centre (GCC) Policy 2025**, positioning itself as a **leading hub for global innovation, technology, and business collaboration**.

- The **Madhya Pradesh State Electronics Development Corporation Limited (MPSeDC)** will act as the **nodal agency** responsible for implementing the policy.
- A dedicated **Policy Implementation Unit (PIU)** will manage **project approvals, incentive allocation, and compliance monitoring**.

Note:
Unveiled ahead of the **Global Investors Summit (GIS) 2025** in **Bhopal, MP**, on **24 and 25 February 2025**, the **GCC Policy 2025** reinforces MP's role in **India's USD 110 billion GCC market vision for 2030**.

Objective:

The **Madhya Pradesh GCC Policy 2025** aims to transform **tier-2 cities** like **Bhopal, Indore, and Gwalior** into **global operations centers**, providing a **competitive advantage** to businesses seeking expansion in India.

Key Features:

i. The focus sectors of the policy include:

- **Information Technology (IT)**
- **Finance**

- **Engineering**
- **Human Resources (HR)**
- **Emerging Technologies (ET)**
- Special emphasis on **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Cybersecurity.**

ii. This policy **combines incentives** for **Capital Expenditure (CapEx), payroll subsidies, upskilling programs**, and **Research and Development (R&D)**.

Economic and Employment Impact:

i. The policy aims to attract **over 50 GCCs**, generating over **37,000 direct jobs** in sectors like:

- **IT**
- **Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES)**
- **Advanced analytics**
- **R&D**
- **Digital transformation**.

Points to Note:

i. **Madhya Pradesh's IT exports have tripled** in the last **3 years**, with an **annual growth rate of 43%**.

ii. **MP ranked 4th** in the **Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) (2023)** rankings released by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

51) Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 - Commemorative Postage Stamps

The Department of Posts (DoP) has released a **special commemorative souvenir sheet** featuring **3 postage stamps** dedicated to the **Maha Kumbh Mela 2025**, which is taking place in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh (UP) from **13th January to 26th February 2025**. Union Minister **Jyotiraditya Madhavrao Scindia**, Ministry of Communications (MoC), unveiled these stamps at Arail Ghat Post Office (PO), Prayagraj.

- The commemorative postage stamps, designed by **Sankha Samanta**, depict **3 prominent aspects** of **Triveni Tirtha**– **Maharshi Bharadwaj Ashram** (an ancient center of learning), **Snan** (holy dip at Triveni Sangam), and **Akshayvat** (the immortal Banyan tree).
- Other philatelic releases highlighting Maha Kumbh include special covers and cancellations on sacred Snan days, **'Divya, Bhavya and Digital Mahakumbh'**, and a picture postcard celebrating **'Prakhyat Prayagraj'**.

Note: The Kumbh Mela is rooted in Hindu mythology, linked to the churning of the ocean (Samudra Manthan). **Maha Kumbh occurs once every 144 years** at Prayagraj, UP.

52) Rs 100 Commemorative Coin – Birth Centenary of Mohammed Rafi

The Government of India (GoI) will issue a **Rs 100 commemorative coin**, to mark the **birth centenary** of legendary playback singer **Padma Shri Mohammed Rafi**, which concluded on **24 December 2024**. The circular and non-circulating coin is reportedly **minted by the India Government Mint (IGM) in Mumbai, Maharashtra**.

- The **metal composition** of the Rs 100 commemorative coin will consist of a **Quaternary Alloy**, comprising **50% Silver (Ag), 40% Copper (Cu), 5% Nickel (Ni), and 5% Zinc (Zn).**
- The coin will weigh **35 grams** (g) and have a diameter of **44**

millimeters (mm), featuring **200 serrations** along the edge.

- On the **obverse side**, the face of the coin will bear the **Lion Capital of Ashoka Pillar** in the center with the legend **'Satyameva Jayate'** inscription, Rupee symbol (₹) below, and **denominational value "100"** in the international numerals below it.
- The left and right peripheries of the coin will be flanked with the words **"Bharath"** in Devanagari script and **'INDIA'** in English respectively.
- On the **reverse side**, the face of the coin will bear **Mohammed Rafi's image** in the center with inscriptions **Birth Centenary of Mohammed Rafi** in **Devanagari script and English** on the upper and lower peripheries respectively, along with the years **1924-2024**.

Points to Note:

1. **Mohammed Rafi (24 December 1924 – 31 July 1980)** often referred to as **Rafi Sahab** was born in Punjab. He was honored with the **Padma Shri in 1967** for **'Art'**.
2. **Commemorative coins** were earlier issued in honor of legendary singers including **Begum Akhtar**, a renowned Ghazal artist in **2014**, and **Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi**, the iconic Carnatic singer in **2017**.

53) Historic Renaming: Foy Sagar Now Varun Sagar, King Edward Memorial Transformed

The Rajasthan government has undertaken a significant **step towards erasing colonial** remnants and restoring cultural pride by **renaming two prominent British-era** landmarks in Ajmer. The **132-year-old Foy Sagar Lake** has been renamed **Varun Sagar**, and the **113-year-old King Edward Memorial Bhawan** has been rechristened **Maharishi Dayanand Vishrant Grih**. Rajasthan Assembly Speaker **Vasudev Devnani** confirmed the renaming and emphasized that these changes reflect India's journey towards embracing its indigenous heritage and honoring its historical and spiritual figures.

Key Highlights of the Renaming

1. Foy Sagar Lake Renamed as Varun Sagar

- **Historical Background:**
  o The lake was originally named after British engineer **Mr. Foy**, who supervised its construction.
  o Built in **1892** during British rule, it was a **famine relief project** aimed at tackling water scarcity in Ajmer.
- **Significance of the New Name:**
  o Now renamed **Varun Sagar** after **Lord Varun**, the Hindu **god of water**.
  o The renaming emphasizes the spiritual and cultural connection to water and nature in Indian traditions.
- **Upcoming Developments:**
  o A **statue of Lord Varun** will be installed at the lake.
  o A **ghat (riverbank structure)** will be constructed to facilitate prayers and spiritual activities.
  o The lake holds special reverence for the **Sindhi community**, who worship it.

2. King Edward Memorial Bhawan Renamed as Maharishi Dayanand Vishrant Grih

- **Historical Background:**
  - Initially named after **King Edward VII**, who was the British monarch from **1901 to 1910**.
  - The building, located on **Railway Station Road, Ajmer**, has been a historical landmark in the city.
- **Significance of the New Name:**
  - Renamed in honor of **Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati**, the **founder of the Arya Samaj**.
  - Maharishi Dayanand **attained nirvana in Ajmer**, making the renaming highly symbolic.
  - The renaming aligns with India's movement to replace symbols of **colonial rule with those of national pride and inspiration**.

54) Prime Minister Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana – Transforming India's Solar Energy Landscape

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

- This platform was introduced through a circular issued by SEBI in exercise of the powers given under **Section 11(1) of the SEBI Act 1992**, read with the provision of **Regulation 77 of SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulation, 1996**, to protect the interest of the investors in securities and to promote the development of, and to regulate the securities market.

i. As per SEBI circular, the platform will assist with investments that may have been forgotten, lost, or left unclaimed due to outdated Know Your Customer (KYC) details or the demise of the original investor.

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

iii. SEBI has mandated SEBI-registered brokers to set up a separate business unit (**SBU**) to trade in Government Securities (G-secs) through the Negotiated Dealing System Order Matching (**NDS-OM**).

54) **Government Announces ₹100 Commemorative Coin Honoring Mohammed Rafi's Legacy**

To honor the **100th birth anniversary** of legendary playback singer **Mohammed Rafi**, the **Indian government** has announced the release of a **₹100 commemorative coin**.

- This initiative celebrates **Rafi's extraordinary contributions** to **Indian music and culture**, acknowledging his role in shaping

Bollywood's golden era of playback singing.

Prime Minister's Tribute

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** paid homage to **Mohammed Rafi**, calling him a **"musical genius whose cultural influence and impact transcend generations."**
- The Prime Minister emphasized:
  - **Rafi's versatility** in singing across different genres, from soulful ghazals to energetic patriotic anthems and romantic melodies.
  - His ability to **capture diverse emotions** through his songs, making him one of the most celebrated playback singers in India.

55) Dr. Jitendra Singh to Preside Over 12th All India Pension Adalat

Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions, will chair the 12th All India Pension Adalat in New Delhi on February 13, 2025. **Organized by the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW),** this initiative **aims to resolve long-pending pension grievances of retired Central Government employees**. With 180 cases under review, the event seeks to provide immediate resolutions to pensioners whose issues have been pending for over 120 days. The Pension Adalat has played a crucial role in grievance redressal since its launch in 2017, significantly improving the efficiency of pension-related dispute settlements.

Objectives and Purpose of the Pension Adalat

The **primary objective** of the 12th All India Pension Adalat is to address and resolve **long-pending pension grievances** of retired Central Government employees. The session will focus on:

- Reviewing pension-related cases from **16 different Ministries and Departments**
- Ensuring **real-time grievance redressal** with direct participation of senior officials
- Resolving issues related to **delayed pensions, incorrect calculations, family pension claims, and arrears**
- Reducing the need for **legal intervention** by ensuring quick administrative solutions

56) India to Host First Regional Social Justice Dialogue in 2025

India is set to host the first-ever Regional Dialogue on the **Global Coalition for Social Justice on February 24-25, 2025, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**. Organized by the Ministry of Labour and Employment in collaboration with **the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Employers' Federation of India (EFI),** the event aims to bring together **global stakeholders to discuss inclusive and sustainable social policies.**

Importance of the Regional Dialogue

India's Commitment to Social Justice

- The dialogue aligns with **India's broader commitment** to:
  - **Fair employment opportunities**
  - **Social security enhancements**
  - **Inclusive and sustainable economic growth**
- Representatives from **Asia-Pacific and beyond** will discuss:

- o **Responsible business practices**
- o **Strengthening social justice frameworks**
- o **Equity and economic security in the labor market**

About the Global Coalition for Social Justice

- **Launched: 2023** by the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**
- **Purpose:**
  - o To **address global social and economic inequalities**
  - o To **promote decent work, economic security, and fair labor rights**
- **Key Participants:**
  - o Governments, Employers, Workers' Organizations
  - o International and Regional Bodies
  - o Financial Institutions, Enterprises, NGOs, and Academia
- **Core Initiatives:**
  - o Strengthening labor laws and **fair wage policies**
  - o Enhancing **social security systems**
  - o Encouraging **public-private partnerships** in social justice reforms

57) Aero India 2025: India's Premier Aerospace and Defence Exhibition Unveiled

In **February 2025, Union Minister Rajnath Singh,** the Ministry of Defence (MoD), inaugurated the **15th edition of Aero India,** Asia's largest aerospace and defence exhibition, at Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

- The five-day event took place from **February 10 to 14, 2025**, with the theme **"The Runway to a Billion Opportunities."**

Key Highlights:

1. The first three days, from **February 10 to 12**, are designated as business days, while **February 13 and 14** are reserved as public days for visitors.
2. Union Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the **India Pavilion,** Innovations for Defence Excellence (**iDEX Pavilion**), and **Karnataka Pavilion** at Aero India 2025.
3. Department of Defence Production, MoD, Secretary **Sanjeev Kumar** unveiled the new name of Hindustan Jet Trainer HJT-36, now called **'Yashas'**.
4. **Ahmedabad (Gujarat)** - based **Adani Defence & Aerospace**, in partnership with the **New Delhi (Delhi)-based** Defence Research and Development Organisation (**DRDO**) operating under MoD, introduced a **Vehicle-Mounted Counter-Drone System** at Aero India 2025.
5. **General Electric (GE) Aerospace**, headquartered in Ohio, United States of America (USA), has signed a **five-year Performance-Based Logistics (PBL) contract** with the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** to support the sustainment of **T700-GE-701D engines** powering its AH-64E-I Apache helicopters.
6. **Mumbai (Maharashtra)**-based **ideaForge Technology Limited** introduced its latest Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (**UAV**), **NETRA 5**, along with the **SWITCH V2 Tactical UAV** and a logistics UAV concept.

7. **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL),** a Public Sector Undertaking (**PSU**) headquartered in **Bengaluru, Karnataka**, has partnered with **Safran Electronics & Defence**, a **aerospace and defence company in France**, to establish a joint venture (**JV**) for manufacturing and maintaining **Highly Agile Modular Munition Extended Range (HAMMER) weapons** in India.

58) Government to Establish Deregulation Commission to Reduce State's Role in Governance

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the formation of **a Deregulation Commission aimed at reducing the role of the state in governance**. Speaking at the **ET Now Global Business Summit, Modi emphasized the government's** commitment to eliminating bureaucratic hurdles and promoting ease of doing business. This move aligns with **the broader vision of transforming India into a more business-friendly and efficient economy.**

Formation of the Deregulation Commission

- **Objective:** Reduce state intervention in governance and enhance ease of doing business.
- **Announcement:** Made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the ET Now Global Business Summit.
- **Key Goals:**
  o **Minimizing government interference** in business and economic activities.
  o **Enhancing ease of doing business** by reducing bureaucratic hurdles.
  o **Eliminating obsolete regulations** that slow down governance.
  o **Encouraging private sector participation** in India's economic development.

- **Jan Vishwas 2.0 Initiative:**
  o Aims to remove outdated compliances and archaic laws.
  o Strengthens the government's commitment to business-friendly reforms.

59) President Droupadi Murmu Inaugurates National Tribal Festival 'Aadi Mahotsav' in New Delhi

The **National Tribal Festival 'Aadi Mahotsav'** was inaugurated by the **President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu**, in **New Delhi on February 16, 2025**. The event is being organized by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** at **Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi**, and will be held from **February 16 to 24, 2025**.

Significance of Aadi Mahotsav

- **Showcasing Tribal Heritage:** Aadi Mahotsav is an important platform that highlights the **rich heritage, culture, and traditions** of India's tribal communities.
- **Economic Empowerment:** It provides **tribal entrepreneurs, artisans, and artists** with a broader market to showcase their skills and products at both **national and international levels**.
- **Cultural Exchange:** The festival helps foster awareness and appreciation of **tribal arts, crafts, food, attire, jewelry, medical**

- practices, household items, and sports.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Many tribal products reflect a **scientific and eco-friendly approach** to living, promoting environmental sustainability.

60) PM-AASHA Scheme Extended to Support Farmers Until 2025-26

The **Government of India** has extended the **Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) scheme until 2025-26** to ensure **better income support** for farmers. This initiative helps farmers receive **remunerative prices for their crops**, stabilizes **essential food commodity prices**, and **protects both farmers and consumers** from market fluctuations.

Key Components of PM-AASHA

PM-AASHA comprises **three major components** aimed at ensuring **fair prices for agricultural produce** and providing **income security to farmers**:

Price Support Scheme (PSS)

- Under this scheme, the **government procures pulses, oilseeds, and copra** at the **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** from **pre-registered farmers**.
- The procurement is carried out through **designated agencies like**:
  - **National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED)**
  - **National Cooperative Consumers' Federation (NCCF)**
  - **Food Corporation of India (FCI)**

- **Objective**: To ensure that **farmers do not suffer losses** due to low market prices and are provided with a **guaranteed minimum price**.
- **Impact**: Protects farmers against price fluctuations and encourages the production of key crops.

Price Stabilization Fund (PSF)

- The **Price Stabilization Fund (PSF)** is a **market intervention mechanism** that helps **regulate the prices of essential commodities** such as pulses and onions.
- The government **maintains buffer stocks** of pulses and onions **using this fund**, which are released into the market **to control inflation and price volatility**.
- **Objective**:
  - To stabilize **consumer prices** and prevent **farmers from suffering losses** due to oversupply or market fluctuations.
  - To ensure that pulses and onions remain **affordable for consumers** while maintaining **adequate farmer incomes**.
- **Impact**: Reduces **price shocks**, prevents **hoarding and black marketing**, and enhances **food security**.

61) Gujarat Launches G-SAFAL to Uplift 50,000 Underprivileged Women

The **Gujarat government**, under the leadership of **Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel**, has launched **G-SAFAL (Gujarat Scheme for Antyodaya Families for Augmenting Livelihoods)**. This **flagship initiative** aims to **empower underprivileged families, especially**

women, and promote **economic self-sufficiency**.

The scheme **targets 50,000 Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) cardholder families** across **25 talukas in 10 districts of Gujarat** over the next **five years**. It is implemented by the **Gujarat Livelihood Promotion Company Limited (GLPCL)** under the **Rural Development Department**.

G-SAFAL focuses on **livelihood creation, financial inclusion, and social development**, ensuring that the **poorest families** in Gujarat achieve **sustainable economic growth**.

Key Highlights of G-SAFAL

Objectives

- Strengthen the **livelihoods** of **Antyodaya families (economically weaker sections)**.
- **Empower women** by promoting **skill development and entrepreneurship**.
- Ensure **financial self-sufficiency** and **economic security** for beneficiaries.

Key Features of the Scheme

1. **Target Beneficiaries**
   o **50,000 AAY cardholder families** from **25 talukas across 10 districts**.
2. **Implementation Agency**
   o **Gujarat Livelihood Promotion Company Limited (GLPCL)**, under the **Rural Development Department**.
3. **Financial Assistance**
   o **₹80,000 per family** as a grant to **develop income-generating activities**.

4. **Skill Training**
   o Specialized training programs to **enhance employability** and **promote entrepreneurship**.
5. **Financial Inclusion**
   o **Connecting beneficiaries** with **banks, savings programs, and insurance schemes**.
6. **Women's Empowerment**
   o **Field coaches** assigned to **40 families each** to **mentor and assist in skill development**.
7. **Technology Integration**
   o **Real-time monitoring** through a **digital dashboard** to track progress.

62) Mary Kom, Avani Lekhara, Suhas Yathiraj Join Pariksha Pe Charcha 2025

- **Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC) 2025** is an annual interactive initiative led by **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi**, aimed at guiding students on how to approach academics and life challenges with confidence and a positive mindset.
- The initiative encourages students to overcome stress, adopt effective study techniques, and develop resilience through engaging discussions with experts and achievers from various fields.

7th Episode Highlights

- **This episode featured iconic sportspersons**:
  1. **M C Mary Kom** – Boxing Champion
  2. **Avani Lekhara** – Paralympic Shooter

3. **Suhas Yathiraj** – Para-Badminton Player and IAS Officer
- The discussion revolved around **goal setting, resilience, stress management**, and **life lessons from sports** that can help students navigate academic and personal challenges.

64) Union Minister Pabitra Margherita Inaugurates SILKTECH 2025

The CSB's International Conference – **SILKTECH 2025** was inaugurated by **Shri Pabitra Margherita, Hon'ble Minister of State for Textiles & Foreign Affairs, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**, as part of the **Bharat Tex 2025 mega textile event**. The conference, organized by **CSB-Central Tasar Research & Training Institute, Ranchi, and CSB-Central Silk Technological Research Institute (CSTRI)** under the Ministry of Textiles, focused on emerging technologies in the silk sector to enhance quality, sustainability, and global competitiveness.

Introduction

- **SILKTECH 2025** is an **international conference** organized by the **Central Silk Board (CSB)** under the **Ministry of Textiles**.
- It was inaugurated at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**, as part of **Bharat Tex 2025**, a mega textile event.
- **The conference was organized by:**
  - **CSB-Central Tasar Research & Training Institute, Ranchi**
  - **CSB-Central Silk Technological Research Institute (CSTRI)**

- The focus of the event was on **emerging technologies in the silk sector** to enhance:
  - **Silk quality**
  - **Sustainability**
  - **Global competitiveness**

65) Dharmendra Pradhan Celebrates Hindu College's 126th Founder's Day

On the occasion of Hindu College's 126th Founder's Day, Union Minister **for Education Shri Dharmendra Pradhan attended the event in New Delhi**, highlighting the **college's exceptional legacy in shaping India's intellectual, cultural, and national identity. Shri Pradhan** interacted with **students, faculty, and staff members and visited an exhibition on Skill Development** and Entrepreneurship, engaging with innovative ideas, prototypes, and business models. He expressed optimism that these young talents would lead the way **for future innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation.** The event also saw him reflect on the college's foundation, and its future role in India's national development.

Introduction

- Hindu College celebrated its **126th Founder's Day** in **New Delhi**.
- The event was attended by **Union Minister for Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan**.
- The Minister highlighted the **college's role in shaping India's intellectual, cultural, and national identity**.
- The celebration included **an exhibition on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**, where students showcased innovative ideas, prototypes, and business models.

Legacy of Hindu College

- **Minister praised the college** for:
  - Its long-standing history of **educational excellence and innovation**.
  - Its role in **shaping India's intellectual and cultural identity**.
- **Hindu College's Impact**:
  - Has produced **distinguished alumni** contributing to **various fields such as politics, academia, business, and arts**.
  - Played a **pivotal role in India's freedom struggle and nation-building**.

66) Bhupender Yadav Opens 'Waste Recycling and Climate Change 2025' Conclave

On February 18, 2025, **Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav,** inaugurated **the 'Waste Recycling and Climate Change 2025' conclave**, organized by **the Recycling and Environment Industry Association of India (REIAI).** The event focused on how waste recycling can contribute to environmental sustainability and economic growth in India. The minister highlighted the importance of transitioning to a circular economy, which can reduce waste, improve resource efficiency, and generate employment.

Why is Waste Management a Critical Issue in India?

Current Waste Scenario:

- India generates nearly **62 million tonnes** of waste annually.
- The problem is exacerbated by **rising plastic, electronic, and hazardous waste**.

- The existing **'take, make, dispose'** linear economic model is **unsustainable**:
  - Landfills are **overflowing**, causing severe **environmental pollution**.
  - Unregulated waste disposal leads to **soil, water, and air contamination**.

Need for a Circular Economy:

- A **circular economy** focuses on **reusing, repairing, and recycling** products instead of discarding them.
- Benefits include:
  - Conservation of **natural resources**.
  - Reduction in **pollution and carbon footprint**.
  - Creation of **economic opportunities** in the recycling sector.
- The government aims to replace the traditional model with **sustainable waste management systems**.

67) India's First Open-Air Art Wall Museum Inaugurated at Mausam Bhawan

India's first **Open Air Art Wall Museum** was inaugurated at **Mausam Bhawan, New Delhi**, by **Dr. Jitendra Singh**, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for **Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, and other key departments**.

This initiative, developed in collaboration with **Delhi Street Art**, marks **150 years of the India Meteorological Department (IMD)** and presents a visually engaging series of murals. The project combines **science and art** to illustrate **India's meteorological history, technological advancements, and contributions to society**.

Inauguration & Purpose

Event Details

- **Location**: Mausam Bhawan, New Delhi.
- **Date**: Inauguration took place to mark the **150th anniversary** of IMD.
- **Inaugurated By**:
  - **Dr. Jitendra Singh**, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for:
    - **Science & Technology**
    - **Earth Sciences**
    - Other key departments.

Purpose of the Museum

- **Commemoration**: Celebrates **150 years** of **IMD's** contributions.
- **Public Engagement**: Uses **artistic storytelling** to depict **weather science and meteorology**.
- **Scientific Awareness**: Educates people on **IMD's role in meteorology, disaster management, and agriculture**.

68) Shivraj Singh Chouhan to Launch NAKSHA for Urban Land Survey

The National Geospatial Knowledge-based Land Survey of Urban Habitations (NAKSHA) pilot program was inaugurated by Union Minister for Rural Development and Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, **Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, on **February 18, 2025**, in Raisen, Madhya Pradesh. Spearheaded by the **Department of Land Resources**, the initiative aims to modernize urban land surveys and improve land record accuracy in **152 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) across 26 states and 3 Union Territories (UTs).** The central government has allocated ₹194 **crore** for this initiative.

Key Objectives of the NAKSHA Program

- Modernization of urban land survey processes.
- Creation and updating of accurate land records.
- Enhancement of urban planning and infrastructure development.
- Reduction of land disputes by ensuring transparency and proper documentation.
- Digital integration of survey data with national databases.

Key Activities at the Inauguration

- **Drone demonstration** showcasing geospatial survey techniques.
- **Release of Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) booklet** for land survey implementation.
- **Launch of NAKSHA program video and flyer** for public awareness.
- **Flagging off of the Watershed Development Component (WDC) Yatra**, an initiative aimed at improving watershed management.
- **Screening of the WDC video and playing of the Watershed Anthem** to highlight the importance of water conservation.

69) Centre Releases 15th Finance Commission Grants for Rural Local Bodies

The **Union Government** has released the **Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV FC) grants for the fiscal year 2024–25**, providing **financial support to Rural Local Bodies (RLBs)** in **Bihar, Haryana, and Sikkim**.

These grants aim to **strengthen rural governance** by empowering **Panchayati**

Raj Institutions (PRIs) and enabling them to enhance **local administration and service delivery**. The funds are distributed as **Untied Grants and Tied Grants**, ensuring both **flexibility and targeted improvements** in essential services such as **sanitation and water supply**.

Financial Assistance Provided to the States

The Finance Commission grants have been distributed to the three states based on specific **eligibility criteria**. The allocations are as follows:

1. Bihar

- **Total Allocation**: ₹869.7360 crores
  - ₹**821.8021 crores** as the **second installment** of Untied Grants.
  - ₹**47.9339 crores** from the **previously withheld first installment**.
- **Utilization**:
  - **38 District Panchayats**
  - **530 eligible Block Panchayats**
  - **8,052 eligible Gram Panchayats**

2. Haryana

- **Total Allocation**: ₹210.0656 crores
  - ₹**202.4663 crores** as the **second installment**.
  - ₹**7.5993 crores** from the **withheld first installment**.
- **Utilization**:
  - **18 District Panchayats**
  - **142 Block Panchayats**
  - **6,195 Gram Panchayats**

3. Sikkim

- **Total Allocation**: ₹6.2613 crores

  - Entire amount granted as the **second installment**.
- **Utilization**:
  - **4 eligible District Panchayats**
  - **186 Gram Panchayats**

These grants were released **only after the states fulfilled mandatory conditions** set by the Finance Commission, as per the **Press Information Bureau (PIB)**.

70) West Bengal's "Nodi Bandhan" Scheme and Ghatal Masterplan

The West Bengal government, under Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, has introduced the **"Nodi Bandhan" scheme in the 2025-26 budget** to enhance riverine development and prevent erosion along **the Ganga-Padma**. Alongside this, a significant allocation for the Ghatal Masterplan has been made to address flooding in **West Midnapore**. These initiatives aim to mitigate natural calamities, boost livelihoods, and strengthen infrastructure in the river-dependent regions of the state.

Key Highlights of the "Nodi Bandhan" Scheme & Ghatal Masterplan

1. Nodi Bandhan Scheme

- Aims to combat natural calamities and enhance livelihoods in riverine areas.
- Will interconnect rivers and wetlands, benefiting pisciculture and irrigation.
- Could lead to the development of small-scale agriculture and fishery-based industries.
- The name "Nodi Bandhan" was coined by Mamata Banerjee herself.

2. Prevention of Ganga-Padma Erosion

- The government has allocated ₹200 crore to address riverbank erosion in Murshidabad and Malda.
- A two-year masterplan will be implemented using hydrological models and nature-based solutions.

3. Ghatal Masterplan for Flood Prevention

- Aims to prevent flooding in Ghatal and surrounding areas of West Midnapore.
- Requires a total funding of ₹1,500 crore, with ₹500 crore allocated in this budget.

4. Political and Economic Impact

- Expected to benefit local communities, providing employment opportunities and economic growth.
- Seen as a strategic move ahead of the elections to strengthen support in Malda and Murshidabad, where TMC holds a strong voter base.
- Highlights the state's efforts amid alleged lack of support from the central government.

71) Kerala Leads in Scientific Disposal of Expired Medicines

Kerala is set to become the **first state in India** to implement a **scientific system for collecting and disposing of expired and unused medicines from households**. The **Kerala Drugs Control Department** will officially launch the **'nPROUD' (New Programme for Removal of Unused Drugs)** initiative on **February 22, 2025**.

This **government-led project** is a major step toward **environmental sustainability and public health** by ensuring the **safe disposal of pharmaceutical waste**.

How Will the nPROUD Initiative Work?

The program will begin as a **pilot project** in **Kozhikode Corporation and Ulliyeri Panchayat in Kozhikode district** before being expanded **statewide**.

Three-Step Process for Collection and Disposal:

1. **Household Collection**
   o Government officials will **visit homes at designated intervals** to collect unused and expired medicines.
2. **Permanent Collection Points**
   o Special **blue-colored bins** will be placed in public areas for easy disposal.
3. **Collaboration with Local Bodies**
   o **Haritha Karma Sena (Green Task Force)** and **local self-government institutions** will help manage collection and logistics.

72) Bengal Leads India in Bird Count for Third Consecutive Year

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is one of the largest global birding events, where birdwatchers from around the world participate in counting species. This year, Bengal once again led the country in bird species recorded, marking its third consecutive victory in the event. Conducted between February 14 and 17, 2025, the exercise saw birdwatchers across India document 1,068 species. Bengal topped the list with 543 species observed, a testament to the state's rich bird diversity and active birdwatching community.

Key Achievements of Bengal in GBBC 2025

- Bengal recorded the **highest number of bird species** in India.
- The state documented **543 species**, the highest in the country.
- Bengal's rich bird diversity and strong birdwatching community played a key role in this success.

Participation Trends

- **Total participation in India:** Over **5,300** birdwatchers.
- **Participants from Bengal: 344** birdwatchers contributed to the count.
- The number of uploaded checklists from Bengal was **1,909**, which showed a **decrease** from **2,223** in 2024.
- The decline in participation was mainly due to timing conflicts with **academic exams**.

Top Observations and Notable Sightings

- Several **rare species** were recorded in Bengal:
  - **Ibisbill** – Spotted in **Jhalong (North Bengal)**.
  - **Spotted Crake** – Found in **Baruipur**.
  - **Common Starling** – Seen in **Malda**.
- Darjeeling recorded the **highest number of species** within Bengal, with **252 species**, though this was lower than **308 species** in 2024.
- **South 24 Parganas** had the most **uploaded checklists** (513 checklists).

Top Contributors from Bengal

- **Baharuddin Sk** emerged as the **top observer**, recording **310 species**.
- **Santanu Manna** uploaded the highest number of checklists (**112 checklists**).

Top 5 States in GBBC 2025 (Species Count)

1. **Bengal** – **543 species**
2. **Uttarakhand** – **446 species**
3. **Assam** – **414 species**
4. **Maharashtra** – **414 species**
5. **Karnataka** – **380 species**

73) India's First Wildlife Biobank Opens at Darjeeling Zoo

- India has taken a significant step in **wildlife conservation** by establishing the country's **first zoo-based biobank**.
- The facility is located at **Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park (PNHZP), Darjeeling, West Bengal**.
- The biobank became **operational in July 2024**.
- It is a **collaborative project** with the **Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB)** under the **Ministry of Science and Technology**.
- Alongside the biobank, the zoo has also launched an **animal museum**, further boosting conservation and research efforts.

What is a Biobank?

- The biobank at PNHZP functions as a **'frozen zoo'** where genetic materials of endangered species are stored.
- It includes **DNA, cellular, and tissue samples** from endangered animals.

- These materials are preserved under **cryogenic conditions at -196°C** using **liquid nitrogen**.
- This preservation ensures the viability of genetic materials for future **scientific research,** breeding programs, and potential species revival efforts.

Key Functions of the Biobank

1. **Genetic Conservation**
   - Helps in storing the genetic material of endangered species to **prevent species loss**.
   - Ensures **long-term genetic preservation** for research and conservation programs.
2. **Scientific Research**
   - Enables **wildlife disease studies**, **population genetics research**, and **breeding strategies**.
   - Helps in understanding the genetic diversity of species.
3. **Climate Change and Environmental Threats**
   - Acts as a **safeguard** against the **permanent loss of species** due to climate change, habitat destruction, and other environmental threats.
4. **Future Breeding and Species Revival**
   - Can assist in the **artificial reproduction of endangered species** in the future.
   - Holds potential for **cloning and assisted reproductive technologies**.

Current Status of the Biobank

- As of **February 2025**, the biobank has collected genetic material from **60 animals across 23 species**.
- Focus is on species at the **highest risk of extinction**.
- The project is part of a **larger national strategy**, with similar biobanks planned at:
  - **National Zoological Park, Delhi**
  - **Nandankanan Zoological Park, Odisha**

74) PM Modi Inaugurated Global Investors Summit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **Global Investors Summit 2025 in Bhopal,** unveiling **18 new industrial policies aimed at transforming Madhya Pradesh** into an investment hub. The event saw participation from leading industrialists and global investors, with a strong emphasis on India's role in global supply chains, particularly in aerospace. PM Modi highlighted India's rapid economic growth, citing optimistic global outlooks from institutions like **the World Bank, OECD, and the UN. The summit aims to attract investments across various sectors, reinforcing India's position as a leading global economic power.**

1. PM Modi's Address & Key Announcements

- India emerging as a **global supply chain hub**, especially in **aerospace**.
- Madhya Pradesh to become a **major investment destination**.
- Global organizations (World Bank, OECD, UN) affirm India's **economic leadership**.
- Focus on **solar power, manufacturing, and digital transformation**.

2. Prominent Industrialists Attended: Kumar Mangalam Birla, Gautam Adani, Nadir Godrej, Piruz Khambatta, Baba N Kalyani, Rahul Awasthi, Neeraj Akhouri.

3. Madhya Pradesh's Growing Role

- CM Mohan Yadav supports **Viksit Bharat 2047** vision.
- **100+ foreign delegates from 50+ countries**.
- **25,000+ investor registrations**.

4. Adani's Endorsement of India's Growth

- India now **defines global trends**.
- Success of **Make in India, Digital India, and Atmanirbhar Bharat**.

5. Key Investment Sectors: Agriculture, Textiles, Mining, IT, Renewable Energy, Tourism, Semiconductors, Drones, Film Production.

6. Industrial Policies & Future Roadmap

- **18 new policies** launched for MSME, food, exports, startups, etc.
- Special video: **"Madhya Pradesh – Infinite Possibilities"**.
- **Amit Shah** to preside over the closing session on **Feb 25, 2025**.

7. Vision for the Future

- **Chief Secretary Anurag Jain** to present MP's future roadmap.
- **CM's direct meetings** with industrialists to finalize investments.
- Goal: **Madhya Pradesh as a global investment hub**.

75) NITI Aayog Panel to Drive AIIMS Modernization

NITI Aayog, the Indian government's premier think tank, has established a committee **to devise a roadmap for transforming AIIMS, New Delhi**, into a world-class institution for medical research and healthcare excellence. **Led by NITI Aayog member VK Paul, the committee** will analyze current systems and propose reforms with specific timelines for their implementation. **This initiative is part of a broader effort to enhance healthcare infrastructure, governance, and self-sufficiency in AIIMS.**

NITI Aayog's Efforts on Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

- **Partnered with CSEP Research Foundation** to study **global UHC models**.
- Draft paper on **healthcare financing strategies** (supply & demand-side funding).
- **Goal:** Improve healthcare **accessibility, quality, and affordability**.
- **Consultations planned** with stakeholders for policy development.

Rare Disease Drug Accessibility Initiative

- Focus on **affordable indigenous drug production**.
- **4 new affordable drugs introduced**, priced **1/60th to 1/100th** of imported versions.
- **4 more drugs under regulatory approval**, expected by year-end.

76) 'Desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyaan' Sets 5 Guinness World Records

India's **'Desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyaan'** has set a new benchmark in public healthcare and Ayurveda by securing **five Guinness World Records**. The campaign, led by the **National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM)** under the **Ministry of Ayush**, aimed at integrating **Ayurveda with preventive healthcare** through **prakriti parikshan (nature assessment)** of individuals.

The **first phase** of the initiative concluded on **February 20, 2025, in Mumbai**, marking a historic moment in India's efforts to **promote Ayurveda-based holistic healthcare** on a global scale.

Key Achievements: Guinness World Records Secured

The campaign achieved **five Guinness World Records**, demonstrating the massive public participation and the growing acceptance of Ayurveda in healthcare.

1. **Most pledges received for a health campaign in one week**
   - **6,004,912 pledges** received, setting a **new global record** with no previous benchmark.
2. **Most pledges received for a health campaign in one month**
   - **13,892,976 pledges**, surpassing the previous record of **58,284**, held by **Cigna & CMB Life Insurance, China**.
3. **Most pledges received for a health campaign (Overall)**
   - **13,892,976 pledges**, breaking India's previous record of **569,057**, held by **Zifi FDC Limited**.

4. **Largest online photo album of people displaying a digital certificate**
   o **62,525 photos** uploaded, breaking the previous record of **29,068** set by **Accenture Solutions Private Limited, India**.
5. **Largest online video album of people saying the same sentence**
   o **12,798 videos** submitted, surpassing the previous record of **8,992 videos** held by **Ghe Bharari, Rahul Kulkarni, and Neelam Edlabadkar, India**.

77) Nagaon Hosts 2nd Simolu Festival Amid Blooming Bombax Ceiba

The 2nd Simolu Festival commenced on February 15, 2025, at Bwisang-Na, an ethnic eco-resort in Barunguri, Laokhowa, Assam. The two-day festival was held to celebrate the blooming Bombax ceiba (Shimul) flowers and promote eco-tourism, conservation, and local culture. The event featured a range of activities such as cycling, camping, ethnic cuisine displays, cultural performances, and awareness sessions.

Dr. Sonali Ghosh, the Field Director of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, highlighted the event's significance, describing it as a spectacular way to experience nature's beauty while raising awareness about environmental conservation.

78) Delhi Cabinet Approves Ayushman Bharat in First Meeting and Other Decisions

Rekha Gupta, BJP leader and first-time MLA from Shalimar Bagh, was sworn in as the ninth Chief Minister of Delhi in a grand ceremony at Ramlila Maidan. In her first cabinet meeting, she announced two major decisions: the implementation of the **Ayushman Bharat Yojana** with a ₹5 lakh top-up, ensuring free healthcare coverage of ₹10 lakh, and the **tabling of 14 pending CAG reports** to promote transparency. Her government has also prioritized **cleaning the Yamuna River**, infrastructure development, education, and women's welfare.

79) UDAN Yatri Cafe Inaugurated at Chennai Airport: A Major Step Towards Passenger Convenience

Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Shri Ram Mohan Naidu, inaugurated the **UDAN Yatri Cafe** at Chennai International Airport, marking the second facility under this initiative. The move aims to enhance passenger convenience and promote affordable air travel. The first **UDAN Yatri Cafe** was launched on **December 19, 2024**, at **Kolkata Airport**, receiving positive feedback for its quality and affordability. Chennai Airport, a key aviation hub handling over **22 million passengers annually**, now joins this initiative, reinforcing the government's commitment to making air travel more inclusive and seamless.

80) Madhya Pradesh Now Home to India's Highest Vulture Population

Madhya Pradesh has recorded **India's highest vulture population**, reaching **12,981** in the **2025 vulture census**, a significant rise from **10,845 in 2024** and **8,397 in 2019**. The **Madhya Pradesh Forest Department** has conducted systematic censuses since **2016**, with the **2025 survey split into two phases**—the first held in **February** and the second scheduled for **April 29**. The survey spans **16 circles, 64 divisions, and 9 protected areas**, covering both resident and migratory vulture species. The state is home to **seven**

of India's nine vulture species, reflecting successful conservation efforts.

81) Recognition of Bathouism in Assam

The **Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) government in Assam** has included **Bathouism** as an official religion option in application forms for **educational institutions, birth, and death certificates**. This initiative aims to preserve **indigenous faiths**, particularly the **nature-centric beliefs of the Bodo community**. The Assam government has also declared the **second Tuesday of Magh** as a **state holiday for Bathou Puja**. **Bathouism**, the traditional faith of the Bodos, revolves around the worship of **Bathoubwrai (Sibwrai), the supreme god**, and emphasizes deep philosophical thought and nature worship.

82) Prime Minister Modi Inaugurates Historic Jhumoir Ensemble in Assam

On **February 24, 2025**, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated **'Jhumoir Binandini 2025'** at **Guwahati's Sarusajai Stadium**, marking the **200th anniversary of Assam's tea industry**. The event featured **over 8,000 artists** from the **tea garden community**, highlighting Assam's rich cultural heritage.

Significance of Jhumoir Dance

Jhumoir is a **traditional dance** of Assam's **tea garden workers and Adivasi communities**, symbolizing **joy and unity**. It features **coordinated movements, vibrant costumes, and traditional instruments** like the **dhol, madal, dhamsa, and bamboo flutes**.

PM Modi's Participation & Announcements

- Played the **Dhomsa drum**, emphasizing his **personal connection to tea**.

- Announced initiatives for **tea garden communities**:
    - **300+ Ayushman Arogya centers** for **healthcare access**.
    - **100+ model schools** for **educational development**.
    - **Self-employment schemes** to boost **economic independence**.

The event celebrated **Assam's tea heritage** while reaffirming the government's commitment to the **welfare and cultural preservation** of the tea garden community.

83) Kerala Unveils nPROUD for Safe Drug Disposal

The **Kerala Health Department** has introduced the **nPROUD (New Programme for Removal of Unused Drugs)** initiative, making Kerala the **first state in India** to implement a **systematic, government-led drug disposal program**. This initiative aims to **prevent environmental hazards and health risks** caused by improper disposal of expired and unused medicines.

How nPROUD Works

- **Household Collection**:
    - Volunteers from **Haritha Karma Sena and Kudumbashree** will **collect unused medicines from homes** at no cost.
    - Awareness campaigns on **antimicrobial resistance** will be conducted alongside collection drives.
- **Pharmacy Participation**:
    - **Medical stores** will have **blue bins** where people can drop unused drugs.

- o **Retailers, wholesalers, and hospitals** will pay **₹40 per kg** for disposal services.
- **Special Collection Drives**:
  - o **"Go Blue Day"** events will be held to boost public participation in pre-scheduled collection drives.
- **Safe Disposal**:
  - o Collected medicines will be **scientifically incinerated** at the **Kerala Enviro Infrastructure Ltd (KEIL)** facility in **Ernakulam**, ensuring compliance with **environmental safety norms**.

Pilot Phase & Expansion Plans

- **Initially launched** in **Kozhikode Corporation and Ulliyeri Panchayat**, covering **200,000 households** and **multiple pharmacies**.
- Plans to **expand the initiative across Kerala** in a phased manner.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

1) Thiruvalluvar Statue Inaugurated in the Philippines

Indian Ambassador to the Philippines, Harsh Kumar Jain, unveiled a statue of renowned **Tamil poet and philosopher Thiruvalluvar at Gullas College of Medicine (GCM)** in Cebu on February 17, 2025. The unveiling ceremony was part of the celebrations marking **the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and the Philippines.** The event witnessed the participation of key dignitaries, **including former Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, senior officials, diplomats, and members of the Indian diaspora.**

Event Highlights:

- The **statue of Thiruvalluvar** was unveiled at **Gullas College of Medicine (GCM), Cebu**.
- The statue was **commissioned by Dr. David Pillai**, Chief Executive Adviser of GCM.
- Former **Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo**, senior officials, diplomats, and the Indian diaspora attended the event.
- Aimed at **strengthening India-Philippines cultural ties** and fostering historical and literary appreciation.

75 Years of India-Philippines Diplomatic Relations

- India and the Philippines established **formal diplomatic relations on November 26, 1949**.
- The unveiling ceremony was part of a **year-long series of events** commemorating the **75th anniversary of bilateral ties**.
- It highlights the **growing cooperation between the two nations** in **culture, education, trade, and diplomacy**.

2) India-Qatar to Double Trade to $28B by 2030

India and Qatar have officially upgraded their **bilateral relations** to **a strategic partnership, focusing on enhanced cooperation in trade, investment, and energy**. This milestone decision was taken during **the two-day visit of Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani to India.** Both nations have set an ambitious target to double their bilateral trade **from $14.08 billion to $28 billion over the next five years**. Furthermore, Qatar has expressed keen interest in expanding investments across key Indian sectors.

Key Highlights of the India-Qatar Partnership

Bilateral Trade & Investment Goals

- India and Qatar aim to increase bilateral trade to $28 billion within five years.
- Discussions focused on expanding economic collaboration beyond liquefied natural gas (LNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), where Qatar is India's largest supplier.
- This strategic partnership aligns Qatar with other Gulf nations like UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Kuwait, which already have similar ties with India.

3) India Becomes IALA Vice President, Boosts Maritime Leadership

India has been elected as the **Vice President** of the **International Organization of Aids to Marine Navigation (IALA)** during its **inaugural General Assembly in Singapore**. This election signifies **India's growing influence in global maritime affairs** and comes at a crucial time when **IALA is transitioning from a non-governmental organization (NGO) to an inter-governmental organization (IGO)**.

With India assuming a leadership position in IALA, the country is set to play a **pivotal role in shaping global maritime navigation policies and governance** in the coming years.

Significance of India's Election as IALA's Vice President

Strengthening Global Maritime Governance

- **IALA, established in 1957**, has been instrumental in coordinating **marine aids to navigation worldwide**.
- The organization is responsible for **setting global standards for maritime safety and navigation**.
- In **August 2024**, **34 member states ratified IALA's transformation into an IGO**, enhancing its ability to **regulate and standardize marine navigation** globally.
- India's active involvement in this transition reinforces its **commitment to strengthening international maritime governance**.

4) Philippines Set to Acquire $200 Million Akash Missile System from India

India is making significant progress in expanding its **defense exports**, with a **$200 million deal** under discussion for supplying the **Akash missile system** to the **Philippines**. This deal, expected to be finalized in the **current fiscal year**, highlights India's **growing role in the global defense market** and strengthens its **strategic ties** with the Philippines.

Overview of the Akash Missile System

What is the Akash Missile System?

- The **Akash missile system** is a **medium-range surface-to-air missile (SAM)** developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- It is **cost-effective** and provides **high operational efficiency**,

making it attractive for international buyers.

- The system has been in service with the **Indian Army and Indian Air Force** since **2009** and has demonstrated **high reliability** in real-world applications.

Key Features of the Akash Missile System

- **Range:** Up to **25 kilometers**.
- **Warhead: 60 kg high-explosive warhead** with a **proximity fuse** for effective target destruction.
- **Versatility:** Can target **aircraft, cruise missiles, and air-to-surface missiles**.
- **Mobility:** Designed for **quick deployment and mobility**, protecting moving convoys and military assets.
- **Radar and Fire Control:** Equipped with **multi-function radars and sophisticated fire control systems**.
- **All-Weather Capability:** Can function under diverse weather conditions and in complex terrains.

5) PM Narendra Modi's US Visit Strengthens Indo-US Trade and Strategic Ties

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the United States has **laid a strong foundation for enhanced bilateral cooperation between India and the US**. This visit marked a significant milestone in trade, **defense, and strategic partnerships, further solidifying Indo-US ties.** The meeting with **US President Donald Trump** focused on **economic collaboration, military agreements, and security issues, emphasizing a long-term vision for mutual growth and stability**.

Strengthening Indo-US Trade Relations

One of the most critical aspects of the visit was the commitment to **doubling bilateral trade to $500 billion by 2030**. Both nations have agreed to expand their economic engagement in several key sectors, ensuring sustainable and balanced growth.

Key Trade Agreements and Initiatives

- **Expansion in High-Tech Sectors**: India and the US will strengthen partnerships in **artificial intelligence (AI), semiconductor manufacturing, and critical mineral supply chains**.
- **Addressing Trade Imbalances**: India has agreed to **increase imports of US oil, gas, and defense equipment**, helping to bridge the US trade deficit with India.
- **Tariff Reduction Talks**: Both sides are working toward **reducing tariffs and trade barriers** to facilitate smoother trade flows.
- **Investment in Technology and Infrastructure**: The visit has paved the way for US companies to **increase investments in Indian infrastructure, digital economy, and clean energy projects**.

6) DoT & ITU Collaboration on AI-Driven Infrastructure Planning

On **February 17, 2025**, the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)**, Ministry of Communication (MoC), Government of India (GoI), and the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** in Geneva, Switzerland, signed a **Letter of Intent (LoI)** to collaborate on **advanced infrastructure planning** using **Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven digital twin technologies**.

- This partnership aims to leverage cutting-edge technologies for the **sustainable development of infrastructure**.
- **Signatories:** The LoI was signed by
  - **Doreen Bogdan-Martin**, Secretary-General (SG), ITU
  - **Dr. Neeraj Mittal**, Secretary (Telecom), DoT, MoC, during his official visit to Geneva.

PhD Fellowship Scheme for Telecommunications and Emerging Technologies

1. In addition to infrastructure planning, **DoT and ITU signed an agreement** to initiate a **'Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) fellowship scheme'** focused on **telecommunications and emerging technologies**.
2. The proposed scheme envisions **supporting PhD fellowships over 5 years** in ITU focus areas.

7) India to Host BRICS Youth Entrepreneurship Meet in March 2025

India is set to host the **BRICS Youth Council Entrepreneurship Working Group Meeting** from **March 3 to 7, 2025**, under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. The event, themed **"Youth Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Growth,"** will bring together approximately **45 youth representatives** from the **BRICS** nations: **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa**. The focus of the discussions will be on enhancing youth entrepreneurship across these nations, fostering innovation, and creating sustainable growth pathways.

Purpose of the BRICS Youth Entrepreneurship Meeting

The key objectives of this meeting include:

- **Establishing the BRICS Youth Council's Entrepreneurship Working Group** as a permanent initiative.
- **Aligning entrepreneurship efforts** across BRICS nations for better coordination and synergy.
- **Identifying new strategies** for strengthening youth entrepreneurship and promoting global market participation.
- **Developing innovative engagement formats** to enhance cooperation and collaboration within the BRICS framework.
- **Connecting youth entrepreneurs** with global business opportunities, helping them expand their reach.

The ultimate goal is to create a **long-term roadmap for cooperation** among BRICS countries, particularly in the youth entrepreneurship sector.

8) EAM Jaishankar Chief Guest of the 1st Raisina Middle East Conference

The **first Raisina Middle East Conference** was held in the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** capital city, **Abu Dhabi**, on 28 and 29 January 2025. External Affairs Minister **Dr S. Jaishankar** was the Chief Guest of the **first Raisina Middle East Conference**.

- **Dr S.Jaishankar** was on a three-day official visit to the **UAE on 27 and 29 January 2025.**
- This was the third visit to the **UAE by Dr Jaishankar** since he was

reappointed as the External Affairs Minister in June 2024.

- The Raisina Dialogue is India's premier conference on **geopolitics and geoeconomics** which brings together experts to discuss the most challenging issues facing the world community.

Niger Achieves Historic Milestone: First African Nation to Eliminate Onchocerciasis

On January 30, 2025, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** announced **that Niger has become the first country in the African region to officially eliminate onchocerciasis, also known as river blindness**, as a public health threat. This remarkable achievement places Niger alongside just four other countries globally—**Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico**—that have successfully halted the transmission of the parasitic disease. **It marks a significant moment in public health, especially for sub-Saharan Africa,** where onchocerciasis has long been a major concern. **According to WHO, Niger's success reflects the progress made in controlling and eliminating neglected tropical diseases.**

Global Context:

- Niger joins only **four other countries globally**— **Colombia**, **Ecuador**, **Guatemala**, and **Mexico**—that have successfully halted the transmission of **onchocerciasis**.

What is Onchocerciasis (River Blindness)?

- **Cause**: A parasitic worm transmitted by the bite of **infected blackflies**.

- **Symptoms**: Can cause **severe itching**, **skin rashes**, and, in severe cases, **blindness**.
- **Impact**: It is the **second-leading infectious cause of blindness** globally and affects millions in **sub-Saharan Africa**, especially rural communities near fast-flowing rivers where blackflies breed.

9) Trump Effect :US Withdraw from UNHRC & Stop Funding of UNRWA

Donald Trump, the **47th President of the United States of America,** has signed an executive order to withdraw the country from **the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** and **permanently stop the funding of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees** in **the Near East (UNRWA).** He has also ordered **the review of the American contribution to UNESCO and the funding of the United Nations.**

Executive Order by Donald Trump (February 2025):

- **Withdrawal from UNHRC:** The U.S. has withdrawn from the **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)**, a move that mirrors Trump's previous decision in 2018. The U.S. had rejoined under President Biden in 2021 but did not seek a second term in 2023.
- **Withdrawal from UNRWA Funding:** The U.S. has **suspended funding** to the **United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA)**, a policy initially adopted by Trump in 2018 and later reversed by Biden. The U.S. is the largest donor to the agency.

Impact:

- **UNHRC:** The U.S. was not a member of the **UNHRC** at the time of withdrawal but had informal observer status. The decision will not immediately impact the council's operations.
- **UNRWA:** The U.S. suspension of funding will significantly affect the UNRWA's operations, as it is the largest donor to the agency. The agency provides essential services like health, education, and food to Palestinian refugees.

The **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** is an intergovernmental body within the **United Nations (UN)** responsible for the promotion and protection of **human rights** worldwide.

Key Details of UNHRC
Establishment:

- Established in **2006** by the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**, replacing the **United Nations Commission on Human Rights (1946–2006)**.

Functions:

- Promotes and protects **human rights** globally.
- Reviews **human rights violations** and makes recommendations.
- Conducts **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** to assess the human rights records of **all UN member states**.
- Works with **special rapporteurs** and **working groups** to address specific human rights issues.

Membership:

- Composed of **47 member states**, elected by the **UNGA** for a **three-year term**.
- Members are elected based on **regional representation**:
  - **13 seats** – Asia
  - **13 seats** – Africa
  - **6 seats** – Eastern Europe
  - **7 seats** – Western Europe & Other Groups
  - **8 seats** – Latin America & Caribbean

Headquarters: Located in Geneva, Switzerland.

10) After US Exit, Argentina Cuts Ties with WHO

Argentina has announced its decision to withdraw from the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, following a similar move by the **United States** under former President **Donald Trump**. The decision, made under the leadership of **President Javier Milei**, has sparked significant debate both domestically and internationally. Below is a detailed breakdown of the key aspects, implications, and reactions to this decision:

1. Decision and Announcement
- **Announcement Date**: Argentina announced its withdrawal from the WHO on **Wednesday** (specific date not provided).
- **Official Confirmation**: Presidential spokesperson **Manuel Adorni** confirmed the decision during a news conference.
- **Formalization**: Foreign Minister **Gerardo Werthein** has been instructed to formalize the exit process.

11) UNICEF Releases National Roadmap for Child & Adolescent Road Safety in India

On **February, 2025**, **UNICEF**, in collaboration with the **World Health Organization Collaborating Centre (WHOCC)** for Injury Prevention and Safety, launched the **'National Roadmap to address Road Traffic Injuries (RTIs) among children and adolescents in India'** at the **National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences (NIMHANS)** in **Bengaluru, Karnataka**.

- **Objective**: The roadmap aims to create a **multi-sectoral action plan** addressing **road safety management**, **vehicular regulations**, **school safety initiatives**, and **enhanced post-crash care**.
- **Key Statistics**:
  - **Daily Fatalities**: On average, **45 children under 18 years old** lose their lives in road crashes daily.
  - **Annual Fatalities**: **16,443 children** died in road crashes in **2022** alone.
  - **Non-Fatal Injuries**: **5 million children** suffer non-fatal injuries requiring hospitalization each year.
  - **Total Fatalities (2011-2022)**: Approximately **1.98 lakh children and adolescents** lost their lives in road crashes, with **75%** of fatalities among **14-17 year-olds**.
  - **Leading Cause of Death**: **Head injuries** are the leading cause of death in child road crashes, with **50%** of deaths occurring at the scene.

12) PM Modi and Macron to Inaugurate Indian Consulate in Marseille

India is set to expand its diplomatic presence in **France** with the inauguration of a new consulate in **Marseille** on **February 12, 2025**. Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and French President **Emmanuel Macron** will jointly open the consulate, marking a significant step in Indo-French relations. This will be India's **second diplomatic mission in France**, after its embassy in **Paris**. The move reflects India's commitment to enhancing economic, cultural, and strategic ties with France, particularly in the southern region.

Why is Marseille Important for India?

Strategic Location & Trade Significance

- **Marseille**, the **second-largest city in France**, holds strategic importance due to its **Mediterranean coastline**.
- It serves as a **key trade gateway** connecting **Europe with Africa, the Middle East, and Asia**.
- The **Port of Marseille-Fos**, the **largest port in France**, plays a crucial role in international trade.
- It handles a **significant portion of France's imports and exports**, including **oil shipments** through the **Fos-sur-Mer terminal**.

13) US President Trump Recognizes February 9 as 'Gulf of America Day'

In a **historic move**, **US President Donald Trump** has officially recognized **February 9** as **"Gulf of America Day"**, following a significant change to the name of the **Gulf of Mexico**. This marks the **first time** such a day has been established, and it comes after President Trump signed an **executive order** to rename the Gulf, an initiative that has drawn both **national** and **international**

attention. Below is a detailed breakdown of the event and its implications:

Renaming of the Gulf of Mexico
- **Executive Order**: On **January 20**, during his **inauguration**, President Trump signed an **executive order** directing the **Department of the Interior** to take immediate action to facilitate the renaming of the **Gulf of Mexico**.
- **Implementation**: The executive order allowed the **Department of the Interior** a **30-day period** to implement the necessary steps to change the name, with the goal of officially recognizing the **Gulf of America**.
- **Objective**: The renaming reflects the **Trump administration's efforts** to assert **American sovereignty** and **pride** over its natural landmarks

Proclamation of "Gulf of America Day"
- **Date**: **February 9**.
- **Signing**: President Trump signed the official proclamation while aboard **Air Force One**, flying over the **Gulf of Mexico**.
- **Context**: The signing took place en route to the **Super Bowl** in **New Orleans**, a city situated on the Gulf.
- **Statement**: President Trump addressed the historic moment, stating, "We are flying right over it right now. So we thought this would be appropriate."

14) India Secures Place on UN's Honour Roll for Timely Budget Payment

India has once again demonstrated its **commitment to global cooperation** by making a **timely payment** to the **United Nations (UN) regular budget**.

On **January 31, 2024**, India contributed **USD 32.895 million** to the UN, securing its place on the prestigious **Honour Roll**, which acknowledges member states that pay their **assessed contributions** on time. Below is a detailed breakdown of India's financial commitment to the UN and its significance:

1. India's Contribution to the UN Regular Budget
- **Amount**: **USD 32.895 million**.
- **Date**: **January 31, 2024**.
- **Recognition**: India secured its place on the **UN Honour Roll**, which recognizes member states that pay their **assessed contributions** in full within **30 days** of receiving the UN's payment notice.
- **Appreciation**: **Stephane Dujarric**, spokesperson for **UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres**, appreciated India's contribution, stating, "We thank our friends in New Delhi."

2. Why Did India Make It to the UN Honour Roll?
- **Criteria**: The **UN Honour Roll** is a recognition given to countries that pay their **financial obligations** in full within **30 days** of receiving the UN's payment notice.
- **As of January 31, 2024**: Only **36 nations** met this criterion, and **India** was one of them.
- **Consistency**: India has consistently maintained a record of **on-time contributions**. In **2023**, India paid **USD 30.54 million**, securing its spot on the **Honour Roll** that year as well.

15) India Signs MoU with Panama for Quick Impact Projects (QIP)

In **February 2025**, India signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Panama** to implement **Quick Impact Projects (QIP)** for the first time.

- The MoU aims to provide **tangible benefits** to Panama's local communities and improve **socio-economic infrastructure**.
- **Signatories**:
    - **Dr. Sumit Seth**, India's Ambassador to Panama, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua.
    - **Javier Martinez-Acha Vasquez**, Panama's Foreign Minister.
- **Key Features**:
    - **Grant Assistance**: The QIP will be supported by **grant assistance** from the **Government of India (GoI)**.
    - **Focus Areas**:
        - **Physical Infrastructure**: Development of **roads, community centers**, and other essential structures.
        - **Social Infrastructure**: Projects in critical sectors like **education, healthcare,** and **sanitation**.

16) India-EFTA Strengthen Economic Ties with the Inauguration of the India-EFTA Desk

India and the **European Free Trade Association (EFTA)** – which includes **Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein** – have taken a major step in enhancing economic cooperation by inaugurating the **India-EFTA Desk**.

This initiative follows the **successful conclusion of the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA)**, which makes EFTA the **first European bloc to formalize a trade pact with India**. The **India-EFTA Desk** will act as a **dedicated platform** to facilitate **trade, investment, and economic cooperation** between the two regions.

Inauguration of the India-EFTA Desk: A Landmark Initiative

Launch Event and Key Announcements

- The **India-EFTA Desk** was officially **launched in New Delhi**, marking a significant milestone in **India-EFTA economic relations**.
- **Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal**, described the **TEPA** as a **landmark agreement** that reflects **India's rising role in global trade**.
- The desk will serve as a **one-stop contact point** to ensure **transparency, trust, and ease of doing business** between India and EFTA countries.

17) BIMSTEC Youth Summit 2025: Empowering Young Leaders for Regional Cooperation

Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, (MoYA&S) inaugurated the first-ever **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)** Youth Summit in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat.**

- The three-day event, held from February 7 to 11, 2025, brings together young leaders from across

the region to discuss key challenges and opportunities.

- The summit is jointly organized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), with New Delhi (Delhi) based-Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Young Indians (YI) as the knowledge partner.

Key People: The event was attended by Chief Minister (CM) of Gujarat, Bhupendrabhai Patel, Minister of State (MoS), MoYA&S, Raksha Khadse and Jaldeep Mazumdar, Secretary (East) MEA.

Theme: The theme of summit "Youth as a Bridge for Intra-BIMSTEC Exchange", highlighting the critical role of youth in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030.

18) 4th India-UK Energy Dialogue 2025: Strengthening Cooperation in Renewable Energy

In February 2025, Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Ministry of Power (MoP) and **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA); and Ed Miliband, Secretary for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) for the United Kingdom** (UK), co-chaired the **4th India-UK Energy Dialogue in New Delhi (Delhi).**

- During this dialogue, both nations reviewed the progress made in the energy sectors, including power and renewable energy (RE), and also reaffirmed their commitment to a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive energy future.

I. The Ministers announced the launch of Phase-2 of the India-UK bilateral Accelerating Smart Power & Renewable Energy in India (ASPTRE) programme.

II. The Ministers announced the establishment of a UK-India Offshore Wind Taskforce. The key focus areas for the taskforce will be: advancing offshore wind ecosystem development, supply chains, and financing models in both countries.

About the United Kingdom (UK): Prime Minister (PM) – Keir Starmer Capital-London Currency- Pound Sterling (GBP)

19) Mount Dukono erupts in Indonesia

Mount Dukono, one of Indonesia's most active volcanoes, erupted on **February 20, 2025, spewing a massive ash cloud up to 2,000 meters into the air**. The eruption, occurring on Halmahera Island in North Maluku province, has prompted Indonesian authorities to issue urgent aviation warnings and safety advisories for residents.

The Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation Centre (PVMBG) raised the alert level, warning aircraft to maintain a 5-kilometer distance from the volcano due to the risk of volcanic ash interfering with flights. Local communities have also been advised to stay at least 4 kilometers away from the active Malupang Warirang crater and take necessary precautions, including wearing face masks to avoid inhaling ash particles.

20) UAE Introduces Blue Visa: 10-Year Residency for Foreigners

The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has launched the **first phase of the Blue Visa**, a **10-year residency permit** aimed at **individuals contributing to environmental sustainability and climate action**. The initiative was announced during the **World Governments Summit 2025** in **Dubai (February 11-13)** by the **Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MoCCAE)** in collaboration with the **Federal Authority for Identity,**

Citizenship, Customs, and Ports Security (ICP).

Key Features of the UAE Blue Visa

- **Residency Duration**: 10 years.
- **Target Group**:
  - **Environmental innovators and sustainability leaders**.
  - **Members of international organizations and NGOs**.
  - **Corporate leaders in environmental protection**.
  - **Recipients of global sustainability awards**.
  - **Researchers working on sustainability solutions**.
- **Application Process**:
  - Fully **electronic and available 24/7** via the **ICP website and mobile app**.
  - Eligible individuals can **apply directly** or be **nominated by UAE authorities**.
  - **Government agencies in the sustainability sector** can submit nominations.
- **Initial Phase**:
  - **20 sustainability experts** will receive the visa in the first phase.

Significance & Government Remarks

- **Dr. Amna Bint Abdullah Al Dahak**, UAE **Minister of Climate Change and Environment**, emphasized the country's **commitment to global sustainability leadership**.
- **Major General Suhail Saeed Al Khaili**, Director-General of ICP, confirmed that the **visa process is fully digital and accessible through ICP platforms**.

21) Green Transition Alliance India: Denmark's New Climate Initiative

Denmark has announced the launch of the **Green Transition Alliance India (GTAI)** to **enhance collaboration with India** on **renewable energy, green fuels, and energy efficiency**. The initiative aligns with the **Green Strategic Partnership (GSP)**, established in 2020, and aims to support **India's net-zero target by 2070** and **Denmark's goal of net zero by 2045**.

Key Features of GTAI

- **Objective**: Strengthen Denmark-India cooperation in **renewable energy, green fuels, and energy efficiency**.
- **Leadership**: Led by the **Embassy and Consulate General of Denmark in India**.
- **Structure**: Comprises **three working groups** focused on:
  - **Renewable Energy**
  - **Green Fuels**
  - **Energy Efficiency**

Danish Companies Involved

Several leading Danish companies will contribute expertise in **sustainable energy solutions**:

- **Grundfos** – Sustainable water solutions
- **Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners** – Renewable energy investments
- **Baettr** – Wind energy solutions
- **Novonesis** – Biotech and sustainability solutions
- **MASH Makes** – Green fuel technology
- **ROCKWOOL** – Energy efficiency solutions
- **A.P. Moller-Maersk** – Sustainable shipping and logistics

ECONOMY NEWS

1) Indian Banks' Margins to Drop 10 Bps in FY26

According to **Fitch Ratings**, Indian banks are expected to witness a **10 basis points (bps) decline** in their **net interest margins (NIMs)** in the financial year **2025-26**. This decline follows the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s decision to cut the key policy rate by 25 basis points (bps) to 6.25% in February 2025**, marking the first rate cut in nearly five years. While this move is aimed at **stimulating economic growth**, it presents **challenges for banks** by squeezing their margins due to lower lending rates.

1. Impact of RBI's Rate Cut on Loans and Interest Margins

A. Floating Rate Loans and Interest Earnings

- **Immediate Effect**: The rate cut will **lower the interest rates** on **floating rate loans** linked to external benchmarks such as the **repo rate, treasury bill rates, or other market-linked indicators**.
- **Key Sectors Affected**:
  - **Housing loans**
  - **Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) loans**
  - **Retail borrowing and commercial loans**
- **Bank Earnings Impact**:
  - With lower lending rates, **banks will earn less interest on new loans**, leading to a direct reduction in **interest income**.
  - **Non-Banking Financial Institutions (NBFIs)**, particularly those engaged in **urban housing and commercial loans**, will also experience a **decline in yields**.

B. Increased Competition and Profitability Challenges

- **Banks will face heightened competition** as lending rates decline, forcing them to **lower their interest rates** to attract borrowers.
- **Reduced profitability** is expected, as banks struggle to **maintain existing margins** while accommodating lower interest rates.

2) Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for January 2025: Inflation Rate and Key Highlights

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has released the **Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for January 2025**, reporting an **annual inflation rate of 2.31% (provisional)** compared to January 2024. The rise in inflation is primarily attributed to **increasing prices in manufactured food products, food articles, non-food articles, and textiles**. However, on a **month-over-month (MoM) basis**, WPI declined by **(-) 0.45%**, indicating a marginal drop in wholesale prices from December 2024 to January 2025.

Key Trends in WPI Components for January 2025

The **Wholesale Price Index (WPI)** is classified into three major categories: **Primary Articles, Fuel & Power, and Manufactured Products**. The trends observed in these categories for January 2025 are as follows:

1. Primary Articles (Weight: 22.62%)

The **index for Primary Articles declined by 2.01%**, dropping from **193.8 (December 2024) to 189.9 (January 2025, provisional)**.

- **Food Articles:** Prices fell by **3.62%** in January 2025 compared to December 2024.
- **Crude Petroleum & Natural Gas:** Prices increased by **6.34%**, indicating rising energy costs.
- **Non-Food Articles:** Prices recorded an increase of **0.66%**.
- **Minerals:** A marginal increase of **0.22%** was observed.

2. Fuel & Power (Weight: 13.15%)

The **index for Fuel & Power increased by 0.47%**, rising from **149.9 (December 2024) to 150.6 (January 2025, provisional)**.

- **Mineral Oils:** Prices rose by **0.71%**.
- **Electricity:** Prices increased by **0.20%**.
- **Coal:** Prices remained **unchanged** compared to December 2024.

3. Manufactured Products (Weight: 64.23%)

The **index for Manufactured Products increased by 0.14%**, from **143.0 (December 2024) to 143.2 (January 2025, provisional)**.

- Out of **22 manufacturing sub-sectors**, **15 groups recorded price increases, 5 groups recorded price declines, and 2 groups remained unchanged**.
- **Sectors with price increases:**
    - Other Manufacturing
    - Manufacture of Food Products
    - Machinery & Equipment

- Chemicals & Chemical Products
- Pharmaceuticals, Medicinal Chemical & Botanical Products
- **Sectors with price declines:**
    - Basic Metals
    - Fabricated Metal Products (except Machinery & Equipment)
    - Wearing Apparel
    - Beverages
    - Other Transport Equipment

3) Indian Export touch a historic high of USD 778.21 billion in 2023-24

According to the Union Ministry of Commerce, Indian exports (merchandise and service in **2023-24 touched a historic high of USD 778.21 billion.** The total exports from India in 2022-23 was USD 776.3 billion.

In 2013-14, the total export from India was USD 466.22 billion and it will grow by 67 % to USD 778.21 billion in 2023-24.

Break up of the Export in 2023-24

The export is divided into merchandise goods(tangible) and services (intangible).

The total merchandise export from India in 2023-24 was **USD 437.10 billion**. In 2013-14 it was USD 314 billion

The service sector export in 2023-24 was **USD 341.11 billion**. In 2013-14 it

was USD 152 billion. The increase in exports has been driven by strong performance in information technology, financial, and business services.

Merchandise Export Destination in 2023-24

In 2023-24, the major export destination for Indian merchandise goods was the **United States of America** with a share of 17.90 in total Indian exports.

The other major export destinations for merchandise goods in the descending orders are the **United Arab Emirates (8.23%)**, Netherlands (5.16%), China (3.85%), Singapore (3.33%), UK (3.00%), Saudi Arabia (2.67%), Bangladesh (2.55%), Germany (2.27%), and Italy (2.02%).

4) Union Budget 2025-26: Focus on Growth, Fiscal Discipline, and Social Welfare; Here's a detailed analysis

The **Union Budget 2025-26** outlines a comprehensive framework for **India's economic growth**, focusing on **infrastructure**, **inclusive development**, **fiscal prudence**, and **job creation**. With a **total expenditure** of ₹50.65 lakh crore, the government aims to enhance various sectors, focusing on agriculture, MSMEs, infrastructure, and social development, while targeting a fiscal deficit of **4.4% of GDP**.

Key Focus Areas in the Budget:

1. Agriculture & Rural Prosperity:

- **Programs**: National Mission on High Yielding Seeds, Makhana Board to boost agricultural productivity.
- **Farmer Support**: Enhanced credit through **Kisan Credit Cards** and missions promoting **sustainable cotton farming** and **pulses production**.

2. MSME Support:

- **Revised MSME Classification**: Updated limits for investment and turnover to encourage growth.
- **Credit Guarantees**: Custom credit cards for up to 10 lakh micro-enterprises.
- Focus on **labor-intensive sectors** such as footwear, leather, toy, and food processing industries.

3. Infrastructure & Urban Development:

- **Urban Challenge Fund**: ₹1 lakh crore allocated for city redevelopment and water management.
- **State Support**: ₹1.5 lakh crore allocated for capital expenditure, including interest-free loans.

4. Technological & Educational Advancements:

- **Medical Education Expansion**: Increased focus on **AI** and **Atal Tinkering Labs**.
- **Rural Connectivity**: Broadband in rural schools and development of **Centers of Excellence for skilling**.

5. Tax Reforms:

- **Income Tax Relief**: Targeted reforms for the **middle class**, including **deductions for senior citizens** and changes to **TDS** for rent.
- **Simplified Tax Filing**: Proposals for **rationalizing tax structures** and extending deadlines for filing updated returns.

6. Financial Sector Reforms:

- Increased **FDI** limits in the **insurance sector**.
- Introduction of **Grameen Credit Score** and revamped KYC registry to improve rural credit access.

Government Revenue Sources:

1. **Corporation Tax**: 17% of total revenue
2. **Income Tax**: 22% (includes Securities Transaction Tax)
3. **Customs Duty**: 4%
4. **Union Excise Duties**: 5%
5. **GST & Other Taxes**: 18%
6. **Non-Tax Receipts**: 9%
7. **Non-Debt Capital Receipts**: 1%
8. **Borrowings & Liabilities**: 24%

Government Expenditure Breakdown:

1. **Total Expenditure**: ₹50.65 lakh crore

1. **Revenue Expenditure**: ₹39.44 lakh crore
2. **Capital Expenditure**: ₹11.21 lakh crore
3. **Effective Capital Expenditure**: ₹15.48 lakh crore
4. **Major Expenditures**:

2. **Interest Payments**: ₹12.76 lakh crore
3. **Defence**: ₹4.91 lakh crore

4. **Pensions**: ₹2.77 lakh crore
5. **Subsidies**:
   - Food: ₹20,34,20 crore
   - Fertilizer: ₹16,78,87 crore
   - Petroleum: ₹12,100 crore

Deficit Indicators:

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

Key Infrastructure and Development Allocations:

- **Rural Development**: ₹2,66,817 crore
- **Education**: ₹1,28,650 crore
- **Healthcare**: ₹98,311 crore
- **Urban Development**: ₹96,777 crore
- **Transport Infrastructure**: ₹5,48,649 crore

Major Government Schemes & Allocations:

1. **Agriculture & Rural Development**:

1. **PM-KISAN**: ₹63,500 crore
2. **Mahatma Gandhi NREGA**: ₹86,000 crore
3. **PM Awas Yojana**: ₹74,626 crore
4. **Education & Employment**:

2. **PM Schools for Rising India**: ₹7,500 crore
3. **Samagra Shiksha**: ₹41,250 crore
4. **Skill Development**: ₹13,560 crore
5. **Health & Social Welfare**:

3. **Ayushman Bharat – PMJAY**: ₹9,406 crore

4. **POSHAN 2.0**: ₹21,960 crore
5. **Social Assistance Programs**: ₹9,652 crore
6. **Infrastructure & Industrial Development**:

4. **Jal Jeevan Mission**: ₹67,000 crore
5. **PM Gram Sadak Yojana**: ₹19,000 crore
6. **PLI Schemes**: ₹2,445 crore

Budget Allocations for Key Ministries:

1. **Ministry of Finance**: ₹19.39 lakh crore
2. **Ministry of Defence**: ₹6.81 lakh crore
3. **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution**: ₹2.15 lakh crore
4. **Ministry of Railways**: ₹2.55 lakh crore
5. **Ministry of Road Transport & Highways**: ₹2.87 lakh crore

Other Key Ministry Allocations:

- **Ministry of Education**: ₹1.28 lakh crore
- **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**: ₹99,858 crore
- **Ministry of Rural Development**: ₹1.90 lakh crore
- **Ministry of Commerce & Industry**: ₹18,446 crore

5) India's Retail Inflation Drops to 4.31% in January 2025

India's **retail inflation**, measured by the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**, eased to **4.31% in January 2025**, marking its **lowest level in five months**. This is a decline from **5.22% in December 2024**, bringing **relief to consumers and policymakers**. The fall in inflation is primarily attributed to **a slowdown in food prices**, particularly **vegetables**, as fresh winter supplies entered the market.

Reasons Behind the Inflation Decline in January 2025

The **easing of inflation** in January was mainly driven by the **food price slowdown** and **monetary policy measures**:

(a) Food Price Inflation Decline

- **Food inflation fell to 6.02% in January 2025**, down from **8.39% in December 2024**.
- **Vegetable prices**, which surged **26.6% year-on-year in December**, **only rose by 11.35%** in January.
- The **availability of fresh seasonal produce** (such as winter vegetables) led to a **stabilization of food costs**.

(b) Role of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in Easing Inflation

- The **RBI reduced its key policy rate by 25 basis points (bps) to 6.25%**, marking its **first rate cut in nearly five years**.
- This move was aimed at **supporting economic growth** while inflation showed **signs of moderation**.

6) India's Q3 FY25 GDP Growth Set at 6.4%

India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 6.2% in the third quarter (Q3) of the fiscal year 2024-25 (October-December 2024), according to official data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on February 28, 2025. This marks an acceleration from the 5.6% growth observed in the previous quarter (Q2).

Sectoral Performance:

- **Agriculture:** The agriculture sector experienced a growth rate of 4.0% in Q3 FY25.
- **Industry:** The industrial sector expanded by 6.2% during the same period.
- **Services:** The services sector led the growth with a 7.7% increase in Q3 FY25.

These figures indicate a broad-based recovery across major sectors of the economy.

Factors Contributing to Growth:

- **Government Spending:** Increased public expenditure, particularly in infrastructure and social welfare, has bolstered economic activity.
- **Export Revival:** A significant rebound in exports, especially in services, has contributed to the overall economic momentum.
- **Domestic Demand:** Strong rural consumption, supported by a bountiful harvest, has played a crucial role in driving growth

7) India's Road to High-Income Status by 2047

India is on track to become a high-income nation by 2047, with **its GDP projected** to **reach between $23 trillion and $35 trillion,** according to a recent report by Bain & Company in collaboration with Nasscom. The services sector is expected to be the biggest contributor**, making up 60% of GDP**, **while manufacturing will account for 32%.** The report highlights that technology, workforce expansion, and strategic investments in key sectors will play a crucial role in India's economic transformation.

GDP Projection:

- Expected to reach **$23 trillion to $35 trillion** by 2047.
- **Services sector** will contribute **60%** of GDP, while **manufacturing** will account for **32%**.

Workforce & Employment:

- **200 million** people will join the workforce in the next two decades.
- A **50 million workforce shortfall** is predicted by 2030 if skill development is not prioritized.
- Focus on **vocational training, STEM education, and digital literacy** is essential.

Technology & Manufacturing Growth:

- AI, **chip design, and touchless manufacturing** will drive industrial efficiency.
- **Manufacturing exports** to increase from **24% to 45%-50%** by 2047.
- **Renewable energy** share to rise from **24% (2023) to 70% (2047)**.

8) India's GDP Growth to Slow to 6.4% in 2025: Moody's

India's economic growth is expected to slow down to 6.4% in 2025, according to a report by Moody's Analytics. **This marks a slight decline from the 6.6% GDP growth in 2024**. The report highlights key global factors affecting the slowdown, including new U.S. tariffs and weakening global demand, which are expected to impact India's exports. **The Asia-Pacific region is also witnessing reduced growth, with China's GDP projected to fall from 5% in 2024 to 4.2% in 2025**.

9) India's Economic Growth to Reach 6.4% in FY25 and FY26

India's economic growth is set to expand **at 6.4% in both FY25 and FY26**, according to the latest forecast **by S&P Global Market Intelligence**. This estimate reflects steady progress despite global economic challenges and domestic policy shifts. While the projection aligns closely with **the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) forecast of 6.6% for FY25**, it is slightly **lower than S&P Global Ratings'** earlier estimate of 6.8%. The report highlights how key monetary and fiscal policies, inflation trends, and government expenditure will influence this growth.

Growth Projection:

- **6.4% GDP growth** in both **FY25 and FY26** (S&P Global Market Intelligence).
- Close to **RBI's forecast of 6.6%** but lower than **S&P Global Ratings' 6.8% estimate**.

Monetary & Fiscal Policies Driving Growth:

- **RBI cut policy repo rate** by **25 basis points** to **6.25% (Feb 2025)**—first cut in five years.
- Expected **another 25 basis point cut in April 2025** to boost investment.
- **2025 Union Budget tax relief** aims to increase disposable income and spending.

Significance:

- Stimulates **borrowing, investment, and domestic demand**.
- Helps **cushion against global uncertainties** and maintain steady growth.

BANKING NEWS

1) SIDBI and AFD Sign $100 Million Green Finance Deal to Boost Sustainable Growth in MSMEs

SIDBI and French Development Agency Sign USD 100 Million Green Finance Deal for MSMEs

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

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

Key Points:

i. The AFD will provide a credit line of **USD 100 million** to SIDBI to deploy the funds to expand access to affordable financing for MSMEs investing in energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy solutions, and climate-friendly business practices.

ii. **Green Finance:** This collaboration focuses on **green finance**, which refers to financing that supports projects or businesses working to reduce their environmental impact.

iii. **Low-carbon Economy:** The aim is to help businesses shift to a **low-carbon economy** that produces fewer greenhouse gases and relies more on renewable energy.

iv. MSMEs have a vital role to play in India's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2070, and this initiative also complements the work on the **Greening Indian Financial System (GIFS) Platform**.

v. The **GIFS Platform** focuses on integrating sustainability and a climate perspective into the strategies of Indian financial stakeholders.

2) RBI Fines Shriram Finance, Ujjivan SFB, and Nainital Bank for Violations

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has imposed **monetary penalties** on three financial institutions—**Shriram Finance, Ujjivan Small Finance Bank, and The Nainital Bank Limited**—for **regulatory non-compliance**. These penalties were imposed under the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949**, following RBI's **Inspection for Supervisory Evaluation (ISE 2023)**, which assessed the financial health of these institutions as of **March 31, 2023**. The violations included **non-adherence to interest rate guidelines, improper loan documentation, and lapses in risk categorization**.

Reasons for RBI's Penalties

1. The Nainital Bank Limited – ₹61.40 lakh penalty

- The bank **failed to benchmark floating rate loans** to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (**MSMEs**) against an **external benchmark rate**, as per RBI's guidelines.
- **Violated RBI's norms on 'Interest Rate on Advances' and 'Customer Service in Banks.'**
- Instead of charging customers a **proportionate fee for non-maintenance of minimum balance**, the bank imposed a **fixed penalty**, which was against RBI's fair banking practices.

2. Ujjivan Small Finance Bank – ₹6.70 lakh penalty

- The bank **did not issue loan agreements** to some borrowers at the time of loan disbursement, violating RBI's policy on **'Loans and Advances – Statutory and Other Restrictions.'**
- This failure compromised **borrower rights and financial transparency**, leading to regulatory action.

3. Shriram Finance – ₹5.80 lakh penalty

- The company **did not implement a system to periodically review risk categorization of customer accounts**, which is essential for regulatory compliance.
- This failure increased **risks related to financial fraud, money laundering, and inadequate risk assessment**.

3) IRDAI's 'Bima Trinity' Initiative: Transforming India's Insurance Landscape

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has unveiled a revolutionary plan called **Bima Trinity** during the **9th Bima Manthan**, held on February 13-14, 2025. This initiative is set to transform India's insurance industry, aiming to make insurance more accessible, affordable, and efficient. The plan, a three-pronged approach, is designed to address critical gaps in insurance accessibility and coverage across the country. **The 9th Bima Manthan** meeting was an important platform **where IRDAI engaged with the**

CEOs of insurance companies to discuss the performance of the sector and its future strategies.

Key Components of Bima Trinity

Bima Trinity is a **three-pronged strategy** consisting of:

1. Bima Sugam (Unified Digital Marketplace)

- A **one-stop digital platform** for all insurance-related activities, including buying, servicing, and claiming policies.
- Provides a **centralized interface** where all insurance companies, policyholders, and agents can interact.
- Aims to **reduce paperwork**, enhance transparency, and speed up claim settlements.
- Consumers can **compare different insurance products** from various insurers on a single platform.
- **Impact**: Simplifies insurance access and improves efficiency in policy management.

Bima Vistaar (Comprehensive Insurance Product)

- A **bundled insurance product** covering:
  - **Life Insurance** (financial security for families).
  - **Accident Cover** (compensation for accidental injuries or death).
  - **Property Protection** (covering damages to homes and assets).
  - **Health Insurance** (hospitalization and medical expenses).

- Reduces the need for multiple insurance policies by offering **comprehensive coverage in a single plan**.
- Designed to be **affordable and easy to understand**, making it accessible to all income groups.
- **Impact**: Ensures holistic protection for individuals and families while simplifying policy management.

4) LIC Unveils 'One Man Office' to Digitally Empower Agents

The **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** launched a **new digital initiative** called the **'One Man Office' (OMO)** on **February 17, 2025**. This initiative aims to **enhance the efficiency of LIC agents** by providing **24×7 digital services** and aligns with LIC's long-term vision of **'Insurance for All by 2047'**.

This **mobile digital office** allows LIC agents to **manage policy sales, customer service, and business operations seamlessly**, ensuring **greater independence and productivity** without requiring a **traditional office setup**.

Key Objectives of 'One Man Office'

- **Empowering LIC agents** with **digital tools** to manage their business efficiently.
- **Enhancing customer service** through quick and seamless policy transactions.
- **Supporting LIC's digital transformation** and reducing dependence on **physical offices**.
- **Contributing to the 'Insurance for All by 2047' vision**, expanding insurance penetration across India.
- **Boosting LIC's business growth** by enabling more agents to operate digitally.

5) SEBI launches 'Related Party Transaction (RPT) portal'

On February 14, 2025, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (**SEBI**) launched the **'Related Party Transaction (RPT) portal'**, India's first dedicated platform to monitor and analyze RPTs. The portal aims to enhance transparency and governance in corporate India.

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

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

Key Points:

1. **SEBI clarified** that executive compensation will be covered under RPTs, allowing promoters to reward themselves without shareholder approval.
2. The portal compiles **comprehensive information on RPTs**, including shareholding voting patterns from the last 2 years, helping investors make well-informed decisions.
3. The platform **fixes information gaps** and improves corporate governance in India.

- The portal will be maintained by three proxy advisories:
  - **InGovern Research Services Pvt. Ltd.** (Bengaluru, Karnataka)
  - **Institutional Investor Advisory Services India Ltd. (IiAS)** (Mumbai, Maharashtra)
  - **Stakeholders Empowerment Services (SES)** (Mumbai, Maharashtra)

4. The portal allows investors to **track RPTs** and access opinions on transactions.
5. **Retail investors** now have access to this information, which was earlier limited to institutional investors.

6) NPCI introduces a new rule for managing chargebacks in UPI transactions

In February 2025, the Mumbai-based **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** introduced a new rule for managing **chargebacks in Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** transactions.

- As per the new **UPI rule**, chargebacks will be **automatically accepted or rejected** based on **Transaction Credit Confirmation (TCC)** and **Return Requests (RET)** raised by beneficiary banks in the next settlement cycle.
- This new feature is implemented in the **UPI Dispute Resolution System (URCS)** from **February 15, 2025**.

Note:

A chargeback is a process that reverses a **completed UPI transaction** due to disputes, fraud, or technical errors. It is initiated by the payer's bank, and if approved, the transaction is returned to the payer.

Need for the New Mechanism:

1. **Earlier, chargebacks started from 'T+0'**, causing issues for banks in reconciling transactions.

2. Some chargebacks were **closed automatically**, leading to penalties by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**.

Key Highlights of the New Mechanism:

1. The new UPI rule applies to **bulk upload** options and **Unified Dispute Resolution Interface (UDIR)**, **excluding front-end dispute resolution**.
2. **Beneficiary banks** will now have the chance to **reconcile transactions efficiently** before chargebacks are deemed approved.

7) Exim Bank to provide USD 300 million credit to Vietnam

In February 2025, the Mumbai-based **Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank)** announced a **USD 300 million Line of Credit (LoC) to Vietnam** for **high-speed boats and offshore patrol vessels**.

- **In July 2024**, EXIM Bank signed an agreement with **Vietnam's Government (GO-VNM)** for a **USD 180 million LoC** for **4 Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV)**.
- Another agreement committed **USD 120 million** for **high-speed guard boats**.

1. Both agreements are **effective from January 20, 2025**.
2. The **last date for disbursement** is **60 months after project completion**.

8) RBI Approves Small Finance Banks to Offer Pre-Sanctioned Credit Lines via UPI from February 12, 2025

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

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

Background:

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

Transparent Credit Access:

i. Customers must provide **explicit consent** before availing of credit lines, ensuring transparency. Terms such as credit limits, interest rates, and repayment tenure are determined by individual **SFBs** under their board-approved policies.
ii. The facility aims to serve **'new-to-credit' (NTC) customers**, including **farmers, small entrepreneurs, and rural**

businesses, reducing reliance on informal lenders charging exorbitant rates. iii. It is required for customers to review the terms and conditions of the credit lines before usage.

9) South Indian Bank launches 'SIB Quick FD'

On **February 14, 2025**, **Thrissur (Kerala)-based South Indian Bank Limited (SIB)** launched **'SIB Quick FD'**, a new digital service that allows individuals to open **Fixed Deposits (FDs)** without a savings account in the bank.

- This initiative aims to offer a **hassle-free** and **convenient digital banking experience** for both existing and new customers.
- It offers **digital-first solutions** that cater to the evolving needs of customers with minimal setup, affordable entry amounts, and insured deposits ensuring a **secure, simple, and convenient investment experience**.

Key Features of 'SIB Quick FD'

1. **No Savings Account Required:**
   o Individuals do not need a savings account with SIB to open an FD.
   o This provides greater flexibility and accessibility for all customers.
2. **Digital and Paperless Process:**
   o The entire process is digital, eliminating the need for traditional paperwork.
   o The FD can be set up in just **5 minutes**.
3. **UPI Fund Transfer:**
   o Customers can fund their FD using **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**.

   o This streamlines the payment process for added convenience.
4. **Minimal Documentation:**
   o Only two documents are required to open an FD:
     ▪ **PAN (Permanent Account Number)**
     ▪ **Aadhaar (Unique Identification Number)**
5. **24/7 Availability:**
   o Customers can open an FD at any time, offering flexibility in managing their investments.
6. **Affordable Investment:**
   o The minimum investment to start an FD is just **Rs.1,000**, making it accessible to a wide range of investors.

10) SBI Introduces 'SBI Patrons' Term Deposit Scheme for Super Senior Citizens

In January 2025, the State Bank of India (SBI) launched a **new Term Deposit (TD) scheme called 'SBI Patrons' for Super Senior Citizens**, defined as residents aged 80 years or above. The scheme offers additional interest benefits, **with an interest rate 10 basis points (0.10%) higher than the rates provided to senior citizens.**

Key Features:

1. **Interest Rates**: The scheme offers interest rates ranging from 4.10% to 7.60%. For example, the 1-year TD rate is 7.4%, and the 5-year TD rate is 7.6% for super senior citizens.
2. **Deposit Options**: The scheme offers Term Deposit Receipt (TDR) and Short-Term Deposit Receipt

(STDR) options with a minimum deposit of Rs. 1,000 and a maximum deposit of up to Rs. 3 crore. The tenure for deposits ranges from 7 days to 10 years.

3. **Penalty for Premature Withdrawal**: A penalty of 0.50% applies for premature withdrawals up to Rs. 5 lakh, and 1% for amounts exceeding Rs. 5 lakh.

This initiative aims to provide super senior citizens with better returns on their savings, supporting their financial stability in their later years.

11) RBI Tightens Norms for Monetary Penalties and Compounding Offences under Payment and Settlement Systems Act (PSS Act, 2007)

In January 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced stricter norms for **imposing monetary penalties and compounding offences under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act (PSS Act, 2007).** This new framework aims **to streamline and strengthen enforcement actions against payment system operators and banks** for violations such as operating without authorization, disclosing prohibited information, and failing to pay penalties within the prescribed time.

Key Provisions:

1. **Penalty Provisions**: As per Section 30 of the PSS Act, RBI can now impose penalties up to Rs 10 lakh or twice the amount involved in the contravention (whichever is higher), where the amount is quantifiable.

2. **Compounding of Offences**: Under Section 31 of the Act, RBI officers are authorized to compound contraventions, except for offences punishable with imprisonment or

both imprisonment and fine. This change aims to ensure more effective regulatory oversight and quicker resolutions in cases of non-compliance.

12) NPCI Implements New Rules for UPI Transaction ID from February 1, 2025

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has introduced new regulations for **Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions**, which came into effect on February 1, 2025. Under the new guidelines, **all UPI transaction IDs** containing special characters **(such as @, #, $, %, etc.) will be declined, and only alphanumeric characters will be permitted.**

Key Points:

1. **Enforcement of Alphanumeric Only Transaction IDs**: The regulation mandates that UPI transaction IDs must exclusively use alphanumeric characters, aligning with technical specifications set by NPCI in March 2024.

2. **Compliance with Technical Standards**: The move follows NPCI's earlier Operating Circular (OC 193) from March 2024, which called for standardizing transaction IDs to facilitate smoother operations across UPI platforms.

3. **System Updates for Compliance**: Banks, payment service providers, and third-party applications (apps) are required to update their systems in accordance with the new rules before the enforcement date.

13) Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Seeks Universal Banking Licence

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (USFB) has applied for a **universal banking licence,**

marking a significant milestone in its transition from a small finance bank to a full-fledged commercial bank. This move is part of the bank's strategy to expand its financial services, enhance regulatory flexibility, and strengthen its market position.

Why is USFB Seeking a Universal Banking Licence?

- **Established in 2017**, USFB initially focused on serving underserved and unbanked sections of society, offering products like savings accounts, fixed deposits, microloans, housing loans, and small business loans.
- Transitioning to a **universal bank** allows USFB to offer **corporate banking** and **larger loan products**, broadening its portfolio and service capabilities.

Criteria for Transition:

According to **RBI guidelines**, small finance banks must meet certain conditions to apply for a universal banking licence:

1. Be a **listed entity**.
2. Maintain a **net worth of at least ₹1,000 crore**.
3. Have a **net NPA ratio of less than 1%** for two consecutive years.
4. Possess a **diversified loan portfolio**.

15) L&T Finance Unveils AI-Powered Home Loan Advisor 'KAI'

In a bid to enhance **customer experience**, **L&T Finance Limited (LTF)**, a leading **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)** in India, has introduced **'Knowledgeable AI' (KAI)**, an **AI-powered virtual home loan advisor** on its newly redesigned website.

This initiative represents a key step in **LTF's** efforts to integrate **advanced technology** with customer service, simplifying and personalizing the **home loan process**.

What Makes KAI Stand Out in the Home Loan Sector?

- **KAI** is a **virtual advisor** powered by **artificial intelligence**, designed to guide users through the **home loan process**.
- Built on a **large language model (LLM)**, it understands **individual customer needs**, making the home loan journey more personalized and efficient.

How Does KAI Enhance the Home Loan Process?

- **Quick and accurate loan calculations**: KAI helps users evaluate **loan eligibility** and explore **EMI plans**.
- **User-friendly interface**: Interactive sliders for EMI calculations give **real-time estimates**, empowering customers to make informed decisions about their home loans.

16) RBI's Strategic Measures to Boost Liquidity in the Banking System

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has introduced a **series of liquidity-boosting measures** to stabilize the financial system, ensuring smooth money market operations and mitigating liquidity constraints. These measures include:

1. **$5 Billion USD/INR Forex Swap Auction**
2. **Open Market Operations (OMOs) Worth ₹60,000 Crore**
3. **Variable Rate Repo (VRR) Auction Worth ₹50,000 Crore**

1. RBI's $5 Billion Forex Swap Auction (January 31, 2025)

- The **USD/INR buy/sell swap auction**, conducted on **January 31, 2025**, was aimed at **infusing liquidity** into the banking system.
- **Why was it needed?**
  - The **falling rupee** and **dollar shortages** had tightened liquidity.
  - The auction allowed banks to access more rupees, supporting their liquidity needs.
- **Outcome of the Auction:**
  - The auction saw **huge demand**, receiving bids worth **$25.59 billion** (oversubscribed five times by **253 participants**).
  - The RBI sold **$5 billion** in exchange for rupees, thereby absorbing excess rupee liquidity from the system.
  - The **six-month maturity** of the swap ensures that banks can manage their forex needs efficiently.
- **Impact on Financial Stability:**
  - This step will provide **short-term relief** to the banking system by easing liquidity shortages.
  - It will help **control volatility in the forex market** and **maintain the stability of the rupee**.

2. Open Market Operations (OMOs) – ₹60,000 Crore in Three Phases

- **OMOs involve the RBI buying or selling government securities** to regulate the money supply.
- To further **ease liquidity constraints**, the RBI announced OMOs worth **₹60,000 crore** in **three parts**:
  - **January 30, 2025 – ₹20,000 crore**
  - **February 13, 2025 – ₹20,000 crore**
  - **February 20, 2025 – ₹20,000 crore**
- **Why OMOs?**
  - By **buying government securities**, the RBI injects liquidity into the economy.

- o This helps in **reducing interest rate fluctuations** and ensures **credit availability** for businesses.
- **Expected Benefits:**
  - o **Increase money supply** to support economic activity.
  - o **Ease liquidity stress** in financial markets.
  - o **Support stable interest rates**, ensuring lower borrowing costs for businesses and consumers.

3. Variable Rate Repo (VRR) Auction – ₹50,000 Crore (February 7, 2025)

- The **56-day VRR auction** will take place on **February 7, 2025**, aimed at **providing short-term liquidity** to banks.
- **Why is VRR Important?**
  - o The money market has faced **temporary cash shortages**, impacting lending and borrowing.
  - o Through **Variable Rate Repo**, banks can **borrow funds** from the RBI at market-determined rates.
- **Impact of VRR on the Banking System:**

- o Ensures that **banks have enough liquidity** to operate smoothly.
- o Helps **stabilize short-term borrowing and lending rates**.
- o Supports **credit flow** to businesses and individuals.

17) Finvasia and Yes Bank Unveil 'Jumpp'

Finvasia, a fintech company based in Mohali, Punjab, has collaborated with **Yes Bank to launch a new, AI-powered super app named Jumpp**. This innovative app aims to simplify and enhance personal finance management by offering a range of services under one platform. **With its focus on accessibility and ease of use, Jumpp** is set to revolutionize how **users manage their financial lives**.

Overview of Jumpp:

- **Developed by: Finvasia**, a fintech company based in **Mohali, Punjab**.
- **Banking Partner: Yes Bank**.
- **Purpose: AI-powered super app** designed to simplify and enhance personal finance management.
- **Key Focus:** Accessibility, ease of use, and AI-driven financial insights.

Key Features of Jumpp:

- **AI Integration:**
  - Uses **multilingual conversational AI**, allowing seamless interaction in **English and Hindi**.
  - Improves accessibility for a **wider audience**, catering to India's diverse linguistic population.
- **Instant Account Opening:**
  - Users can open a **Yes Bank savings account** within minutes, removing lengthy paperwork and delays.
  - The streamlined process enhances user convenience.
- **Account Aggregator Ecosystem:**
  - Consolidates **all linked financial accounts into a single dashboard**.
  - Provides users with a **holistic view of their financial health**.
  - Has surpassed **100 million consents**, showcasing strong adoption.

18) Angel One Launches Two New Fund Offerings (NFOs) in February 2025

In February 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based **Angel One** Asset Management Company (AMC) Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Angel One Limited, has launched two New Fund Offerings (NFOs), namely, **Angel One Nifty Total Market ETF**, which is India's 1st Exchange Traded Fund (ETF), and the **Angel One Nifty Total Market Index Fund**.

- The funds are passively managed; aim to monitor the performance of the Nifty Total Market Total Return Index (**TRI**), delivering a low-cost and efficient investment strategy.
- Both these NFOs of the scheme were opened on February 10, 2025, for subscription and will close on **February 21, 2025**.

Key Highlights:

1. Both formats aim to **track 750 stocks** from the Nifty 500 and Nifty Microcap 250 indices across **22 sectors**, including large (60%), mid (19%), small (10%), and microcap segments (4%), accounting for **93% of India's total market capitalization**.
2. The NFO is priced at **Rs 10 per unit**, with no exit load, and the minimum investment amount will be **Rs 1,000**, with subsequent investments allowed in multiples of **Re 1**.

19) Infibeam Avenues' RediffPay Secures TPAP License from NPCI to Enter India's UPI Ecosystem

In February 2025, **Infibeam Avenues Limited,** a leading Indian fintech company headquartered in **Gandhinagar (Gujarat)**, announced that its subsidiary, **Rediff.com India Ltd.**, has obtained a **Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP) license** from the **National Payments Corporation**

of India (NPCI) for its digital payment platform, **RediffPay**.

- This approval enables RediffPay to offer **Unified Payments Interface (UPI) services**, positioning Infibeam as a new entrant in India's consumer-facing digital payments sector.

Key Developments:

1. **Axis Bank as Payment System Provider (PSP):** Axis Bank Limited will serve as the PSP bank for RediffPay, facilitating **UPI-based transactions**. This partnership aims to ensure **secure, real-time inter-bank payments**, leveraging Axis Bank's infrastructure and Infibeam's fintech expertise.
2. **Strategic Acquisition of Rediff.com:** The license follows Infibeam's **acquisition of a 54% stake in Rediff.com** in August 2024 for **Rs. 500 million (USD 5.7 million)**.

20) RBI Fines Federal Bank & Karur Vysya Bank for Rule Violations

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has imposed monetary penalties **on Federal Bank Ltd and Karur Vysya Bank Ltd for non-compliance with regulatory guidelines. Federal Bank has been fined ₹27.30 lakh, while Karur Vysya Bank faces a penalty of ₹8.30 lakh.** This action follows RBI's routine inspections, which identified violations in account management and credit delivery systems. These penalties highlight RBI's firm stance on maintaining strict banking compliance.

Overview of RBI's Monetary Penalties

- **Regulator:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- **Banks Penalized:**
  - **Federal Bank Ltd:** ₹27.30 lakh
  - **Karur Vysya Bank Ltd:** ₹8.30 lakh
- **Reason:** Non-compliance with RBI's regulatory guidelines on account management and credit delivery
- **Inspection Type:** Routine statutory inspections conducted by RBI
- **Impact:** Highlights RBI's commitment to ensuring strict adherence to banking norms and financial discipline

21) RBI Allows SFBs to Offer Credit via UPI

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has taken a significant step to **expand digital credit access** by allowing **Small Finance Banks (SFBs) to offer pre-sanctioned credit lines through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**. This decision is expected to **enhance financial inclusion**, particularly benefiting **individuals and small businesses with limited access to formal banking**.

Evolution of UPI's Role in Digital Credit

The **UPI platform**, launched in **2016**, initially served as a **real-time payment system** for fund transfers. Over time, its role expanded to **merchant payments, bill payments, and digital transactions**.

(a) Key Developments in UPI's Credit Integration:

- **September 2023:** RBI allowed **Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs)** to link **pre-sanctioned credit lines** to UPI.

- This enabled customers to **use their approved credit limits** for transactions **without requiring separate loan approvals**.
- However, **Small Finance Banks (SFBs), Payments Banks, and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)** were **excluded** from this facility.

(b) New Expansion for Small Finance Banks (SFBs)

- With the **latest RBI approval**, SFBs can now **extend pre-approved credit via UPI**.
- This brings **millions of underserved customers** into India's **fast-growing digital credit ecosystem**.

22) RBI to Issue ₹50 Banknotes with Governor Sanjay Malhotra's Signature

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has announced the issuance of **new ₹50 denomination banknotes** featuring the signature of its newly appointed **Governor, Sanjay Malhotra**. Malhotra took over as the **26th RBI Governor in December 2024**, succeeding **Shaktikanta Das**.

The **new ₹50 notes** will maintain the **existing design** under the **Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series**, ensuring continuity in India's currency framework. **All previously issued ₹50 notes will remain legal tender**, as confirmed by the RBI.

1. Who is Sanjay Malhotra, the New RBI Governor?

Sanjay Malhotra assumed office as RBI Governor in December 2024, following the end of Shaktikanta Das's extended tenure.

Key Highlights of Malhotra's Career:

- Previously served in the Ministry of Finance, focusing on banking and financial regulations.
- Played a crucial role in economic policymaking, financial sector reforms, and digital banking initiatives.
- His appointment comes at a time when the RBI is tackling inflation, ensuring economic stability, and expanding digital banking.

2. What Changes in the New ₹50 Banknotes?

The new ₹50 banknotes will retain the current design under the Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series, introduced to enhance security features and prevent counterfeiting.

Key Features of the New ₹50 Notes:

- Signature of Governor Sanjay Malhotra (the only major change).
- Mahatma Gandhi's portrait remains on the front.
- Cultural motifs on the reverse, as in previous versions.
- No change in color, design, or dimensions.

The RBI has ensured that this approach maintains familiarity among users while preserving currency security.

3. Will Old ₹50 Notes Still Be Valid?

Yes, the RBI has confirmed that all previously issued ₹50 notes will remain legal tender.

- This means that older ₹50 notes with signatures of previous governors (such as Shaktikanta Das, Urjit Patel, or Raghuram Rajan) will continue to be valid for transactions.

- The smooth transition policy ensures no inconvenience to the public or businesses.

4. Why Does the RBI Update Governor Signatures on Banknotes?

The Governor's signature on banknotes is a routine update whenever a new RBI Governor takes office.

Historical Examples:

- In 2016, ₹50 notes with Urjit Patel's signature were issued.
- In 2004, ₹50 notes with Y.V. Reddy's signature were introduced.

This practice maintains an updated official record while ensuring the continuity of India's currency system.

23) RBI Unveils RBIDATA App for Seamless Economic Data Access

- RBI has launched **RBIDATA**, a mobile app providing access to **11,000+ macroeconomic and financial data series**.
- Available on **iOS and Android (version 12 and above)**, it connects to **RBI's Database on the Indian Economy (DBIE)**.

Key Features:

- **Vast Data Collection:** Covers key aspects of **India's economy**.
- **Interactive Visualization:** Users can analyze **time-series data** via **graphs and charts**.
- **Quick Search & Reports:** Easy **data retrieval** and access to **popular reports**.
- **Banking Facility Locator:** Helps find **bank branches within a 20 km radius**.

- **SAARC Economic Data:** Includes **financial statistics** for **regional comparisons**.

24) SBI Cuts India's FY25 GDP Growth Forecast to 6.3%

India's economic growth is expected to slow down **in the fiscal year 2024-25, with the State Bank of India (SBI) revising its GDP growth estimate to 6.3%**. This is lower than the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) **projection of 6.6%** and a significant drop from **last year's growth rate of 8.2%.** The downgrade is attributed to weaker manufacturing growth and subdued private investment, both of which have raised concerns about the overall economic trajectory.

25) Bajaj Allianz Life Launches Bima-ASBA, a First in India

- **Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance (BALIC)** becomes the **first Indian insurer** to adopt the **Bima-ASBA** facility.
- Launched by **IRDAI on February 22, 2025**, it aims to improve **transparency and convenience** in premium payments.

How Bima-ASBA Works:

- Policyholders can **block up to ₹2 lakh** in their **bank accounts via UPI's One-Time Mandate (OTM)**.
- The amount **remains in the account, earning interest**, until the insurer **accepts or rejects the policy**.
- If the policy is approved, **the amount is debited**; if rejected or not processed within **14 days, it is released** back.

Key Benefits for Customers:

1. **Financial Security:** No need for upfront premium payments.
2. **No Refund Delays:** Instant unblocking if the policy is rejected.

3. **Interest Earnings:** Money stays in the account until policy approval.

26) RBI Fines Citibank, Asirvad Micro Finance, and JM Financial for Violations

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed monetary penalties **on Citibank N.A., Asirvad Micro Finance, and JM Financial Home Loans for failing to comply with key regulatory norms**. According to the central bank, these financial institutions were found violating guidelines related to large exposures, credit information reporting, and disclosure requirements. The penalties were issued following an inspection of their financial positions as of March 31, 2023.

Penalties and Violations:

Citibank N.A. – ₹39 lakh fine

- **Violation:** Failed to comply with the **Large Exposures Framework**.
- **Issues Identified:**
    - Did not report breaches **within the mandated timeframe**.
    - **Delayed correction of data** in Credit Information Companies (CICs), exceeding the **7-day limit** set by RBI.

Asirvad Micro Finance – ₹6.20 lakh fine

- **Violations:**
    - Failed to **report household incomes** of borrowers to CICs.
    - Did not provide **gold loan customers with mandatory factsheets**.
    - Lacked an **automatic escalation mechanism** for grievance redressal.

JM Financial Home Loans – Penalty details not specified

- RBI noted compliance issues, but specific details of violations are yet to be disclosed.

27) RBI's OMO Auction Sees ₹1.87 Trillion Bids Amid Liquidity Crunch

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Open Market Operation (OMO) purchase auction on February 20, 2025, witnessed an overwhelming response from banks and financial institutions. Against an offer of ₹40,000 crore, the auction received bids worth ₹1.87 trillion, highlighting the acute liquidity deficit in the banking system. This strong demand signals market participants' expectation of further liquidity infusions from the central bank, as financial conditions tighten across sectors.

Key Takeaways:

- **Total Bids Received:** ₹1.87 trillion vs. **Offer Size:** ₹40,000 crore
- **Reason for High Demand:** Persistent **liquidity deficit** in the banking system (**₹1.77 trillion as of Feb 19, 2025**)
- **Impact:** Signals **tight financial conditions**, prompting expectations of **further liquidity infusions**

Why Did RBI Conduct This OMO Purchase Auction?

- The **Open Market Operation (OMO) purchase** allows RBI to **inject liquidity** by buying government securities from banks.
- The liquidity shortfall has continued for **nine consecutive weeks**, making **such interventions crucial**.
- Public sector banks were **among the top bidders**, reflecting their **urgent liquidity needs**.

28) IndusInd Bank Becomes Official Banking Partner of PGTI

IndusInd Bank has announced its partnership with **the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI)** as its **official Banking Partner.** This collaboration aims to enhance the banking experience for **Ultra High Net Worth Individuals (UHNIs) and High Net Worth Individuals (HNIs)** under the PIONEER banking program. The partnership aligns with IndusInd Bank's commitment to integrating lifestyle experiences with premium banking services, particularly in the field of sports.

Key Highlights of the Partnership

- Official Banking Partner of PGTI: IndusInd Bank will support PGTI events throughout the tournament.
- Strengthening India's Professional Golfing Landscape: The bank's involvement will help expand golf's reach in India.
- Leadership at PGTI: Kapil Dev (President) and Amandeep Johl (CEO) lead the tour, which includes 20+ tournaments annually.
- Exclusive Engagement for PIONEER Customers: Special activities and participation opportunities for premium banking clients.

29) RBI Launches Financial Literacy Week 2025 for Women's Inclusion

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has initiated the Financial Literacy Week (FLW) 2025 from February 24 to 28, focusing on **"Financial Literacy: Women's Prosperity."** This annual event aims to educate women about managing finances, making informed decisions, and contributing to economic growth. By promoting financial literacy, the RBI seeks to bridge the gender gap in financial

inclusion and empower women to participate actively in the economy.

Objective: To educate women on managing finances, making informed decisions, and contributing to economic growth.

Significance:

- Empowers women by enhancing their financial knowledge.
- Encourages savings, investments, and responsible credit usage.
- Helps bridge the gender gap in financial inclusion.

Key Highlights:

- RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra emphasized financial independence for women.
- Banks and financial institutions urged to promote awareness.
- Supports India's goal of improving financial resilience and inclusion.

30) RBI Raises Small Loan Limit for UCBs to ₹3 Crore

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has revised **the small-value loan ceiling for Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs), increasing it to ₹3 crore per borrower.** This change is part of a broader initiative to redefine small-value loans and strengthen the financial stability of UCBs. While the new cap allows greater lending flexibility, RBI has retained existing conditions, timelines, and prudential norms to ensure responsible credit allocation.

Definition of Small-Value Loans:

- Should not exceed ₹25 lakh or 0.4% of Tier I capital, whichever is higher.
- Maximum limit capped at ₹3 crore.
- Existing conditions and prudential norms remain unchanged.

Loan Composition Requirement:

- UCBs must ensure at least 50% of total loans are small-value loans by **March 31, 2026**.
- Bank boards to review portfolios and manage risks.

Housing & Real Estate Exposure:

- Capped at **10%** of total assets.
- Additional **5%** allowed for **priority sector housing loans**.

Objective: Strengthen financial stability and improve responsible credit allocation.

31) AMFI Launches Chhoti SIP, Tarun Yojana & MITRA for Wider MF Access

The Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) has unveiled three strategic **initiatives—Chhoti SIP, Tarun Yojana, and MITRA**—to enhance **financial inclusion, promote investor awareness, and facilitate the retrieval of unclaimed investments.** These programs align with the Securities and Exchange Board of India's (SEBI) ongoing efforts to democratize mutual fund investments, ensuring broader participation across diverse demographics.

Key Initiatives:

1. **Chhoti SIP:**
   - Introduces a **₹250 Systematic Investment Plan (SIP)** to make mutual funds accessible.
   - Targets first-time investors and underserved communities.
2. **Tarun Yojana:**
   - Integrates **financial literacy into school curriculums**.
   - Aims to equip youth with investment knowledge for

informed financial decisions.

3. **MITRA (Mutual Fund Investment Tracing and Retrieval Assistant):**
   o Helps investors and legal heirs recover **unclaimed mutual fund investments**.
   o Enhances investor confidence by ensuring rightful asset ownership.

Significance:

- Aligns with SEBI's efforts to **democratize mutual fund investments**.
- Aims to **bridge awareness and accessibility gaps** in India's growing mutual fund industry.

32) PNB Partners with ITBP to Provide Exclusive Banking Benefits

Punjab National Bank (PNB) has signed **a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)** to provide specialized banking services and exclusive financial benefits to ITBP personnel, pensioners, and their families. The agreement, formalized on February 11, 2025, aims to enhance financial **security for ITBP members by offering high insurance coverage and better banking services.**

Objective of the MoU

- Strengthen **financial security** for ITBP personnel, pensioners, and their families.
- Offer **specialized banking services** and exclusive financial benefits.
- Provide **high insurance coverage** tailored to the needs of ITBP members.

33) Axis Bank Launches 9th Evolve Edition

Axis Bank has launched **the 9th edition of its knowledge-sharing seminar, Evolve, to help Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** adapt to the changing business landscape. This year's theme, **"Future-Proofing MSMEs for the New-Age Business,"** highlights the need for digital transformation, innovation, and operational resilience. The initiative aims to equip entrepreneurs with practical insights and strategies to strengthen their businesses in an evolving market.

34) SBI Cuts India's FY25 GDP Growth Forecast to 6.3%

India's economic growth is expected to slow down in the fiscal year 2024-25, with the State Bank of India (SBI) revising its **GDP growth estimate to 6.3%.** This is lower than the **Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) projection of 6.6% and a significant drop from last year's growth rate of 8.2%.** The downgrade is attributed to weaker manufacturing growth and subdued private investment, both of which have raised concerns about the overall economic trajectory.

35) RBI Reverses Higher Risk Weights on Bank Loans to NBFCs and Microloans

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided **to reverse its 2023 decision to increase risk weights on bank loans to non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) d**ue to the slowdown in bank credit growth. This move, effective from April 1, 2025, is expected to free up capital for banks, improve lending to NBFCs, and provide clarity on risk weights for microloans.

Key Highlights of the RBI's Announcement

1. Risk Weights on Bank Loans to NBFCs

- In **November 2023**, RBI had **increased risk weights by 25 percentage points** on bank loans to NBFCs.
- This meant that banks had to **hold more capital** against loans to NBFCs, making lending more expensive.
- **Reversal of the 2023 decision:**
  - **Risk weights will now be based on the external credit rating of the NBFC** rather than a fixed higher rate.
  - This will **reduce capital requirements** for banks and encourage **higher lending** to NBFCs.
  - Expected to **improve liquidity** in the NBFC sector and **support credit flow** to retail borrowers.

2. Impact of the November 2023 Risk Weight Hike

- The increase in risk weights led to **a sharp decline in credit growth to NBFCs:**
  - **December 2023:** Bank credit growth to NBFCs was **15%**.
  - **December 2024:** It dropped significantly to **6.7%**.
- Overall **bank loan growth also slowed down** during the same period:
  - **December 2023:** 20%
  - **December 2024:** 11.2%
- As a result, NBFCs had to **seek alternative funding sources**, such as:
  - **Capital markets** (issuing bonds and other instruments).
  - **External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs)** (raising funds from foreign lenders).
  - These alternatives were **more expensive** due to **rising dollar hedging costs**.

SPORTS NEWS

1) 2025 Chennai Open ATP Challenger: Kyrian Jacquet and Japanese Duo Shine

The **2025 Chennai Open** Association of Tennis Professionals (**ATP**) Challenger concluded with **France's Kyrian Jacquet** clinching the **men's singles** title and the **Japanese duo of Shintaro Mochizuki and Kaito Uesugi** securing the **doubles** crown.

- **2025 was the 5th edition of the Chennai Open**, part of the **2025 ATP Challenger Tour**, held from **February 3-9, 2025**, at the **SDAT Tennis Stadium in Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN)**.
- The **Chennai Open** offered **100 ranking points** and a **prize money of USD 22,730** to the singles champion, while the runner-up received **USD 3,350** and **50 points**.

Singles Final: Jacquet Outlasts Ymer in Straight Sets

- **Winner: Kyrian Jacquet (France)**
- **Runner-up: Elias Ymer (Sweden)**
- **Score: 7–6(7-1), 6–4**
- **World No. 273 Kyrian Jacquet** claimed his **maiden ATP Challenger title** by defeating **Sweden's Elias Ymer** (ranked 332).

2) Campa Cola Replaces Thums Up as IPL 2025 Co-Presenter

Reliance Consumer Products' **Campa Cola** has secured the **co-presenting rights** for the **Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025**, marking a **Rs 200 crore deal**. This move reflects **Reliance's aggressive expansion** in India's **soft drink market**, traditionally dominated by global brands like **Coca-Cola and PepsiCo**.

Key Highlights of the Deal

- **Sponsorship Agreement**: Campa Cola has acquired the **co-presenting rights** for IPL 2025, making it one of the main sponsors of the tournament.
- **Deal Value**: The sponsorship is worth **Rs 200 crore**, reflecting a substantial investment in **brand visibility**.
- **Replacement of Coca-Cola's Thums Up**: Campa Cola replaces **Thums Up**, which was the **co-presenting sponsor in IPL 2024**.

3) Manu Bhaker Wins BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2024

Olympic medal-winning shooter **Manu Bhaker** has been awarded **the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year (ISWOTY) 2024.** The prestigious award, conducted by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), honours the achievements of Indian female athletes and their contributions to sports over the past year. The award, which is decided through a combination of expert panel nominations and public voting, saw **Manu Bhaker emerge as the winner among a strong field of nominees**, including golfer Aditi Ashok, para-**shooter Avani Lekhara, cricketer Smriti Mandhana, and wrestler Vinesh Phogat.**

Manu Bhaker's Historic Achievement

- First Indian woman to win an **Olympic medal in shooting**.
- Medals at the Paris 2024 **Olympics:**
  - **Bronze medal in Women's 10m Air Pistol event**.
  - **Bronze medal in Mixed 10m Air Pistol event** (partnering with **Sarabjot Singh**).
- **Historic Feat:**
  - First Indian to win **two Olympic medals in a single edition post-independence**.
  - The only other Indian to achieve this was **Norman Pritchard** (Paris **1900** Olympics – two silver medals in athletics).

Other Finalists for BBC ISWOTY 2024

Manu Bhaker won against a strong lineup of nominees:

1. **Aditi Ashok** (Golf)
2. **Avani Lekhara** (Para-Shooting)
3. **Smriti Mandhana** (Cricket)
4. **Vinesh Phogat** (Wrestling)

4. BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year (ISWOTY) – Past Winners

Year	Winner	Sport
2019	**PV Sindhu**	Badminton
2020	**Koneru Humpy**	Chess
2021	**Mirabai Chanu**	Weightlifting
2022	**Mirabai Chanu**	Weightlifting
2023	No awards were held	—
2024	**Manu Bhaker**	Shooting

5. Significance of the BBC ISWOTY Award

- Recognizes **excellence in women's sports in India**.
- Brings **greater visibility to female athletes**.
- Encourages **young women to participate in competitive sports**.
- Strengthens India's **global sports reputation**.

4) **Sportstar Aces Awards 2025**

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

- Indian hockey legend, **Parattu Raveendran (PR) Sreejesh** won the Sportstar of the Year 2025 (Male), while **Manu Bhaker** won the Sportstar of the Year 2025 (Female) and also the Sportswoman of the Year (Olympic Sport) respectively.
- The event featured 5 Popular Choice Awards and 16 Jury Awards, with over 2 lakh votes cast for the Popular Choice categories.
- This year 2025, 2 special awards: 'Special Recognition Gamechanger 2025' and 'Inspirational Icon Award 2025' were presented.

Other awards:

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

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

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

5) **9th Asian Winter Games 2025**

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

- Organized by the **Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)** and supported by the **International Skating Union (ISU)**, the event brought together athletes from **34 countries**.
- Asian Winter Games 2025 featured **64 events** across **11 winter sports disciplines**.
- **China topped** the medal tally with **32 Gold, 27 Silver, and 26 Bronze medals**, total **85 medals**.

Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championship 2025

On February 16, 2025, **Indonesia won their first-ever title** at the **4th Edition** of the "Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championship 2025" by defeating two-time defending champions **China with a 3-1 victory** in the final. The tournament was held from February 11 to 16, 2025, at the Conson Gymnasium in Qingdao, China.

- **Muhammad Shohibul Fikri** served as the captain for the Indonesia team, while the China team was led by captain **Chen Xujun**.
- **Indonesia, for their triumph, earned the coveted gold medal**, China took home the **silver**, while **Japan and Thailand were awarded the bronze** medals for their victory.

Key Highlights:

1. **Mixed Doubles**: Rinov Rivaldy and Siti Fadia Silva Ramadhanti set the tone for Indonesia's victory, defeating China's **Gao Jiaxuan and Wu Mengying** with a dominant **21-11, 21-13** scoreline, giving Indonesia an early **1-0 lead**.
2. **Men's Singles**: Alwi Farhan continued the momentum by securing a **21-15, 21-13** win over China's World Junior Champion **Hu Zhe'an**, pushing Indonesia's lead to **2-0**.
3. **Women's Singles**: China managed to grab a point when **Xu Wenjing** triumphed over Indonesia's **Putri Kusuma Wardani 21-12, 21-13**, bringing the score to **2-1**.
4. **Men's Doubles**: The decisive match saw Indonesia's **Muhammad Shohibul Fikri and Daniel Martin** comfortably defeat China's **Chen Xujun and Huang Di 21-15, 21-9**, sealing Indonesia's historic victory and sparking celebrations among the team.
5. **India's Stance**: **Team India has been eliminated in the Quarterfinals and placed at 6th in the table**.

6) 38th Edition of National Games 2025

Services Sports Control Board (**SSCB**) topped at the **38th edition** of National Games which was held in **Uttarakhand** from **January 26, 2025, to February 14, 2025**, with **121 medals** including **68 gold, 26 silver, and 27 bronze**. With this, SSCB continued its dominance in the National Games as it topped the medal tally for **5th time** in the last six National Games except in 2023.

- **SSCB secured the Raja Bhalindra Singh Trophy**, which is awarded to the team that wins the highest number of gold medals at the National Games.
- **Maharashtra, secured 2nd position** in overall medal tally with **201 medals** (**54 gold, 71 silver, and 76 bronze**).
- It is followed by **Haryana ranked at 3rd position** with **153 medals** (**48 gold, 47 silver, and 58 bronze**).
- The event, themed **'Green Games'**, focused on sustainability, featuring eco-friendly welcome kits, e-waste medals, and tree plantations for medalists.

Key Highlights:

1. The latest edition of National Games witnessed the participation of **more than 16,000 athletes** from **28 states, 8 Union Territories (UTs)**, and **SSCB competed in 35 different sports**, with **33 medal sports and a total of 448 gold, 448 silver, and 594 bronze medals**.
2. **14-year-old swimmer from Karnataka, Dhinidhi Desinghu**, and **India's top backstroke swimmer Srihari Nataraj (Bengaluru, Karnataka)** claimed the **Best Female Athlete** and **Best Male Athlete** titles, respectively, at the **38th National Games**.

3. **Meghalaya will host the 39th edition of National Games**, which is scheduled to be held tentatively in the month of **February or March, 2027**.

7) Govt extends financial support for Athletes of 9th Asian Winter Games

For the first time, **the government of India has extended full financial support** to **the Indian contingent participating in an Asian Winter Games** under **the Assistance to National Sports Federations (ANSF) Scheme. The Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** has announced the inclusion of the Indian contingent participating in the 9th Winter Asian Games to be held in Harbin, China under its ANSF scheme. **The Chinese city of Harbin is hosting the 9th Asian Winter Games from 7-14 February 2025.**

India's Financial Support for Athletes:

- **Full Financial Support**: For the first time, the government of India is providing **full financial support** to the Indian contingent under the **Assistance to National Sports Federations (ANSF) Scheme**.
- **Supported Events**: Indian athletes participating in **Alpine Skiing, Cross-Country Skiing, Figure Skating, Short Track Speed Skating, and Speed Skating (Long Track)** will receive this financial support.
- **Contingent**: India is sending an **88-member contingent** to the **9th Asian Winter Games**, including **59 athletes** and **29 officials**.

About the 9th Asian Winter Games 2025:

- **Host City**: **Harbin, China**, will host the games from **7-14 February 2025**. This is Harbin's **second time hosting** the event, having previously done so in **1994**.
- **Events and Disciplines**: Athletes from **45 countries** will compete in **11 disciplines** across **6 sports**: **biathlon, curling, ice hockey, skating, skiing, and ski mountaineering**. The games will feature both **men's and women's events** as well as **mixed events** in certain sports.
- **Mascots**: The mascots are **Binbin** and **Nini**, both tigers from Northeast China. Binbin represents **ice sports**, and Nini represents **snow sports**.
- **Slogan**: **"Dream of Winter, Love among Asia"**.
- **Emblem**: The emblem is called **"Breakthrough"**.

8) India successfully defends its ICC Women's U19 T20 World Cup Title

The Indian women's U19 cricket team demolished **South Africa** by nine wickets in the final of the **2nd ICC Women's U19 T20 World Cup** to retain their title, which was won two years back in South Africa. The final of the tournament was played on 2 February 2025 at **the Bayuemas Cricket Oval, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia**. This was the major title win for the Niki Prasad-led Indian team, having won the inaugural Asian Cricket Council **Women's U19 Asia Cup 2024 Title in Malaysia** in December 2024.

South Africa's Performance:

- **South Africa's Innings**: South Africa, after winning the toss and choosing to bat, was **all out for 82 runs** in 20 overs.
- **Top Scorer for South Africa**: **Mieke van Voorst** was the highest scorer with **23 runs**.

- **Indian Bowling**: **Gongadi Trisha** was the main bowler, taking **3 wickets for 15 runs**.

9) Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers win men's Hockey India League 2024-25 Title

Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers won **the 6th Men's Hockey India League 2024-25 title**, beating **Hyderabad Toofans 4-3 in a tense final at a packed Birsa Munda International Hockey Stadium** in Rourkela.Odisha on 1 February 2025. This was the first title win for **the Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers, winning them a prize of Rs 3 crore.** The runners-up **Hyderabad Toofan won Rs 2 crore as prize money.** The 6th men's Hockey India league was held at **the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela, Odisha from 28th December 2024 to 1st February 2025.**

Key Players in the Final:

- **Jugraj Singh** scored a **hat-trick** for Bengal Tigers, and **Same Lane** added a **solitary goal**.
- **Gonzalo Peillat** scored **twice** for Hyderabad Toofans, and **Amandeep Lakra** scored once.

Award Winners of the 6th Men's Hockey India League:

- **Fairplay Award (Team)**: **UP Rudras**
- **Best Goalkeeper of the Tournament**: **Bikramjit Singh** (Hyderabad Toofans)
- **Upcoming Player of the Tournament**: **Arshdeep Singh** (Hyderabad Toofans)
- **Top Scorer of the Tournament**: **Jugraj Singh** (Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers)

- **Player of the Tournament 2025**: **Sukhjeet Singh** (Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers)

About the Tournament:

- The **6th Men's Hockey India League** took place from **28 December 2024 to 1 February 2025** in **Rourkela, Odisha**.
- It marked the **first title for Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers** in this prestigious club-based tournament.

10) R Praggnanandhaa Wins Tata Steel Masters Chess Title

R Praggnanandhaa emerged as the champion of **the Tata Steel Masters chess tournament** held in the Netherlands on February 2, 2025**. He defeated D Gukesh 2-1 in a thrilling tie-breaker, claiming his first-ever Tata Steel Masters title.** The intense final saw shocking twists, including upsets and an edge-of-the-seat finish. **Praggnanandhaa's victory** is considered a milestone in **his young career, with a significant contribution from fellow Indian Arjun Erigaisi's earlier win over Gukesh.**

Overview of the Tournament:

- **Event:** Tata Steel Masters Chess Tournament 2025
- **Location:** Held in the Netherlands
- **Date of Final:** February 2, 2025
- **Champion:** R Praggnanandhaa

- **Significance:** This victory marks Praggnanandhaa's first-ever Tata Steel Masters title, a major milestone in his rapidly rising chess career.

11) Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers Win Men's Hockey India League 2024-25

In **February 2025**, **Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers** won the first-ever title of the **Men's Hockey India League 2024-25 (HIL 2024-25)** by defeating **Hyderabad Toofans 4-3** in the final held at the **Birsa Munda International Hockey Stadium** in **Rourkela, Odisha**.

- **Tournament Details**:
  - **Duration**: The **6th edition** of the Men's HIL was held from **December 28, 2024**, to **February 1, 2025**.
  - **Teams**: The tournament featured **8 teams**.
- **Captains**:
  - **Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers**: Led by **Captain Rupinder Pal Singh**.
  - **Hyderabad Toofans**: Led by **Captain Sumit Walmiki**.
- **Prize Money**:
  - **Winners (Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers)**: Awarded ₹3 crore.
  - **Runners-up (Hyderabad Toofans)**: Received ₹2 crore.
- **Highlights**:
  - **Jugraj Singh** scored a **hat-trick (25', 32', 35')** and **Sam Lane** added a goal in the **54th minute** to secure the title for Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers.
  - **Gonzalo Peillat** scored twice (9', 39') and **Amandeep Lakra** scored once (26') for Hyderabad Toofans, but their efforts fell short.
- **Awards**:
  - **Top Scorer of the Tournament**: **Jugraj Singh** (Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers).
  - **Player of the Tournament**: **Sukhjeet Singh** (Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers).
  - **Best Goalkeeper of the Tournament**: **Bikramjit Singh** (Hyderabad Toofans).
  - **Upcoming Player of the Tournament**: **Arshdeep Singh** (Hyderabad Toofans).

12) Varun Chakravarthy Becomes India's 2nd Oldest ODI Debutant

Indian spinner Varun Chakravarthy made his One Day International (ODI) debut at the age of 33 years and 164 days, making him India's second-oldest cricketer to debut in ODIs. The record for **the oldest Indian ODI debutant remains with Farokh Engineer, who made his debut at 36 years and 138 days.**

Representing Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in the **Indian Premier League (IPL), Chakravarthy had an impressive start to his ODI** career **by dismissing England's Phil Salt in his opening spell.** His performance in the ODI series could play a crucial role in determining his selection for the upcoming Champions Trophy.

Key Highlights

Varun Chakravarthy's ODI Debut

- Made his ODI debut at the age of 33 years and 164 days.
- Became India's second-oldest ODI debutant after Farokh Engineer.
- Started his ODI career on a strong note by dismissing Phil Salt in his first spell.

13) Rohit Sharma Becomes Second-Highest Six-Hitter in ODI History

India's captain Rohit Sharma showcased **a remarkable innings in the second ODI against** England **in Cuttack,** leading **India to a four-wicket victory**. His outstanding **knock of 119 runs off 90 balls, which included 12 fours and 7 sixes, helped him achieve multiple milestones.**

Rohit surpassed Chris Gayle to become the second-highest six-hitter in ODI history and also overtook Sachin Tendulkar to become the second-highest run-getter for India as an opener in international cricket.

Key Highlights of the Match

Rohit Sharma's Achievements

- **Six-Hitting Record:**
  - Became the second-highest six-hitter in ODI history with 338 sixes.
  - Surpassed Chris Gayle, who had 331 sixes.
  - Now trails only Shahid Afridi, who holds the record with 351 sixes.
- **Match Performance:**
  - Scored 119 runs off 90 balls at a strike rate of 132.22.
  - Hit 12 fours and 7 sixes.

- **Milestone as an Opener:**
  - Became India's second-highest run-getter as an opener in international cricket.
  - Overtook Sachin Tendulkar's tally of 15,335 runs with his total now standing at 15,404 runs.

14) Mumbai Open 2025 WTA (Women's Tennis Association) 125 Event

On **February 9, 2025**, **Jil Belén Teichmann**, Switzerland's professional tennis player, claimed the singles title of the 4th edition of **"Mumbai Open 2025 WTA 125 Event"**, held from **February 3 to February 9, 2025**, in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.

- **Singles Title**: Jil Belén Teichmann won the singles title by defeating **Mananchaya Sawangkaew** of Thailand with a straight-set victory of **6-3, 6-4**.
- **Doubles Title**: **Elena Ivanovna Pridankina and Amina Vladikovna Anshba** of Russia won the Doubles title by defeating **Prarthana Thombare of India** and her **Dutch partner Arianne Hartono** with a score of **6-7(4), 6-2, 10-7**.

About the Mumbai Open 2025:

i. The **Mumbai Open 2025** is an **outdoor tournament** played on a **hard court**, at the **Cricket Club of India (CCI)** in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
ii. The **4th edition** was sponsored by **Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Limited** and named as **"L&T Mumbai Open 2025"**.
iii. **Prize Money and Points**: Jil Belén Teichmann earned **125 ranking points** and a **USD 15,000** winner's cheque, while Mananchaya Sawangkaew received **81**

points and a **USD 8,400** prize.
iv. **WTA Tournament Levels**: WTA 1000, WTA 500, WTA 250, WTA 125 (**Mumbai Open is a WTA 125 event**).
v. The **Mumbai Open** was first held in **2017** and was won by the **current World No.1 women's tennis player Aryna Siarhiejěǔna Sabalenka** of Belarus.

15) India's Performance at the 2025 Para Archery Asia Cup

India concluded its participation in the **2025 Para Archery Asia Cup** in Bangkok, Thailand, with an outstanding performance, securing **6 Gold Medals** and topping the medal tally.

- **India's Para-Archers bagged a total of 12 medals** in the competition: **6 Gold, 3 Silver, and 3 Bronze**.
- India's Para Archery contingent, consisting of **27 members**, participated in the **Asia Para Cup – World Ranking Archery Tournament 2025**, which featured **11 events** and was held from **February 2-11, 2025**.

Highlights:

1. **Sarita Kumari** secured **gold** in the **Women's Compound Open** category, narrowly defeating Nur Syahidah Alim from Singapore with a score of **143-142**.
2. **Shyam Sundar Swami** triumphed in the **Men's Compound Open**, overcoming Ken Swagumilang from Indonesia with a score of **143-141**, securing **India's sixth and final gold medal**. He also won **silver**.
3. **Rakesh Kumar** earned **bronze** in the **Men's Compound Open**, following a shoot-off victory against Wiro Julin from Malaysia after both archers scored **140**.
4. **Pooja Jatyan** fell short in the **Women's Recurve Open final**, losing **6-0** to Zina Lavrinc of Slovakia (Slovak Republic) and settling for **silver**.
5. Paralympic champion **Harvinder Singh** claimed **bronze** in the **Men's Recurve Open**, defeating Nurfaizal Hamzah with a **6-2** scoreline.
6. **Adil Mohamed Nazir Ansari** secured a **bronze** in the **Men's W1 (Recurve/Compound)** with a **120-116** win over Yung Man Tai from Hong Kong, China.

16) Meghalaya to Host 2027 National Games

The **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** has officially confirmed that **Meghalaya** will host the **39th edition of the National Games** in **February/March 2027**. The announcement was conveyed by **IOA President PT Usha** to **Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma**, marking a **historic moment for the northeastern state**.

Key Highlights

1. Official Announcement

- **Meghalaya has been allocated hosting rights** for the **39th National Games in 2027** by the **IOA**.
- The decision was formally conveyed to **Chief Minister Conrad Sangma**.

2. Handover Ceremony

- Meghalaya will **receive the IOA flag** during the **closing ceremony** of the **38th National Games in Uttarakhand** (held in Haldwani).

- **PT Usha invited Conrad Sangma** to attend the ceremony, symbolizing the **official transition** of hosting rights.

3. Meghalaya's Reaction

- **CM Conrad Sangma** expressed his excitement, calling it a **"huge honor"** for the state.
- He shared his enthusiasm on **social media platform 'X'**, highlighting Meghalaya's **commitment to successfully organizing the games**.

4. Significance of the National Games

- The **National Games** is one of India's **largest multi-sport events**, attracting thousands of athletes and officials.
- The **current edition (38th National Games in Uttarakhand)** has around **10,000 participants**.
- Hosting the **39th edition** will provide **a major boost to sports infrastructure and tourism in Meghalaya**.

5. Previous and Upcoming Hosts

Edition	Year	Host State	Key Cities
35th	2015	Kerala	Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode, Alappuzha
36th	2022	Gujarat	Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Vadodara, Surat, Bhavnagar, Rajkot
37th	2023	Goa	Panaji, Margao, Vasco, Mapusa, Ponda
38th	2024	Uttarakhand	Dehradun, Haldwani, Haridwar, Udham Singh Nagar, Almora, Tehri, Pithoragarh
39th	2027	Meghalaya	(Upcoming)

- **Revival of the National Games**:
  - After **delays in previous editions**, the **event is now being held regularly**.
  - With Meghalaya hosting in 2027, **four editions will have taken place within five years**.

17) Advani Triumphs in Indian Snooker Championship

India's most decorated cueist, **Pankaj Advani**, secured his **36th national title** and **10th men's snooker championship** at the **Yashwant Club**. Displaying **remarkable skill and resilience**, he defeated **Brijesh Damani** in the final, overturning an earlier group-stage loss. His victory cements his spot in **upcoming international championships**, further enhancing his **legendary status in cue sports**.

Key Highlights

1. Victory and Milestones

- **Pankaj Advani clinched his 36th national gold medal** and his **10th men's snooker title**.
- The tournament is **India's sole selection event** for the **Asian and World Snooker Championships**.
- With this win, he continues to **dominate Indian cue sports**.

2. Final Match Performance

- Faced **Brijesh Damani** in the **championship final**.
- **Lost the opening frame** but quickly **recovered**, conceding only one more frame in the entire match.
- **Sealed the final frame** with an **impressive 84 break**, demonstrating his **precision and composure**.

3. Road to Victory

- **Group Stage**: Suffered his **only defeat** in the tournament to **Brijesh Damani**.
- **Round of 48**: **Mounted a thrilling 5-4 comeback** after being **4-2 down**, narrowly avoiding an early exit.
- Maintained **consistent and precise gameplay** throughout the tournament.

18) Rohit Sharma Becomes Second Fastest to 11,000 ODI Runs

Rohit Sharma became **the second fastest batsman to reach 11,000 ODI runs**, achieving the milestone in **261 innings during India's Champions Trophy 2025 match against Bangladesh in Dubai on February 20, 2025**. He is the fourth Indian to reach this mark, joining Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, and Virat Kohli, and the 10th overall in ODI history. Virat Kohli remains the fastest, achieving it in 222 innings. Rohit reached the milestone in the fourth over by hitting Mustafizur Rahman for a boundary over mid-on.

19) Mohammed Shami Joins Elite Club with 200 ODI Wickets

Mohammed Shami became **the fastest Indian to claim 200 ODI wickets**, achieving the feat during **India vs Bangladesh in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 at Dubai**. He broke Ajit Agarkar's Indian record (133 matches) and **equaled Saqlain Mushtaq** as the joint second fastest globally, behind Mitchell Starc (102 matches). Shami also became India's highest wicket-taker in ICC ODI events, surpassing Zaheer Khan's 59 wickets, with 60 wickets in just 19 matches.

20) Virat Kohli Breaks Tendulkar's Record for Fastest 14,000 Run

Virat Kohli has created history by **becoming the fastest batter to reach 14,000 ODI runs in just 287 innings, surpassing Sachin Tendulkar (350)** and **Kumar Sangakkara (378).** He achieved this milestone during **India's Champions Trophy 2025 match against Pakistan in Dubai, scoring a match-winning unbeaten century (51st ODI ton).** Known for his remarkable consistency and chase mastery, Kohli has been the fastest to **every 1,000-run milestone since 8,000 runs in 2017, cementing his dominance in ODIs.**

21) Saurav Ghosal Marks Triumphant Return with Sydney Title

Saurav Ghosal, Indian squash legend and former **World No. 10**, made a remarkable comeback by winning the **Octane Sydney Classic title**. After retiring from the PSA Tour in April 2023, he rejoined on January 1, 2025, to continue representing India. The 38-year-old second seed dominated the final, defeating Egypt's Abdelrahman Nasser in straight sets to secure the title.

22) Pankaj Advani Wins 2025 Asian Snooker Championship

Pankaj Advani clinched the 2025 Asian Snooker Championship men's title, defeating Amir Sarkosh (Iran) 4-1 in the final, **marking his 14th Asian title across snooker and billiards.** The tournament, held in Doha, Qatar (Feb 15-21, 2025), was

organized by the Asian Confederation of Billiards Sports. Advani, a multiple-time Asian and World Champion, has also won two Asian Games gold medals (2006, 2010)

23) Mohun Bagan Clinch Back-to-Back ISL Winners Shield

Mohun Bagan Super Giant secured their second consecutive **Indian Super League (ISL) Winners Shield with a dramatic 1-0 victory over Odisha FC at Kolkata's Salt Lake Stadium on February 23, 2025**. The match remained tense until the final moments when Dimitrios Petratos struck the winning goal in injury time, **making Mohun Bagan** the first team in ISL history to defend the Shield successfully. **This win also ensures their direct qualification for the AFC Champions League 2.**

24) Saudi Arabia to Host Inaugural Olympic Esports Games 2027

- The **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** made a groundbreaking decision in **July 2023** by introducing the **Olympic Esports Games**, marking a significant step toward integrating **esports with traditional sports**. In a historic development, **Saudi Arabia** has been selected as the **host nation for the first-ever Olympic Esports Games in 2027**.
- This decision underscores the growing **global recognition of esports** and its potential to be an integral part of mainstream competitive sports. The **Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee (SOPC)** will collaborate with the **IOC**, and the **Esports World Cup Foundation (EWCF)** has been designated as the **Founding Partner** for the event.

AWARD NEWS

1) Tata Group Chairman N. Chandrasekaran Honored with UK Knighthood

N. Chandrasekaran, Chairman of Tata Group, has been awarded an honorary **knighthood by the United Kingdom.** This prestigious recognition highlights his remarkable contributions to strengthening business ties between India and the UK. **The UK government conferred this honor on February 14, 2025, acknowledging his leadership in driving Tata Group's investments and collaborations in the UK.**

BAFTA Awards 2025: Full Winners List Unveiled!

The **78th British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA)** celebrated the **best cinematic achievements of 2024**, with major winners including *Conclave*, *The Brutalist*, and *Emilia Pérez*. The event highlighted **exceptional performances, direction, and technical brilliance**, with notable wins for films across multiple categories.

Key Highlights of BAFTA 2025

1. **Biggest Winners of the Night:**
   - *Conclave* and *The Brutalist* led the awards, securing **four wins each**.
   - *Emilia Pérez* continued its **global dominance**, winning **Best Film Not in the English Language**.
   - *Dune: Part Two* won in **technical categories**, showcasing excellence in **sound and visual effects**.
   - *Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl* was recognized as the **Best Animated Film**.
2. **Major Award Winners:**
   - **Best Film:** *Conclave*

- **Best Director:** *Brady Corbet* (*The Brutalist*)
- **Best Actor:** *Adrien Brody* (*The Brutalist*)
- **Best Actress:** *Mikey Madison* (*Anora*)
- **Best Film Not in the English Language:** *Emilia Pérez*
- **Best Animated Film:** *Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl*
- **Outstanding British Film:** *Conclave*
- **Outstanding British Debut:** *Kneecap* (*Rich Peppiatt*)

Breakdown of Major Award Categories

1. Best Film & Screenplay Awards

Category	Winner
Best Film	*Conclave*
Best Adapted Screenplay	*Peter Straughan* (*Conclave*)
Best Original Screenplay	*Jesse Eisenberg* (*A Real Pain*)

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

In February 2025, **NTPC Limited** (formerly known as **National Thermal Power Corporation Limited**), an Indian **'Maharana' Central Public Sector Undertaking (PSU)** which works under the **Ministry of Power (MoP)**, has been conferred with **Forward Faster Sustainability Award 2025** in the category of **'Water Resilience'**, in recognition of NTPC's exceptional efforts in water conservation and sustainable water management initiatives.

- **Harekhrushna Dash**, ED (Sustainability, Environment &

Ash), and **K Karthikeyan**, Additional General Manager (AGM), NTPC Limited, received the award at a ceremony organized by the **United Nations (UN) Global Compact Network India (UN GCNI)** in **Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN)**.

- NTPC is actively implementing the **Reduce, Reuse & Recycle (RRR) approach** to optimize water use.

Key Highlights:

1. The **Forward Faster Sustainability Awards** recognizes **organizations/institutions in India** that have made significant contributions in **promoting sustainability and corporate responsibility**, aligning with **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
2. **NTPC Limited**, the **largest integrated power utility in India**, is contributing **25% of India's power requirements** and has an **installed capacity of more than 77 Giga Watt (GW)**, with an **additional capacity of 29.5 GW under construction**, including **9.6 GW of Renewable Energy (RE) capacity**.

3) BCCI Annual Awards 2025: Honoring Legends and Rising Stars

The **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** celebrated excellence in Indian cricket with its **Annual Awards ceremony for 2025**, recognizing outstanding achievements and contributions to the game.

Key Award Winners:

- **Col. C. K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award – Men**: **Sachin Tendulkar** Recognizing his monumental contributions to Indian cricket, Tendulkar continues to be an icon of the sport.
- **Polly Umrigar Award – Best International Cricketer (Men)**: **Jasprit Bumrah** Honored for his exceptional performances, particularly in limited-overs formats.
- **Best International Cricketer (Women)**: **Smriti Mandhana** Acknowledging her consistent and stellar performances in women's cricket.
- **Best International Debut (Men)**: **Sarfaraz Khan** Awarded for a remarkable debut at the international level.
- **Best International Debut (Women)**: **Asha Sobhana** Recognizing her impressive entry into the international cricketing scene.
- **BCCI Special Award**: **Ravichandran Ashwin** Celebrating Ashwin's continuous contributions and achievements in international cricket.
- **Highest Run-Getter in ODIs (Women)**: **Smriti Mandhana** A well-deserved recognition for her dominance in the format.
- **Highest Wicket-Taker in ODIs (Women)**: **Deepti Sharma** Honored for her brilliant bowling performances in ODIs.
- **Best Umpire in Domestic Cricket**: **Akshay Totre** Recognized for his outstanding umpiring in domestic cricket.

Domestic Cricket Awards:

- **M.A. Chidambaram Trophy – Highest Run-Getter in U-19 Cooch Behar Trophy**: **Kavya Teotia**
- **M.A. Chidambaram Trophy – Highest Wicket-Taker in U-19 Cooch Behar Trophy**: **Vishnu Bhardwaj**
- **Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy – Best Woman Cricketer (Senior Domestic)**: **Priya Mishra**
- **Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy – Best Woman Cricketer (Junior Domestic)**: **Ishwari Awasare**
- **Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy – Highest Wicket-Taker in U-16 Vijay Merchant Trophy**: **Hemchudeshan Jeganathan**
- **Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy – Highest Run-Getter in U-16 Vijay Merchant Trophy**: **Lakshya Raichandani**
- **MA Chidambaram Trophy – Highest Wicket-Taker in U-23 CK Nayudu Trophy (Plate Group)**: **Neizekho Rupreo**
- **MA Chidambaram Trophy – Highest Run-Getter in U-23 CK Nayudu Trophy (Plate Group)**: **Hem Chetri**
- **MA Chidambaram Trophy – Highest Wicket-Taker in U-23 CK Nayudu Trophy (Elite Group)**: **P Vidyuth**
- **MA Chidambaram Trophy – Highest Run-Getter in U-23 CK Nayudu Trophy (Elite Group)**: **Aneesh KV**

Madhavrao Scindia Awards:

- **Highest Wicket-Taker in Ranji Trophy (Plate Group)**: **Mohit Jangra**

- **Highest Wicket-Taker in Ranji Trophy (Elite Group)**: **Tanay Thyagarajan**
- **Highest Run-Getter in Ranji Trophy (Plate Group)**: **Agni Chopra**
- **Highest Run-Getter in Ranji Trophy (Elite Group)**: **Ricky Bhui** (Andhra Pradesh)

Lala Amarnath Awards:

- **Best All-Rounder in Domestic Limited-Overs Competitions**: **Shashank Singh** (Chhattisgarh)
- **Best All-Rounder in Ranji Trophy**: **Tanush Kotian**

4) Chandrika Tandon wins Best New Age Album Award at the 67th Grammy

Indian-born American musician Chandrika Tandon won her first Grammy award in **the ' Best New Age Album, Ambient or Chant Album category' for her album Triveni at the 67th Grammy Awards 2025.** This was the first Grammy Award for the **71-year-old Chandrika Tandon who was once nominated for a Grammy award in 2011 for her album Soul Call**. The 67th annual Grammy Awards function was held at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, **the United States of America, on 2 February 2025.**

About Chandrika Tandon:

- **Background:** Born in Chennai, India, and an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Management – Ahmedabad, she began her professional career with Citibank.
- **Musical Training:** She is a trained Carnatic and Hindustani vocalist.
- **Album "Triveni":** A collaboration featuring South African flautist Wouter Kellerman (three-time

Grammy winner) and Japanese cellist Eru Matsumoto. The album blends Vedic chants, meditative tones, and world music, representing diverse cultural influences.

5) Deepak Kumar Kedia Honored with "CA in Public Service" Award

In **February 2025**, **Deepak Kumar Kedia**, **Inspector General (IG) Headquarters** of the **National Security Guard (NSG)**, was honored with the prestigious **"CA in Public Service" Award** by the **Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)**.

- **Recognition**: The award was presented at the **World Forum of Accountants (WOFA)** meet held at **Yashobhoomi, India International Convention and Exhibition Centre (IICC)** in **New Delhi**.
- **Previous Honors**: Kedia was also honored with the **'President Medal for Distinguished Service'** on the **76th Republic Day of India (January 26, 2025)**.
- **About Deepak Kumar Kedia**:
  - **Background**: A **1999-batch Indian Police Service (IPS)** officer from the **Assam cadre**.
  - **Career Highlights**:
    - Worked with **Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)** at its **Rourkela Plant (Odisha)** in the **Finance and Accounts (F&A) Department**.
    - Held various positions including **Superinte**

ndent of Police (SP) in Assam, **Director (Left Wing Extremism)** at the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, **Additional Director** at the **Enforcement Directorate (ED)**, and **Inspector General of Police (IGP) (Law & Order)** in Assam.

6) Chaman Arora Honored with Sahitya Akademi Award 2024 in Dogri

In **February 2025**, the **Ministry of Culture (MoC)** announced that the late **Chaman Arora** has been selected for the **Sahitya Akademi Award 2024** in the **Dogri language** for his short story book **'Ik Hor Ashwithama' (Short Stories)**.

- **Approval**: The award was approved by **Madhav Kaushik**, President of **Sahitya Akademi**, based on recommendations from jury members **Sushma Rani**, **Veena Gupta**, and **Jitendra Udhampuri**.
- **Award Ceremony**: The award will be presented to a family member or nominee of the awardee on **International Women's Day**, **March 8, 2025**, at **Kamani Auditorium** in **New Delhi**.
- **Award Details**:
    - **Composition**: A casket containing an **engraved copper plaque**, a **shawl**, and a **cash prize of ₹1 lakh**.
    - **Other Winners**: The **Sahitya Akademi**

Awards 2024 include **8 books of Poetry**, **3 Novels**, **2 Short Stories**, **3 Essays**, **3 Literary Criticism**, **1 Play**, and **1 Research**.

7) Purnima Devi Barman Named in TIME's Women of the Year List

Indian biologist and wildlife conservationist **Purnima Devi Barman** has been honored in **TIME Magazine's Women of the Year 2025 list** for her efforts in conserving the **greater adjutant stork (Hargila)**. She is the **only Indian woman** on this year's list, alongside global figures like **Nicole Kidman** and **Gisele Pelicot**.

Key Highlights of Barman's Conservation Work

1. Global Recognition

- Named among **13 influential women** for **2025**.
- Her work has influenced **India, Cambodia, and beyond**.

2. Conservation Journey & Success

- Started her mission in **2007** after witnessing the **destruction of stork habitats**.
- Increased Assam's **greater adjutant stork population** from **450 (2007) to over 1,800 (2023)**.
- Helped change the **IUCN status** of the stork from **"Endangered" to "Near Threatened"**.

3. Formation of the 'Hargila Army'

- Mobilized **20,000+ women** to protect **stork nests**.
- Integrated conservation with Assamese **culture and traditions**.

- Introduced **stork-themed textiles** to promote **livelihoods**.

4. International Influence

- Schools in **France and Cambodia** teach students about her work.
- The **Hargila Army model** is inspiring **global conservation movements**.

8) Indian Vishvaa Rajakumar Prodigy Wins Global Memory Championship

20-year-old **Vishvaa Rajakumar** from India has achieved a **historic milestone** by winning the **Memory League World Championship 2025**, as reported by *The New York Times*. His **record-breaking feat** involved recalling **80 digits in just 13.5 seconds**, showcasing **exceptional cognitive skills**.

Key Highlights of His Achievement

- **Winner** of the **Memory League World Championship (Feb 2025)**.
- **Set a new record** by recalling **80 digits in 13.5 seconds**.
- Used the **"Memory Palace" technique**, a method dating back to ancient Rome.
- **Emphasized hydration** as a key factor in boosting **memory performance**.
- Described his win as an **"amazing experience"**, expressing **deep joy**.

The Secret Behind His Success: The Memory Palace Technique

- Involves **associating information with familiar locations** to improve recall.
- Rajakumar **visualized a house with multiple rooms** to **map and retrieve sequences**.

- Helped him remember **50 stories for 100 words** with ease.

Physical Well-Being & Memory Enhancement

- Stressed the **importance of hydration** in **boosting brain function**.
- Drinking enough **water improves recall speed and memory retention**.

9) Nagaland's Forest Project Recognized with SKOCH Award

The **Nagaland Forest Management Project (NFMP)** has been honored with the **SKOCH Award 2024** for its **outstanding contribution to forest conservation and sustainable development**. The award was presented during the **100th SKOCH Summit** at the **India Habitat Centre, New Delhi**, on **February 15, 2025**.

Key Highlights

- **Awarded** for excellence in **forest ecosystem conservation, livelihood enhancement, and jhum rehabilitation**.
- **Presented to** the **Department of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (DEFCC), Government of Nagaland (GoN)**.
- **Accepted by** Ango Konyak (**Deputy Project Director, NFMP**) and Wennyei Konyak (**Resident Commissioner, Nagaland House, New Delhi**).
- **Supported by** the **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**.

About NFMP

- **Project Goal**: Improve **forest ecosystems**, support **income**

generation, and rehabilitate **jhum (shifting cultivation) areas**.

- **Duration**: **2017–2027** (10-year initiative).
- **Coverage**:
  - **79,096 hectares** under forest intervention.
  - **185 villages** across **11 districts** and **22 forest ranges**.
  - Formation of **555 self-help groups** (SHGs) for sustainable livelihoods.
- **Implementation**: Managed by **DEFCC, Government of Nagaland**, with **JICA assistance**.

Significance of the SKOCH Award

- **Recognizes excellence in governance, public service, and social development**.
- One of **India's highest independent honors** for **states, organizations, and projects**.
- Highlights **effective collaboration** between **government, local communities, and international agencies** for sustainable development.

10) Mopa Airport Wins Prestigious 'Sarvashrestha Suraksha Puraskar'

Manohar International Airport (GOX), operated by **GMR Goa International Airport Ltd. (GGIAL),** has become **the first airport in India to win the prestigious "Sarvashrestha Suraksha Puraskar (Golden Trophy)" at the NSCI Safety Awards 2024 under the 'Service Sector' category**. The award, presented in Mumbai, recognizes the airport's exemplary Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) performance, commitment to reducing workplace injuries, and adoption of best safety practices. Its proactive safety

measures and zero-incident record were key factors in securing this.

11) Sunil Mittal Receives Honorary Knighthood From UK

Sunil Bharti Mittal, founder and chairman of Bharti Enterprises, has been awarded an Honorary Knighthood (KBE) for his role **in strengthening India-UK business ties**. He received the Knight Commander of the **Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE) at a special ceremony in New Delhi, making him the first Indian citizen to be honored under King Charles III.** Mittal has significantly contributed to trade and investment between the two nations through Airtel Africa, Eutelsat OneWeb, and his leadership in the India-UK CEO Forum.

12) International Booker 2025: Kannada Book in Historic Longlist

Banu Mushtaq's short story collection Heart Lamp, translated from **Kannada by Deepa Bhasthi, has become the first-ever Kannada book to be longlisted for the International Booker Prize**. The 2025 longlist features 13 books from 15 nationalities, including Kannada and Romanian for the first time. The collection, set in Muslim communities of southern India, was praised for its witty, vivid, and moving storytelling. **The shortlist will be announced on April 8, 2025, and the winner on May 20, 2025, with a total prize of £50,000, split between the author and translator.**

13) Dhanwantari Ayurveda Awards Honor India's Healthcare Legacy

The Ministry of Ayush has honored **three distinguished practitioners with the National Dhanwantari Ayurveda Awards** for their exceptional contributions to traditional Indian medicine. Each awardee received a citation, **a statue of**

Lord Dhanwantari, and a cash prize of ₹5 lakh.

14) Screen Actors Guild Awards 2025 Full List of Winners

The 31st SAG Awards took place on February 23, 2025, at the **Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles**, celebrating excellence in film and television. **Hosted by Kristen Bell and streamed on Netflix, the event honored actors and ensembles for their outstanding performances**. Jane Fonda received the SAG Life Achievement Award, emphasizing empathy and unions in her speech. The awards, known for predicting Oscar winners, **featured emotional moments and surprise victories. Top winners included Conclave (Best Cast), Timothée Chalamet (A Complete Unknown, Best Male Actor), Demi Moore (The Substance, Best Female Actor), Kieran Culkin (A Real Pain, Best Supporting Male Actor), Zoe Saldaña (Emilia Pérez, Best Supporting Female Actor), and The Fall Guy (Best Stunt Ensemble)**

15) Prani Mitra and Jeev Daya Award Ceremony 2025: Recognizing Excellence in Animal Welfare

The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI), a statutory body under the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, organized the Prani Mitra and Jeev Daya Award Ceremony on 27th February 2025 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The event was held to honor individuals and organizations that have contributed significantly to animal welfare, protection, and compassionate treatment of animals**. The AWBI, established under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960, plays a crucial role in ensuring that animals** are not subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering. The ceremony was attended by eminent personalities, including Union Ministers of State, senior government officials, representatives from various states, and distinguished animal welfare advocates.

DEFENCE NEWS

1) India-Japan Joint Military Exercise 'Dharma Guardian 2025' to be Held at Mount Fuji

The **sixth edition of Exercise Dharma Guardian** is set to take place from **February 25 to March 9, 2025**, at **Mount Fuji, Japan**. This annual Indo-Japanese military exercise is a key initiative aimed at bolstering strategic and defence cooperation between the **Indian Army** and the **Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF)**.

Background and Significance

Exercise Dharma Guardian is an annual **joint military exercise** between India and Japan. It plays a crucial role in strengthening defence ties between the two nations and enhancing interoperability between their armed forces. The exercise is held alternatively in **India and Japan**, with the previous edition (2024) conducted in **India**.

The upcoming **2025 edition** of the exercise comes after the **successful visit of India's Chief of the Army Staff to Japan in October 2024**. The visit paved the way for deeper military collaboration, showcasing both countries' commitment to **regional security and stability** in the **Indo-Pacific region**. Given the evolving security challenges in the region, joint military training programs like **Dharma Guardian** are essential to **improve combat preparedness and address common threats**.

2) Saab and HAL Sign MoU for Local Production of LWS-310 Electronic Warfare System

On **February 13, 2025**, Swedish defence company **Saab** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** to collaborate on the **Electronic Warfare Laser Warning System-310 (LWS-310)**. This agreement strengthens India's defence capabilities by enabling domestic production of the system, in line with the **'Make in India' initiative** and the goal of achieving self-reliance in critical defence technology.

Objective of the Saab-HAL MoU

The primary purpose of the MoU is to establish a **structured partnership** for the **production and maintenance** of the **LWS-310 system** in India. Key aspects include:

1. **Technology Transfer:**
   - Saab will transfer critical **maintenance technology** to HAL through a **Maintenance Transfer of Technology (ToT)** agreement.
   - This ensures that HAL can support and sustain the LWS-310 system **independently** in India.
2. **Domestic Manufacturing:**
   - HAL will **manufacture** the LWS-310 system, reducing dependence on foreign suppliers.
   - This supports India's goal of building a **self-sufficient defence sector**.
3. **Enhanced Combat Capabilities:**
   - The **LWS-310** is designed to detect **laser-based** threats quickly and accurately.
   - It provides **early warnings against laser-guided weapons**, improving the survivability of combat vehicles and aircraft.
4. **Long-Term Operational Support:**
   - By setting up **local production and maintenance facilities**, the MoU ensures **sustained support** for the LWS-310 in India.
   - This also enables faster servicing and upgrades without relying on foreign manufacturers.

3) Aeronautical Development Agreement for MDN100 Steel

Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based **Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA)**, a department of the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** and **Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited (MIDHANI)**, a defence Public Sector Undertaking (**PSU**), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) for the **Indigenous development of high-strength, high-toughness special-grade steel "MDN100"** for aerospace applications.

- This collaboration aims to advance aeronautical applications, particularly in the **5th generation Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)** program.
- The MoU was signed at the **Aero India 2025** airshow held from **10-14 February 2025** in Bengaluru.

Note: ADA is the nodal organization for combat aircraft development in India.

Key Points:

i. The MDN100 Steel has excellent forgeability and is suitable for manufacturing highly stressed aircraft parts, offering significant weight-saving benefits.

ii. This initiative supports the **'Atmanirbhar Bharat'** (self-reliant India) initiative under India's combat aircraft programs.

iii. MIDHANI has been a key supplier of critical materials for **DRDO** and **Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)** in various aeronautical projects.

iv. MIDHANI showcased **SuperNi 41 plates** at Aero India 2025, a **nickel-chromium-based superalloy** capable of withstanding extreme temperatures in aero engines.

v. ADA's ongoing combat aircraft programs include **Light Combat Aircraft Mark 2 (LCA Mk2), Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), and Twin-Engine Deck Based Fighter (TEDBF)** for the Indian Navy.

4) Military Exercise 'Jal-Thal-Raksha 2025' Held in Gujarat to Enhance Coastal Security

On **February 16, 2025**, the **Indian Army (IA)** organized a large-scale military exercise **'Jal-Thal-Raksha 2025'** at **Bet Dwarka, Gujarat**. The primary objective was to bolster security in Dwarka and its surrounding islands in response to recent illegal encroachments.

- The exercise involved the participation of **11 Ahmedabad** and **31 Jamnagar Army units**, as well as the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** and **Marine Police**.
- The exercise aimed to improve coordination between **government departments, paramilitary forces, and defence forces** during

emergencies such as **terrorist attacks** or **wartime scenarios**.

Key Highlights:

i. During the exercise, security personnel were deployed to the coast via **hovercraft**. The exercise simulated securing **critical infrastructure** and responding to potential **land-based threats**, enhancing overall preparedness.

ii. The **District Administration of Devbhoomi Dwarka, Forest Department, Maritime Board of Gujarat Energy, and National Security Guard (NSG)** supervised the operations, ensuring smooth coordination and response strategies.

Indian Navy Participation in 'International Fleet Review 2025' and 'Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo 2025'

The **Indian Navy (IN)** participated in the **'International Fleet Review (IFR) 2025'** and the **'5th Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo'** in **Bali, Indonesia** from **February 15 to 22, 2025**.

- The **Indian delegation** was represented by:
    - **INS Shardul** (Landing Ship Tank - Large)
    - **P-8I Long-Range Maritime Surveillance Aircraft**

International Fleet Review (IFR) 2025:

- **Reviewed by: President of Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto Djojohadikusumo**
- **Key Highlights:**
    1. **Multinational Naval Event:** Naval forces from various countries participated, promoting **international maritime cooperation**.

2. **India's Participation:** The Indian Navy took part in **high-level engagements** on **February 15, 2025**.
3. **Key Activities:**
   - **International Maritime Security Symposium:** Discussions on global maritime security challenges.
   - **Tactical Floor Games:** Simulated exercises for **tactical decision-making**.
4. **Environmental Initiatives:** IN crew participated in activities like:
   - City parade
   - Baby turtle release
   - Coral and mangrove plantation
   - Beach cleaning

Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo 2025:

- **Officially commenced: February 16, 2025, at Benoa Port, Denpasar, Bali**
- **2025 Theme:** *'Maritime Partnership for Peace and Stability'*
  - Focus on **natural disaster management** and **humanitarian aid**.
  - Strengthening **maritime security and regional cooperation**.
- **Participants:**
  - **Over 30 countries**, including **USA, Russia, China, Australia, and Singapore**.
  - Emphasis on **disaster relief and humanitarian operations**.
- **About Exercise Komodo:**

  - **First launched in 2014** by the **Indonesian Navy**.
  - A **non-combat military drill** for fostering **maritime cooperation**.

Key Points to Note:

1. **India's Commitment:**
   - IN's participation in **IFR 2025 and Exercise Komodo** aligns with India's **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) initiative**.
2. **Previous Involvement:**
   - IN was part of the **LA PEROUSE exercises** in Indonesia in **January 2025**, with **INS Mumbai and the P-8I aircraft**.
3. **High-Level Engagements:**
   - **Admiral Muhammad Ali, Chief of Staff of the Indonesian Navy**, visited India during the **Republic Day Parade 2025** with **President Prabowo Subianto**.

5) Maldives host the 13th edition of the 'Ekuverin' military exercise

The 13th edition of the joint India-Maldives military exercise 'Ekuverin' is being hosted by **Maldives from 2-15 February 2025**. The inaugural ceremony of the **13th Ekuverin exercise between the Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Forces (MNDF)** was held at the **Official Composite Training Center of the MNDF at Maafilaafushi in Maldives on 2 February 2025.**

About Ekuverin Exercise:

- **Meaning:** 'Ekuverin' translates to 'Friends' in Dhivehi (Maldives' language).
- **Started in:** 2009, aimed to strengthen military ties between India and Maldives.
- **Participants:** Indian Army and MNDF.
- **Frequency & Rotation:** Held alternately in India and the Maldives.
- **Focus:**
  - Counter-insurgency operations.
  - Joint humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.
- **Participants' Level:** Platoon-level contingent from both countries.

6) DRDO Conducts Three Back-to-Back VSHORADS Trials

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully carried out **three successive flight trials of the Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS)** on February 1, 2025, from **the Chandipur test range off the Odisha coast**. These tests were conducted against high-speed aerial targets flying at low altitudes, reinforcing India's air defence capabilities. The trials showcased the missile system's precision, reliability, and effectiveness in neutralizing airborne threats, particularly drones and loitering munitions.

Successful Flight Tests:

- DRDO conducted three consecutive flight trials of the Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) on February 1, 2025, at the Chandipur test range in Odisha.
- The tests targeted high-speed, low-altitude threats simulating drones.

Impressive Interception Capability:

- In all trials, the system successfully intercepted and destroyed the targets, which mimicked low-flying drones with reduced thermal signatures.

Final Deployment Configuration:

- The missile system was tested in its final deployment configuration.
- Two field operators managed weapon readiness, target acquisition, and missile launch.

7) India's Defence Ministry Pilot Study on LAWS

In February 2025, **India's Defence Ministry**, in collaboration with **the Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, conducted a pilot study on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS).** The study is part of India's exploration into **the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in modern warfare**. This is a crucial step in evaluating how AI can be integrated into **India's defense strategy while addressing the ethical, legal, and accountability challenges of employing such advanced systems in military operations.**

Importance of AI in India's Defence:

- **Global Trend:** AI is increasingly becoming a key element in military strategies worldwide, and India recognizes its potential in strengthening its defense capabilities.
- **Autonomy and Efficiency:** AI enables military systems to operate autonomously, which means they can make decisions without constant human oversight. This is particularly valuable for quicker

decision-making in combat scenarios, allowing faster responses to rapidly changing situations.

- **Strategic Autonomy:** For India, AI is essential for maintaining strategic autonomy. In the context of modern warfare, technological superiority is closely tied to military power. AI can help India remain competitive and resilient against evolving threats.
- **Security and Military Superiority:** AI is seen as crucial for India to strengthen its defense technology, improve combat effectiveness, and reduce human intervention in critical military operations.

8) Aero India 2025 – India's Premier Aerospace and Defence Exhibition

Aero India 2025 is set to take place from **February 10–14, 2025**, at **Air Force Station Yelahanka, Bengaluru**. This biennial event is **India's largest aerospace and defence exhibition**, attracting aviation enthusiasts, industry leaders, and defence experts from across the globe. It serves as a dynamic platform for showcasing **military and commercial aviation advancements**.

Event Overview:

- **Dates**: February 10–14, 2025
- **Location**: **Air Force Station Yelahanka**, Bengaluru
- **Key Participants**:
  - Global aerospace manufacturers
  - **Indian Air Force (IAF)** officials and pilots
  - **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**
  - **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**
  - **Union Ministry of Civil Aviation and Space Organisations**
  - **International defence and aviation experts**

9) Joint Military Exercise 'Cyclone 2025' Between India and Egypt Begins in Rajasthan

India and Egypt have launched the **third edition** of their joint military exercise, **Cyclone 2025**, at the **Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan**. The **14-day exercise** is designed to **enhance interoperability** between the **special forces** of both nations while improving **combat readiness in desert warfare**.

Objectives and Focus Areas

The primary goal of **Cyclone 2025** is to strengthen **defense cooperation** between India and Egypt. The exercise focuses on:

- **Counter-terrorism operations**
- **Reconnaissance and raids**
- **Sniping and combat free fall**
- **Surveillance and target designation**
- **Specialized military missions in desert environments**

By operating in the **harsh terrain** of Rajasthan, the forces will refine their **tactical skills**, improve **coordination**, and increase **operational effectiveness** in challenging conditions.

Key Participants: Indian and Egyptian Contingents

Both nations have deployed their **elite special forces** for the exercise:

- **Indian Army – Parachute Regiment (Special Forces)**, experts in **airborne operations** and **rapid deployment**.

- **Egyptian Army** – **Commando Squadron** and **Airborne Platoon**, skilled in **desert warfare** and **counter-terrorism operations**.

The participation of these specialized units highlights the emphasis on **precision, coordination, and combat adaptability**.

10) DRDO-IIT Hyderabad Unveils Large Area Additive Manufacturing System

India's defense and aerospace manufacturing sectors have received **a significant boost with the development of a Large Area** Additive **Manufacturing (LAAM) system at the DRDO-Industry-Academia Centre of Excellence (DIA-CoE) at IIT Hyderabad.** The innovative LAAM system, a collaboration between **IIT Hyderabad, DRDO's Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL),** and various industry partners, is set to revolutionize the way large components, particularly for the aerospace and defense sectors, are fabricated. By enabling the large-scale production of metal parts through additive manufacturing, this achievement paves the way for India's future growth in advanced manufacturing technology.

Overview and Significance:

- **Boost to Defense & Aerospace Manufacturing:**
  The development of the LAAM system represents a major technological advancement for India's defense and aerospace sectors, enabling large-scale production of metal components.

- **Collaborative Effort:**
  The system is a result of a collaborative project between IIT Hyderabad, DRDO's Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL), and multiple industry partners, under the DRDO-Industry-Academia Centre of Excellence (DIA-CoE).

11) Indian Army and IAF Execute 'Winged Raider' in Eastern Theatre

The **Indian Army and the Indian Air Force (IAF)** successfully conducted the **joint military exercise 'Winged Raider'** in the **Eastern Theater**. The exercise focused on **special airborne operations**, improving coordination between the two forces, and **enhancing rapid deployment capabilities** in critical operational zones.

Significance of 'Exercise Winged Raider'

1. **Refining Airborne Insertion Techniques**
   o The drill emphasized **special airborne operations**, crucial for conducting **quick-reaction missions in challenging terrains**.
   o It involved both **fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft**, demonstrating advanced air mobility tactics.

2. **First-Time Use of Chinook Helicopter**
   - This was the **first time the Chinook helicopter** was used for training **troops in airborne operations in the Eastern Theater**.
   - The Chinook's **heavy-lift capabilities** enable the rapid movement of troops and equipment, enhancing operational readiness.

3. **Participation of Special Forces Units**
   - The exercise included **Special Forces troops**, focusing on **rapid deployment, tactical maneuvering, and mission readiness**.
   - Troops practiced **coordinated attacks and swift troop movements**, vital for real-time combat scenarios.

12) HAL's Upgraded Hindustan Jet Trainer 36 Renamed 'Yashas'

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has officially renamed its **Hindustan Jet Trainer (HJT-36)** as **'Yashas'** after significant modifications aimed at **improving its flight characteristics**. The renaming event took place at **Aero India 2025**, marking a new phase in the aircraft's development for **advanced pilot training and operational roles**.

Key Upgrades and Modifications

The 'Yashas' has undergone extensive enhancements to address **departure characteristics and spin resistance**, making it more stable and safer for pilot training. The modifications ensure:

- **Enhanced departure recovery and spin resistance**, allowing for a **wider flight envelope**.
- **State-of-the-art avionics and ultra-modern cockpit**, improving **situational awareness** and training effectiveness.
- **Optimized flight control systems**, making the aircraft more **maneuverable and reliable**.

The unveiling ceremony was led by **Secretary (Defence Production) Sanjeev Kumar**, alongside **HAL Chairman & Managing Director Dr. D K Sunil** and other senior officials.

13) Indian Coast Guard Holds 'Sagar Kavach' Drill for Coastal Security

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) successfully conducted the **'Sagar Kavach' security exercise along the 158 km West Bengal coastline on February 21-22, 2025**. This two-day operation aimed to test and enhance the coastal security mechanism by involving multiple agencies in tackling simulated threats. **The exercise focused on refining Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and strengthening inter-agency coordination to counter potential threats along India's eastern maritime border.**

14) India, Bangladesh Set Up New Border Hotline

The BSF-BGB director general-level talks (Feb 18-20, 2025) led to key agreements on border security and communication. **A new hotline will be set up between BSF's Eastern Command (Kolkata) and BGB (Dhaka) to enhance coordination.** Both nations identified 99 new border patches (70-72 km) for fencing, **while 92 patches (95.8 km) are already under construction**. With 864.48 km of the border still unfenced, efforts will

continue to address security gaps. **BGB committed to stricter action against border crimes, including enhanced night patrolling.**

15) Military Exercise 'Jal-Thal-Raksha 2025' Held at Bet Dwarka

The Indian Army, in collaboration with the Indian Coast Guard and Marine Police, conducted the large-scale military exercise '**Jal-Thal-Raksha 2025' at Bet Dwarka, Gujarat**. The drill focused on island security, combating illegal encroachments, and enhancing coordination between security forces. Key participants included Army units from Ahmedabad & Jamnagar, district administration, Forest Department, Maritime Board, Gujarat Energy Department, and NSG. The exercise featured hovercraft landings, securing critical infrastructure, and simulated responses to security threats, ensuring preparedness against potential risks

16) India Successfully Test Fires Naval Anti-Ship Missile

India has successfully conducted the test-firing of a first-of-its-kind Naval Anti-Ship Missile (NASM-SR) from Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha. The missile was launched from **an Indian Naval Seaking helicopter and successfully demonstrated its precision strike capability**. This achievement marks a significant milestone in India's defense and naval warfare capabilities.

17) Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh Unveils First Edition of 'Sashakt Bharat' Hindi Magazine

In a significant move to promote the use of Hindi in official communications, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh released the first edition of the Ministry of Defence's (MoD) bi-annual Hindi magazine 'Sashakt Bharat'. The launch event took place on February 27, 2025, at South Block, New Delhi. The magazine is an initiative by the **MoD's Department of Official Language and serves as a platform to highlight the patriotism, valour, and sacrifices of the Armed Forces personnel while also discussing key government policies in Hindi**

SCIENCE AND TECH NEWS

1) Euclid Captures a Perfect Einstein Ring

The European Space Agency's (ESA) Euclid telescope, launched on July 1, 2023, **embarked on a six-year mission to explore the dark Universe.** During an initial testing phase in September 2023, **Euclid's scientists** unexpectedly discovered **a rare and nearly perfect Einstein Ring** within **the galaxy NGC 6505, located 590 million light-years away.** This luminous ring was formed by the gravitational lensing of light from a much more distant, yet unnamed, galaxy 4.42 billion light-years away. **This discovery highlights Euclid's immense capabilities in uncovering cosmic secrets and advancing our understanding of gravity, dark matter, and dark energy.**

Overview of the Euclid Mission

- **Launched: July 1, 2023**, by the **European Space Agency (ESA)**.
- **Mission Duration: Six years** (2023–2029).
- **Primary Goal:** To explore the **dark Universe**, focusing on **dark matter, dark energy, and cosmic evolution**.
- **Coverage:** Mapping **one-third of the sky**, capturing **billions of galaxies** up to **10 billion light-years away**.

- **Survey Start Date: February 14, 2024** (official full-scale sky survey).
- **Scientific Importance:**
  - Understanding **the nature of dark matter and dark energy**.
  - Investigating **gravitational lensing effects** to study cosmic structures.
  - Contributing to models of **Universe expansion** and **galaxy evolution**.

2) China to Build First Deepwater 'Space Station' in South China Sea

After years of deliberation and technical evaluations, China has officially approved the construction of a deep-sea research facility **in the strategically significant South China Sea**. The facility, referred to as a **"deep-sea space station,"** will be anchored 2,000 meters (6,560 feet) below the ocean surface. It aims to advance marine exploration and strengthen China's geopolitical presence in the resource-rich region. **Expected to be operational by 2030**, the station will **accommodate six scientists for month-long missions, enabling real-time experiments in extreme underwater conditions.**

Overview of the Project

- China has officially approved the construction of a **deep-sea research facility** in the **South China Sea** after years of deliberation and technical evaluations.
- The facility, referred to as a **"deep-sea space station,"** will be located **2,000 meters (6,560 feet) below the ocean surface**.
- It will be one of the **deepest and most technologically advanced underwater research stations** ever built.
- The project is expected to be **fully operational by 2030**.
- The station will accommodate **six scientists** for **missions lasting up to one month**, allowing for real-time experiments in extreme underwater conditions.

3) Meta's 50,000 km Cable to Boost India-US Digital Connectivity

Meta has launched **Project Waterworth**, a **50,000-kilometer undersea cable initiative** aimed at improving digital connectivity between **India, the United States, South America, and Africa**. The project is expected to enhance **internet speed, reliability, and accessibility** while **future-proofing global digital infrastructure** to support **AI, cloud computing, and digital services**.

What is Meta's Project Waterworth?

- **Project Waterworth** is an ambitious **undersea cable project** by **Meta** aimed at **enhancing global digital connectivity**.
- The project will span **50,000 kilometers**, making it one of the **largest undersea cable networks** globally.
- It will connect **India, the US, Brazil, South Africa, and multiple other regions**, improving internet access across these continents.
- The cable will support **high-speed internet services** for various applications, including:
  - **Social media interactions**.
  - **Cloud computing**.
  - **Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications**.

- Features **picturesque waterfalls** like **Joranda and Barehipani**.
- Part of the **Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve**, which includes **Hadgarh and Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuaries**.
- **Terrain**:
  o Hilly and undulating landscape.
  o Grasslands and **dense forests** dominate the reserve.
  o Surrounded by **high plateaus and rolling hills**.
  o **Highest peaks**: Khairiburu and Meghashini (**1,515 meters above sea level**).

4) TrailGuard AI: Revolutionizing Anti-Poaching Efforts in Wildlife Conservation

The integration of **Artificial Intelligence (AI) in wildlife conservation** has significantly enhanced **anti-poaching strategies**, leading to a substantial reduction in poaching incidents. One of the most impactful innovations in this field is **TrailGuard AI**, an advanced surveillance system designed to detect and prevent illegal activities in protected areas.

A notable example of its successful implementation is the **Similipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha**, where officials have observed remarkable improvements in wildlife protection.

This document provides a **detailed overview** of:

1. **The Similipal Tiger Reserve** – its location, biodiversity, and conservation status.
2. **TrailGuard AI** – its purpose, mechanism, and impact on wildlife protection.
3. **Community engagement and future applications** of AI in conservation.

Similipal Tiger Reserve: A Biodiversity Hotspot

1.1 Location & Geography

- **Situated in Mayurbhanj District, Odisha,** in the northernmost part of the state.
- Covers an extensive **2,750 sq. km**, making it **one of India's largest tiger reserves**.

5) India's Matsya-6000 Successfully Completes Wet Testing for Deep-Sea Exploration

On February 17, 2025, India's 4th-generation deep-ocean submersible **'Matsya-6000'** successfully completed its wet testing at L&T Shipbuilding facility in Kattupalli Port, Chennai (Tamil Nadu, TN).

- It was developed and tested by the **National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)**, Chennai under the **Samudrayaan Project**, and was designed for deep-sea exploration and scientific research.

i. Before undergoing wet testing, Matsya-6000 completed dry tests at a 500 m operational range to assess the integration and performance of the submersible, ensuring its readiness for more advanced trials.
ii. From January 27 to February 12, 2025, Matsya-6000 underwent wet testing at Kattupalli Port, involving 8 dives: **5 unmanned and 3 manned**.
iii. The tests focused on key performance

parameters, such as power control, buoyancy, stability, maneuverability, safety, and the functionality of its scientific instruments.

6) Sunita Williams Sets New Spacewalk Record

Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams has made history by setting a new record for the longest spacewalking time by a woman. With a total of **62 hours and 6 minutes** of spacewalking across **nine spacewalks**, she surpassed the previous record held by **Peggy Whitson**, who logged **60 hours and 21 minutes**. This new achievement occurred during her most recent **extravehicular activity (EVA)** alongside fellow astronaut **Butch Wilmore** on the **International Space Station (ISS)**.

Key Highlights of Williams's Record-Breaking Achievement

- **Spacewalk Duration**: The record-breaking spacewalk lasted **5 hours and 26 minutes**, starting at **7:43 am ET** and concluding at **1:09 pm ET**.
- **Purpose of the Spacewalk**: During this EVA, Williams and Wilmore removed **degraded radio communications hardware** and collected **samples** to check for **microorganisms** on the exterior of the ISS.
- **Spacewalking History**: With this accomplishment, Williams now ranks **fourth** on NASA's **all-time spacewalking list**.

Extended Stay on the ISS

- **Launch and Mission**: Williams and Wilmore launched aboard **Boeing's Starliner**

spacecraft in **June 2024** for an **eight-day mission**. However, due to technical issues with the spacecraft, including **helium leaks** and **thruster malfunctions**, the **Starliner** was deemed unsafe for their return.
- **Return Plans**: They are currently awaiting their return to Earth, which is now scheduled for **late March 2025** aboard a **SpaceX spacecraft**.

Williams's Notable Achievements

- **Triathlon in Space**: In 2012, Williams became the first person to complete a **triathlon in space**, using the ISS's exercise equipment to swim, bike, and run in microgravity.
- **Previous Spacewalks**: This recent spacewalk was her **ninth**, while Wilmore completed his **fifth** EVA.

7) Indian Railways Launches 'SwaRail' SuperApp for Seamless Travel

On January 31, 2025, the Ministry of Railways launched the 'SwaRail' SuperApp, aiming to consolidate various **railway services into a single, user-friendly platform**. Currently in **its beta phase, the app is available for download on the Google Play Store and Apple App Store**. The primary objective is to enhance user experience by **integrating multiple services, thereby reducing the need for several separate applications.**

Launch Date and Availability:

- **Launch Date**: January 31, 2025.
- **Platforms**: Available for download on **Google Play Store** and **Apple App Store**.
- **Current Phase**: Beta testing.

Objective:

- The **SwaRail SuperApp** aims to consolidate various railway services into a single platform to improve the user experience, eliminating the need for multiple apps.

Services Offered by 'SwaRail':

1. **Ticket Bookings**: Both **reserved** and **unreserved ticket reservations**.
2. **Platform and Parcel Bookings**: Enables users to book **platform tickets** and manage **parcel services**.
3. **Train and PNR Inquiries**: Real-time updates on **train schedules** and **PNR statuses**.
4. **Food Ordering**: Allows passengers to **order meals** during their journey.
5. **Rail Madad**: Platform to **lodge complaints** and seek **assistance**.

8) Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla to Pilot Axiom Mission 4 to ISS

In January 2025, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s astronaut and the fighter pilot of Indian Air Force (IAF), **Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla**, has been named the pilot for **Axiom Mission 4(Ax-4), a private spaceflight for International Space Station (ISS).** • With this announcement, he will become the 1st Indian astronaut to go to the ISS on a private mission and also the 1st Indian to go to space in the last 40 years.

Brief Notes:

- **Historic Achievement: Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla**, an astronaut of **ISRO and a fighter pilot with the Indian Air Force (IAF),** has been named the pilot for the Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4) private spaceflight to **the International Space Station (ISS).**
- **Significance:** He will become the first Indian astronaut to participate in a private mission to the ISS and the first Indian to go to space in 40 years.

About Shubhanshu Shukla:

- Commissioned into IAF on June 17, 2006.
- A fighter combat leader and test pilot with over 2,000 flight hours.
- Experienced in flying various aircraft, including Su-30 MKI, MiG-21, MiG-29, and more.
- Promoted to Wing Commander in 2019 and Group Captain in 2024.
- Selected as one of the 4 astronaut-designates for India's Gaganyaan mission.

About Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4):

- A private astronaut mission to the ISS, scheduled for 2025, organized by Axiom Space in collaboration with NASA.
- Axiom Space has contracted SpaceX for transportation to and from the space station.
- The mission will include 14 days of scientific experiments, educational outreach, and commercial activities.
- The mission will launch from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

9) Garuda Aerospace Pledges Rs 100 Crore Investment for India's 1st 'Drone City' in Andhra Pradesh

In January 2025, Chennai-based Garuda Aerospace Private Limited, a leading drone manufacturing company, announced its commitment **to invest Rs 100 crore for**

the development of India's first 'Drone City' in Orvakal village, Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh (AP).

Key Points:

1. **Investment for Drone Innovation**: The proposed Drone City aims to become a hub for drone innovation, Research & Development (R&D), and contribute to transforming India into a global leader in drone technology.
2. **Vision Alignment with National Initiatives**: Agnishwar Jayaprakash, CEO of Garuda Aerospace, stated that the project aligns with the 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' and supports the 'Namo Drone Didi' initiative, which empowers rural women through drone technology.
3. **Regulatory Approvals**: Garuda Aerospace has already received six approvals from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), including Type Certification and Remote Pilot Training Organisation (RPTO) approvals.

10) ISRO's NVS-02 Satellite Faces Orbit-Raising Challenge

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is addressing a significant technical issue with its **NVS-02 navigation satellite,** launched on January 29, 2025, **aboard the GSLV-F15 rocket**. Post-launch, the satellite's solar panels deployed successfully, and communication with ground control was established. However, a malfunctioning valve has prevented the **Liquid Apogee Motor (LAM)** from firing, hindering the satellite's orbit-raising maneuvers. **Consequently, NVS-02 remains in an elliptical Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO)** instead of reaching its designated geostationary orbit.

Overview:

- **Launch Date:** January 29, 2025, aboard the GSLV-F15 rocket.
- **Post-launch:** Successful solar panel deployment and communication with ground control.
- **Issue:** A malfunctioning valve prevented the Liquid Apogee Motor (LAM) from firing, hindering the satellite's orbit-raising maneuvers.

Cause of the Problem:

- The failure of valves to open prevented the oxidizer from reaching the thrusters required for orbit-raising operations.
- The satellite is stuck in an elliptical **Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO)** instead of achieving the desired **geostationary orbit**.

11) India's First AI University to Open in Maharashtra

Maharashtra is set to establish **India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) university**, a significant step in advancing **AI education**, **research**, and **innovation**. A dedicated task force has been formed to plan and implement the project, bringing together experts from **academia**, **industry**, and the **government**.

Key Highlights of the AI University:

Objective and Vision:

- Establish **India's first AI-focused university**.

- Promote **research**, **innovation**, and development in **AI** and related fields.
- Foster stronger collaboration between **industry**, **academia**, and **government**.
- Support technological advancements and **AI policy formulation**.
- Aligns with the **BJP's election manifesto**, which promotes **technology-driven growth**.
- **Role of the Task Force**:

- A **task force** has been created for **planning and implementation**, chaired by the **Principal Secretary of the IT Department**.
- The task force includes experts such as:
    - Directors from **IIT Mumbai** and **IIM Mumbai**.
    - Representatives from **Google India**, **Mahindra Group**, and **L&T**.
    - Officials from the **Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY)**, **Govt. of India**.
    - Experts from **Rajiv Gandhi Science & Technology Commission** and **Data Security Council of India**.

12) ISRO Successfully Conducts Ignition Trial of 'CE20' Cryogenic Engine for LVM3

The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** successfully conducted the **ignition trial of the CE20 cryogenic engine**, which powers the upper stage of the **Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3)**. The engine was **indigenously developed** by the **Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) of ISRO**.

This **high-altitude test** simulated engine ignition in a vacuum condition, a crucial step for ISRO's future missions, including **Gaganyaan**.

Key Highlights of the Ignition Trial

- **Test Location: High Altitude Test Facility, Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu**
- **Technology Tested:** Multi-element igniter for cryogenic engine ignition in a vacuum
- **Purpose:** Simulating **engine ignition in the vacuum conditions of space**
- **Potential Applications:** Future ISRO space missions, including **human spaceflight missions (Gaganyaan)**

13) India Launches Indigenous Biomedical Waste Treatment Plant 'Srjanam' at AIIMS Delhi

In February 2025, **Union Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge, IC) Dr. Jitendra Singh, Ministry of Science and Technology (MoS&T) and the Ministry of Earth Science (MoES),** launched India's first **Indigenous Automated Bio-Medical Waste Treatment Plant (BMWTP)** named **"Srjanam"** at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi (AIIMS New Delhi) in Delhi.

- It was developed by **Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala) based Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) - National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST).**

- It marks a major step forward in the sustainable handling of biomedical waste.
- It replaces costly and energy-intensive incinerators, besides imparting a pleasant fragrance to these foul-smelling toxic waste.

14) ISRO & IIT-M Develop Indigenous RISC-V Controller Chip 'IRIS' for Space Applications

In February 2025, **Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala)-based Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Inertial Systems Unit (IISU)** in partnership with **Chennai (Tamil Nadu, TN)-based Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M)**, indigenously designed & developed a semiconductor chip named **"Indigenous (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) RISC–V Controller for Space Applications (IRIS)"**. IRIS has been built on the SHAKTI processor baseline.

- It is the **3rd SHAKTI-based microprocessor chip**, successfully fabricated in India after **RIMO (2018)** and **MOUSHIK (2020).**

This marks a significant milestone toward self-reliance in space and semiconductor technology, reaffirming India's efforts under the **'Make in India' initiative and 'Atmanirbhar' initiatives**

About SHAKTI Project:

i. The microprocessor project is supported by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) under its 'Digital India RISC-V Microprocessor (DIR-V)' program. It aims to promote the indigenized development of microprocessor-based products.
ii. The project is led by **Dr. Veezhinathan Kamakoti**, Professor at Prathap Subrahmanyam Centre for Digital Intelligence and Secure Hardware

Architecture (PSCDISHA) in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at IIT-M.

15) SpinLaunch's Innovative Satellite Launch Technology

SpinLaunch, a **California-based company**, has developed an innovative method to launch satellites into **low Earth orbit (LEO)** without using traditional rocket fuel.

- **Technology**: The system employs a **ground-based, electric-powered kinetic launch mechanism**, essentially a **massive rotating arm**, to catapult satellites into space.
- **Process**:
  - The satellite is placed inside a **vacuum-sealed centrifuge** and rapidly spun to high speeds.
  - It is then released through a **launch tube**, propelling it toward space.
  - Once the satellite reaches a certain altitude, it activates its own propulsion system to achieve the desired orbit.
- **Support**: SpinLaunch is supported by **NASA**, **Airbus**, and the **U.S. Department of Defense**.
- **Future Plans**: The company plans to launch **satellite constellations** by **2026** for sustainable spaceflight.
- **Benefits**:
  - **Cost-Effective**: Reduces the cost of satellite launches.
  - **Eco-Friendly**: Minimizes environmental impact compared to traditional rocket launches.
- **Leadership**: The **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of SpinLaunch is **Jonathan Yaney**.

16) World's First Kangaroo Embryos Created via IVF

In a **historic scientific breakthrough**, researchers have successfully created **kangaroo embryos** through **in vitro fertilization (IVF)** for the first time. This achievement, led by scientists at the **University of Queensland, Australia**, has the potential to **revolutionize the conservation** of **endangered marsupial species**, helping to protect them from **extinction**. Below is a detailed breakdown of the study and its significance:

Overview of the Breakthrough
- **Achievement**: The first-ever **kangaroo embryos** were developed using **IVF techniques**.
- **Publication**: The study was published in the journal **Reproduction, Fertility and Development**.
- **Lead Researchers**: Scientists at the **University of Queensland, Australia**, led by **Andres Gambini**, a senior lecturer in animal science.
- **Objective**: To develop **reproductive preservation methods** for **endangered marsupials** and expand the use of **IVF** in marsupial reproduction.

17) Microsoft Unveils Magma: The AI Model That Can See, Read, and Take Action in the Real World

Microsoft has introduced Magma, a groundbreaking multimodal AI model capable of understanding both images and language in digital and physical environments. This revolutionary AI model can read, interpret, and act upon real-world tasks, such as navigating applications and controlling robotic movements**. Developed by researchers from Microsoft Research, the University of Maryland, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, KAIST, and the University of Washington**, Magma is the first foundation model capable of interpreting and grounding multimodal inputs within its surroundings.

18) First Astronaut with Disability Cleared for ISS Mission

In a groundbreaking development, **the European Space Agency (ESA) has medically cleared British astronaut John McFall, a former Paralympian with a prosthetic leg, for long-duration missions to the International Space Station (ISS).** This historic decision marks a significant milestone in making space exploration more inclusive**.

19) ISRO Develops World's Largest Vertical Propellant Mixer

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has achieved a significant milestone by developing a 10-tonne **vertical planetary mixer**, the largest of its kind globally, for solid propellant production. **This indigenous mixer, created in collaboration with the Central Manufacturing Technology Institute (CMTI) in Bengaluru**, is set to enhance the efficiency and safety of solid rocket motor manufacturing, **marking a substantial advancement in India's space capabilities.**

20) NASA and SpaceX to Launch Athena to Moon

Athena, a robotic moon lander by Intuitive Machines, is set for launch on February 26, 2025, **aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from NASA's Kennedy Space Center**. This marks **the company's second lunar mission**, following its historic first private moon landing in 2024. Part of NASA's CLPS program, **Athena will analyze lunar soil composition,**

search for subsurface water, and test Nokia's 4G communication system. Targeting Mons Mouton in the Moon's south polar region, the mission aims to support future lunar exploration and habitation.

21) Moon's South Pole: First Detailed Geological Map Unveiled

Indian scientists have achieved a historic breakthrough by creating **the first-ever detailed geological map of the Moon's south pole, using data from the Chandrayaan-3 mission. This new map provides crucial insights into the lunar surface, offering valuable information about the region's topography, crater formations, and geological history**. The research, a collaborative effort between **the Physical Research Laboratory (Ahmedabad), Panjab University (Chandigarh), and ISRO's Laboratory for Electro-Optics Systems,** marks a significant step in understanding the Moon's evolution.

22) Pixxel's Firefly: Revolutionizing India's Space Tech

Bengaluru-based startup Pixxel has marked a historic milestone by launching **India's first private hyperspectral satellite constellation under its Firefly project.** The launch, which took place aboard **SpaceX's Transporter-12** rideshare mission from **Vandenberg Space Force Base, California, signifies a major shift in the Indian space sector,** bringing **private players into a domain traditionally dominated by government agencies.**

23) NASA's Lunar Trailblazer: Mapping the Moon's Water

NASA's Lunar Trailblazer, a small satellite launched **aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 on February 26, aims to map lunar water and analyze its distribution, form,**

and variability in the Moon's shadowed craters, especially at the South Pole. Equipped with HVM3 (NASA JPL) and LTM (University of Oxford) instruments, the mission will provide high-resolution water maps, aiding future lunar exploration and resource utilization. Part of NASA's SIMPLEx program, this low-cost, high-risk mission could help astronauts extract water, oxygen, and fuel, advancing sustainable space travel.

Ranks And Report News

1) India's Renewable Energy Growth and Future Projections (2024-2027)

India's share of renewable energy (RE) is projected to rise from **21% in 2024 to 27% by 2027**. According to the **International Energy Agency (IEA)**, the growth is mainly driven by **solar power**, which is expected to increase by more than **28% between 2025 and 2027**.

- This transition aims to balance **economic growth, energy security, and environmental sustainability** over the next decade.

Key Highlights:

1. From **2018 to 2024**, **wind energy** grew at a **7% compound annual growth rate (CAGR)**, with a forecasted increase to **11% CAGR from 2025 to 2027**.
2. **Hydropower** is expected to grow at a **7% CAGR between 2025 and 2027**, with a **21.1 GW small hydropower potential** identified by the **Central Electricity Authority (CEA)**.
3. In **2024**, **nuclear energy capacity** rose by **13%**, and the government plans to **triple its capacity from 8.2 GW to 22.5 GW by 2032**.

2) India Ranks 96th in Transparency International's 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index; Denmark Retains Top Spot

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

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

i. The 2024 CPI highlights that about **85%** of the world (about **6.8 billion people**) live in countries with high corruption.
ii. **South Sudan** ranked **180th** (score **8**), **Somalia** at **179th** (score **9**), **Venezuela** at **178th** (score **10**), and **Syria** at **177th** (score **12**) are the most corrupt nations, ranking at the bottom.

3) Karnataka Tops Devolution Index 2024 for Empowering Panchayats; Report Released by MoS S.P. Singh Baghel

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

at the **Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi (Delhi).**

- As per the report, **Karnataka ranked 1st** in the devolution of power to panchayats, excelling in terms of **funds, functions, and functionaries**, followed by **Kerala, Tamil Nadu (TN), Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh (UP)**.
- The report was prepared by the **IIPA** and assessed **31 states** and **Union Territories (UTs)**, sampling **172 Panchayats across 68 districts**, with a total of **1,594 respondents interviewed**.

What is the Devolution Index?

i. The **Devolution Index** is the result of thorough research and empirical analysis, offering insights into **decentralization progress** across **States and UTs**.
ii. The Index evaluates **6 critical dimensions**: **Framework, Functions, Finances, Functionaries, Capacity Building, and Accountability** of Panchayats.

4) Yes Bank Leads S&P Global Sustainability Rankings 2025

Yes Bank has been recognized as **India's highest-rated bank** in sustainability for the third consecutive year, according to the **S&P Global Corporate Sustainability Assessment (CSA) 2024 and the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP). With a CSA score of 72/100,** it is the only Indian bank featured in the S&P Global Sustainability Yearbook 2025**, which ranks the top 15% of global banking leaders. Among 7,690 global firms assessed, only 780 made the list.** Yes Bank also retained its A- (Leadership Band) rating from CDP, reflecting excellence in climate risk management and disclosure practices. **The**

CSA assessment covered 1,000 ESG indicators, including climate strategy, financial inclusion, human capital development, and corporate governance.

5) Women Billionaires Global List 2025: Forbes Billionaire List

The net worth of an individual is not just a financial measure; it also reflects influence, innovation, and impact. In today's evolving world, women have emerged as powerful leaders across various industries. They are shaping economies, leading multinational corporations, and breaking barriers in traditionally male-dominated sectors.

According to **Forbes Billionaire List 2024**, women accounted for **13.3%** of the global billionaire population. In 2025, the top ten richest women collectively hold a staggering **net worth of over $500 billion**. These women have made their fortunes through inheritance, strategic investments, and entrepreneurial success. Their rise signifies a **major shift in financial leadership**, breaking historical patterns of male dominance in wealth accumulation.

While most names on the list have remained the same from 2024, **some notable shifts and additions** have been observed in their net worth and rankings.

Rank	Name	Net Worth (USD)	Source of Wealth
1	**Alice Walton**	$112.5 billion	Walmart
2	**Francoise Bettencourt Meyers & Family**	$74.4 billion	L'Oréal
3	**Julia Koch & Family**	$74.2 billion	Koch Industries
4	**Jacqueline Mars**	$42.3 billion	Mars Inc
5	**Rafaela Aponte-Diamant**	$39.0 billion	MSC Group (Mediterranean Shipping Company)
6	**Abigail Johnson**	$36.0 billion	Fidelity Investments
7	**Savitri Jindal & Family**	$32.3 billion	JSW Group
8	**MacKenzie Scott**	$32.3 billion	Amazon
9	**Miriam Adelson & Family**	$31.5 billion	Las Vegas Sands
10	**Marilyn Simons & Family**	$31.0 billion	Hedge Funds

6) Global University Reputation 2025: US Leads, Where Do India Rank?

The Times Higher Education (THE) World Reputation Rankings 2025 evaluates the most prestigious universities worldwide based on academic excellence and global recognition. Harvard University continues to dominate **the rankings for the 14th consecutive year, followed by the University of Oxford and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) sharing the second spot**. This year, four Indian institutions made it to the list, though all witnessed a decline in rankings. **Additionally, Odisha's Shiksha 'O' Anusandhan entered the rankings for the first time in the 201-300 band.**

Indian Universities' Performance

- **IISc Bengaluru** dropped from **101-125 (2023) to 201-300 (2025)**.
- **IIT Delhi** slipped from **151-175 to 201-300 band**.
- **IIT Madras** declined from **176-200 to 201-300 band**.
- **IIT Bombay** was removed from the list (previously in **151-175 band**).
- **Shiksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA), Bhubaneswar**, entered the **201-300 band** for the **first time**.

7) India Retains 3rd Spot in USGBC's LEED Rankings

In **February 2025**, the **United States Green Building Council (USGBC)** released its latest **'Annual list of Top 10 Countries and Regions for Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) in 2024'**.

- **India's Position**: India retained its **3rd spot globally**, with **370 LEED-certified projects** covering **8.50 million Gross Square Meters (GSM)** or **91.5 million square feet (sq. ft.)**.
- **Global Rankings**:
    - **1st**: **China** with **1,860 LEED-certified projects**, covering over **25 million GSM**.
    - **2nd**: **Canada** with **300 projects**, covering **10 million GSM**.
    - **Bottom 5**: **Mexico (6th)**, **Hong Kong SAR (7th)**, **Italy (8th)**, **Brazil (9th)**, and **Turkey (10th)**.
- **Significance**: Reflects India's commitment to achieving the **United Nations (UN)'s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030**.

8) India's Rank in Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2024

Corruption remains a significant global challenge, affecting **governance, democracy, and development. The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2024**, released by Transparency International, ranks **India at 96th position out of 180 countries**, with a score of 38—a decline from 39 in 2023 and 40 in 2022. The CPI evaluates nations based on perceived levels of **public sector corruption, using a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).**

India's Performance in CPI 2024

India's Ranking and Score

- **Rank: 96th out of 180 countries**
- **Score: 38**
- **Declining Trend:**
    - **2024:** 38
    - **2023:** 39
    - **2022:** 40
- **Ranking in Previous Years:**
    - **2023: 93rd**
    - **2022: 85th**

Implications for India

- Indicates a **gradual decline in India's perceived integrity**
- Highlights **growing governance and accountability concerns**
- Need for **stronger anti-corruption measures** in public administration

Global and Regional Rankings

Top 3 Least Corrupt Nations

1. **Denmark** (Score: **90**) – Maintains **1st position**
2. **Finland** (Score: **87**) – Ranked **2nd**
3. **Singapore** (Score: **85**) – Ranked **3rd**

India's Neighbors in CPI 2024

Country	Rank	Score
China	76th	42
Sri Lanka	121st	34
Pakistan	135th	28
Bangladesh	149th	24

- **China (76th, Score 42):** Higher than India, but concerns over political corruption remain.
- **Pakistan (135th, Score 28):** Corruption is a key governance issue.
- **Bangladesh (149th, Score 24):** Struggles with widespread bribery and weak legal enforcement.

9) India's Logistics Performance Sees Major Leap in Global Rankings

India has made significant progress in **logistics efficiency**, securing the **22nd rank in the International Shipments category** and moving up to **38th place overall** among 139 countries. This achievement highlights India's efforts to **modernize infrastructure, implement policy reforms, and integrate advanced technology** to streamline its supply chain operations.

Key Highlights of India's LPI 2023 Ranking

Category	Rank in 2023	Rank in 2018
Overall LPI Ranking	38th	44th
International Shipments	22nd	44th

- **Significant jump in International Shipments rank from 44th (2018) to 22nd (2023)**
- **Overall ranking improved from 44th (2018) to 38th (2023)**

- **India has outperformed major global economies** in port efficiency and logistics improvements

10) NITI Aayog's Policy Report: 'Expanding Quality Higher Education through States and State Public Universities'

NITI Aayog has launched a comprehensive policy report titled **'Expanding Quality Higher Education through States and State Public Universities'**, focusing on **State Public Universities (SPUs)**. This report is **the first of its kind**, providing a **detailed analysis of quality, funding, governance, and employability** in higher education over the past decade. It aligns with **NEP 2020** and the **Viksit Bharat 2047** vision.

1. Launch and Key Stakeholders

- **Released by**:
  - **Suman Bery** (Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog)
  - **Dr. Vinod Kumar Paul** (Member, NITI Aayog)
  - **BVR Subrahmanyam** (CEO, NITI Aayog)
  - **Vineet Joshi** (Secretary, Department of Higher Education - DHE)
  - **Dr. Pankaj Mittal** (Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities - AIU)
- **Significance**:
  - First policy document specifically focusing on **State Public Universities (SPUs)**.
  - Based on **stakeholder consultations** with:
    - **State Government Officials**

- **Vice-Chancellors of 50 SPUs**
- **State Higher Education Councils**

2. Role of State Public Universities (SPUs) in Higher Education

- **SPUs account for 80% of India's higher education system.**
- SPUs must shift from just providing access to **delivering world-class education**.
- As per **NEP 2020, SPU enrolment is expected to reach 7 crore by 2035**.

11) Mukesh Ambani Tops Asia's Wealthiest Families List

Asia's wealthiest families continue to shape the global economy through their presence in **technology, finance, real estate, and energy**. According to **Bloomberg's 2025 rankings**, **Mukesh Ambani and the Ambani family** have retained their position as Asia's **richest business dynasty**, reflecting their sustained dominance in wealth creation.

India emerges prominently in the rankings, with **six Indian families** making it to the **top 20**, highlighting the country's **strong industrial and economic contributions**.

Key Highlights of Bloomberg's 2025 Asia's Richest Families List

1. Mukesh Ambani & Reliance Industries *(Rank 1 – Asia's Richest Family)*

- **Mukesh Ambani** continues to lead as **Asia's richest individual**.
- **Reliance Industries** has diversified into **oil refining, technology, consumer goods, financial services, and green energy**.

Other Indian Families in the Bloomberg 2025 List

2. Shapoorji Pallonji Group (Mistry Family)

- **Major stakeholder in Tata Sons**, managing the **$400 billion Tata Group**.
- The **Mistry family** has played an integral role in shaping **India's corporate landscape**.
- Their construction and real estate businesses are globally recognized.

3. O.P. Jindal Group (Jindal Family)

- **Founded in 1952** with a steel plant, later diversifying into **energy, cement, and sports**.
- The **Jindal family** has expanded across multiple industrial sectors, strengthening India's **manufacturing and infrastructure**.

4. Aditya Birla Group (Birla Family)

- A **business empire dating back to the 19th century**.
- **Kumar Mangalam Birla** leads the group, which has major interests in **metals, financial services, cement, and retail**.
- The group has a **global presence in over 36 countries**.

12) IEA's Report on India's Gas Market Growth by 2030

According to Paris (France)-based **International Energy Agency (IEA)**'s report titled **"India Gas Market Report: Outlook to 2030"**, India's natural gas consumption is expected to increase by nearly **60% to 103 billion cubic meters (bcm) annually by 2030**. This growth will be mainly driven by robust growth in city

gas distribution, industrial demand, and power generation.

- While, **Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) imports** are projected to more than double between **2023 and 2030, to 65 bcm annually**, driven by steady demand growth and a much slower increase in domestic production.
- The key findings of the report were released during the **India Energy Week (IEW)** celebration held in New Delhi, Delhi.

13) Reliance Beats Apple, Ranks 2nd in FutureBrand 2024

- **Reliance Industries Limited** has achieved **a historic milestone by securing the second position in the FutureBrand Index 2024**. This is the first time an Indian company has ranked in the top three of this prestigious global ranking, surpassing major multinational corporations **like Apple, Nike, Disney, Netflix, Microsoft, Intel, and Toyota. Samsung secured the top position in the ranking.**
- Unlike traditional financial rankings, the FutureBrand Index evaluates companies based on brand perception, consumer trust, and influence rather than financial performance. This recognition highlights Reliance's growing global impact and strong brand positioning.

14) India's Smartphone Exports Reach ₹1.5 Trillion, Boosted by PLI Scheme

India's smartphone exports have reached an all-time high of **₹1.55 trillion** in the period from **April 2024 to January 2025**.

- This marks a **56% increase** compared to **₹991.2 billion** in the same period last year.
- The surge in exports is primarily attributed to the **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme**, which has strengthened India's smartphone manufacturing ecosystem.
- Global companies like **Apple and Samsung** are leading the export growth, with Apple contributing nearly **70% of total smartphone exports** from India.
- The Indian government's push for **local production and self-reliance** has played a key role in positioning India as a **major smartphone manufacturing and export hub**.

15) Urban Unemployment Rate Steady at 6.4% in Q3 FY25

The urban unemployment rate in India stood unchanged **at 6.4% in the October-December quarter of FY25, according to the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** released **by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** on February 18, 2025. This follows a slight decline from 6.6% in Q1 FY25 to 6.4% in Q2 FY25, indicating a stable employment scenario in urban areas.

- **Urban unemployment rate** remained **unchanged at 6.4%** in the **October-December quarter of FY25**, as per the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** released by **MoSPI on February 18, 2025**.
- The rate had previously declined from **6.6% in Q1 FY25** to **6.4% in Q2 FY25**, indicating **employment stability** in urban areas.
- The report highlights **gender-specific job trends, youth**

employment levels, and labor force participation rates (LFPR), providing key insights into the urban labor market.

Urban Unemployment Across Gender

Gender	Q2 FY25 (Jul-Sep)	Q3 FY25 (Oct-Dec)	Change
Male Unemployment Rate	5.7%	5.8%	**+0.1%**
Female Unemployment Rate	8.4%	8.1%	**-0.3%**

16) India Tops Global Domestic Flight Load Rankings

India has emerged as the **global leader** in **Passenger Load Factor (PLF)** for domestic flights, with a remarkable **86.4% PLF** in **2024**, surpassing the United States (84.1%) and China (83.2%), according to the latest **International Air Transport Association (IATA)** report.

Key Findings from the IATA Report:

- **India's Domestic Aviation Performance**:

- **Passenger Load Factor (PLF)** in 2024: **86.4%** (highest globally).
- **Domestic Passengers Carried**: **16.3 crore** (as per DGCA data).
- India ranked **ahead of the US** (84.1%) and **China** (83.2%).
- **Performance of Other Major Countries**:

- **Brazil**: 81.9% (4th place).
- **Australia**: 81.8% (5th place).
- **Japan**: 78% (6th place).
- **Global Air Travel Trends in 2024**:

- **Total Air Traffic Growth**: **10.4%** increase over 2023.
- **International Traffic Growth**: **13.6%** compared to 2023.
- **Capacity Increase (ASK)**: **8.7%** in 2024.
- **Overall Global Load Factor**: **83.5%**, setting a new global record.

BOOKS AND AUTHOR NEWS

Book Name	Author	Key Notes
I Am a Soldier's Wife: The Life and Love of Toni Lidder	Geetika Lidder	- Memoir honoring **Brigadier LS Lidder**, a distinguished Indian Army officer. - Highlights his **dedication, compassion, and inspirational character**. - Launched in the presence of **Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi**. - Showcases his **extraordinary humanity and professional grace**.
The New Icon: Savarkar and the Facts	Arun Shourie	- Critically examines the **controversial legacy of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar**. - Challenges historical narratives, similar to the author's **1997 work on B.R. Ambedkar**. - Highlights that **Savarkar lacked political protection**, making the book a **significant contribution to national discourse**.
I Am?	Gopichand P. Hinduja	- Compiled by **Gopichand P. Hinduja**, Chairman of the **Hinduja Group**. - Launched by **Vice President Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar**. - Attended by **political leaders, business magnates, and diplomats**, making it a **prestigious event**.

APPOINTMENT NEWS

S.No	Name	Institution	Other Details
1	Rajesh Nirwan	Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS)	Appointed as Director General (DG) under MoCA
2	Bart De Wever	Belgium Government	Sworn in as Prime Minister on February 3, 2025
3	K Balasubramanian	Citibank	Appointed as India Subcontinent Sub-Cluster and Banking Head
4	Constantine Tassoulas	Greece Government	Elected President of Greece on February 12, 2025
5	Ilie Bolojan	Romania Government	Sworn in as interim President following Klaus Iohannis' resignation
6	Jotham Napat	Vanuatu Government	Elected as Prime Minister unopposed
7	Tulsi Gabbard	U.S. Intelligence Community	Appointed as Director of National Intelligence (DNI)
8	Charanjot Singh Nanda	Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)	Elected as 73rd President for 2025-26
9	Prasanna Kumar D	Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)	Elected as Vice-President for 2025-26

10	Gyanesh Kumar	Election Commission of India (ECI)	Appointed as Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)
11	Prabdev (P.D.) Singh	Standard Chartered Bank	Appointed CEO for India and South Asia
12	Salila Pande	SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd	Appointed MD & CEO, effective April 1, 2025
13	Rekha Gupta	Delhi Government	Sworn in as Chief Minister of Delhi
14	V Anantha Nageswaran	Government of India	Tenure extended as Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) until March 2027
15	Vivek Joshi	Election Commission of India (ECI)	Appointed as Election Commissioner of India
16	Kash Patel	Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), USA	Sworn in as the ninth Director on February 21, 2025
17	Sabyasachi Kar	Institute of Economic Growth (IEG)	Appointed as Director, effective February 6, 2025
18	Fernando Fernandez	Unilever	Appointed as CEO, succeeding Hein Schumacher in March 2025
19	Vijender Gupta	Delhi Legislative Assembly	Elected as Speaker on February 20, 2025
20	Madhukant Pathak	Indian Olympic Association (IOA)	Head of 5-member ad-hoc committee for Boxing Federation of India (BFI)
21	N Chandrasekaran	Ratan Tata Endowment Foundation (RTEF)	Appointed as Head of RTEF
22	Tuhin Kanta Pandey	Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)	Appointed as 11th Chairperson for a three-year term
23	Dorababu Daparti	SBI Life Insurance	Appointed as Deputy CEO, effective February 24, 2025

OBITUARY NEWS

S.No	Person Name	Field	Key Notes
1	**Navin Chawla**	Former Chief Election Commissioner of India	Led the **2009 Lok Sabha elections** and contributed to **electoral reforms**.
2	**Shyam Benegal**	Filmmaker	A **visionary filmmaker** and pioneer of **Indian parallel cinema**. Passed away on **December 23, 2024**, at **90**. Known for **realistic and socially relevant narratives**.

Mobile: 8524008400
WEB:

3	**Acharya Satyendra Das**	Chief Priest	Served as the **chief priest of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple** in Ayodhya for over **six decades**. Passed away at **85** on **February 7, 2024**.
4	**Gyalo Thondup**	Brother of the 14th Dalai Lama	Passed away on **February 8, 2025**, at **97** in **Kalimpong, West Bengal**.
5	**Pandit Prabhakar Karekar**	Hindustani Classical Vocalist	Renowned **Goan classical vocalist**. Known for devotional renditions like *Bolava Vithal Pahava Vithal* and *Vakratund Mahakay*. Passed away at **80** in **Mumbai**.
6	**Sukri Bommagowda**	Renowned Folk Singer, Padma Shri Awardee	A respected **Halakki Vokkaliga** community figure. Celebrated for preserving **folk traditions** through music.
7	**Pratul Mukhopadhyay**	Bengali Vocalist, Composer, and Lyricist	Passed away at **83**. Known for soulful songs like *Ami Banglar Gaan Gai* and *Dinga Bhasao Re*, shaping Bengali music.
8	**C Krishnaveni**	Veteran Telugu Actor and Producer	Passed away at **102** in **Hyderabad**. Introduced legends like **N.T. Rama Rao (NTR)** and **Ghantasala Venkateswara Rao**. Known as an **actor, singer, and producer**.
9	**Milind Rege**	Former Mumbai Cricket Captain	Passed away on **February 19, 2025**, at **76** due to cardiac arrest. Key figure in **Indian domestic cricket**.
10	**Mayadhar Raut**	Renowned Odissi Maestro	Known as the **"Father of Odissi Dance"**. Passed away on **February 22, 2025**, at **92**. A **Padma Shri awardee**, instrumental in the **revival and codification** of **Odissi dance**. Introduced **Sanchari Bhava, Mudra Viniyoga, and Rasa Theory**.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Date	Day/Observance	Theme/Description
February 2	**World Wetlands Day**	*Theme:* "Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future" – Highlights the role of wetlands in biodiversity, climate change mitigation, and sustainable livelihoods.
February 4	**World Cancer Day**	*Theme:* "United by Unique" (2025-2027 campaign) – Emphasizes global unity in addressing cancer and reducing its burden.
February 6	**International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation**	Recognized as a human rights violation affecting millions globally, with severe physical, psychological, and social consequences.
February 10	**World Pulses Day**	Raises awareness of pulses' sustainability, nutritional value, and role in food security and soil fertility.
February 10	**International Day of the Arabian Leopard**	Declared by the UN to highlight the conservation needs of the critically endangered Arabian leopard.

February 11	International Day of Women and Girls in Science	*Theme:* "Unpacking STEM Careers: Her Voice in Science" – Promotes gender equality and women's contributions in STEM fields.
February 11	International Epilepsy Day	Raises awareness about epilepsy, treatment, and challenges faced by patients worldwide.
February 12	National Productivity Day	Organized by the National Productivity Council (NPC) to promote efficiency and innovation in industries and startups.
February 12	Darwin Day	Honors Charles Darwin's contributions to the theory of evolution and encourages scientific thinking.
February 13	World Radio Day	Celebrates radio's role in communication, democracy, and global dialogue. Established by UNESCO in 2011.
February 13	National Women's Day (India)	Honors Sarojini Naidu, a poet and freedom fighter, recognizing her contributions to women's rights.
February 15 (Third Saturday of February)	World Pangolin Day	Raises awareness about pangolin conservation, as they are the world's most trafficked mammals.
February 15	International Childhood Cancer Day	Established by Childhood Cancer International (CCI) to promote awareness, early detection, and medical research.
February 17	Global Tourism Resilience Day	Highlights the importance of a resilient tourism sector in overcoming global challenges.
February 20	World Day of Social Justice	Promotes fairness, equality, and social protection to combat poverty, discrimination, and human rights violations.
February 21	International Mother Language Day	*Theme:* "Silver Jubilee Celebration of International Mother Language Day" – Celebrates 25 years of linguistic diversity and cultural heritage preservation.
February 24	Central Excise Day (India)	Commemorates the Central Excise and Salt Act, 1944, recognizing CBIC's role in tax administration.
February 27	World Protein Day	Raises awareness of protein's role in human nutrition and global food security.
February 27	World NGO Day	*Theme:* "Empowering Grassroots Movements for a Sustainable Future" – Recognizes the role of NGOs in humanitarian aid, education, healthcare, and sustainability.

Mobile: 8524008400
WEB: