

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## January

- TOPIC WISE CURRENT AFFAIRS
- 150 QUESTION FOR PRACTICE
- DETAILED ANALYSIS OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

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# PREFACE

This is our special edition of Current Affairs Magazine for various Central & State level Competitive Examinations, covering content from the month of January 2025.

**The Magazine is divided into three sections:**

## **Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short**

The first section is dedicated to Topic Wise Current Affairs with a short description to provide information about all major happenings this month.

## **Section 2: Practice Questions with Answers**

The Second Section contains 150 Multiple Choice Questions based on daily current affairs.

## **Section 3: Detailed Analysis of important Event**

The Third Section covers some major happenings in this month along with analysis. The content has been covered from various online & offline sources including reputed newspapers like The Hindu, Indian Express etc. All the news topics have been explained keeping in mind their underlying issues. Every issue has been covered comprehensively. Some of the information provided may not be directly relevant for the examination. As the content is very wide, we have only covered a limited set of issues. You can utilize it smartly along with Daily Study of News Papers as well as other sources.



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## Section 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs

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# SECTION 1

## Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short





## 1: Important Days



### Global Family Day : 01 January :-

Global Family Day is observed annually on January 1. In 1997, the United Nations General Assembly established the International Decade for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the World's Children. In 1999, members of the United Nations were formally invited to devote the first day of the year to brainstorming methods to promote peace to the globe. Since then, Global Family Day has been observed every year on the same day. On Global Family Day, we are reminded of the critical role families play in reducing feelings of isolation, promoting a sense of belonging, and offering emotional support.



### World Braille Day : 04 January :-

January 4 is World Braille Day, which commemorates the birth of Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille. The day also acknowledges that people with vision impairments should be entitled to the same human rights as everyone else. In November 2018, the United Nations General Assembly recognized January 4 as World Braille Day. The next year, the inaugural World Braille Day was honored and designated as a global holiday. Braille, a universal code rather than a language, serves as a tool to write and

read in various languages, including Sanskrit, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Spanish, and many others.



### World Day of War Orphans Observed Globally : 06 January :-

World Day of War Orphans was observed on January 6, 2025, to highlight the plight of children who have lost their parents due to war and conflict. The day aims to raise awareness about the challenges faced by these vulnerable children, including displacement, lack of education, and access to healthcare. Various non-governmental organizations and international bodies organized campaigns and fundraisers to support orphaned children and provide them with better opportunities. In India, special programs were conducted in regions affected by conflict to extend support and ensure the protection of children's rights.



### Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti Celebrated Across India : 06 January :-

Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti, marking the birth anniversary of the 10th Sikh Guru, was celebrated with devotion and enthusiasm across the country on January 6, 2025. Known for his spiritual wisdom and valor, Guru Gobind

Singh played a pivotal role in establishing the Khalsa Panth and promoting the principles of equality, justice, and righteousness. Devotees gathered at gurudwaras to participate in prayers, kirtans, and langars. The day is also an occasion to reflect on his teachings of courage, humility, and unwavering faith in the divine. Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended his greetings, urging citizens to draw inspiration from Guru Gobind Singh's life.



#### Earth's Rotations Day : 08 January :-

Every year, January 8 is honored as Earth Rotation Day. This day commemorates the anniversary of French physicist Leon Foucault's 1851 demonstration that the Earth revolves on its axis. We are all aware with the Earth's rotation. It occurs while our planet orbits the sun on a vertical axis. It took philosophers and scientists several years to understand how the Earth moved around the sun. The most prominent one was taken out in 1851 by a French physicist named Leon Foucault. He devised a pendulum to demonstrate the earth's rotation about a fixed axis.



#### Pravasi Bharatiya Divas : 10 January :-

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) has been observed on January 9th every year since 2003 to commemorate the

Overseas Indian community's contribution to India's growth. January 9 was chosen to commemorate this significant event because it was on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa, spearheaded India's freedom movement, and radically transformed the lives of Indians. The Indian diaspora is now over 35.4-million strong, with 19.5 million Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and 15.8 million NRIs. The US and the UAE are home to the largest groups of diaspora, with over 2 million PIOs in the US and more than 3.5 million NRIs in the UAE.



#### 10 January : World Hindi Day :-

World Hindi Day is annually observed on January 10. With around 600 million speakers worldwide, Hindi is one of the most commonly spoken languages, alongside Mandarin, Chinese, and English. On this date in 1949, Hindi was spoken for the first time at the United Nations General Assembly. Vishwa Hindi Diwas was observed for the first time on January 10, 2006, on the orders of then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. It is an occasion to recognise Hindi as a universal language. The theme for World Hindi Day 2025 is "Hindi : The Global Voice of Unity and Cultural Pride."



#### Death Anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri : 11 January :-

Lal Bahadur Shastri was born on October 2nd, 1904 at Mughalsarai, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. He served as the second Prime Minister of India as an independent nation and led the Indian National Congress Party. Shastri was profoundly affected by Mahatma Gandhi and Tilak. On June 9, 1964, Lal Bahadur Shastri became India's Prime Minister. He championed the White Revolution, a nationwide push to boost milk production. He also promoted the Green Revolution, to increase food production in India. Lal Bahadur Shastri died due to a heart attack on 11 January 1966. He was awarded the Bharat Ratna India's highest civilian award posthumously in 1966.



#### **National Youth Day (India) : 12 January :-**

National Youth Day is observed yearly on January 12 to commemorate Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary, who is noted for his contributions to the revival of Hinduism and advocacy for worldwide brotherhood. The government established National Youth Day on January 12 in 1985 to celebrate Vivekananda's vision and emphasis on the role of youth in shaping the country's destiny. This day encourages young people to embrace qualities such as self-discipline, responsibility and spiritual growth.



#### **Makar Sankranti : 14 January :-**

Makar Sankranti is a highly prosperous occasion representing new beginnings and prosperity. It is observed yearly on January 14 and commemorates the Sun's entry into Capricorn (Makara Rashi), signaling the start of longer days and the end of winter. The holiday is observed across the country, with various regional customs such as kite flying in Gujarat, Pongal in Tamil Nadu, and Lohri in Punjab. This year Makar Sankranti will begin on Tuesday, the 14th of January, from 9:03 AM onwards. This festival is associated with the end of winter and the beginning of the harvest season.



#### **Indian Army Day : 15 January :-**

Every year on January 15, the nation comes together to celebrate Army Day. This year, India will commemorate its 77th Army Day. The day is dedicated to remembering veterans and their sacrifices for the country. Army Day also commemorates the moment when Field Marshal Kodandera M Cariappa assumed command of the Indian Army from General FRR Bucher, the final British Commander-in-Chief, in 1949, becoming the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of Independent India. The 77th Army Day celebration theme is "Samarth Bharat, Saksham Sena".





**National Startup Day (India) : 16 January :-**

Every year on January 16th, we commemorate National Startup Day. The day recognizes the innovation, determination, and enthusiasm of startup founders. India has more than 99,000 registered enterprises and a \$500 billion ecosystem, making it the world's third-largest startup cluster. Startup Policy Forum (SPF) has created 'Startup Baithak' and 'Startup Baatchet' to commemorate National Startup Day 2025, in collaboration with DPIIT and Startup India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced January 16 as National Startup Day in 2022 to recognise startups' contributions to the Indian economy.

**World Religion Day 2025 : 19 January :-**

Annually, World Religion Day is celebrated on the third Sunday of January. This year's memorable occasion will be commemorated on January 19. In 1947, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'í Faith held a discourse at Eastland Park Hotel to commemorate the annual World Peace Through World Religion event. Since 1950, it has been known as World Religion Day. This day is observed in many parts of the world and is a brilliant forum to understand different religions, cultures, and mingle with people of different faith.

**Penguin Awareness Day : 20 January :-**

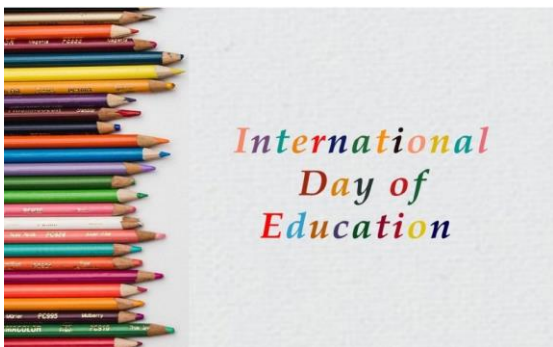
Penguin Awareness Day is observed annually on January 20th in the United States to increase awareness of these animals' activities and wonderful traits. The objective of the day is to raise public awareness about penguins and their habitats. This day emphasizes the need of maintaining penguin habitats in order to encourage penguin conservation worldwide. Because humans typically don't live in penguins' natural habitats, the species' annual population decline goes largely unnoticed. This day is a fantastic effort to increase awareness of this important issue.

**Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti : 23 January :-**

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti is observed yearly on January 23 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Subhas Chandra Bose, one of India's most prominent independence fighters. This day is known as 'Parakram Diwas' and commemorates his tireless efforts in India's independence struggle. In 1927, he was appointed General Secretary of the Congress and collaborated with Jawaharlal Nehru to promote independence. In 1938, he was appointed president of the Indian National Congress. One of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's most notable contributions was the formation of the Indian National Army (INA), also known as the Azad Hind Fauj, during World War II.

**National Girl Child Day (India) : 24 January :-**

National Girl Child Day is marked annually on January 24th, with the goal of engaging the public in establishing a positive atmosphere which supports the girl child. The day promotes equitable opportunity for females in education, healthcare, and nutrition while also raising awareness of the inequalities they experience. celebrates the first anniversary of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Scheme (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child) on January 22, 2015. In 2025, the theme is 'Empowering Girls for a Bright Future.'



#### **International Day Of Education : 24 January :-**

Annually, the world commemorates International Education Day to emphasize the role of education in promoting peace and development. The International Day of Education is observed on January 24 every year. The topic for this year's commemoration is 'AI and education: Preserving human agency in a world of automation.' The theme was chosen to emphasize the growing importance of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation in education and the future workforce. As technology rapidly evolves, AI and automation are transforming industries, economies, and how people live and work.



#### **National Voters Day (India) : 25 January :-**

Since 2011, National Voters' Day (NVD) has been observed on January 25 each year to commemorate the founding day of the Election Commission of India (ECI), which was formed on this date in 1950. The primary goal of the NVD commemoration is to promote, facilitate, and optimize voter enrolment, particularly among new voters. The Day is dedicated to the country's voters and is held to raise awareness about the importance of informed participation in the election process. This Year's National Voters Day theme is "Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure".



#### **National Tourism Day (India) : 25 January :-**

National Tourism Day has been celebrated annually on January 25th to celebrate the authentic essence of colorful India. This day honors the ageless idea of "Atithi Devo Bhava" by emphasizing the transforming effect of travel. It emphasizes how tourism not only drives economic growth, creates jobs, and promotes infrastructural development, but also establishes India as a vibrant global tourism destination, enthralling the globe with its incomparable beauty and culture. The theme for National Tourism Day 2025 is "Tourism for Inclusive Growth."



#### **Republic Day Celebrations Across India : 26 January :-**

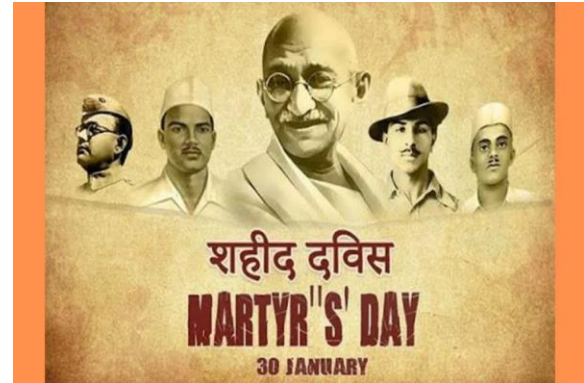
India celebrates its 76th Republic Day today, commemorating the adoption of the Constitution on January 26, 1950. The grand parade in New Delhi at Rajpath (now Kartavya Path) showcases the nation's military might, cultural diversity, and technological advancements. This year's chief guest is President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi of Egypt, marking a significant moment in India's international diplomacy. The parade features tableaux from various states, representing their unique heritage, along with performances by armed forces, schoolchildren, and cultural groups. For the first time, an all-woman contingent of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) participates in the parade, symbolizing the growing role of women in India's defense services. The celebration concludes with a spectacular flypast by the Indian Air Force, enthraling millions of spectators.



#### Indian Newspaper Day : 29 January :-

Every year, we mark Indian Newspaper Day to honor the creation of the country's first printed newspaper. On January 29, 1780, an Irishman founded 'Hicky's Bengal

Gazette,' an English weekly. This day promotes newspapers and encourages people to pick up and read them every day. During British administration, the Hicky's Bengal Gazette was well-known for its news and opinions. It strongly criticised the administration of the then Governor General Warren Hastings and it was important for its journalism and fight for freedom of expression in India.



#### Martyrs Day (India) : 30 January :-

Martyrs' Day, observed on January 30, commemorates Mahatma Gandhi, who was assassinated in 1948. Gandhi was spearheading India's nonviolent independence campaign when he was shot by Nathuram Godse on his way to a prayer meeting at Delhi's Birla Bhawan. His assassination was a terrible event in Indian history, and since then, this day has been marked to honor not only Gandhi but all those who gave their lives for the country's freedom. The day serves as a reminder of their selfless devotion and unwavering patriotism.

## 2: Agreements



#### SJVN signs MoU with Bihar government :-

SJVN Ltd, a state-owned power producer, said that it has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Bihar government to develop the 1,000-MW Hathidah Durgawati Pumped Storage Project (PSP). The project is expected to cost ₹5,663 crore, with a levelized pricing of ₹9.39 per kWh based on February 2024 price levels and assuming a pumping energy rate of ₹3 per kWh. The Pumped Storage Projects development in Bihar



will create direct and indirect employment for 5,000 persons and investment of about ₹10,000 crore.



#### **IIT Madras collaborates with Agriculture Ministry on Project VISTAAR :-**

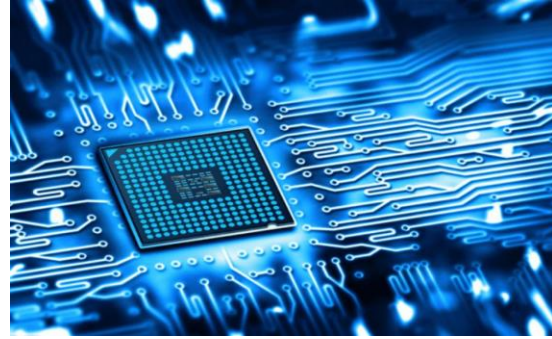
The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) is working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare of India on Project VISTAAR to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of agricultural extension systems through digitization. The pilot project VISTAAR (Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources) seeks to strengthen the agricultural extension system. This initiative will enable farmers and other stakeholders in agriculture and allied sectors to become aware of the capabilities and offerings that start-ups have and ease access to them.



#### **India and Mongolia To Forge Mining Partnership :-**

India is anticipated to execute a preliminary deal with Mongolia on geology and exploration soon, according to a senior Indian government official with firsthand knowledge of the situation. Mongolia is a landlocked country with abundant copper and coking coal deposits, and India relies heavily on imports to meet expanding demand for the red metal used in electricity, construction, and electrical vehicles, as well as coking coal for steelmaking. Companies such as Adani, Hindalco

and Vedanta have expressed an interest in sourcing copper from Mongolia, the source said.



#### **C-DOT and IIT Mandi signs agreement to Develop Wideband Spectrum Sensor Chip :-**

In an important move towards establishing Indigenous state-of-the-art next-generation telecommunications technology, the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), the leading Telecom R&D center of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India, has inked an agreement with the Indian Institute of Technology Mandi (IIT Mandi) in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology Jammu (IIT Jammu), for the development of "Wideband Spectrum-Sensor ASIC-Chip for Enhancing the Spectrum Utilization".



#### **India-U.S. joint Sonobuoy production line expected to be ready by 2027 :-**

According to the US company Ultra Maritime (UM), the final assembly of sonobuoys used to detect submarines underwater would take place in India, with an operational production line slated to be completed in 2027. The equipment will be co-produced in India in collaboration with Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), a defense public sector organization. India and the U.S. announced the "first-of-its-kind partnership on co-production" of U.S. sonobuoys for Undersea Domain Awareness for the Indian Navy, a high-end technology



that allows tracking of submarines in the deep seas and oceans.



#### **NPCI and Magnati Partner to Boost UPI Use in UAE :-**

NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) has established a cooperation with Magnati, a UAE-based payment service provider, to promote QR-based Unified Payments Interface (UPI) merchant payments using point-of-sale (POS) terminals across the Middle East. The collaboration intends to expand the UAE's QR-based merchant payment network by allowing more shops to accept UPI as a payment method from Indian tourists, according to NIPL, the international branch of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).



#### **C-DOT and IIT Bombay Collaborate for Indigenous 6G Optical Chipset :-**

The Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT Bombay) and the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), the top telecom R&D center under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India, have inked an agreement that is a major step towards developing next-generation telecommunications technology. The collaboration focuses on the development of an "Optical Transceiver Chipset for High-Bandwidth 6G Wireless Links" under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) 6G Call for Proposal initiative.



#### **Odisha, Singapore sign MoU to establish FinTech hub in Bhubaneswar :-**

The Government of Odisha's Electronics and IT Department and Singapore's Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN) inked a Memorandum of Understanding to create a Global Competency Centre in Bhubaneswar to promote FinTech collaboration, with the initial focus on developing inclusive and sustainable InsureTech and related areas. Commenting on the MoU, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi stated that Odisha intends to use GFTN's worldwide expertise and resources to foster innovation and produce bespoke Fintech solutions in the state. The initiative marks another positive step commemorating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Singapore in 2025.



#### **Ashapura Minechem signs MoU with China Railway for bauxite project in Guinea :-**

The exporter of bauxite, Ashapura Minechem Ltd., declared that China Railway and its foreign affiliate had signed a long-term memorandum of understanding (MoU). A strategic cooperation to jointly develop the bauxite resource in Guinea's Kindia region is outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding. As per the MoU, China Railway will be responsible for the production of

bauxite and logistic solutions while Ashapura will looking into sales and marketing and technical support, including quality assurance for the project.



#### **Rural Development and Panchayat Raj dept. signs MoU with British Council for GP Arivu Kendras :-**

The British Council, the United Kingdom's international organization for opportunities in education and social relations, and the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish Arivu Kendras in gram panchayats to improve learning the English language among children. "We're taking a decisive step towards ensuring that children in rural Karnataka have access to all high-quality learning resources that inspire curiosity, build skills and open doors to bigger opportunities," Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) Minister Priyank Kharge said in a statement.



#### **Uttarakhand-Iceland Collaborates for Geothermal Energy :-**

In a crucial step toward becoming carbon neutral by 2070, the Uttarakhand government has chosen 40 geothermal sites throughout the state. It has also inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Iceland, the world's leader in geothermal energy. The Uttarakhand government has signed an agreement with

Iceland's Verkis Consulting Engineers for the 'Exploration and Deployment of Geothermal Energy in Uttarakhand'. Chief Minister Dharami joined the event virtually, emphasising the significance of this partnership in promoting renewable energy initiatives in the state.



#### **JSW Group signs MoU with Maharashtra to invest ₹3,00,000 crore in Gadchiroli :-**

The multifaceted JSW Group has declared intentions to invest Rs 3 lakh crore across its companies in three parts of Maharashtra, which includes naxal-infested Gadchiroli. On the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, the conglomerate and the Maharashtra government signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU). The commitment from JSW is a significant step in fulfilling the state's vision to develop Gadchiroli as the 'steel city' of India, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said, adding that the announcement is a clear testament to their confidence in the state's potential.



#### **Reliance Industries signs MoU to invest ₹3.05 lakh crore in Maharashtra :-**

Reliance Industries has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Maharashtra government to devote Rs 3.05 lakh crore in the state's multiple industries, including new energy, retail, hotel, and high-technology manufacturing. This is anticipated to create 3 lakh jobs in the state. The Memorandum of



Understanding was inked on the outskirts of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos. Notably, Maharashtra government has so far signed over 50 MoUs with various business conglomerates at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos.



### **Tripura becomes first North East State to sign MoU with Bhashini for Multi-lingual Governance :-**

The Government of Tripura has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Digital India Bhashini Division (DIBD) of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, under the able leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Prof. Dr. Manik Saha, marking a significant milestone in the state's efforts to increase the use of Tripura's rich regional languages and to facilitate citizen digital participation by using these languages in governance. The MOU signing ceremony was held at Pragna Bhavan in Agartala, during a State Level Workshop- 'Bhashini Rajyam'.

## **3: Appointments**



### **Rajat Verma Appointed CEO of DBS Bank India :-**

DBS has nominated Rajat Verma as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of DBS Bank India, effective March 1, 2025, following permission from the Reserve Bank of India. Verma, currently Head of the Institutional Banking Group (IBG) at DBS Bank India, will take over as CEO when Surojit Shome retires on February 28, 2025. Since becoming CEO of DBS Bank India in 2015, Shome has dramatically expanded the India business, including the establishment of digibank, India's first mobile-only bank, in 2016.



### **Bhuvnesh Kumar Appointed UIDAI CEO :-**

Bhuvnesh Kumar, additional secretary in the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in responsibility of cyber legislation and UIDAI-related matters, has been appointed CEO of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). He is going to continue to hold the two offices. Kumar replaces Amit Agrawal, who was named as secretary of the Department of Pharmaceuticals in December. Bhuvnesh Kumar is an IAS officer from the 1995 batch of Uttar Pradesh cadre. He is a graduate of National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra.



### **Manish Singhal Appointed Secretary General of ASSOCHAM :-**

The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), one of the country's oldest business chambers, has named Manish Singhal as its new Secretary General. Singhal has over 35 years of work experience in both corporate India and chambers of commerce, and previously worked as the Deputy Secretary General of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), according to the news release. His extensive career includes stints with major Indian transnational companies such as Tata Motors, Eicher (Volvo), Tata Auto Comp Systems, Moser Baer India, and BEML.



### **Faiz Ahmed Kidwai Appointed as DGCA Director General :-**

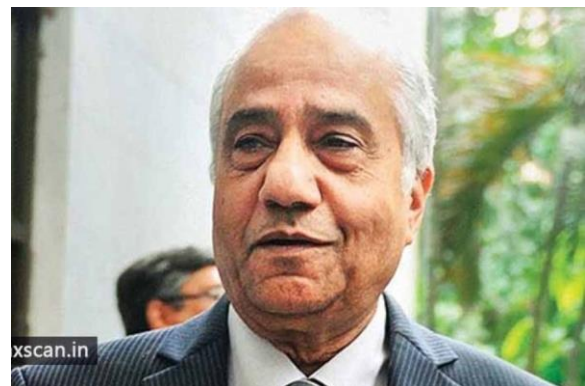
Faiz Ahmed Kidwai has been named the next director general of the DGCA. Kidwai is an IAS officer from Madhya Pradesh's 1996 batch, currently serving as additional secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. Other selections comprise Ashutosh Agnihotri as chairman and managing director of Food Corporation of India, Akash Tripathi as assistant

secretary in the Ministry of Power, and Kamal Kishore Soan as mission director of the Jal Jeevan Mission. Shubha Thakur, a Central Secretariat Service officer, was reassigned from agriculture ministry to serve as additional secretary in the Inter-State Council Secretariat under MHA.



### **Bahadur Singh Sagoo elected new president of Athletics Federation of India :-**

Bahadur Singh Sagoo has been elected as the next president of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI). The Asian Games shot put medalist succeeded the outgoing president, Adille Sumariwalla, at the federation's Annual General Assembly Meeting in Chandigarh. With Sagoo's appointment, Sumariwalla's more than ten-year reign as AFI president comes to an end. The 67-year-old had been AFI president since 2012. Sagoo, a one-time Asian medallist and two-time national champion, won a gold medal in the shot put at the 2002 Busan Asian Games. He also competed in the 2000 and 2004 Olympics.



### **Justice B.N. Srikrishna to Lead Advisory Board of Equal and OneMoney :-**

B. N. Srikrishna, a retired Supreme Court justice, will lead the newly formed Advisory Board of Equal, an ID

verification and data sharing platform. Equal offers identity authentication services to large businesses, with digital integrations with several ID providers. The appointment comes as the government finalizes the Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025, which will implement the DPDP Act, 2023. Justice Srikrishna was the chair of the first committee formed by the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to formulate a data protection law.



#### **M. Rajeshwar Rao to Lead RBI's Monetary Policy Department :-**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a portfolio change for its deputy governors after the retirement of Michael Debabrata Patra, the central bank's most senior deputy governor. Patra's tenure ended on January 15, 2025. According to the most recent assignment of duties, Deputy Governor M Rajeshwar Rao, who is responsible for banking regulation, would be in charge of both the Department of Monetary Policy and the Department of Economics and Policy Research. Meanwhile, Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar has been assigned the Financial Markets Operations Department.



#### **Punjab National Bank and Indian Bank Appoint New MDs and CEOs :-**

The government has named Ashok Chandra as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Punjab National Bank (PNB), and Binod Kumar

as the MD and CEO of Indian Bank. ahead of these promotions, Chandra was an executive director at Canara Bank, and Kumar was an executive director at Punjab National Bank. Kumar (55) has been given a three-year term and will be eligible for an extension of up to two more years, following a performance review. Chandra (57) has also been appointed for a three-year term.



#### **Justice Krishnan Vinod Chandran Joins the Supreme Court:-**

K Vinod Chandran, the former chief justice of the Patna High Court, swore in as a Supreme Court judge. Less than a week after the Supreme Court collegium proposed his ascension to the top court, the Center had previously approved his promotion. The Supreme Court collegium, led by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, recommended on January 7 that Justice Chandran be promoted to the highest court. Justice Chandran, whose parent high court is the Kerala High Court, was appointed as a judge of that high court on November 8, 2011.



#### **Justice (Retd) Arun Mishra appointed as BCCI Ombudsman :-**

Justice Arun Mishra has been designated as the BCCI's Ombudsman and Ethics Officer. Justice Arun Mishra was elected to the Bar Council M.P. position with record votes in 1989 and 1995. In 1998-99, he was elected as



India's youngest Bar Council Chairman. He was appointed Judge of the High Court of Madhya Pradesh on October 25, 1999, and Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court on November 26, 2010. Arun Mishra was also appointed as the Chief Justice of the High Court at Calcutta on December 14, 2012.



#### **Gyanendra Pratap Singh Appointed as CRPF Director General :-**

Gyanendra Pratap Singh, the Assam police chief, has been named Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), according to a cabinet directive. Mr. Singh is a 1991 batch Indian Police Service officer from the Assam-Meghalaya cadre. Senior IPS officer Vitul Kumar has been in command of the force after Anish Dayal Singh's retirement on December 31, 2024. Mr. Singh, who previously worked for the National Investigation Agency (NIA), was sent to Assam as the additional DGP in 2019 during the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) agitation. He later assumed charge as the DGP.



#### **Ambarish Kenghe Appointed Group CEO of Angel One :-**

Following the announcement to the exchange, Angel One appointed Ambarish Kenghe as Group CEO (CEO). He will begin his tenure as CEO in March 2025. Kenghe is a technology and product leader with expertise in financial, e-commerce, and consumer electronics.

Khenge formerly served as Vice President and General Manager of Google Pay APAC, where he helped to expand Google Pay's footprint and advance the UPI ecosystem in India. Before Google, Kenghe served as Chief Product Officer at Myntra.



#### **Justice Alok Aradhe Appointed as Chief Justice of Bombay High Court :-**

Justice Alok Aradhe was ordained in as the Bombay High Court's next Chief Justice at Raj Bhawan in Mumbai. The oath was administered by Maharashtra Governor CP Radhakrishnan to Justice Alok Aradhe. Justice Aradhe follows Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya, who left office on January 17. The ceremony also included Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. Justice Aradhe, who became the Chief Justice of Telangana HC, on July 23 2023, was first appointed the additional judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court in December 2009.



#### **Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya Takes Oath as Chief Justice of Delhi High Court :-**

The Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, VK Saxena, swore in Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyay as the next chief justice of the Delhi High Court. The ceremony was conducted in Raj Niwas, Civil Lines, Delhi, the Lieutenant Governor's official house. On January 14, the Central

Government announced the appointment of Chief Justice Upadhyay as Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court, succeeding Justice Vibhu Bakhru, who is currently acting Chief Justice of the High Court. On January 7 the Supreme Court collegium had recommended his transfer from the Bombay High Court to the Delhi High Court as Chief Justice.



#### **Dhananjay Shukla Becomes ICSI President for 2025 :-**

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) has appointed Dhananjay Shukla as its president for 2025. According to sources, he holds a business and law degree, is an ICSI fellow, and works as a company secretary in Gurugram. Pawan G Chandak, on the other hand, has been appointed as the vice president, with a background in labor laws and welfare. He is also the vice president of the ICSI for the year 2024. With more than 20 years of experience, he has assisted numerous start-up ventures to be established in India by foreign promoters.



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

Reliance Power announced the appointment of Neeraj Parakh as CEO. Parakh's nomination as the company's Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is dependent upon member approval, the statement stated. Parakh joined the Reliance Group in June 2004 as an additional manager in the Central Technical Services team at Reliance Infrastructure (Infra). From his initial focus on planning, project monitoring, technical services, and project execution, he advanced to operations and maintenance roles in both Reliance Power and Reliance Infra.



#### **M. Mohan Appointed as Director of ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre :-**

M Mohan was named the new head of Isro's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) in Valiyamala. This appointment fills the position left by V Narayanan, the former LPSC leader, who became Isro chairman. Mohan was the system leader for the Moon Impact Probe, which successfully landed the Indian flag on the lunar surface during the Chandrayaan-1 mission in 2008. The LPSC in Valiyamala, Thiruvananthapuram, is one of Isro's most important technical institutions, responsible for developing all of Isro's rocket engines, including the Vikas and cryogenic engines.



## 4: Awards



### Southgate, Fry, and Athletes Recognized in 2024 New Year Honours :-

Former England football manager Gareth Southgate and actor Stephen Fry have both been knighted in the New Year Honours list, which also honours Olympic athletes. Keely Hodgkinson, the 800m champion, is one of numerous medalists to receive an MBE following the summer games in Paris. Sadiq Khan, mayor of London, and Andy Street, former mayor of the West Midlands, have also received knighthoods. Other notable names on the 2025 list include musician Myleene Klass, gardener Alan Titchmarsh, and actresses Carey Mulligan and Sarah Lancashire.



### SAIL Earns Great Place to Work Recognition for Second Consecutive Year :-

Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), a Maharatna PSU, has yet again received the renowned 'Great Place to Work' award, this time from January 2025 to January 2026. The Great Place to Work Institute of India gave SAIL its second consecutive certification, following its first from December 2023 to December 2024. This award

recognizes SAIL's effort to creating a pleasant working culture through innovative HR initiatives. Key programs include the Work Other than Workplace (WoW) scheme, flexible timings for urban employees, and self-paced learning platforms like LinkedIn Learning Hub and E-Pathshala.



### Manu Bhaker, Gukesh among four athletes to get Khel Ratna award :-

Manu Bhaker, a double Olympic medalist, has been picked for the Khel Ratna award, alongside chess World Champion D Gukesh, hockey captain Harmanpreet Singh, and Paralympic gold medalist Praveen Kumar, according to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. Swapnil Kusale, who won the rifle 3-position bronze, and Sarabjot Singh, who won the mixed air pistol bronze with Manu at the Paris Olympics, have both been selected for the Arjuna award. Aman Sehrawat, the wrestling bronze medallist from the Paris Games, was also picked for the Arjuna Award.



### Odia Poet Prativa Satpathy to Receive Gangadhar National Award :-

Sambalpur University will present the Gangadhar National Award for Poetry 2023 to renowned Odia poet Prativa Satpathy on the anniversary of its 58th foundation day on January 5. Satpathy, a Sahitya Akademi Award winner, rose to popularity in the 1960s alongside Sesha Janha. Her Odia writings have been translated into other Indian and foreign languages. Named after renowned Odisha poet Gangadhar Meher, the award, instituted by the university in 1989, is presented every year during its foundation day function.



#### **Sai Paranjpye to Receive Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award :-**

Sai Paranjpye, a veteran director-writer noted for slice-of-life films that include "Sparsh", "Chashme Buddoor", "Katha", and "Saaz", will be awarded the Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award at the Ajanta-Ellora International Film Festival (AIFF) 2025. The 10th edition of the film gala is set to take place in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar from January 15 to 19. AIFF chairman Nandkishor Kagliwal, chief mentor Ankushrao Kadam and honorary chairman of AIFF, director Ashutosh Gowariker made the announcement, according to a press release.



#### **Golden Globes 2025 :-**

The Golden Globes 2025 were underway in Beverly Hills, California, where the who's who of Hollywood gathered to honor the best of 2024. The 82nd Golden Globes, hosted by acclaimed comedian Nikki Glaser, marking the first time a woman has hosted the ceremony solo. The French musical criminal comedy Emilia Perez leads the race with a whopping ten nominations. The film won four awards: Best Picture, Best Supporting Actress (Zoe Saldana), Best Non-English Feature, and Best Original Song. While Jeremy Allen White won the Best Actor (Comedy or Musical) for The Bear, Jean Smart took home the Best Actress (Comedy or Musical) prize.



#### **Lionel Messi Honoured with the US Presidential Medal of Freedom :-**

Argentine football ace Lionel Messi became the first men's footballer to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom in the United States, although he did not attend the White House ceremony. The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the highest civilian honor bestowed to those "who have made exemplary contributions to the prosperity, values, or security of the United States, world peace, or other significant societal, public, or private endeavors." The White House statement said that Messi had been given the award as "the most decorated player in the history of professional soccer."



### Women dairy farmers honoured at Southern Dairy Summit 2025 :-

On the third day of the Southern Dairy Summit, five women from the five south Indian states received the 'Best Women Dairy Farmer Award' in Bengaluru. The Indian Dairy Association (IDA) hosted the event at the NIMHANS convention center as an annual celebration of dairy organization cooperation, with K Venkatesh, Minister for Animal Husbandry and Sericulture, serving as the chief guest. The Best Woman Dairy Farmer 2024 was awarded State-wise to Naveena Kumari (Andhra Pradesh), Mangalamma (Karnataka), Vidhu Rajeev (Kerala and Lakshadweep), Pudhaari Gangavva (Telangana), and Selvanayaki (Puducherry).



### Kappad and Chal Beaches Receive Prestigious Blue Flag Certification :-

Kerala's famous Kappad beach in Kozhikode and Chal beach in Kannur have received the prestigious Blue Flag designation from Denmark's Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) for meeting tough environmental and safety criteria, according to a Tourism department statement. Tourism Minister P.A. Mohamed Riyas said the Blue Flag status not only enhances the global appeal of these beaches but also firm up Kerala's reputation as a leading sustainable tourism destination.



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

Aparna Sen, an eminent director, received the 'Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award' at the West Bengal Film Journalists Association's (WBFJA) annual awards ceremony for her contributions to Indian cinema. Sen accepted the award and thanked current Bengali filmmakers for continuing on the history of Bengali cinema. The event saw 'Manik Babur Megh' win Best Bengali Film, and Chandan Sen was named Best Actor for his work in the film. Srijit Mukherji and Debaloy Bhattacharya jointly won Best Director for 'Badami Haynar Kabale' and 'Padatik,' while Mukherji's 'Oti Uttam' earned Special Recognition for Technical Innovation.



### Singapore Confers Honorary Citizenship on Tarun Das :-

Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam has bestowed the country's Honorary Citizen Award on former Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) president Tarun Das in recognition of his outstanding contributions to improving bilateral relations. The Honorary Citizenship Award is the Singapore government's highest accolade for a non-Singaporean. It is awarded to individuals who have made significant impact in fields such as business, science and technology, education, health, arts and culture, and community service.





### Bumrah named ICC Men's Player of Month for December 2024 :-

Indian pace star Jasprit Bumrah has been named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for December 2024, following a succession of outstanding performances during India's tour of Australia. The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced the award, which recognizes Bumrah's dominance against world-class opponents. Bumrah defeated Australia's Pat Cummins and South Africa's Dane Paterson to win the award. Over three grueling Test matches, Bumrah spearheaded India's bowling attack, scalping an impressive 22 wickets at an exceptional average of 14.22, reaffirming his stature as one of the finest bowlers in world cricket.



### Chandigarh University becomes first private university to bag MAKATrophy :-

President Droupadi Murmu presented the famous Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy 2024 to Chandigarh University (CU) during a magnificent ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Deep Inder Singh Sandhu, Senior Managing Director of CU, and Dr Devinder Singh, Pro Vice-Chancellor, accepted the trophy at the National Sports Awards ceremony. This marks the first time a private university has won the MAKATrophy since its inception in 1956-57.



### Urbasi Sinha Wins Gates-Cambridge Impact Prize 2025

Professor Urbasi Sinha of the Raman Research Institute (RRI) in Bengaluru has received the Gates-Cambridge Impact Prize 2025 for her groundbreaking contributions to quantum computing and technology. Sinha, who directs RRI's Quantum Information and Computing (QuIC) lab, is one of eight recipients selected to commemorate the Gates-Cambridge fellowship programme's 25th anniversary. Sinha currently plays a key role in India's National Quantum Mission and helped establish the Open Quantum Institute at CERN in 2024.



### President Approves 139 Padma Awards for 2025 :-

President Droupadi Murmu has approved the conferment of 139 Padma Awards for the year 2025. The list includes seven Padma Vibhushan, 19 Padma Bhushan, and 113 Padma Shri awards. Notably, 23 of the awardees are women, and the list also features 10 individuals from the categories of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI, as well as 13 posthumous awardees. Eminent personalities such as Indian writer M.T. Vasudevan Nair, former chairman of Suzuki Motor Corporation Osamu Suzuki, and singer Sharda Sinha have been honored with the Padma Vibhushan posthumously.



### Melie Kerr Clinches ICC Women's Player of the Year Award :-

Melie Kerr, a New Zealand all-rounder, made history as the first Kiwi to win the coveted Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy, winning the title of ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year for her outstanding performances in 2024. The 24-year-old outperformed her colleagues, defeating Laura Wolvaardt, Chamari Athapaththu, and Annabel Sutherland to win the top award in women's cricket. Kerr is not only the first New Zealander to win the Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy but also the first Kiwi to be recognised as ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year in any category.



#### Hariman Sharma honored with Padma Shri :-

Shri Hariman Sharma, a visionary farmer from Himachal Pradesh, has received the Padma Shri, one of the highest civilian awards, for his revolutionary contribution to Indian agriculture. He created an innovative, self-pollinating, low chilling apple variety called HRMN - 99, which has transformed the country's apple production landscape and made a juicy, nutritious variety more accessible in terms of geography and cost. Unlike commercial apple varieties that require temperate climates and extended chilling hours, HRMN-99 thrives in tropical, sub-tropical, and plain regions with summer temperatures reaching 40-45°C, enabling apple farming in areas where it was previously considered unviable.



#### Doordarshan bags award for voter awareness :-

Doordarshan has received an award in the Electronic Media category for its extensive program on voter awareness and education. Doordarshan has received recognition for its coverage of the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, especially the "Chunav Ka Parv Desh Ka Garv" series. President Droupadi Murmu bestowed the award onto Doordarshan Director-General Kanchan Prasad. Through its creative and inclusive approach, Doordarshan successfully empowered voters throughout the country, especially first-time participants, to contribute to the democratic process.



#### City Union Bank Wins 7 IBA Tech Awards :-

City Union Bank (CUB) earned seven prizes at the 20th Annual Technology Conference, Expo, & Citations 2024, which was held in Mumbai. This is the bank's second consecutive year of receiving accolades in all seven categories at the event. According to a release, the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) gives these awards to acknowledge the top technology suppliers in the banking industry, thereby fostering competition and rewarding innovation in customer service and best practices. The awards were presented by T Rabi Sankar, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), to Vijay Anandh, Executive Director of City Union Bank.



#### Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Honored with Maharaja Hari Singh Award :-



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha was presented with the Maharaja Hari Singh Award during a ceremony in Jammu. The LG accepted the Maharaja Hari Singh Peace and Harmony Award 2024-25 at the Satyam Resort in Jammu. Later in his remarks, LG Sinha paid tribute to the late Devender Singh Rana, who was also honored at the

ceremony. He praised Rana's efforts in promoting peace and harmony, stating that his contributions will always be remembered. LG Sinha highlighted the significant role of Maharaja Hari Singh in integrating Jammu and Kashmir with India.

## 5: Banking



### RBI Introduces Name Lookup for NEFT and RTGS :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has requested that the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) develop a facility that will allow customers using online fund transfer systems, such as RTGS and NEFT, to validate the name of the bank account to which money is being transferred before starting the transaction in order to avoid errors and fraud. All banks that are direct members or sub-members of Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) System and National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) System are advised to offer this facility no later than April 1, 2025, the Reserve Bank said in a circular.



### RBI Reports 98.12% of ₹2,000 Notes Returned :-

According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), by December 31, 2024, 98.12% of the ₹2,000 in circulation as of May 19, 2023, had been returned, while the remaining notes remained legal currency. In an update on the withdrawal of ₹2000 denomination banknotes, the central bank emphasized that as of the end of business on December 31, 2024, the total value of ₹2,000 banknotes in circulation had decreased to ₹6,691 crore, down from ₹3.56 lakh crore as of May 19, 2023, when the withdrawal was announced.



### SBI unveils TAB-based digital onboarding for NRIs' account opening :-

To make it easier for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to open NRE (Non-Resident External) and NRO (Non-Resident Ordinary) accounts, State Bank of India (SBI) has introduced a TAB-based end-to-end digital onboarding process. The largest bank in India stated in a statement that this program, which uses digital tools to improve the effectiveness and simplicity of account opening, will be accessible at all SBI branches in India as well as a few overseas locations. It eliminates the need for physical paperwork, enabling faster account opening both at branches and during customer visits by digitally verifying documents, per the statement.



### **SBI Introduces 'Har Ghar Lakhpati' and 'SBI Patrons' Deposit Schemes :-**

The State Bank of India (SBI) has unveiled two new deposit schemes, 'Har Ghar Lakhpati' and 'SBI Patrons', to give its clients more financial flexibility and better value. SBI has around a 23% market share in deposits. The bank stated that these services demonstrate its commitment to prioritising innovation and empowering individuals. 'Har Ghar Lakhpati' is a pre-calculated recurring deposit system created for consumers who deposit Rs 1,000,000 or its multiples. With this product, customers can focus on planning and saving to achieve their financial goals.



### **RBI adds 8 tons gold to its reserves in November 2024: WGC :-**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) purchased eight tonnes of gold in November 2024, while central banks around the world purchased a total of 53 tonnes of the precious metal throughout the month, based on the most recent World Gold Council (WGC) report. The RBI has, like other central banks, started purchasing gold as a safe-haven asset. The strategy of holding gold is primarily aimed at hedging against inflation and reducing foreign currency

risks, especially in times of uncertainty triggered by geopolitical tensions.



### **RBI Lifts Lending Restrictions on Asirvad Micro Finance and DMI Finance :-**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lifted the regulatory limitations placed on Asirvad Micro Finance Ltd, Chennai, and DMI Finance Private Ltd, New Delhi, with immediate effect. Asirvad Microfinance is Manappuram Finance's microlending arm. Additionally, restrictions on two other non-banking financial organizations (NBFCs), Navi Finserv Pvt Ltd and Arohan Financial Services Ltd, were eased following identical compliance procedures, with orders issued on December 2, 2024 and January 3, 2025, respectively.



### **PNB MetLife Joins Hands with Saraswat Bank for Financial Inclusion :-**

One of India's biggest urban co-ops, Saraswat Co-operative Bank Ltd., and PNB MetLife India Insurance Company Ltd. (PNB MetLife) have established a strategic bancassurance cooperation. By providing a full range of life insurance options, such as savings, protection, retirement, and group plans, to Saraswat Bank's substantial clientele of almost 30 lakh people spread



throughout 302 branches across the country, this partnership seeks to improve financial inclusion. Bancassurance is an insurance distribution model where companies partner with banks to sell insurance policies or products.



#### **RBI Allows Overseas Banks to Open INR Accounts :-**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has permitted overseas branches of banks to create rupee accounts for citizens living outside of India, in the latest step toward the rupee's internationalisation. According to an announcement on the RBI's website, people living outside India would be allowed to complete transactions with individuals living outside the nation using balances in their repatriable rupee accounts, which include special non-resident rupee account and special rupee Vostro account (SRVA). SRVA's were introduced in July 2022 and several foreign banks have since opened such accounts with banks in India.



#### **HSBC India gets RBI approval to open 20 new branches in 20 cities :-**

HSBC India said that it has acquired RBI approval to open 20 new bank branches in 20 strategic locations. According to the statement, these locations were chosen because of their rising wealth pools, and they will serve as additional touchpoints for wealthy, high net worth,

and ultra-high net worth clients with local and international wealth and banking demands. Currently, HSBC has a network of 26 branches across 14 cities in India, including a recently inaugurated 8,300 square-foot branch in Bengaluru – its largest in the country to date.



#### **RBI forms new committee for bank license, chaired by former DG Jain :-**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) established a new standing external advisory group to review proposals for universal banks and small financing banks (SFBs). The committee is chaired by former RBI deputy governor M K Jain and comprises five members. The committee's duration will be three years. RBI said that, "The secretarial support to the committee would be provided by RBI's Department of Regulation." The first committee was formed in March 2021 and was headed by former Deputy Governor Shyamala Gopinath for three years.



#### **Tata AIA Life Insurance launches Shubh Muhurat :-**

Tata AIA Life Insurance introduced 'Shubh Muhurat,' a life insurance option to assist parents in saving for their children's weddings. Jefferies India reported that over 80 lakh marriages were held last year, costing an estimated ₹10.7 lakh crore. Indian weddings often cost around ₹12.5 lakh, which is twice the amount spent on schooling from preschool to graduation. Venky Iyer, Managing

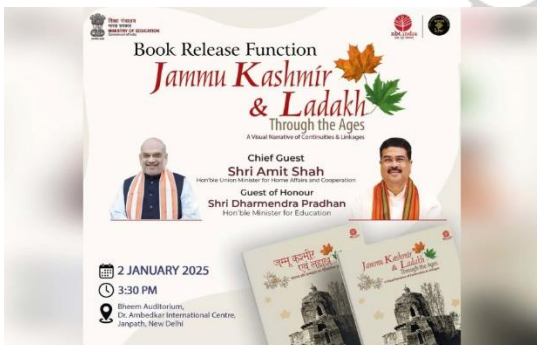
Director and Chief Executive Officer, Tata AIA said a marriage is not only a celebration of love and togetherness but also a testament to family aspirations and Shubh Muhurat intends to help families plan well in advance.



### Skydo Receives RBI Nod as Cross-Border Payment Aggregator :-

Skydo Technologies has got in-principle approval from the RBI to function as a Payment Aggregator-Cross Border (PA-CB). The Bengaluru-based fintech, launched in 2022, services over 12,000 Indian exporters and processes over \$250 million in export payments yearly. The company works with prominent banks worldwide to provide solutions for invoicing, payments, and reconciliation with transparent pricing and no markups on real mid-market FX rates. Skydo's selling propositions are its ease of use with digital onboarding, instant KYC, dedicated customer support, fast settlements, and streamlined regulatory compliance through instant FIRA issuance.

## 6: Books and Author



### Amit Shah, Dharmendra Pradhan launched book documenting story of Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan presented the book "Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh: Through the Ages" in New Delhi. "The book attempts to document the story of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh from a perspective and format that enables an overview for both the subject specialist and those less conversant," an official statement from the Education Ministry said. According to the announcement, the book is the outcome of a collaboration between the National Book Trust of India and the Indian Council of Historical Research. It was published in both Hindi and English.



### Coffee table book on Chikankari launched :-

The Lucknow district administration, in partnership with the Indian Institute of Management (IIM)-Indore, has published a coffee table book that spotlights Chikankari goods, which are an important component of Lucknow's cultural history. "Building on recently submitted report, "Strategies for Strengthening Systems and Processes, Marketing and Branding of Chikankari Fabrics", the institute has prepared a coffee table book to further celebrate and document the craft," said Lucknow district magistrate Suryapal Gangwar addressing a press conference.





### 17-year-old writer's debut work 'Gasoline Rainbows' released:-

Joan Liz Joe's initial work, Gasoline Rainbows, a collection of short stories, was unveiled by an esteemed panel consisting of Ministers P Rajeeve and M B Rajesh, MP A A Rahim, and Padma Shri-awardee Dr Jose Chacko Periappuram at an exclusive gathering at the Reccaa Club in Kakkanad, Kochi. Meanwhile, Rajesh, who published the book, complimented Joan for taking such a significant step at such a young age. A close friend of the author's parents, the minister also hailed Jianna Bridget Joe, Joan's sister, for contributing artwork for the book.



### Book on marathons organised in Karunanidhi's memory released :-

The book Guinness Kalaigal, authored by Health Minister Ma. Subramanian, was unveiled by Water Resources Minister and DMK general secretary Duraimurugan at the 48th Chennai Book Fair, which took place on the YMCA premises at Nandanam. Former Director-General of Police (DGP) C. Sylendra Babu was the first to receive a copy of the Tamil edition, while global chess champion D. Gukesh received the English version. Mr. Subramanian said his book detailed the marathon events he organised in the memory of late Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, and was also a handbook of the late DMK leader's life history.



### Book on the lives and history of Indians in Fiji released on Pravasi Bharatiya Divas :-

Rekha Chaturvedi, an author and academic, launched her book "Fiji Mein Bhartiyaon Ka Itihas Tatha Unka Jeevan (1879-1947)" on Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. According to the author, the book provides a detailed account of the life and hardships of Indian indentured labourers. The book is a call to recognize and honor the sacrifices of the Indian diaspora, making sure that their tales be preserved for future generations, she said. This book, published by Sasta Sahitya Mandal, brings to the fore the indenture of these labour forces in services and their inhuman treatment and living conditions on the island nation of Fiji.



### Hindu Group Released Book "Thiruvallikeni – Divine Abode Of Lord Parthasarathy" In Chennai :-

Nirmala Lakshman, Chairperson of The Hindu Group Publishing Private Limited, released a book on Triplicane's Sri Parthasarathy Perumal Temple as part of The Hindu Group's Shrine Series in Chennai. The book, titled Thiruvallikeni - Divine Abode of Lord Parthasarathy, includes well-researched pieces on the temple's history, puranic narratives, and magnificent photographs taken over the years by The Hindu's photographer. The temple is unique in many ways — it has five deities, all of whom have been praised in the Nalayira Divya Prabandham.



### Vice President Releases Book on Parliament's Rights and Privileges :-

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar released Dr. K.S. Chauhan's book, "Parliament: Powers, Functions, and Privileges: A Comparative Constitutional Perspective". During the event, Dhankhar praised the author's commitment and tireless efforts in researching the complex role of Parliament in a democracy. The book sheds light on Parliament's function and obligations, particularly in government oversight. It discusses the importance of dialogue, debate, and deliberation in ensuring accountability.



### Book exploring rich culture and history of Tamils released :-

The book, The Tamils: A Portrait of a Community, authored by Nirmala Lakshman, Chairperson of The Hindu Group Publishing Private Limited, was launched in front of a crowd of distinguished researchers, journalists, academics, artists, and Chennai's who's who. Gopalkrishna Gandhi, the former governor of West Bengal, released the book. Ms. Lakshman explained how the book came to be, stating that she wanted to share her personal thoughts and learnings about Tamil culture, history, and literature with an audience in this region as well as non-Tamil speakers overseas.



### Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh Has Released Book On Pollution, Health :-

Dr Jitendra Singh, the Union Minister of Science and Technology, has issued a book titled 'Pollution & Health'. Dr Vitull Gupta's book includes chapters by a number of medical specialists, including Drs Jyotirmay Pal, V Mohan, Milind Nadkar, Shashank Joshi, Mangesh Tiwaskar, and Banshi Saboo. The book was produced by the Physicians Research Foundation, which is part of the Association of Physicians of India. Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh lauded the efforts of Prof. Dr. Vitull K. Gupta and his team for their work on the monograph Pollution and Health, describing it as a unique contribution to addressing a critical public health issue.



### Kiran Bedi's book 'Fearless Governance' released in Punjabi :-

Kiran Bedi, former lieutenant governor of Puducherry, has released the Punjabi translation of her book 'Fearless Governance' at her alma mater, Saroop Rani Government College in Amritsar. The book, named 'Nidar Prashasan' in Punjabi, is centered on Bedi's ground realities from nearly five years of service as LG and her 40-year career in the Indian Police Service (IPS). Bedi, the first woman IPS of India, was accompanied by senior journalist Arvind Chhabra, who translated the book into



Punjabi and retired principal Urmil Khairah, who was one of her mentors during her graduation years at the book release event.



### **Book "Legal First Aid" By Legal Expert Sunil Kumar Pathak Launched :-**

Sunil Kumar Pathak, a legal expert, launched his book "Legal First Aid" at the India International Centre (IIC)'s multipurpose hall in New Delhi. Dr. Lalit Bhasin, President of Indian Law Firms and past President of the Bar Association of India, was the event's Chief Guest. Dr. Pinky Anand underlined the common man's limited access to courts, which is exacerbated by a shortage of legal awareness. She stated that having a basic understanding of the law is crucial, and a book like this can be immensely helpful.

## **7: Defence**



### **India's Defence Exports Cross Rs 21,000 Crore : Rajnath Singh :-**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh stated that India's defence exports had risen to a record Rs 21,000 crore from Rs 2,000 crore a decade earlier. Singh told commanders at the Army War College (AWC) in Mhow Cantonment, which is over two centuries old, that a target of Rs 50,000 crore in defence exports had been set for 2029. He stated that mastering frontier technology is essential in today's ever-changing world, and that military training facilities play an important role in equipping and preparing personnel to face future challenges.



### **Vitul Kumar Appointed Officiating DG of CRPF :-**

Vitul Kumar, a senior IPS official, took over as Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) after former Anish Dayal Singh retired. Kumar, a 1993 batch IPS officer from the Uttar Pradesh cadre, is currently the CRPF's Special Director General. The competent authority has cleared Vitul Kumar to assume the officiating responsibility for the post of DG, CRPF, upon the retirement of Anish Dayal Singh, a 1988 batch Manipur cadre IPS officer, on December 31, 2024, till the appointment of a regular incumbent or until further order, whichever comes first.



### Defence Ministry declares 2025 as 'year of reforms' :-

The Defence Ministry has designated 2025 as the year of reforms, with the goal of facilitating the development of integrated theater commands to strengthen collaboration across the three services. The reforms would be implemented to transform the armed forces into a technologically advanced combat force capable of multi-domain coordinated operations, according to the statement. The ministry said the focus in 2025 will be on new domains such as cyber and space, emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, hypersonic and robotics.



### Defence Ministry Signs Rs 2,867 Crore Contracts to Strengthen Submarine Capabilities :-

In a key step toward boosting India's naval defence, the Ministry of Defence inked two large contracts totaling Rs 2,867 crore with Mumbai-based Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited and Naval Group, France. These agreements aim to improve the capabilities of the Indian Navy's submarines, particularly the Kalvari-Class, by utilizing sophisticated technology such as Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) and Electronic Heavy Weight Torpedo (EHWT) systems. The contracts were

signed in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh at a ceremony held in New Delhi.



### Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra Assumes Command of IAF's Western Air Command :-

Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra assumed the coveted position of heading the Indian Air Force's (IAF) Western Air Command, which is responsible for the defense of India's western borders. Air Marshal Mishra joined the Indian Air Force as a fighter pilot in December 1986 and has earned over 3000 flight hours during his three-decade service. A graduate of the National Defence Academy in Pune, Mishra has also attended several esteemed institutions, including the Air Force Test Pilots School in Bangalore, the Air Command and Staff College in the USA, and the Royal College of Defence Studies in the UK.



### Aero India 2025 : 10 TO 14 February 2025 :-

Aero India 2025 is one of the most anticipated airshows, not just in India, but around the world. The event will take held from February 10 to 14, 2025, at the Air Force Station Yelahanka in Bengaluru, Karnataka. It's a prominent biennial event that include both military and civilian aircraft. During the event, some ground-breaking



advances in aerospace and defense technologies are also displayed. The grand event promises to bring together aviation enthusiasts, industry professionals, and the general public for thrilling air displays and exhibitions.



#### **Army to display six marching contingents, 19 bands at Republic Day parade :-**

The Indian Army is preparing to put on a stunning display of power, heritage, and technical innovation during the 76th Republic Day parade on January 26. The Army will deploy six marching contingents, each symbolizing the courage and history of their regiment. The Army's aviation capabilities will also be on show, with two Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) and four Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH-WSI). Additionally, 11 military bands and 8 pipe and drum bands will fill the air with rousing tunes. For the first time in the Republic Day's history, the Army's contingent will also feature the United Nations (UN) flag.



#### **Army Day Parade to be held in Pune on Jan 15 :-**

The Southern Command will host the Army Day Parade 2025 at Pune on January 15. The 'Know Your Army Mela 2025' was held at the Royal Western India Turf Club (RWITC) from January 3 to January 5. According to the Southern Command, the city will host the Army Day

Parade, a cornerstone of India's military celebrations, for the first time in history. The parade is poised to showcase the evolving capabilities of the Indian army while highlighting inclusivity, tech innovation, and a deep connection with the nation's citizens.



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

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has launched the HIMKAVACH multi-layer clothing system, which is specifically designed to give maximum protection in extreme cold weather situations. The novel clothing system has passed all user trials under genuine operational settings, demonstrating its suitability for military activities in cold weather, particularly in the Himalayas. The HimKavach system is made up of multiple layers, each tailored for insulation, breathability, and comfort. The modular design allows soldiers to add or remove layers depending on the weather.



#### **India Successfully Tests Nag Mk 2 Anti-Tank Missile :-**

India has successfully concluded field evaluation trials of its indigenously built third-generation Anti-Tank Fire-and-Forget Guided Missile Nag Mk 2 at Rajasthan's Pokhran Field Firing Range, according to a Press



Information Bureau release. According to the statement, the missile system successfully hit all assigned targets at both maximum and lowest ranges, effectively certifying its operational range. It added the Nag Missile Carrier version-2 was also evaluated during the trials, confirming the readiness of the complete weapon system for induction into the Indian Army.



#### **PM Modi Commissions INS Surat, Nilgiri, and Vagsheer**

On January 15, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated three sophisticated naval vessels: the INS Surat, the INS Nilgiri, and the INS Vagheer. These three strong submarines represent India's desire for a self-sufficient navy capable of facing difficulties across the Indian Ocean and beyond. By commissioning these three frontline naval combatants, India would boost its ambitions to become a global defense leader while also enhancing its desire for self-reliance. INS Surat is a stealth-guided missile destroyer known for its speed and cutting-edge technology.



#### **DRDO conducts Scramjet Engine Ground Test :-**

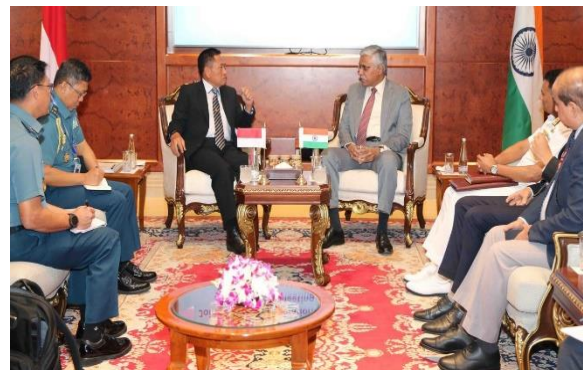
According to the defense ministry, the scramjet combustor has successfully completed a ground test by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), indicating its potential for operational usage in hypersonic missiles. According to a statement from the

ministry, the Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL), a DRDO laboratory located in Hyderabad, has taken the lead in creating a long-duration supersonic combustion ramjet or scramjet driven hypersonic technology. The successful ground test marks a "crucial milestone in developing next-generation hypersonic missiles", the ministry added.



#### **INS Mumbai Joins took part in La Perouse 2025 naval exercise :-**

According to the Navy Spokesperson on January 22, the Indian Navy participated in the sea phase of exercise La Perouse 25 from January 17 to 20 in conjunction with the Royal Navy, Royal Canadian Navy, and French Carrier Strike Group (CSG). The exercise, which aimed to improve maritime security throughout the Indo-Pacific region, involved the Indian Navy's indigenous destroyer, INS Mumbai, and long-range maritime surveillance aircraft, P8I. These operations underscored the coordination between the participating nations and their collective commitment to enhancing maritime security.



#### **India and Indonesia Enhance Defense Cooperation :-**

India and Indonesia have agreed to bolster their defense collaboration through the ratification of the Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) and the initiation of cadet

exchanges between their naval academies. This move aims to strengthen military ties and promote mutual understanding between the two nations. India has committed to supporting Indonesia's ongoing defense modernization programs by sharing expertise and experience. Both countries have affirmed their dedication to deepening cooperation in the defense industry, utilizing the Joint Defense Cooperation Committee (JDCC) as a platform for collaboration.



### Indian Railways to Launch High-Speed Train Corridor Connecting Major Cities :-

On January 28, 2025, Indian Railways announced plans to launch a high-speed train corridor that will connect key metropolitan cities across the country, starting with Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata. The project, aimed at improving long-distance travel efficiency, will include trains capable of reaching speeds of up to 300 km/h, significantly reducing travel times between major urban centers. This initiative is part of the government's ongoing push to modernize India's infrastructure and make rail travel more convenient and sustainable. The new trains will feature state-of-the-art amenities, including Wi-Fi, luxury seating, and eco-friendly designs, ensuring a comfortable travel experience for passengers. The corridor is expected to be operational by the end of 2027, with additional routes planned to link other major cities in the future.

## 8: Economy



### GST Growth Slows to 7.3% in December :-

The pace in monthly GST collection decreased further in December, with gross income rising 7.3% to Rs 1.77 lakh crore. In November, gross revenue rose by 8.5% to Rs 1.85 lakh crore. In the current fiscal year, gross monthly GST income increased by double digits in only three of the nine months. In December, gross revenue from domestic transactions increased by 8.4% to Rs 1.32 lakh crore, while import revenue increased by 3.9% to Rs 44,268 crore. Net GST collection (net of refunds) grew at an even slower pace of 3.3% to Rs 1.54 lakh crore in December.



### Blinkit Launches 10-Minute Ambulance Service in Gurugram :-

According to Blinkit CEO Albinder Dhindsa, the quick-commerce business has started a 10-minute ambulance service in Gurugram and intends to extend it to other Indian cities over the course of the next two years. Medical supplies like oxygen cylinders, AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators), stretchers, monitors, suction machines, emergency medications, and injections would be included in the ambulances, according to Dhindsa. A paramedic, an assistant, and a qualified driver will accompany the ambulance. While the first five

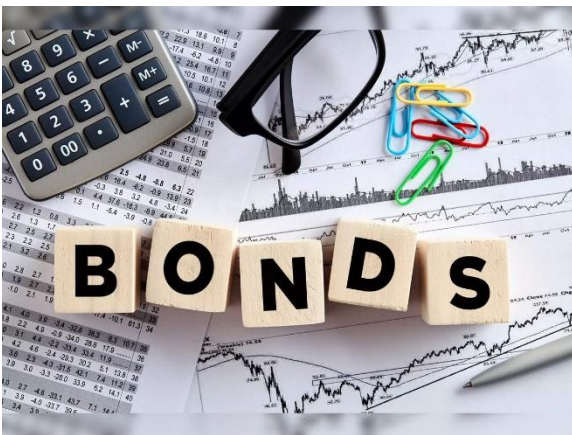


ambulances will immediately take to the roads of Gurugram, more users will be able to book a Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulance through the Blinkit app.



### India Updates GDP Base Year to 2022-23 :-

The government decided in early December to shift the base year for GDP computation from 2011-12 to 2022-23. This step is significant because it seeks to provide a more realistic picture of the present economic framework and better policymaking. A base year is the first of a series of years in an economic or financial index. Typically, it is set to an arbitrary value of 100. Updating base year is important as it guarantees that GDP data reflects the most recent economic activity, consumption trends, and industry contributions.



### Foreign Flows into Indian Bonds Expected to Decline in 2025 :-

After a record-breaking year in 2024, foreign inflows into Indian government bonds are expected to decline in 2025. This comes in the wake of India's inclusion in JPMorgan's emerging market debt index, which had initially attracted significant foreign investment. Analysts attribute the expected slowdown to a combination of

factors, including fluctuating interest rates in India and the US, as well as the movement of the Indian rupee. Market experts emphasize the need for policy measures to maintain the momentum of foreign investments in the bond market.



### BharatPe to Sell 25% Stake in Unity Small Finance Bank

Resilient Innovations, BharatPe's parent company, is looking for investors to sell up to 25% of its 49% investment in Unity Small Finance Bank (Unity SFB). According to insiders familiar with the situation, the company hopes to raise roughly \$800 million. According to sources familiar with the matter, the action is consistent with regulatory requirements to cut its position in the bank to 10% by 2029, regardless of Unity SFB's IPO. BharatPe has appointed Rothschild & Co to facilitate the stake sale.



### HDFC Bank Secures RBI Approval to Acquire Stakes in Peer Banks :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has authorized HDFC Bank, India's largest private financier, to purchase up to a 9.5 percent interest in AU Small Finance Bank within a year of the clearance date. If the transaction is not completed within this time range, the approval will be



voided. In a regulatory filing, AU Small Finance Bank stated that the central bank's letter permits HDFC Bank and its group businesses—which includes HDFC Mutual Fund, HDFC Life Insurance, HDFC Pension Management, HDFC ERGO General Insurance, and HDFC Securities—to jointly buying up to 9.5 percent of AU SFB's paid-up share capital or voting rights.



#### **RBI Approves Merger of National and Cosmos Co-operative Banks :-**

The Reserve Bank of India has authorized the voluntary merging of The National Cooperative Bank Ltd., Bangalore (Karnataka) with Cosmos Co-operative Bank Limited (Maharashtra). The National Co-operative Bank Ltd. branches in Bangalore (Karnataka) will become Cosmos Co-operative Bank Limited branches in Maharashtra beginning January 6, 2025, according to the banking regulator. Mumbai-based Maratha Sahakari Bank (with 7 branches) and Sahebrao Deshmukh Sahakari Bank (with 11 branches) merged into Cosmos Bank in the financial year ended March 2024.



#### **Suzuki's Investment in NDDB's Bio-Gas Venture :-**

Suzuki Motor Corporation has agreed to buy a 26% share in NDDB Mirda Ltd, a bio-gas venture of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), as part of its

intentions to deploy compressed bio-gas (CBG) to improve vehicle longevity and performance. Suzuki had previously sought 49 percent equity in NDDB Mirda Ltd, but the Government of India permitted the company to retain 26 percent. There is also a provision in the deal whereby Suzuki can gradually increase their equity in the company to 49 per cent.



#### **Govt's fiscal deficit target in reach despite lower GDP estimate :-**

According to the National Statistics Office's (NSO) First Advance Estimates, the fiscal deficit for 2024–25 (FY25) might stay within the target even though nominal gross domestic product (GDP) growth was 9.7% less than planned. Experts said the expected miss in reaching the capital expenditure (capex) target set in the Budget Estimates (BE) is likely to make it easier for the government to manage the fiscal deficit at Rs 16.13 trillion, or 4.9 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in FY25.



#### **Satya Nadella unveils Microsoft's largest investment in India :-**

Over the next two years, Microsoft will invest \$3 billion in India to strengthen the nation's cloud and artificial

intelligence capabilities, according to CEO Satya Nadella. The corporation plans to train 10 million Indians in AI skills by 2030 as part of this promise. Additionally, the investment will help meet the rising demand for AI infrastructure and cloud services. Nadella also emphasized the growing AI ecosystem in India, with over 30,500 AI projects currently under development. Last year in February, Microsoft unveiled a skilling initiative in India, aiming to equip 2 million people with AI skills by 2025.



#### **Rupee Hits Record Low of ₹86 Against US Dollar :-**

On January 10, 2025, the rupee fell 14 paise and struck the key 86.00-mark (provisional) against the US dollar for the first time, failing to withstand pressure from a stronger US dollar and a massive outflow of foreign cash. The dollar also rose on increased demand as the new US administration prepares to impose restrictive trade measures once President-elect Donald Trump takes office on January 20, 2025. On January 9, 2025, the rupee gained 5 paise to settle at 85.86 against the U.S. dollar, recovering from the steep decline of 17 paise in the preceding session.



#### **India to Invest ₹50,000 Crore in National Waterways Over 5 Years :-**

The Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC), the country's main authority for policy planning on the inland waterways network, has announced investments totaling more than Rs 50,000 crore over the next five years. The decisions to improve infrastructure along national waterways (NWs) were made at the second IWDC meeting, organized by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) at Kaziranga, according to a release. They include a series of new initiatives across 21 Inland Waterways, worth more than Rs 1,400 crore.



#### **Piyush Goyal Launches Bharat Cleantech Manufacturing Platform :-**

Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, released the 'Bharat Cleantech Manufacturing Platform', which the Centre characterized as a "initiative designed to enhance India's cleantech value chains in the solar, wind, hydrogen, and battery storage sectors". The Minister stated that the inauguration of the Bharat Cleantech Manufacturing Platform will allow Indian enterprises to collaborate and co-innovate. He also said that the initiative will help provide a platform for financing and the exchange of ideas, technologies, and resources.



#### **India's Retail Inflation Drops to 5.22% in December :-**



According to numbers issued by the Ministry of Statistics, India's retail inflation rate, based on the Consumer Price Index, fell to a four-month low of 5.22 percent in December as prices of vegetables, pulses, and sugar plummeted, providing relief to household budgets. Inflation has been progressively dropping since October, when it reached a 14-month high of 6.21 percent. CPI inflation had declined to 5.48 per cent in November. The decline in retail inflation in December was attributed to the easing of the price spiral in key food items.



#### **Wholesale Price Inflation Increases to 2.37% in December 2024 :-**

Wholesale price inflation surged to 2.37 percent in December 2024, driven by a surge in manufactured goods, despite lower food prices, according to government data. In November 2024, the wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation rate was 1.89 percent. It was 0.86% in December 2023. According to the report, food inflation slowed to 8.47 percent in December 2024, down from 8.63 percent in November. Inflation in vegetable stood at 28.65 per cent, as against 28.57 per cent in November. Among food items, cereals, pulses, wheat saw easing in inflation in December.



#### **India approves ₹11,440 crore revival package for Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited :-**

The Union Cabinet authorized a ₹11,440 crore resuscitation scheme for Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the state-owned entity that runs the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. The statement followed a Cabinet meeting headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw outlined the strategy, which involves a ₹10,300 crore equity infusion and the conversion of ₹1,140 crore in working capital loans to preferred share capital. Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister and acknowledged the contributions of those involved in the plant's establishment.



#### **BMW India launches first locally produced EV at Rs 49 lakh :-**

The first domestically built electric automobile, priced at Rs 49 lakh (ex-showroom all India), was introduced by German luxury automaker BMW India. The BMW X1 Long Wheelbase All Electric is manufactured domestically at the BMW Group factory in Chennai. BMW Group India President Vikram Pawah said, "It is the perfect premium SUV for the rising aspirations of new Bharat. As the first 'Make in India' EV from BMW, the X1 Long Wheelbase beacons a new era of innovation and excellence."



#### **Centre introduces 'Entity Locker' for smooth business document management :-**



Building on DigiLocker's success, the government has launched 'Entity Locker,' a new digital platform designed to simplify the management and verification of corporate and organizational records. This secure, cloud-based platform, developed by the National eGovernance Division (NeGD) of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), serves a wide range of entities, including corporations, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), trusts, startup companies, and societies. Entity Locker leverages advanced technology to seamlessly integrate with various government and regulatory systems.



#### **Moody's slashes India's economic growth forecast to 7% for FY25 :-**

Moody's has reduced India's economic growth prediction to 7% for the fiscal year concluding March 2025, a decrease from 8.2% in the fiscal year before that. This change coincides with a broader decline in international and regional economic trends. In its most recent analysis, Moody's noted, "We expect India's economy to grow by 7% in FY 2024 (year to March 2025), down from 8.2% the previous year." However, the strong economy is going to keep fuel premium growth." According to the research, India's GDP per capita at purchasing power parity climbed 11% year on year to \$10,233 in fiscal year 2023.



#### **Bajaj Finance & Bharti Airtel To Unveil Digital Finance Platform :-**

Bajaj Finance has partnered with Bharti Airtel to develop a digital platform for financial services. With this agreement, the telecom operator will gradually provide the majority of the non-banking financial company's (NBFC) retail financial solutions to all of its 370 million consumers. "The platform will service 375 million customers and the over 1.2 million strong distribution network of Airtel through Bajaj Finance's diversified suite of 27 product lines. It will use the distribution heft of more than 5,000 branches and 70,000 field agents," Bajaj Finance said.



#### **Centre Hikes MSP on Jute, Promises 66.8% Returns for farmers :-**

The minimum support price (MSP) for raw jute has been enhanced by Rs 315 for the marketing season 2025-26, to Rs 5,650 per quintal by the Centre. This decision, agreed by the Union Cabinet, is estimated to offer farmers with a return of 66.8% over the all-India average weighted cost of production. Since 2014-15, the MSP for raw jute has climbed 2.35 times. This year's MSP raise exceeds that of the 2024-25 season, with the goal of increasing jute production in India. Last year, the MSP for raw jute was increased by Rs 285, reaching Rs 5,335 per quintal for the 2024-25 season.



### Government Plans Significant Increase in Agriculture Budget :-

The Indian government is poised to announce a 15% hike in the agriculture budget, bringing the total allocation to nearly \$20 billion for the next fiscal year. This marks the largest increase in over six years and reflects the government's commitment to strengthening rural incomes, controlling inflation, and boosting agricultural exports. Key allocations are expected for farm mechanization, crop insurance, irrigation, and research in sustainable farming practices. Experts believe this will play a crucial role in ensuring food security and doubling farmers' incomes by 2025. In addition to budgetary support, the government is expected to unveil policies aimed at modernizing the agricultural supply chain and promoting digital agriculture.



### Major Subsidies to Rise by 8% in Upcoming Budget :-

India plans to increase spending on key subsidies, including food, fertilizer, and cooking gas, by 8%, amounting to \$47.41 billion in the upcoming fiscal year. This decision comes amidst rising global food and energy prices, which have disproportionately affected economically vulnerable populations. The increased allocation aims to stabilize prices of essential commodities, ensure food security, and support small farmers. Special focus will also be given to distributing subsidized LPG to women under the Ujjwala Yojana, a flagship scheme to empower rural households. Analysts note that while the move will provide short-term relief, it may pose fiscal challenges due to the rising subsidy burden.



### Decline in Business Growth Due to Weaker Services Demand :-

India's business activity slowed to a 14-month low in January 2025, primarily due to subdued demand in the services sector. According to the Composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), growth fell to 57.9, down from 59.2 in December 2024. The decline reflects weakened domestic consumption and global economic uncertainty. However, the manufacturing sector remained resilient, supported by strong export orders. Economists have called for targeted fiscal measures to revive consumer demand, especially in urban and semi-urban areas. The report suggests that continued investment in infrastructure and digital technology could help offset these challenges in the long run.



### Reserve Bank of India's Bond Purchases Fuel Speculation of February Rate Cut :-

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) recent decision to purchase government bonds has led investors to anticipate a potential interest rate cut in February. These bond purchases have resulted in a decline in bond yields and, coupled with daily one-day repo auctions, have increased liquidity within the banking system. With the economy projected to slow to a four-year low in the



2024-25 fiscal year, and recent changes in the RBI's rate-setting committee, there is growing expectation that the central bank will focus on supporting economic growth. In the week ending January 17, the RBI purchased bonds worth ₹101.75 billion, marking the first such purchase in over three years. The 10-year bond yields have subsequently fallen to 6.67%, nearing the key repo rate of 6.50%. Analysts anticipate further reductions in the repo rate and possible adjustments to the cash reserve ratio (CRR) in the near future.



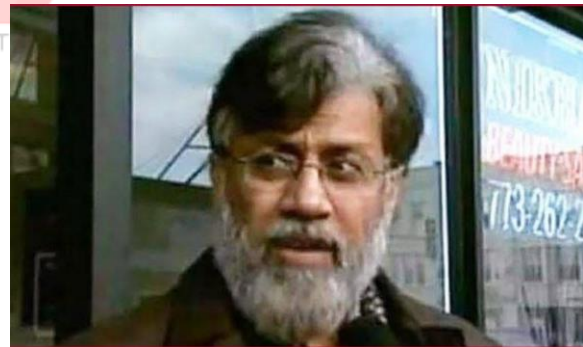
#### **Finance Ministry Seeks Applications for New SEBI Chief**

The Ministry of Finance has initiated the search for a new chairperson for the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), as the current chief, Madhabi Puri Buch, is set to complete her term on February 28, 2025. During her tenure, Buch oversaw significant investigations, including those related to market manipulation and the misuse of tax havens by major conglomerates. The ministry has invited applications with a submission deadline of February 17, outlining a five-year term for the new appointee or until the age of 65, whichever comes first. This leadership transition is anticipated to influence the regulatory landscape of India's financial markets.



#### **India's Banking Sector Faces Challenges Amid Rising Bad Debts :-**

India's banking sector is facing a difficult year in 2025, as rising bad debts continue to plague major financial institutions. The increase in non-performing assets (NPAs) is especially concerning for private banks that have seen a surge in defaults, particularly in unsecured loans like credit cards and personal loans. This financial strain is compounded by a slowdown in economic growth, which has led to a decrease in consumption and credit growth across the country. High inflation and rising interest rates, which the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has maintained to curb inflation, are further complicating the banking sector's efforts to stabilize. These conditions are creating a challenging environment for financial institutions, with experts predicting a tough year ahead unless effective measures are implemented to tackle the growing bad debt problem.



#### **NIA Team to Visit the US for Extradition of 26/11 Mumbai Attack Mastermind :-**

In a major breakthrough in the fight against terrorism, India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) is preparing for a visit to the United States to expedite the extradition of Tahawwur Rana, a key figure involved in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. Rana, who is currently facing charges of conspiracy and aiding the attackers, is expected to face trial in India if the extradition is successful. The United States Supreme Court's recent ruling has cleared the legal barriers that were previously in place, making it possible for the Indian authorities to move forward with the process. This is seen as an important step in delivering justice for the victims of one of the most horrific terrorist attacks in India's history.





### Sell Calls: Top Stock Recommendations for January 28, 2025 :-

January 28, 2025, prominent stock analysts are suggesting specific stocks to sell, based on current market trends. Somil Mehta from Mirae Asset Sharekhan has recommended selling shares of Hindalco at Rs 586, with a target of Rs 540. Hindalco has experienced a breakdown from a key support level, and analysts expect further downward pressure. Similarly, he has also recommended selling Infosys at Rs 1,822, with a target of Rs 1,800. Infosys has faced a technical breakdown and is likely to see further declines in the near term. Investors are advised to carefully monitor their portfolios and consider these recommendations in light of the current market conditions, which are influenced by various

macroeconomic factors such as inflation and global market volatility.



### India, Oman to amend tax treaty, speed up trade pact :-

India and Oman have inked a protocol to alter their Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) and agreed to expedite negotiations for the early signing of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). The pact to revise the DTAA to align it with international cross-border taxation norms, simplify tax procedures, and promote greater tax cooperation was signed during Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal's visit to Muscat. Both countries entered into DTAA way back in 1997.

## 9: International



### US Announces Nearly \$6 Billion in Military and Budget Aid for Ukraine :-

The United States has announced over \$6 billion in military and budget help for Ukraine, as Washington works to deliver assistance before Donald Trump enters office. The impending return of Trump, who has consistently attacked Ukrainian aid, calls into question if American funding would remain at levels close to those

seen under departing President Joe Biden. The package comprises a \$1.25 billion military "drawdown," which allows the Pentagon to pull weapons from US inventories and immediately deploy them to the battlefield. An additional \$1.22 billion will be funded via the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative.



### US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan Visits India :-

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan is on a high-profile visit to India to strengthen bilateral relations. The discussions are centered around enhancing cooperation in critical and emerging technologies, including defense, artificial intelligence, and space exploration. This visit is part of the ongoing efforts to solidify the strategic partnership between the two nations, focusing on shared regional and global priorities. Sullivan is also expected to meet key Indian officials and discuss collaborative strategies to counter security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.



#### Implications of China's Mega-Dam Project on Indian Water Resources :-

China's mega-dam project on the Brahmaputra River has raised significant concerns for India, particularly regarding water availability in northeastern states. Experts warn that the dam could potentially disrupt the flow of water, impacting agriculture, fisheries, and hydropower generation downstream. The project also has implications for regional stability, with fears of water being used as a geopolitical tool. India is exploring diplomatic channels to engage with China and address these challenges, emphasizing the need for transboundary water management frameworks to prevent future conflicts.



#### Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announces decision to step down :-

After nearly a decade in government, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has announced his resignation. Trudeau's career had begun promisingly, with his swift rise to prominence as the son of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. With a landslide win in 2015, he became the second-youngest prime minister in Canadian history. Some of his significant decisions included legalizing cannabis, enacting laws governing voluntary assisted dying, negotiating trade agreements with the United States, implementing climate change policies, and addressing historical injustices suffered by Indigenous people.



#### Indonesia becomes full member of BRICS, Brazil confirms :-

The Brazilian government declared that Indonesia is now a full member of the BRICS. Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and Indonesia are currently members of the alliance, which unites significant growing economies. At the BRICS conference in Johannesburg in 2023, member states unanimously confirmed Indonesia's membership, according to Brazil, which will serve as the organization's 2025 president. However, Indonesia chose to finalise its membership after its presidential election in 2024, which saw President Prabowo Subianto take office in October.



### Lebanon's US-Backed Army Chief Joseph Aoun Elected President :-

Lebanon's army chief, Joseph Aoun, was chosen president, bringing an end to the country's two-year political vacuum. Aoun, 60, is viewed as the candidate endorsed by the United States and regional power Saudi Arabia, putting him as a vital role in stabilizing Lebanon, which is dealing with a severe financial crisis. Following a protracted political impasse, his election is viewed as an attempt to maintain a fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah while also guiding the country toward recovery. Aoun's leadership of the Lebanese army since 2017 has earned him respect as a unifying figure in a country often divided along sectarian lines.



### At least 11 confirmed dead as wildfires rage Los Angeles :-

At least 11 people have died, with fears that the death toll may rise as rescue attempts escalate following deadly wildfires in Los Angeles. The flames, which broke out on January 7, have left communities in shock as they observe the widespread devastation inflicted by the blazing blazes. Firefighters continue to combat the flames in difficult weather, while the strong winds that fuelled the inferno earlier this week have calmed. The disaster has already engulfed over 12,000 homes and structures across a densely populated 25-mile (40 km) area north of downtown Los Angeles.



### Mount Ibu in Indonesia Erupts :-

Mount Ibu on Halmahera island in North Maluku province, eastern Indonesia, recently erupted, spewing hot lava and blowing a cloud of smoke and ash four kilometers (3.1 miles) into the air, according to an official. The volcano remains at the second highest alert level. Ibu is one of Indonesia's most active volcanoes, with more than 2,000 eruptions last year. According to government data, the island of Halmahera had a population of about 700,000 inhabitants in 2022. Last year, Mount Ruang in North Sulawesi province erupted more than half a dozen times, forcing thousands of residents of nearby islands to evacuate.



### India's Jaishankar to Join Trump's Swearing-In Ceremony :-

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will be representing India at Donald Trump's sworn in event as the 47th President of the United States on January 20. "During the visit, EAM will also have meetings with representatives of the incoming administration, as also some other dignitaries visiting the US on that occasion," the foreign affairs ministry said in a statement. Jaishankar's agenda may include PM Narendra Modi's likely travel to the United States, Trump's visit to India, and the Quad Summit, which will be hosted in New Delhi.





**India-Spain Declare 2026 as 'Dual Year' for Culture, Tourism, and AI :-**

During his official visit to Spain, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar stated that 2026 will be a 'dual year' for India and Spain to celebrate culture, tourism, and advances in artificial intelligence. Speaking to the members of the Indian diaspora, Jaishankar recognized their role in projecting a positive image of India around the world and stressed the tremendous potential of India-Spain relations. In his address, Jaishankar described the Indian diaspora as indispensable to fostering stronger bilateral ties, noting their contributions to Spain's economy and society.

**China launches Pakistan's satellite into space :-**

China successfully sent a Pakistani satellite onto space from its Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center. The satellite, PRSC-EO1, was launched by a Long March-2D carrier rocket and successfully entered its planned orbit, according to the state-run Xinhua News Agency. The rocket additionally carried two additional satellites, Tianlu-1 and Lantan-1. This was the 556th flight mission for the Long March carrier rocket series. China has been launching satellites for Pakistan in the last few years broadening their all-weather alliance into the space arena.

**TikTok Suspends Operations Following U.S. Ban :-**

TikTok has formally discontinued its services in the United States, following months of consideration. The social media app, used by 170 million Americans, was shut down just before the federal prohibition was scheduled to go into force. This prohibition comes after Congress passed legislation, approved by President Joe Biden last year, mandating TikTok's Chinese parent company to sell its US business to an approved buyer within nine months. The legislation bars internet hosting services and mobile app marketplaces from making TikTok available to American users.

**Donald Trump Sworn in as 47th President of the United States :-**

Donald Trump ran for a second term in the White House, vowing to halt "four years of American decline" underneath his predecessor Joe Biden and "starting an entirely new era of American strength and prosperity, dignity, and pride." Trump said in an address that was inspiring and uplifting in parts while reiterating some common grievances that the "golden age of America begins right now" and that the country will grow and be respected again. Shortly before Trump was sworn in, his vice-president JD Vance took the oath of office, with his wife Usha Chilukuri Vance and their three children by his side.



### Nigeria Joins BRICS as Partner, Aims for Global Collaboration :-

Nigeria formally joined the group of emerging-market countries known as BRICS, which consists of China, South Africa, India, Russia, and Brazil. The African nation's accession coincides with BRICS's ongoing expansion of power, which has seen recent additions from Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and the United Arab Emirates. Malaysia and Thailand are now included in the group's list of partner nations. With its growing reach, BRICS is seen as a potential challenger to the dominance of the US dollar in global oil and gas trade as per the news agency Bloomberg.



### Usha Vance : 1st Indian-American Second Lady :-

Following her husband J.D. Vance's recent inauguration as the 50th Vice President of the United States, Usha Vance became the first Indian-American and Hindu Second Lady. Usha Vance's coach, Justice Brett Kavanaugh of the Supreme Court, gave her husband the oath. Prior to President Donald Trump taking the oath of office, J.D. Vance was sworn in. Usha Vance is the daughter of Telugu immigrants from India, Radhakrishna "Krish" Chilukuri, an aerospace engineer, and Lakshmi Chilukuri, the provost at the University of California, San Diego.



### Federal Judge Halts Trump's Birthright Citizenship Order :-

In a landmark decision, a federal court temporarily banned President Donald Trump's executive order to redefine birthright citizenship, declaring it "blatantly unconstitutional." The order attempted to deny US citizenship to children born in the nation to unauthorized immigrants by claiming a misinterpretation of the 14th Amendment. This judgment has spawned a surge of court fights and prompted questions about the future of citizenship legislation in the United States. Based on the information in the public domain the 14th Amendment, ratified in 1868, guarantees citizenship to all individuals born on US soil, including those whose parents are immigrants.



### India Joins Eurodrone Program as Observer Nation :-

India has formally joined the MALE RPAS (Medium-Altitude Long-Endurance Remotely Piloted Aircraft System) initiative, often known as the Eurodrone program, as an observer state. The Aeronautical Development Establishment, DRDO, will represent India in the Eurodrone programme. Eurodrone is a four-nation development initiative headed by the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR). India's inclusion in the Eurodrone program makes it the second Asia-Pacific country, after Japan, to gain observer status.

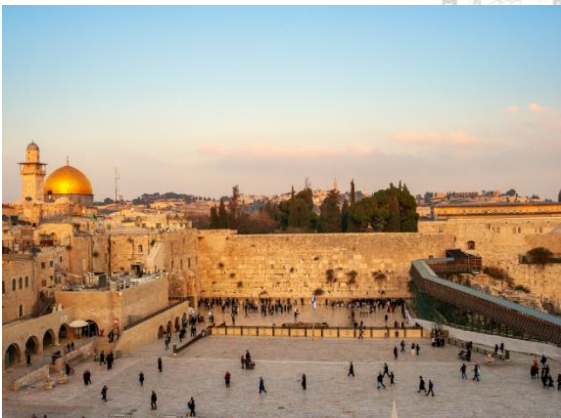


**India and Indonesia Strengthen Bilateral Ties :-**

India and Indonesia have signed a series of agreements aimed at enhancing cooperation in diverse sectors, including health, cultural exchanges, maritime security, and digital transformation. This development comes as part of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two nations. Indonesia's President, Prabowo Subianto, during his visit to New Delhi, highlighted the shared cultural and historical bonds between the countries. Agreements on joint maritime exercises and enhanced trade in pharmaceuticals and digital services were key highlights. Both leaders emphasized the importance of maintaining peace in the Indo-Pacific region and agreed on collaborative efforts to counter global challenges, including climate change and public health crises.

**India Expresses Concern Over China's Plan to Build World's Largest Dam in Tibet :-**

India has raised concerns regarding China's ambitious plan to construct a massive 60-gigawatt dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River in Tibet, near the disputed region of Arunachal Pradesh. The proposed dam, set to be three times the size of the Three Gorges Dam, has sparked apprehension about potential ecological impacts and the future availability of water resources for downstream countries, including India and Bangladesh. Despite China's assurances that the project will not adversely affect downstream nations, skepticism remains. In response, India is considering the development of the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project to mitigate potential flood risks, though this initiative faces local opposition and concerns from neighboring Bangladesh.

**Israel Introduces E-Visa System for Indian Travelers :-**

In a significant development to enhance bilateral tourism, Israel has launched an e-visa system for Indian citizens. Travelers can now apply online for travel authorization, eliminating the need for physical documentation. This system integrates with Israel's Entry Travel Authorization (ETA) platform, ensuring secure and efficient processing. The initiative aims to attract more Indian tourists, particularly in the post-pandemic era, and boost cultural exchanges between the two nations. Israel's tourism ministry has also announced special promotional packages for Indian travelers, focusing on destinations like Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and the Dead Sea.

**China and India Advocate for Enhanced Mutual Understanding :-**

In a recent meeting in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri emphasized the importance of fostering mutual understanding and cooperation between the two nations. Wang Yi called for both countries to work collaboratively, explore substantial measures, and commit to mutual support. He advocated for

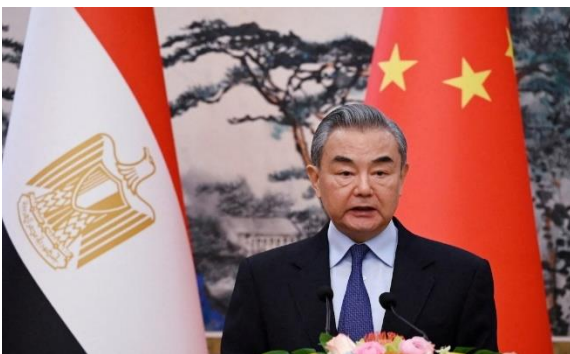


transitioning from suspicion and alienation to a relationship grounded in mutual trust and collaborative effort. This dialogue underscores the ongoing efforts to strengthen diplomatic ties between the two neighboring countries.



#### **External Affairs Minister's Visit to the United Arab Emirates :-**

Dr. S. Jaishankar, India's External Affairs Minister, is undertaking an official visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from January 27 to 29, 2025. During this visit, he is scheduled to meet with UAE leadership to review the close partnership between the two countries and explore avenues to further enhance bilateral relations. Additionally, Dr. Jaishankar will deliver the keynote address at the inaugural session of the Raisina Middle East conference in Abu Dhabi, reflecting India's commitment to engaging with key regional partners on strategic issues.



#### **India and China Agree to Resume Air Travel and Facilitate Journalist Exchanges :-**

In a significant diplomatic development, India and China have agreed to resume direct air travel services after nearly five years of suspension due to border tensions and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This is seen as an important step in improving bilateral relations between

the two nations. In addition to this, both countries have also decided to facilitate the exchange of journalists, which is expected to enhance cultural and information exchange between the two neighboring powers. The resumption of these services and exchanges is viewed as an effort to rebuild trust and cooperation following the 2020 military clashes along the Himalayan border. These steps are seen as part of a broader strategy to reduce tensions and increase mutual understanding between India and China, which have a complex and often strained relationship.



#### **OpenAI Faces Copyright Lawsuit from Indian News Firms :-**

OpenAI is facing a legal challenge from several prominent Indian digital news firms, including outlets owned by billionaires Gautam Adani and Mukesh Ambani, as well as major news agencies such as the Indian Express and Hindustan Times. These companies have filed a lawsuit accusing OpenAI of using their copyrighted content without permission to train its AI models, including ChatGPT. This legal action is based on claims that OpenAI scraped content from their websites without compensating the news firms for its use. The lawsuit adds to the ongoing global debate surrounding the ethical use of copyrighted material by AI companies and could have far-reaching implications for how AI systems are trained and the use of digital content. The outcome of this case may set a precedent for other media companies around the world who are concerned about the use of their intellectual property by AI technologies.



#### India and China to Resume Kailash Mansarovar Yatra :-

In a positive development in India-China relations, the two countries have agreed to resume the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, a religious pilgrimage that has long been a significant point of cultural exchange between the two nations. The pilgrimage, which takes Hindu devotees to the sacred Mount Kailash and Lake Mansarovar in Tibet, had been suspended due to diplomatic tensions and security concerns. However, with the new agreement, the yatra is set to resume in 2025, marking a symbolic step towards mending ties and enhancing people-to-people connections. The resumption of the pilgrimage is expected to bring thousands of Indian pilgrims to Tibet, which will likely help foster better mutual understanding and cooperation between India and China.



#### Lukashenko wins seventh term as Belarus president in election :-

Alexander Lukashenko has won a seventh five-year term as Belarusian president in a landslide election triumph that Western nations have condemned as a fraud. Lukashenko received 86.8% of the vote, according to election results given by the country's electoral authority. The US and EU stated in the run-up to the election that it could not be free or fair since independent media is prohibited in Belarus and all key opposition figures have been imprisoned or forced to go abroad. The electoral commission said turnout was 85.7% in the election, in which 6.9 million people were eligible to vote.



#### UAE President Declares 2025 the 'Year of Community' :-

UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has declared 2025 the Year of Community, initiating a national drive to promote unity and inclusion throughout society. The campaign's slogan, "Hand in Hand," symbolizes the UAE leadership's objective of creating a unified and empowered community. The UAE is home to almost four million Indians, who are an important part of the country's diversified population. President Sheikh Mohamed's announcement reinforces the leadership's commitment to creating a harmonious and inclusive society.



## 10: Miscellaneous



### Banded Royal Butterfly Spotted in Tripura :-

In a remarkable discovery, the Banded Royal butterfly, a rare and exquisite species, has been spotted in the forests of Tripura. Known for its striking black and white patterns, this butterfly is rarely seen in India, making this sighting a significant event for biodiversity conservation. Environmentalists have highlighted the importance of preserving such species, which play a crucial role in pollination and maintaining ecological balance. Conservation efforts are expected to intensify in the region to ensure the butterfly's habitat remains protected.



### Tamil Nadu CM Announces \$1 Million Prize for Deciphering Indus Valley Script :-

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has declared a \$1 million prize for specialists or organizations that successfully interpret the scripts of the Indus Valley Civilization for everyone to understand. The Chief Minister announced a ₹2-crore grant to establish a chair named after noted archaeologist and epigraphist Iravatham Mahadevan at the Chennai-based Roja Muthiah Library. The chair will continue research on the

Indus Valley Civilization by the State Department of Archaeology and the Indus Research Centre.



### Centennial Recognition for Srinagar Meteorology Centre :-

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh announced the building of a Regional Meteorological Centre in Jammu at a historic event honoring the 150th anniversary of the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The Minister discussed the historical significance of the Srinagar Meteorology Centre, which was designated as a Centennial Centre by the World Meteorological Organization, and expressed optimism that the future Regional Meteorological Centre in Jammu would emulate its success. The announcement signifies a major step toward improving weather forecasting, disaster preparedness, and climate resilience in the Jammu & Kashmir region.



### Kumbhvani FM Channel Launched for Maha Kumbh 2025 :-

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated Prasar Bharati's FM station 'Kumbhvani' at



the Circuit House on the final day of his two-day Prayagraj trip. Prasara Bharati has unveiled the OTT-based Kumbhvani FM station to provide detailed information about the Mahakumbh. 'Kumbhvani' will not only reach new heights of popularity but also extend the spirit of Mahakumbh to remote villages where many people, despite their desire, cannot physically attend the event, said the CM.



#### **New Launchpad of ISRO Coming Up at Sriharikota :-**

The Union Cabinet has approved the construction of a Third Launch Pad (TLP) at the Satish Dhawan Space Center in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. The new launch pad is intended to host the next generation of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launch vehicles and strengthen the nation's preparedness for human spaceflight missions. This new infrastructure will play a critical role in improving India's launch capabilities, paving the way for future space exploration, including the country's ambitious human spaceflight programs.



#### **Govt Launches App to Boost Battlefield Tourism :-**

Civilians will soon be able to tour battlefield spots within India's borders, courtesy to a newly launched app and website. The "Bharat Ranbhoomi Darshan" app, a joint

endeavor of the Ministries of Defence and Tourism, as well as the Army, was launched by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on the occasion of Army Day. Tourists will be able to visit the sites of the 1962, 1971, and 1999 (Kargil) clashes, as well as the Siachen base camp and the 2020 Galwan clash. The operational areas will be off-limits but the idea is to open up as much of the forward locations as possible.



#### **U.S. Withdraws from WHO and Suspends Foreign Aid :-**

The United Nations has withdrawn from the World Health Organization (WHO) on allegations that the main worldwide medical authority mishandled the Covid-19 outbreak, failed to reform, and was not independent of the "political influence" of certain member nations, a reference to China. Trump has also banned all US foreign aid for 90 days to assess its effectiveness and alignment with US foreign policy. The US, under Trump, had slammed the organisation for being too sympathetic to China's narrative when the pandemic broke out and withdrawn from WHO in 2020.



#### **Indian IT Giants Lead 2025 Brand Finance IT Services Rankings :-**

According to the Brand Finance 2025 rating, India has achieved a noteworthy feat by providing 36% of the

overall brand value, which was fueled by a 14% increase in brand value. With 40% of the overall brand value, the US continues to dominate the IT services market, and India comes in second. According to the Brand Finance IT services 2025 ranking report, this impressive growth not only demonstrates India's leading position in the global IT services market but also indicates that the country is prepared for continued growth in 2025, supported by its strong emphasis on workforce expansion, technological innovation, and adaptability to changing global trends.



#### Discovery of a Rare Umamaheshwara Sculpture in Karnataka :-

At Taggunje in Ajri village of Kundapura taluk in the Udupi district of Karnataka, a metal sculpture known as Umamaheshwara was discovered. It was most likely created in the 17th century in the style of the 12th century. T. Murugeshi, a retired Associate Professor of

Ancient History and Archaeology, says it is a rare fusion of Shaiva-Shaktha and Naga worship, and is made of five metals. The Umamaheshwara cult was founded by Soma Sharma of Gujarat in the 10th-11th century.



#### Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 Commences in Prayagraj :-

The 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela, one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, has begun in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. Held once every 144 years, this event attracts millions of devotees, sadhus, and spiritual leaders from across the globe. The key highlight of the festival is the Shahi Snan (royal bath) at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and mythical Saraswati rivers, believed to wash away sins and grant moksha (liberation). The Uttar Pradesh government has deployed over 50,000 police personnel, advanced sanitation facilities, and a dedicated healthcare system to ensure the safety and well-being of attendees. Special arrangements for foreign tourists and virtual darshan (online viewing) have also been made.

## 11: National



#### Ministry of Heavy Industries issues draft guidelines on EV charging under PM E-DRIVE :-

The Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) has released draft guidelines for establishing electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure under the Prime Minister's Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) Program. The proposal calls for the building of extensive public charging infrastructure for several vehicle categories, including over 22,000 chargers for electric four-wheelers (e-4Ws) and 1,800 chargers for e-buses. Besides this, the scheme has made a provision to set up charging infrastructure for light EVs, including electric two-wheelers (e-2Ws) and electric three-wheelers (e-3Ws).





### Government Considers Honorary Senior Ranks for Retiring Paramilitary Personnel :-

Director General Anish Dayal Singh of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), who retired on December 31, stated that the government is considering honorary senior ranks for eligible Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) personnel one month prior to their retirement in an effort to "boost their morale" amid promotion delays. According to him, a person may use the rank of Head Constable (HC) if they were retiring on a Constable's rank and qualified for the promotion. Similarly, if an HC is eligible to be promoted as Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI), he or she may use the insignia for ASI.



### PM Modi Flags Off Namo Bharat RRTS: 40-Min Delhi-Meerut Ride :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a 13-kilometer Rapid Rail Transit System (RRTS) link connecting New Ashok Nagar in Delhi with Sahibabad in Uttar Pradesh. The inauguration coincides with the Delhi Assembly election in February, and the model code of conduct is expected to go into effect soon. Travelers are able to onboard the Namo Bharat train on the RRTS corridor from New Ashok Nagar to Meerut South, and vice versa.

According to the government, the nearly 58 km distance can be covered in under 40 minutes.



### Amit Shah Launched CBI's BHARATPOL Portal :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the 'Bharatpol' portal, which aims to improve international cooperation among law enforcement agencies. Bharatpol, broadcast hub for assistance and real-time action against transnational crimes via international police cooperation, was created by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). It will make it easier for federal and state agencies to communicate with Interpol, allowing them to conduct investigations faster. This portal integrates the CBI as the Interpol (NCB-New Delhi) with all law enforcement authorities in India, down to Superintendents of Police (SPs) and Commissioners of Police (CPs).



### Centre approves site for Pranab Mukherjee's memorial at Raj Ghat :-

The BJP-led central government has given its approval to the establishment of a memorial for former Indian President Pranab Mukherjee at a specific location within the "Rashtriya Smriti" complex, which is a component of the Rajghat precinct. Mukherjee passed away on August 31, 2020. Sharmistha Mukherjee, daughter of Pranab Mukherjee, shared a post on X, "I met PM Narendra Modi



to convey my gratitude for the government's decision to create a memorial for my father. It is especially meaningful because we did not request it. This gesture by the Prime Minister deeply moved me."



### Prabowo Subianto to Be Republic Day Chief Guest in 2025:-

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto officially accepted New Delhi's proposal to be the chief guest at the 2025 Republic Day parade. Subianto's selection as the first visitor of Prime Minister Modi's third term demonstrates the importance India places on bilateral relations with Indonesia and its Act East policy. The visit is designed to strengthen both sides' strategic cooperation and defense connections. India's first Republic Day guest was from Indonesia, President Sukarno, a key ally of country's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru during the golden years of the non-aligned movement.



### Centre Releases ₹1.73 Trillion to States to Boost Capital Spending :-

The Centre has granted Rs 1.73 lakh crore in transfer of taxes to state governments in order to accelerate capital investment and fund welfare initiatives. "A higher amount is being devolved this month to enable states to accelerate capital spending and finance their

development and welfare-related expenditures," the finance ministry said in a statement. The Union government has released Rs 1,73,030 crore in tax devolution to state governments, compared to Rs 89,086 crore in December 2024, the ministry said. Currently, 41 per cent of taxes collected by the Centre is devolved in instalments among states during a fiscal year.



### India Targets \$100B Food & Beverage Exports: Piyush Goyal :-

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal stated that India has the potential to export \$100 billion in food and beverage (F&B), agriculture, and marine products over the next five years. The minister emphasized that the aim is not overly ambitious, as the industries must expand at an achievable cumulative pace of 14-15 percent. He praised the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) for contributing significantly to India's \$50 billion exports last year.



### PM Modi to inaugurate Z-Morh tunnel on January 13 In Sonamarg :-

On January 13, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will make his 12th visit to Jammu and Kashmir in over a decade to launch the Z-Morh tunnel, a critical artery for strategic

military access to Ladakh, a region that has risen in importance for India's defense infrastructure. The 6.5-km bi-directional tunnel, built at a cost of ₹2,400 crore on the Srinagar-Leh National Highway, will provide year-round access to the strategically important Ladakh area bordering China and Pakistan. Ahead of the inauguration and Modi's visit, security has been beefed up throughout Kashmir.



#### India adds record renewable energy capacity of about 30 GW in 2024 :-

According to figures from the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, India added a record 30 GW of renewable energy capacity in 2024, more than 113% more than the 13.75 GW reported in 2023. This is significant given India's ambitious goal of achieving 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030. Furthermore, in order to meet its aim, India must install an average of 50 GW of renewable energy capacity every year for the following six years. According to the Ministry data, India had 35.84 GW of renewable energy capacity as of March 31, 2014.



#### Piyush Goyal launches National Turmeric Board :-

Piyush Goyal, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, launched the National Turmeric Board in New

Delhi to boost turmeric production and exports. According to a press statement from the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Palle Ganga Reddy has been appointed as the Board's first Chairperson, with its headquarters in Nizamabad. The Board will focus on key areas such as research and development, value addition to turmeric products, and promoting awareness of the spice's medicinal and essential properties.



#### PM Modi unveils IMD Vision-2047 document :-

According to the India Meteorological Department's (IMD)'s Vision-2047 document released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India wants to achieve 100% detection of all sorts of severe weather at the village and household levels by 2047, as well as zero loss of life due to such events. According to the document, released on the eve of the IMD's 150th anniversary, the weather department aims for 100% forecast accuracy for up to three days, 90% for up to five days, 80% for up to seven days, and 70% for up to ten days, covering all severe weather events at the block and panchayat levels.



#### Piyush Goyal Launches PRABHAAV Factbook and Startup Challenge :-

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal launched the Bharat Startup Grand Challenge for entrepreneurs to commemorate the government's Startup India



programme's nine-year anniversary. Goyal also introduced the updated Prabhaav guide, a nine-year factbook on DPIIT's Startup India program that reflects the depth of India's entrepreneurial journey, the rise of female entrepreneurs, and other topics. Bridging the gap between corporates and startups, the challenge would also offer procurement opportunities for startups, cash prizes, funding and mentoring opportunities along with capacity building measures.



#### **India boosts telecom connectivity with Sanchar Saathi App and NBM 2.0 launch :-**

Union Minister of Communications Jyotiraditya M. Scindia announced a number of initiatives aimed at improving India's telecom infrastructure and accessibility, such as the Sanchar Saathi Mobile App, the National Broadband Mission (NBM) 2.0, and the launch of the Intra Circle Roaming (ICR) facility at Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN)-funded 4G mobile sites. The Sanchar Saathi Mobile App is designed to enhance telecom security and user empowerment. The initiative targets India's growing base of over 900 million smartphone users.



#### **Union Minister Shri Manohar Lal Khattar launches the toolkit for 9th edition of Swachh Survekshan :-**

Shri Manohar Lal Khattar, Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, has introduced the toolkit for the 9th edition of Swachh Survekshan (SS), the globe's biggest metropolitan cleanliness survey, in a new avatar that is simpler, sharper, more methodical, and all-inclusive. Shri S. Katikithala, Secretary of MoHUA, attended the launch event as well. Swachh Survekshan, launched by MoHUA in 2016, improves urban sanitation through community engagement and third-party assessment. For the year 2024, a special category - Super Swachh League has been introduced creating a separate league of cities excelling in cleanliness.



#### **India Celebrates 76th Republic Day with Indonesian President as Chief Guest :-**

On January 26, 2025, India marked its 76th Republic Day with grand celebrations in New Delhi. The event was graced by Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto as the chief guest, highlighting the deepening ties between the two nations. For the first time, the Indonesian National Armed Forces participated in the parade, symbolizing the growing defense cooperation between India and Indonesia. The parade showcased India's military prowess and cultural diversity, featuring domestically produced defense equipment and vibrant cultural performances. The event concluded with a spectacular aerial display by the Indian Air Force.





### Tragic Incident at Nirvana Laddu Parv in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh :-

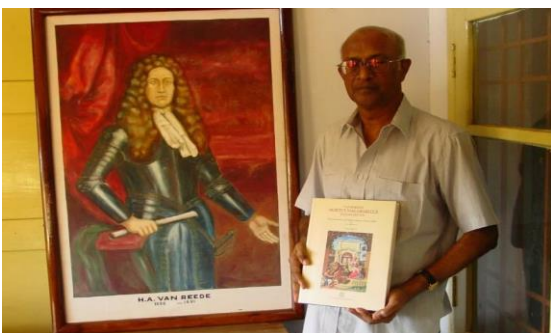
On January 28, 2025, a tragic incident occurred during the Nirvana Laddu Parv, a cultural and religious event in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh. A makeshift stage, which had been erected for performances and festivities, collapsed, leading to the deaths of five individuals and leaving over 60 others injured. The event, which had drawn a large crowd, was disrupted by the mishap, causing widespread panic. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered a thorough investigation into the incident and has directed local authorities to provide immediate assistance to the victims. The authorities are also focusing on assessing the safety measures at such public events to prevent similar tragedies in the future.



### PM Modi inaugurates 38th National Games :-

Shri Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister, opened the 38th National Games at Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Addressing the audience, he stated that Uttarakhand is now brimming with youthful vitality. He noted that the event coincided with Uttarakhand's 25th anniversary, making it a great opportunity for young people across the country to demonstrate their potential. PM Modi commended the inclusion of traditional local games in this edition, dubbed 'Green Games,' and encouraged the use of environmentally friendly materials. PM Modi underlined the economic impact of sports, particularly India's growth as a quality sports equipment manufacturer.

## 12: Obituaries



### Noted botanist K.S. Manilal passes away :-

Dr. K.S. Manilal, the renowned botanist who introduced the old botanical treasure Hortus Malabaricus to the modern world, died at a private hospital in Thrissur, Kerala. He was 86. The Padma Shri recipient has been battling disease for a long time. Dr. Manilal, the previous

head of Calicut University's Botany department, spent over 35 years of his life researching, interpreting, and annotating Hortus Malabaricus, a 17th-century Latin manuscript written by Dutch Governor Hendrik Adrian van Rheedee.



**Eminent nuclear scientist Rajagopal Chidambaram passed away :-**

Rajagopala Chidambaram, a renowned physicist who played a crucial role in the nuclear tests of 1974 and 1998, departed recently, as reported by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). He was 88. Chidambaram, born in 1936, graduated from Presidency College in Chennai and the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru. Chidambaram held a number of distinguished positions all through his career, involving Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India (2001-2018), Director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (1990-1993), Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, and Secretary to the Government of India, DAE (1993-2000).

**Former Greek PM Costas Simitis Dies at 88 :-**

Costas Simitis, the former Greek Prime Minister and a crucial figure in modernizing Greece, died at the age of 88. The Greek government has announced a four-day national mourning period, and Simitis will be honored with a state funeral. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis expressed his sorrow, calling Simitis as a "worthy and noble political opponent" whose leadership saw Greece enter the currency and Cyprus join the European Union. Simitis was a founding member of the Socialist PASOK party and succeeded its charismatic leader, Andreas Papandreou, as prime minister in 1996.

**Shigemi Fukahori, Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Survivor Dies at 93 :-**

Shigemi Fukahori, one of the survivors of the 1945 Nagasaki atomic blast who spent his life pushing for peace and against nuclear weapons, has died. He was 93. Fukahori was just 14 years old when the United States bombed Nagasaki on August 9, 1945, executing tens of thousands of people, involving his family. That occurred three days after the nuclear bombing on Hiroshima, which killed 140,000 people. Japan surrendered days later, ending World War II and the country's nearly half-century of aggression across Asia.

**Pritish Nandy passes away at 73 :-**

Renowned film producer Pritish Nandy, 73, died of a heart arrest at his South Mumbai home. Pritish Nandy produced several hit films, including Jhankaar Beats, Chameli, Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi, Ek Khiladi Ek Haseena, Ankahee, Pyaar Ke Side Effects, and Bow Barracks Forever, among others. Born on January 15, 1951, in Bhagalpur, Bihar, Pritish Nandy was a journalist and well-known media figure. In the 1990s, he hosted a talk show on Doordarshan called The Pritish Nandy Show. He also served as a member of Rajya Sabha from 1998 to 2004, representing the Shiv Sena party.



**Renowned Playback Singer P. Jayachandran Passes Away :-**

At a private medical college in Thrissur, Kerala, acclaimed playback singer P Jayachandran, who was lovingly referred to as Bhava Gayakan for his heartfelt renditions that exquisitely conveyed emotions like love, longing, and devotion, passed suddenly. He was eighty years old. With multiple accolades for best playback singer, the singer—who recorded more than 16,000 songs in Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Hindi—was well-known for his contributions to Indian music. He was honoured with the National Film Award and the Kerala government's J C Daniel Award for his outstanding contribution to cinema.

**Freedom fighter Krishna Mense passes away at 97 in Belagavi :-**

Krishna Mense, a Goa liberation campaigner, Gandhian, writer, and union leader, died in Belagavi. He was 97. Krishna Mense took part in the freedom movement but refused to accept the pension or other perks provided to freedom fighters. He was an associate and leader of the Communist Party of India. He was the president of the Indian Aluminium Company Labour Union in Belagavi for many years. He was also among the frontline leaders of the anti-superstition league that was active in Maharashtra and Karnataka.

**Eminent artist Ramdas Kamath Shevgoor passes away :-**

Ramdas Kamath Shevgoor, the renowned artist behind Shevgoor Fine Arts, died in Manipal from an age-related disease. He was 78. Ramdas Kamath Shevgoor, a member of Mangaluru's famed Shevgoor artist family, was the son of L. K. Shevgoor, a pioneering graphic designer and portrait artist. Ramdas Shevgoor was well regarded for his portraiture skills, notably in oil painting. His lifelike portraits adorn the walls of numerous educational institutions and other establishments across the coastal district. Notably, many portraits in the Hall of Fame at the World Konkani Centre were created by him.

**American Filmmaker David Lynch Passes Away At 78 :-**

David Lynch, an American filmmaker, writer, and artist who received Oscar nominations for best director for "Blue Velvet," "The Elephant Man," and "Mulholland Drive," as well as co-creating the revolutionary television series "Twin Peaks," died at the age of 78. Lynch garnered four Oscar nominations over his career, including three for Best Director. Despite never winning a competitive Academy Award, he received an honorary Oscar in 2019 for his services to cinema. Other his works included "Wild at Heart," the 1990 Palme d'Or winner of the Cannes Film Festival, the 1977 horror film "Eraserhead" and the 1997 mystery "Lost Highway."





**Tamil director and producer Jayamurugan passes away**

Jayamurugan, a director and producer, died from a heart attack. Jayamurugan established the production company Manithan Cine Arts, which made him a well-known producer. Mansoor Ali Khan played the lead in his debut film, 'Sindhu Bhath', released in 1995.

Jayamurugan began his career as a producer before moving on to helm the film 'Roja Malaré'. Murali, Arun Pandian, and Anand Babu played major parts in this film, which was also his directorial debut. Although Roja Malaré received mixed reviews from critics, it showcased Jayamurugan's versatility within the industry.

## 13: Ranks & Reports

**GDP to Grow at 6.6% in FY25: RBI :-**

The Indian economy is exhibiting durability and strength, with GDP expected to increase by 6.6% in 2024-25. According to a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) assessment, this growth will be fueled by a resurgence in rural consumption, greater government expenditure and investment, and strong service exports. The RBI has released the December 2024 edition of its Financial Stability Report (FSR), which reflects the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) Sub-Committee's overall evaluation of India's financial system resilience and potential vulnerabilities to financial stability.

**India Achieves 36% Reduction in GDP Emission Intensity from 2005 to 2020 :-**

India gradually continued to decouple its economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions, reducing the emission rate of its GDP by 36% in 2020 compared to 2005. India shared the data with the UN climate change body earlier this week, stating in its 4th biennial submission that its share of non-fossil sources in installed electricity generation capacity would be 46.5% by October 2024, with a total installed capacity of 203.2 GW for renewable power, including large hydropower. India's cumulative renewable power installed capacity (excluding large hydro projects) has increased 4.5 times by 35 GW in March 2014 to 156.25 GW in 2024.

**Assam's Elephant Population Sees 7-Year Rise :-**

The state forest department's Elephant Population Estimation 2024 revealed an elephant population of 5,828 in Assam, up from 5,719 in the last census in 2017. The population consists of 3,044 adults, 1,042 subadults, 717 juveniles, and 1,025 calves. The estimation was carried out over all 43 forest divisions in Assam. According to the report, 82% of the entire population, or 4,777 elephants, live in the state's five elephant reserves, with the Chirang-Ripu Elephant Reserve having the highest density.



### India Sees 37 Lakh Drop in School Enrolment in 2023-24

According to the Ministry of Education's UDISE data, enrollment in schools across India declined by 37 lakh in 2023-24 compared to the previous year. The Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) Plus is a data gathering platform run by the education ministry that collects school education data from across the country. The number of students enrolled in 2022-23 was 25.17 crore, while the figure for 2023-24 was 24.80 crore. The number of girl students dropped by 16 lakh during the period under review, while the number of boy students fell by 21 lakh.



### Hanoi Declared World's Most Polluted City :-

According to AirVisual, a phone app that offers unbiased worldwide air pollution statistics, levels of harmful tiny particles, known as PM2.5, were detected at 266 micrograms per cubic metre in Hanoi, the greatest number among a list of most polluted cities. The Southeast Asian country, a regional production center with one of Asia's fastest-growing economies, has long suffered chronic air pollution in its major cities, particularly Hanoi. Speaking at a meeting with the transport ministry, Deputy Prime Minister Tran Hong Ha called for an accelerated transition to electric vehicles (EVs) as part of the efforts to reduce pollution, state media reported.



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

India now possesses the world's third largest metro rail network, covering 1,000 kilometers. With this extensive network, India now has the world's third-largest metro system, trailing only China and the United States. "1,000 km metro rail lines are operation now. Projects covering 998+ km are underway, reshaping urban mobility in India," according to Mygov.in, the Government of India's citizen participation platform. In 2022, India exceeded Japan in Metro train projects and is now ranked third in terms of operational Metro network length.



### E-way bills in December at second highest level in two years, shows data :-

According to data released by the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) portal, the number of E-way bills, or electronic permits, produced by enterprises for transporting goods within and across states, reached its second-highest level in 24 months in December, increasing 17.6 percent year on year to 112 million. This represented a big improvement from November's five-month low of 101.8 million. E-way bills are mandatory for the movement of consignments worth more than Rs 50,000 and are, therefore, an early indicator of demand and supply trends in the economy. This often reflects in macroeconomic indicators with a lag.





### India's Direct Tax Collection Sees Significant Growth in FY25 :-

According to government data, net direct tax collection climbed by 15.88% year on year to approximately ₹16.90 lakh crore as of January 12. Since April 2024, the net non-corporate tax collection has exceeded ₹8.74 lakh crore, primarily from personal income taxes. The net corporation tax revenue from April 1, 2024 to January 12, 2024 was around ₹7.68 lakh crore. Net collection from securities transaction tax stood at ₹44,538 crore till January 12 this fiscal. Gross direct tax mop-up increased 20% to ₹20.64 lakh crore during the period, the data showed.



### India's GDP Growth Projected to Reach 6.7% in FY25 : Crisil :-

According to a Crisil Intelligence research, India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate is expected to rise to 6.7% in the following fiscal year (FY25). According to the article, if food inflation continues to fall but non-food inflation remains stable, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may be able to decrease interest rates in the coming months. Headline inflation is steadily approaching the RBI's 4% objective, with food inflation falling for the

second straight month and non-food inflation remaining unchanged. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation cooled to 5.2% in December, down from 5.5% in November.



### India Set to Surpass Japan as World's Fourth-Largest Economy by 2026 :-

India's economy is likely to become the world's fourth biggest by 2026, surpassing Japan, according to industry organization PHDCCI, which forecasts GDP growth of 6.8% in the current fiscal year ending March 31 and 7.7% in fiscal year 26. According to Hemant Jain, President of the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Indian economy has grown steadily over the last three years and is predicted to become the world's fourth largest economy by 2026, surpassing Japan. It also expects the Reserve Bank to slash the bench-mark interest rate by 25 basis points in its policy review next month.



### FICCI forecasts India's GDP growth at 6.4% for 2024-25

According to the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry's (FICCI) most recent Economic Outlook Survey, India's GDP is expected to increase at 6.4% in fiscal year 2024-25. This represents a decrease from the 7% projected in September 2024 and the 8.2%



growth realized in 2023-24. The survey, executed in December 2024, attributes the moderation to worldwide challenges, geopolitical concerns, and an unequal rebound in industrialized nations. Economists predict a modest revival in economic activity driven by increased public capital expenditure, festive season demand, and a normalisation of industrial activity after the monsoon.



#### **IMF retains India's FY25 growth forecast at 6.5% :-**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has maintained India's growth prediction for 2024-25 at 6.5%, but noted that growth is down more than projected, owing to a sharper-than-expected slowdown in industrial output. The IMF's estimate for this year is close to the World Bank's expectation of 6.5% GDP growth for India this year. For next year, the World Bank has estimated growth to be at 6.7%. India will still retain the tag of fastest growing major economy in the world, against the backdrop of geopolitical tensions and global policy uncertainty.



#### **CII Projects 7% GDP Growth for 2025-26 Amid Rising Investments :-**

According to a CII poll, India's present economic situation is favourable for private investment, with the country emerging as a "bright spot" in a challenging global landscape. The pan-India survey is ongoing and will be finished for 500 firms by the first week of February. The interim results have been constructed on a sample of 300 enterprises from all industry sizes (large, medium, and small). Notably, early results reveal that about 97 per cent of the sample firms are likely to increase employment in both 2024-25 and 2025-26.



#### **DeepSeek AI Surpasses ChatGPT on US App Store :-**

DeepSeek, a Chinese artificial intelligence startup, has surpassed rival OpenAI as the most-downloaded free software in the United States on Apple's software Store, dethroning ChatGPT with DeepSeek's AI Assistant. When queried about certain topics, it has limits similar to other Chinese chatbots. When queried about some of Chinese President Xi Jinping's initiatives, DeepSeek allegedly directs the user away from similar lines of discussion. DeepSeek's R1 was built despite the U.S. curbing chip exports to China three times in three years.

## 14: Schemes & Committees



### Chhattisgarh's Green GDP Initiative :-

In a first, the state of Chhattisgarh has implemented an innovative plan that links the ecosystem services of its forests to the Green Gross Domestic Product (Green GDP). The changes were intended to demonstrate the direct link between forests' major environmental contributions such as clean air, water conservation, biodiversity, and the state's economic success. The action plan is intended to promote economic development while protecting the environment for future generations. Chhattisgarh with 44 per cent of its land covered by forests, the state's natural resources are central to the livelihoods of millions of people.



### Tamil Nadu government plans to borrow ₹45,000 crore in Q4 2024-25 :-

The Tamil Nadu government aims to raise ₹45,000 crore in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2024-2025, according to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) indicated market borrowing timetable for states. States, like Tamil Nadu,

raise finances by issuing bonds known as State Development Loans (SDLs). The RBI conducts the bond auctions. Bonds are issued for varying terms, and states are required to repay the principle as well as interest when they mature. Till the first half in 2024-2025, Tamil Nadu has raised ₹50,000 crore through issue of SDLs, as per RBI data.



### Union Cabinet Approves Continuation of Crop Insurance Schemes :-

The Union Cabinet has greenlit the continuation of two major crop insurance schemes: the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and the Restructured Weather-Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS). These schemes aim to provide financial support to farmers, covering risks associated with natural disasters, pests, and diseases. By ensuring comprehensive risk coverage, the government seeks to enhance the resilience of the agriculture sector, which remains a backbone of the Indian economy. The schemes also aim to encourage farmers to adopt innovative practices without fear of financial loss.





**Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0 :-**

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has launched "Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0," an initiative aimed at providing over 500 women members from Panchayati Raj institutions around the country with an understanding of the Constitution and parliamentary procedures. The program, organized to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of tribal icon Birsa Munda, will include workshops and sessions, as well as a walking tour of the new Parliament House, Samvidhan Sadan, Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya, and Rashtrapati Bhavan, which will provide participants with a better understanding of India's legislative process and the functioning of democratic institutions.

**e-Shram Portal Expands to 22 Scheduled Languages :-**

The e-Shram platform, which assists unorganized workers in accessing several social sector initiatives, is now accessible in all 22 scheduled languages, the government announced. Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Labour and Employment, introduced the multilingual capability on the e-Shram webpage at a ceremony in the national capital. Dr. Mandaviya highlighted the growing trust in the e-Shram platform, sharing that the portal records an average of over 30,000 registrations per day by unorganised workers.

**INROAD project in North East secures ₹100 crore to enhance natural rubber quality :-**

The INROAD (Indian Natural Rubber Operations for Assisted Development) project in the North East has received ₹100 crore to improve the quality of natural rubber. With the NR plantation effort reaching significant scale after the fourth year of planting, the emphasis is now shifting to providing rubber growers with technical competence and developing a model infrastructure for quality improvement. INROAD is a first-of-its-kind project in the world in which the tyre industry is contributing directly to the development of rubber plantations.

**India joins UN panel on big data for official statistics :-**

India recently became part of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics (UN-CEBD), a forum set up to investigate the opportunities and difficulties of big data, as well as its possibilities for monitoring and reporting on sustainable development objectives. The milestone corresponds with India's recent membership in the United Nations Statistical Council, according to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).





**SECL introduces Post-Retirement Benefit Cell to streamline services for retirees :-**

South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL), a division of Coal India Limited (CIL) headquartered in Chhattisgarh, has established a dedicated Post-Retirement Benefit (PRB) Cell to improve the welfare and convenience of its retired personnel. The PRB Cell will function as a single-window system, integrating post-retirement services that were previously controlled by multiple departments such as Personnel, Finance, and Medical. This centralization aims to eliminate delays and miscommunication, providing retirees with streamlined access to pensions, provident funds, medical facilities, and other benefits.

**Govt Approves 56 Watershed Projects Worth ₹700 Crore :-**

The Rural Development Ministry has sanctioned 56 new Watershed Development Projects in the 10 best-performing states, totaling Rs 700 crores, according to the government. According to a statement issued here, the projects will be implemented across Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim. "These projects would further help in increasing the income of farmers, addressing land degradation and strengthening climate resilience efforts," the statement said.

**Maha Kumbh 2025: 'One Plate, One Bag' Campaign Launched :-**

The Maha Kumbh, one of the world's largest spiritual gatherings, is currently taking place at Prayagraj's Triveni Sangam, with millions of pilgrims from all over the world attending. This year, the event has adopted a big eco-friendly effort, the "One Plate, One Bag" campaign, which aims to eliminate plastic use throughout the Mela. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is spearheading the effort, which will provide pilgrims and sellers with cloth bags, steel plates, and glasses

**Odisha Government Announces ₹20,000 Pension for Emergency Detainees :-**

The Odisha government has given a monthly stipend of Rs 20,000 for individuals imprisoned during the 1975 Emergency, which was imposed by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The pension system, which goes into effect on January 1, follows chief minister Mohan Charan Majhi's commitment to recognise them on Independence Day. This decision allows Odisha to join several other states, including Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Assam,

who have similar pension schemes in place for Emergency detainees.



#### **PM Distributes 6.5 Million SVAMITVA Property Cards :-**

Through video conference, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given more than 65 lakh property cards under the "SVAMITVA Scheme" to landowners in more than 230 districts and 50,000 villages spread over 10 States and two Union territories. Speaking at the event, he greeted all of the recipients and the public, saying that it was a momentous day for India's villages and rural areas. Prime Minister also remarked that under the Swamitva Yojana, around 2.25 crore people in villages have received legal documents for their homes now.



#### **Chhattisgarh CM Launches Rs 10,000 Annual Aid Scheme for Labourers :-**

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai has proposed a policy to grant Rs 10,000 in annual financial help to landless farm labourers, claiming that the measure will increase their net income and safeguard their own future. The Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Bhoomihin Krishi Majdoor Kalyan Yojana would benefit around 562,000 people, including landless farm workers and a variety of financially disadvantaged social groups, according to the government. The scheme covers landless agricultural labourers along with landless families of forest produce collectors, shepherds, carpenters, blacksmiths, cobblers, barbers etc.

## **15: Science & Technology**



#### **ISRO Launches Historic SpaDeX Mission for Space Docking :-**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) launched its workhorse PSLV rocket, carrying numerous satellites, including two that will carry out an ambitious autonomous orbital rendezvous and docking operation, which only a few space organizations have accomplished. At 10 p.m., the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) lifted off on the PSLV-C60 rocket from Sriharikota's windswept launch pad, reaching its most crucial milestone precisely 910 seconds later. At that time, two spacecraft weighing 220kg were launched into an eastward orbit 476 kilometres above the Earth's surface.





### China Unveils World's Fastest High-Speed Train Prototype :-

China has presented an improved variant of its high-speed bullet train, which the manufacturer claims achieved speeds of 450 kmph during test runs, making it the world's fastest high-speed train. As per the China State Railway Group Co (China Railway), the new model, known as the CR450 prototype, will reduce travel time and increase connection, making travel more convenient and efficient for the country's large passenger base. It is significantly faster than the CR400 Fuxing high-speed rail (HSR) currently in service, which operates at speeds of 350 kmph, a report by state-run Xinhua said.



### Maharashtra gets its first Made-in-India surgical robot

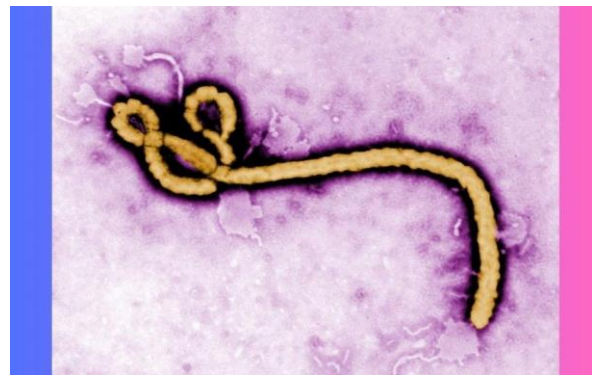
Maharashtra has acquired its first surgical robot developed in India, which has been placed at Noble Hospitals and Research Center in Pune. The SSI Mantra surgical robot, newly approved by India's regulatory agency, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), is a three-robot system for performing complicated procedures. The robotic system, which was inaugurated by Marathi actor Prasad Oak, is an advanced system that includes five lean robotic arms, an immersive

3D HD headset that provides surgeons with unparalleled optics, and a vision cart that provides 3D 4K imaging to the entire surgical team, ensuring increased precision and control.



### Stellaria bengalensis: New Plant Species Discovered in West Bengal :-

Following the discovery of a *Stellaria* (family Caryophyllaceae) plant species in Kerala in 2024, researchers have located another member of the same genus in West Bengal's Kalimpong region. Arya S., PG and Research Department of Botany, PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, and Harsh Singh, Centre for Advanced Studies in Botany, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, who made the discovery, named the annual herb *Stellaria bengalensis* after the state of West Bengal. A paper on the finding was recently published in the journal *Phytotaxa*.

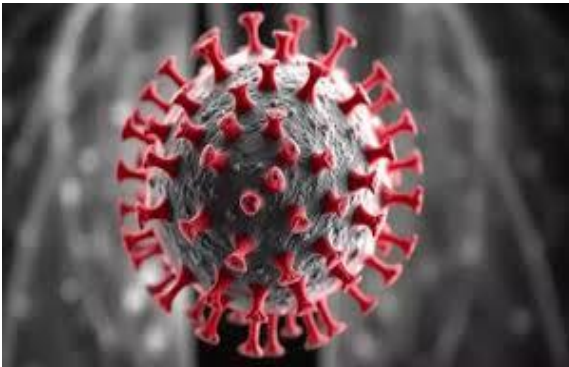


### Ebola Virus Study Reveals Skin Transmission Route :-

Ebola, an uncommon but deadly viral disease, continues to represent a serious threat to human health. The virus spreads mostly through direct contact with infected animals, particularly during preparation, cooking, or eating. Recent outbreaks, such as the 2013-2016 Ebola



pandemic in West Africa, have shown that infectious Ebola virus (EBOV) can be discovered on the skin's surface of persons who have died from infection or at late stages of infection. The study identifies new cell types within the skin that are targeted by EBOV during infection.



#### **First Case of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) Detected in Bengaluru :-**

The first confirmed case of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) has been detected in Bengaluru, raising concerns across multiple states. HMPV is a respiratory virus known to cause symptoms similar to the common cold, but it can lead to severe complications, particularly in children and the elderly. In response, states such as Delhi, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh have issued directives to strengthen surveillance, implement testing protocols, and establish isolation facilities in hospitals to prevent any possible outbreak. The virus's emergence underscores the need for enhanced public health monitoring and preparedness.



#### **India Needs to Prioritize Preventive Care in Healthcare**

Experts have reiterated the need for India to focus on preventive care as a cornerstone of its healthcare strategy. Preventive measures such as regular health check-ups, vaccinations, and public health awareness

campaigns can significantly reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular issues. With rising healthcare costs and the pressure on hospitals, shifting the focus to prevention can lead to better outcomes and a healthier population in the long run. The call for preventive care has gained momentum in light of emerging diseases like HMPV.



#### **First Human Death from H5N1 Bird Flu in Louisiana :-**

Louisiana health officials have announced the first human fatality in the United States connected to bird flu, while stressing that the patient had underlying medical issues and that overall risks to the public were "low." The patient, over the age of 65, had been hospitalized in the southern state since at least mid-December, when the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declared it the country's first significant case of H5N1 virus infection. The amount of bird flu circulating among animals and humans has alarmed scientists over concerns it could mutate into a more transmissible form -- potentially triggering a deadly pandemic.



#### **Nadi Tarangini – India's First Ayurvedic Diagnostic Device :-**

Atreya Innovations, a Pune-based firm, announced the development of an AI-based pulse diagnostic tool for Ayurvedic practitioners that can monitor patients' health

on 22 criteria and create reports in ten Indian languages. Aniruddha Joshi created the 'Nadi Tarangini' device as part of his research project at IIT Bombay. A research grant was also received from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) for this project, said Joshi who founded Atreya Innovations with the support of entrepreneur Anand Deshpande.



#### **IIT-Madras builds Asia's largest shallow wave basin :-**

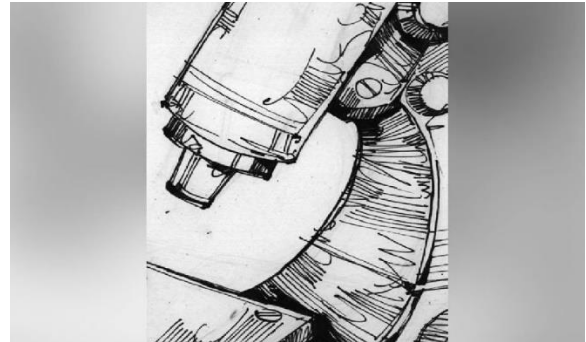
Asia's largest shallow wave basin research facility has been put into service by the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) to meet industry and research needs. The locally built facility is situated in Thaiyur, a suburb of the city, within Discovery, IIT-M's satellite campus. The multidirectional shallow wave basin can manage intricate interactions between waves and currents, resolving concerns with Indian ports, canals, and coastal engineering. The National Technology Centre for Ports Waterways and Coasts (NTCPWC) has established the facility.



#### **Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin postpones maiden launch of New Glenn rocket :-**

Due to poor weather conditions in the Atlantic Ocean, Blue Origin has officially delayed the first flight of their New Glenn reusable launch vehicle until January 12, 2025. The launch, which was initially scheduled for January 10, was postponed due to high seas impacting

the planned landing site for the rocket's booster. The New Glenn rocket, which stands at 320 feet (98 meters), is a big milestone for Blue Origin as it seeks to establish itself in the competitive space launch business. The rocket features a reusable first stage designed to return to Earth and land on a barge named Jacklyn, after Jeff Bezos' mother.



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

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has picked Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI) to set up South India's first Infectious Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory. The laboratory will allow infectious disease research to be carried out in Bengaluru, removing the need to ship samples to other states. The center will focus on diseases caused by bacteria, fungus, and parasites, allowing for faster diagnosis and better care of these conditions. The facility includes a dedicated ward with eight beds, along with pre-cath and post-cath care units.



#### **Union Coal and Mines Minister inaugurates '5G Use Case Test Lab' at CMPDI, Ranchi :-**

G. Kishan Reddy, Union Minister for Coal and Mines, inaugurated the '5G Use Case Test Lab' at the Central Mine Planning and Design Institute (CMPDI) in Ranchi.



The lab is intended to accelerate the coal sector's digital transformation using 5G technology while also addressing the industry's changing issues. The Ministry of Coal has selected CMPDI as the Centre of Excellence (CoE) for leveraging 5G technology in the coal industry. The facility will act as a testbed for developing, testing, and adapting 5G-based applications tailored to the specific needs of coal mining operations.



#### **ISRO's SpaDeX Mission Achieves Satellite Docking Milestone :-**

India has achieved a significant milestone in space exploration by becoming the fourth nation to successfully accomplish space docking using its indigenously designed 'Bharatiya Docking System,' according to Union Minister Jitendra Singh, following the successful launch of ISRO's SpaDeX mission. The SpaDeX mission, ISRO's year-end effort, seeks to complete the difficult process of docking two satellites in orbit. These technologies are critical for future missions, including Chandrayaan-4, the Indian space station, and the manned Gaganyaan mission.



#### **Pixxel and Digantara Launch Satellites for Earth and Space Monitoring :-**

Pixxel and Digantara, two Indian space start-ups, successfully launched their satellites atop a SpaceX

rocket, ushering in a new era for the country's private space sector. These pioneering missions seek to improve earth observation and space object monitoring, thereby tackling major concerns in agriculture, defense, and space sustainability. Pixxel achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first Indian private firm to deploy a constellation of satellites equipped with advanced hyperspectral imaging technology.



#### **Kerala Enhances Disaster Preparedness with Localized Early Warning Systems :-**

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has unveiled KaWaCHaM, one of the world's fastest weather alert systems. It is intended to improve rescue and rehabilitation efforts during extreme weather events caused by climate change. The project is significant given the state's periodic climate emergency since the severe floods of 2018 and the terrible Wayanad landslide last year, which killed 420 people. KaWaCHaM is an advanced disaster warning system that integrates alerts, sirens, and global weather models to improve the state's early disaster preparedness and public safety.



#### **Government Investigates Ride-Hailing Apps Over Pricing Disparities :-**

The Indian government has issued notices to ride-hailing giants Ola and Uber regarding allegations of differential pricing for users based on their smartphone operating systems. Investigations by the Central Consumer Protection Agency (CCPA) have revealed complaints suggesting higher charges for rides booked on iPhones compared to Android devices. This development has sparked a debate on the ethical implications of algorithm-driven pricing models. Both companies have been directed to submit explanations and provide transparency in their fare-setting mechanisms. This incident highlights the growing scrutiny of tech companies amid concerns about consumer rights and data-driven discrimination.



#### **IIT Madras Inaugurates Asia's Largest Shallow Wave Basin :-**

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has inaugurated Asia's largest Shallow Wave Basin at its Thaiyur campus. This cutting-edge facility, built by the National Technology Centre for Ports, Waterways, and Coasts (NTCPWC), is a game-changer for research in coastal engineering, port design, and waterway development. With advanced simulation capabilities, it will enable the testing of ship designs, offshore structures, and coastal erosion patterns. The initiative aligns with India's maritime vision of promoting sustainable port development and enhancing trade through blue economy strategies.



#### **RBI Launches Unified Lending Interface (ULI) Pilot :-**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has initiated a pilot project for the Unified Lending Interface (ULI), aiming to streamline the lending process and enhance credit accessibility. The ULI is designed to provide a standardized platform for lenders and borrowers, facilitating efficient loan processing and disbursement. This initiative is expected to promote financial inclusion and support economic growth by making credit more accessible to various sectors, including small and medium enterprises.



#### **India set to launch first human submersible under Deep Ocean Mission :-**

India is preparing to launch its first human-operated underwater submersible as a part of the Deep Ocean Mission, according to Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh. The submersible, intended for a depth of up to 500 meters, is set to launch this year, with ambitions to extend its reach to 6,000 meters by next year. The statement was made during the Mission Steering Committee's second meeting at Prithvi Bhawan in New Delhi. The Deep Ocean Mission aims to explore underwater resources, improve knowledge of



deep-sea ecosystems, and advance India's blue economy.



#### ISRO successfully launches NVS-02 satellite :-

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) achieved a new milestone by successfully launching a second-generation navigation satellite into orbit. For its 100th rocket launch from Sriharikota, Isro employed a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV). At 6.23 a.m., GSLV-F15, carrying the NVS-02 navigation satellite, lifted off from the second launch pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. Isro chairman V Narayanan said that the Isro has launched six generation of rockets placing 548 satellites weighing a total 120 tonnes including 23 tonnes of 433 foreign satellites.

## 16: Sports



#### Kerala Wins Senior National Men's Handball Championship :-

Kerala scored a historic first by capturing the Senior National Men's Handball Championship title. They defeated Chandigarh 34-31 in a dramatic final. Kerala, who had reached the final for the first time, put on an excellent effort throughout the encounter. The club's triumph was based on a great team effort, including exceptional performances from important players. Devendar was named the 'Best Player of the Championship,' while Rahul received the 'Best Goalkeeper' award for his exceptional performances between the posts.



#### Haryana Steelers Clinch Maiden PKL Title :-

Haryana Steelers made Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) history by winning their first title with a 32-23 triumph over Patna Pirates in the Season 11 decider. The high-stakes match was held in the Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex in Pune, and it was a watershed moment for the Steelers, who finished first in the league this season. Haryana Steelers cruised to victory in the final, thanks to show-stopper Mohammadreza Shadloui. For Haryana Steelers, Shivam Patare scored nine points, Shadloui seven and Vinay added six more. The champions were awarded Rs 3 crore, while the runners-up got Rs 1.8 crore.



### Magnus Carlsen, Nepomniachtchi Share Blitz Title :-

In a rare and unprecedented conclusion, reigning World Blitz Champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway and Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi split the 2024 World Blitz Championship title on Wall Street, New York. The decision to share the title was determined after both players played three straight draws in the sudden-death round. Carlsen had began the final with back-to-back victories and needed only a draw to win, but Nepomniachtchi showed remarkable fighting spirit and perseverance. He achieved two must-win victories, forcing sudden death after the final score was tied at 2–2.



### Devjit Saikia, Prabhtej Singh Bhatia set to assume top BCCI roles :-

Devjit Saikia and Prabhtej Singh Bhatia are set to take on crucial roles in the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) as secretary and treasurer, respectively, with their elections considered to be a formality. Both filed their nominations without opposition, and the polls slated for January 12 in Mumbai are expected to ratify their positions. Saikia, currently the joint secretary and interim secretary since December, will succeed Jay Shah, who

recently took over as independent chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC).



### Indian pacer Varun Aaron retires from all representative cricket :-

Varun Aaron, a former Indian fast bowler, has declared the decision to retire from any type of cricket at the age of 35. After retiring from red-ball cricket at the end of the 2023-24 Indian domestic season, Aaron officially resigned from representative cricket following Jharkhand's elimination from the Vijay Hazare Trophy, when he appeared in four matches and took three wickets at an average of 53.33. Aaron burst onto the cricketing scene in the 2010-11 Vijay Hazare Trophy, clocking speeds over 150 km/h at the age of 21.



### Mo Farah to Lead 20th Mumbai Marathon as International Ambassador :-

Mo Farah, the great distance runner, has been named International Event Ambassador for the 20th edition of the Tata Mumbai Marathon, which will take place on January 19 in south Mumbai. Farah's nomination was announced at a press conference, confirming a record-breaking 60,000 runners' participation in the annual gala. In ten days, Farah will be present to add to the



significance of this historic edition. Farah, the Somalian-born British legend, holds a record number of four Olympic and six World Championship gold to have been hailed as the greatest ever distance runner.



#### International League T20 Season 3 kicks off :-

The third edition of the International League T20 began on January 11, with defending champions MI Emirates facing previous season's runners-up Dubai Capitals. This year's league has cricket luminaries like Ian Smith, Wasim Akram, and Virender Sehwag, among others, who will provide expert commentary and enhance the telecast. In an effort to engage a global audience, the commentary will be delivered in both English and Hindi, featuring presenters Laura McGoldrick, Ridhima Pathak, and Arjun Pandit.



#### Shreyas Iyer Appointed Punjab Kings Captain Ahead of IPL 2025 Season :-

The Indian Premier League franchise Punjab Kings has appointed Shreyas Iyer as its new captain for the 2025 season, which starting in March. The 30-year-old, who guided the Kolkata Knight Riders to victory last year, thanked the Punjab Kings' management and pledged to repay their trust. Iyer had a stellar 2024 season,

contributing to Mumbai's Ranji and Irani Trophy wins. He also led KKR to their IPL 2024 triumph. Additionally, he captained Mumbai to their second Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy win.



#### Kho Kho World Cup: India defeats Nepal in opening clash :-

The Indian men's team defeated Nepal 42-37 in the first match of the maiden Kho Kho World Cup at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium. India's Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, and other prominent dignitaries attended a dazzling opening ceremony prior to the men's Group A battle. P.T. Usha, the head of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), was also present. The inaugural edition of the kho kho competition, backed by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), will feature 20 men's and 19 women's teams.



#### Djokovic Breaks Federer's Record for Grand Slam Match Count :-

Novak Djokovic added another record to his long list, shattering a tie with Roger Federer for the most number of Grand Slam matches played in tennis history with 430 at the Australian Open after a tougher-than-expected second-round triumph. As it stands, Djokovic has won

the most Grand Slam singles championships of any player, 24, surpassing Rafael Nadal's 22 and Federer's 20. The 37-year-old Serb has spent more weeks at No. 1 in the rankings than any other player. He's played in 37 Slam finals, six more than Federer's old record.



#### **Axelsen and An Se-young Triumph at India Open 2025 :-**

Viktor Axelsen and An Se-young won the men's and women's singles events at the India Open Super 750 badminton competition, which took place in New Delhi. Axelsen, a two-time world champion who won the India Open in 2017 and 2019, demonstrated his supremacy by defeating Hong Kong's Lee Cheuk Yiu in straight games, 21-16, 21-8, in the men's singles final. Axelsen's triumph was especially significant for him because he had struggled with injury and motivation since the Olympics. He expressed his delight at regaining his competitive spirit and winning the title for the third time in his sixth India Open final appearance over the past decade.



#### **Kho Kho World Cup 2025: India win both men's and women's titles :-**

The Indian men's and women's teams made history in the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi, defeating Nepal in their respective finals to win the Kho Kho World

Cup 2025 titles. While the Indian men's kho kho team defeated Nepal 54-36 in the title match, the women's team outperformed the Nepalese eves by 78-40. This was the first Kho Kho World Cup. Backed by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), the tournament featured 20 men's and 19 women's teams. India remained unbeaten throughout the kho kho tournament.



#### **India vs. England Third T20 Match Scheduled :-**

Today, January 28, 2025, marks the third T20 match of the ongoing five-match series between India and England. The match will take place at the Niranjan Shah Stadium in Rajkot, where both teams are set to battle it out in what promises to be a high-stakes contest. India has already taken a 2-0 lead in the series, and England, now under significant pressure, must win this match to stay alive in the series. The game is expected to be intense, with both teams aiming to showcase their strength. Fans are looking forward to an exciting day of cricket as India looks to extend its lead and England fights to keep the series competitive. The match is set to begin at 1:30 PM UK time, with a strong lineup of star players from both teams.



#### **Ladakh Tops Khelo India Winter Games 2025; Army Retains Ice Hockey Title :-**



The Union Territory of Ladakh topped the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025, with the first phase held at the NDS Stadium. Leh, Ladakh's capital, held the games for the second time this year. The grand finale featured an exciting men's ice hockey final, with the Indian Army defeating ITBP 2-1 to retain the KIWG title. The second and final phase of KIWG 2025 will take place in Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir, from February 22 to 25. Overall, Ladakh topped the medal tally with seven medals, including four golds. Tamil Nadu followed with five medals.



### **Odisha Warriors Win First Women's Hockey India League Title :-**

Odisha Warriors faced JSW Soorma Hockey Club in the final game of the inaugural season of the world's only commercial women's hockey league. Rutuja Dadaso Pisal, who was bought at auction for Rs. 4.9 lakh, scored both goals for the Warriors, helping them defeat Soorma Hockey Club 2-1 in front of a crowded stadium. Following a scoreless first quarter, Rutuja gave the Warriors the

lead in the 20th minute. The Warriors despite the pressure exerted by Soorma in offence and defence, managed to get two quality shots through and managed to keep it at that to win the title.



### **Smriti Mandhana Smashes India's Fastest Women's ODI Century :-**

Smriti Mandhana, India's captain, continued her amazing form by slamming a century in the third Women's One-Day International versus Ireland at the Niranjan Shah Stadium in Rajkot. Mandhana's 70-ball century broke Harmanpreet Kaur's previous record of 87 balls against South Africa, becoming the fastest century by an Indian woman in one-day internationals. This stunning knock marked Mandhana's tenth ODI century, linking her with England's Tammy Beaumont for the third most centuries in women's ODIs. The list is led by Australian great Meg Lanning with 15 centuries, followed by New Zealand's Suzie Bates with 13.

## **17: State**



### **Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar Sworn in as Kerala Governor :-**

Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar took his oath as the 23rd Governor of Kerala in a ceremony conducted at Raj Bhavan in Thiruvantapuram. He replaced Arif Mohammed Khan, who had been sent to serve as Governor of Bihar. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Chief Secretary Sharada Muraleedharan, Chief Justice Jamdar, and Additional Chief Secretary for General

Administration K R Jyothilal greeted the newly installed Governor and his wife, Anagha Arlekar, on stage. Subsequently, the Chief Secretary read out the President's order appointing the Governor. The oath-taking ceremony followed thereafter.



#### **Arif Mohammad Khan Takes Oath as Bihar's New Governor :-**

Former Union Minister Arif Mohammad Khan took oath as Bihar's 42nd governor at a brief ceremony held at the Raj Bhavan. Justice K Vinod Chandran, Chief Justice of the Patna High Court, delivered the oath to Khan. Khan replaced Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, who was named Governor of Kerala. Khan was originally elected to the Lok Sabha from Kanpur in 1980 as a member of the Congress, but he left the party in 1986 due to disagreements over the Muslim Personal Law Bill. He later joined Janata Dal, Bahujan Samaj Party and finally BJP in 2004.



#### **Maharashtra Reviews Beneficiaries of Ladki Bahin Scheme :-**

The Maharashtra government is conducting a thorough review of the Ladki Bahin Scheme, an initiative launched in June 2024 to provide financial support to women from economically weaker sections. Under the scheme,

eligible beneficiaries receive ₹1,500 per month. However, concerns about its financial viability have been raised as the scheme's annual expenditure is estimated to be ₹46,000 crore. The government is now working to streamline the process and verify the beneficiaries to ensure the scheme's long-term sustainability.



#### **Odisha government announces three-year sponsorship deal for Indian national kho-kho team :-**

The Odisha Mining Corporation would fund an annual investment of ₹5 crore from January 2025 to December 2027, as declared by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi. The Rs 15 crore sponsorship package underlines Odisha's ongoing commitment to sports development, following its successful relationship with Indian hockey. This effort intends to raise Kho Kho's profile and provide crucial support to the national squad. The sponsorship will facilitate team development, training infrastructure, and participation in national and international competitions.



#### **Goa govt launched 'Bima Sakhi Yojana' :-**

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant introduced the 'Bima Sakhi Yojana' in the state with the goal of providing "insurance for all". According to a government statement, Goa has become the second state, after Haryana, to begin Prime Minister Narendra Modi's flagship project. According to the central government's



homepage, the Bima Sakhi Yojana project of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is intended to empower women aged 18 to 70 who have completed Class X. They will receive specialised training and a stipend for the first three years to promote financial literacy and insurance awareness.



#### **Madhya Pradesh Launches PARTH Initiative :-**

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav introduced two projects to support and empower the youth: Police Army Recruitment Training & Hunar (PARTH) and Yuva Prerak Abhiyan MPYP. Yadav declared that the sports department will organize training courses under the PARTH Yojana for state youngsters who want to join the army or police. These training programs will be held at ten locations throughout the state and will be self-funded, with trainees paying a small fee. Under the MPYP scheme, the focus is on connecting the youth with skill development, career, and employment opportunities.



#### **Gautam Adani announces mega investment of Rs 65,000 crore in Chhattisgarh :-**

Gautam Adani talked with Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and pledged an investment of Rs 65,000 crore for the Adani Group's energy and cement projects in the state, according to officials. According to a

statement from the state's public relations department, Adani paid a visit to the chief minister at his official residence in Raipur, Chhattisgarh's capital. During their discussion, Adani announced intentions to invest Rs 60,000 crore to expand the Adani Group's power plants in Raipur, Korba, and Raigarh. This expansion will increase Chhattisgarh's total power generation capacity by 6,120 MW, the statement noted.



#### **Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah inaugurates 'Library for Every Home' project :-**

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah launched the Kannada Book Authority's 'Library for Every Home' project at his home office, 'Krishna'. He also released the Kumaravyasa Bharata volumes published by the authority. Purushottam Bilimale, chairman of the Kannada Development Authority, unveiled the plaque for the library. This project aims to create libraries in one lakh houses across the state during the current committee time. Its main objective is to develop a love for books in today's youth by building a small library in every home to save the fading book culture.



#### **Odisha Integrates with Ayushman Bharat :-**

Odisha has become the 34th state to adopt the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB

PM-JAY), a significant milestone in its healthcare journey. The state inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Health Authority (NHA) at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi, formally integrating the initiative with Odisha's existing Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana (GJAY). The convergence of AB PM-JAY and GJAY will provide healthcare coverage of ₹5 lakh per family annually, with an additional ₹5 lakh for women.



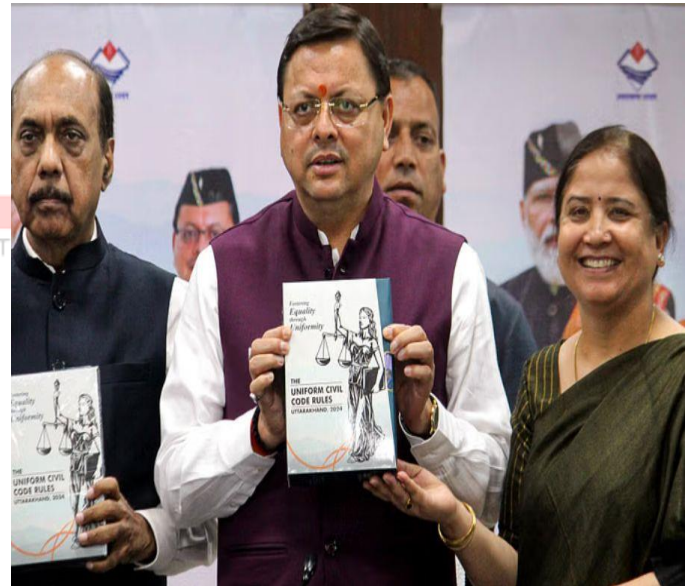
#### **ISKCON Temple Inaugurated by PM Modi in Navi Mumbai :-**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated ISKCON's Sri Sri Radha Madanmohanji Temple in Navi Mumbai. PM Modi also prayed at what is now Asia's second-largest ISKCON temple. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was joined by Maharashtra Governor CP Radhakrishnan, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, and BJP MP Hema Malini during the ceremony. The PM highlighted that the outline of Sri Sri Radha Madanmohanji Temple reflects the entire tradition of spirituality and knowledge.



#### **Archaeological Experiential Museum Launched in Vadnagar :-**

Vadnagar is a lovely city in Gujarat with a history spanning over 2500 years. The city is currently preparing to unveil a new cultural landmark—the Archaeological Experience Museum. The city, which is also the home of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, hopes that the new museum will provide an immersive and informative experience. Union Home Minister Amit Shah presided over the museum's opening ceremony. Built at a cost of INR 298 crore, the Vadnagar Archaeological Experience Museum spans an impressive 12,500 square meters across four storeys.



#### **Uttarakhand Clears Uniform Civil Code Rules :-**

The Uttarakhand cabinet has adopted the norms and regulations for the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), clearing the path for its adoption within the next ten days. With this, Uttarakhand would become the first state in the country to implement UCC since independence. While chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami did not provide a definite date, sources indicated that the code could be implemented on January 26 or 28. Dhami added that the training of over 2,000 govt employees has already been completed, and the trial run is expected to conclude in the coming days.



## 18: Summits & Conferences



### India To Host First Waves Summit in February 2025 :-

India is set to host the World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) for the first time in February 2025, providing a global platform for its creative talents, promoting collaborations, and highlighting the country's potential as a powerhouse for world-class content development. Prime Minister Narendra Modi compared the WAVES to major gatherings such as the World Economic Forum in Davos, stating that leaders from the media and entertainment industries, as well as creative minds from around the world, will converge in Delhi for the Summit from February 5 to 9.



### Andhra Pradesh CM Naidu to attend World Economic Forum Summit in Davos

A team from Andhra Pradesh, headed by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, will be attending the four-day World Economic Forum 2025 in Davos, Switzerland, commencing on January 20. The State government has authorized the requisite proposals for the delegation that includes Mr. Naidu, IT Minister N. Lokesh, Industries Minister T.G. Bharat, and officials from the Industries Department and Andhra Pradesh Economic

Development Board. During the summit, Mr. Naidu and Mr. Lokesh would highlight the resources and investment opportunities in Andhra Pradesh.



### Revanth, Naidu took part in World Telugu Federation conference in Hyderabad :-

Following the assembly elections in both Telugu states, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu attended the same conference for the first time. This uncommon incident took place at the World Telugu Federation's (WTF) 12th Biennial International Conference. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu launched the three-day conference, which began on January 3rd at the HICC in Madhapur, in the evening. He also released the WTF's souvenir and launch the Telugu Angels programme.



### Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025 :-

Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025 inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi is being held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The Grameen Bharat Mahotsav will take place from January 4 to 9, with the theme 'Building a Resilient Rural India for a Viksit Bharat 2047', according to a press release. PM Modi also engaged with

craftsmen at the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025, which is being held at Bharat Mandapam. The Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, was also present. PM Modi was also felicitated by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) chairperson Shaji KV.



#### **World Telugu Conference in Rajamahendravaram on January 8, 9 :-**

The World Telugu Conference is scheduled to be organized at Godavari Global University in Rajamahendravaram on January 8 and 9, 2025. The two-day event will include notable Telugu writers, literary giants, former Vice-President of India M Venkaiah Naidu, former Chief Justice of India NV Ramana, Governors from both Telugu states, Union and State ministers, MPs, artists, and actors. Organised to celebrate Telugu language, literature, and cultural heritage, the world conference will include poetry sessions, competitions, and cultural activities among others.



#### **18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention in Odisha's Bhubaneswar :-**

The 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention began on Wednesday (January 8, 2025) in Odisha's Bhubaneswar, with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar encouraging NRIs and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) to take part

actively in the search for a 'viksit Bharat'. The chief speaker for this event is Trinidad and Tobago President Christine Carla Kangaloo, which is being held on the theme 'Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat'. Ministry of External Affairs Secretary (CPV & OIA) Arun Kumar Chatterjee said the Indian diaspora is working as the "living bridge" between the country where they stayed or worked and their motherland.

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#### **India to showcase transformative agricultural and food solutions at Indusfood 2025 :-**

Chirag Paswan, Union Minister of Food Processing Industries, launched the 8th edition of Indusfood 2025 on January 8 at the India Exposition Mart Ltd in Greater Noida. Indusfood, coordinated by the Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) with backing from the Department of Commerce, is Asia's biggest yearly food and beverage (F&B) trade exhibition, and it is expected to take a significant step forward in 2025 by debuting as an integrated farm-to-fork trade show. The event expects to host 7,500 international buyers and 15,000 Indian buyers and trade visitors. It will run from January 8 to 10, at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida.



#### **Indian Army to host 'Know Your Army Mela' in Bengaluru on January 11 :-**



The Indian Army is set to host a "Know Your Army Mela" on January 11 at the Manekshaw Parade Ground on Cubbon Road in Bengaluru. According to a statement issued by the Defence Public Relations Office, the Army invites Bengalureans to join them for a day of adventure, cultural activities, and equipment exhibitions. The Mela will take place from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. "Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot will be the chief guest of the event, which will be open to all with free entry. The event offers a platform to interact with and understand the lives of soldiers who protect our borders," the statement read.



#### PM Modi to Attend AI Action Summit in France :-

French President Emmanuel Macron has announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to France in February for a state visit and to take part in "Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Summit." France will be hosting the AI Action Summit at the Grand Palais on February 10 and 11. The conference will bring together leaders of state and government, leaders of international organizations, academics, CEOs of major and small businesses, non-governmental organization representatives, artists, and civil society members. Calling it a "summit for action," Macron said it would offer a platform to discuss artificial intelligence.



#### PM Modi Inaugurates Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025

On January 17, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025, India's largest mobility expo, which is slated to feature over 100 new debuts in autos, component products, and technologies. Its five-day expo will be hosted at three locations: Bharat Mandapam and Yashobhoomi in the national capital, and India Expo Center and Mart in Greater Noida. The Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025, scheduled from January 17-22, will bring the entire value chain of the mobility ecosystem under a single umbrella.



#### Gujarat to host 1st Olympic Research Conference :-

A group of experts and representatives from the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) will gather in Gujarat to discuss creative economic models and strategies for funding and constructing "sustainable" sports infrastructure, which will help India establish itself as a serious candidate to host the 2036 Olympics. "We are organising the 1st International Olympic Research Conference from January 27-30, which will discuss financing and innovative economic models for hosting the Olympics in India" said Utsav Chaware, director, Bharat Centre of Olympic Research and Education (BCORE).



**48th International Kolkata Book Fair to begin in January 28 :-**

The 48th International Kolkata Book Fair 2025, the world's largest attended book fair, is set to take place from January 28 to February 9, 2025 at the Boimela Prangan in Salt Lake City, Kolkata. Last year, 2.7 million people attended the book expo. This year, the International Kolkata Book market will be an open-air book market in the real sense. There will be no halls where English language publishers were formerly present. Instead, there will be a designated 'Premier Area' for all English language participants. Germany is the focal theme country of the International Kolkata Book Fair 2025.

**First-Ever Pashmina Festival Held in Kathmandu :-**

The first three-day International Pashmina Festival and Exhibition, organized by the Nepal Pashmina Industries Association and the Confederation of Nepalese Industries, drew customers' attention to the delicate,

lightweight, and warm natural fiber derived from the Chyangra or Pashmina goat. Nepal is a major manufacturer of true Pashmina, which is frequently labeled as "Chyangra Pashmina" to underline its excellent quality and uniqueness. Nepali Pashmina has a good market in different countries including America and Japan as well as in Europe.

**'Utkarsh Odisha' Business Conclave :-**

The two-day 'Utkarsh Odisha' – Make in Odisha Conclave 2025 and the Make in Odisha Exhibition was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Bhubaneswar. While addressing the audience, PM Modi stated that eastern India is a growth engine for the country's development, with Odisha playing an important role. He emphasized that this region was experiencing more opportunities than at any other time since independence. The Prime Minister called upon all the industry leaders attending the grand conclave to invest in Odisha as now is the right time to invest in the state's development journey.



## SECTION 2

# Practice Questions with Answers



## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1) In which of the following city the 72nd Plenary of the North Eastern Council (NEC) was held?

- A) Agartala
- B) Dispur
- C) Itanagar
- D) None of the above

2) Which of the following state government has unveiled the Sanjeevani Yojana, promising free medical treatment for senior citizens aged 60 and above?

- A) Telangana
- B) Punjab
- C) Kerala
- D) Delhi

3) The World Bank approved \_\_\_\_\_ loan to India for developing Amaravati of Andhra Pradesh.

- A) \$900 million
- B) \$800 million
- C) \$600 million
- D) \$500 million

4) Legendary Malayalam \_\_\_\_\_ MT Vasudevan Nair passed away recently.

- A) Journalist
- B) Singer
- C) Writer
- D) None of the above

5) Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (TPREL) has joined forces with which of the following bank to promote the adoption of rooftop solar systems under the PM Surya Ghar Scheme?

- A) Bank of Baroda
- B) Canara Bank
- C) HDFC Bank
- D) SBI Bank

6) Who among the following released the 18th biennial 'India State of Forest Report 2023 (ISFR 2023)'?

- A) Ajit Doval
- B) Amit Shah
- C) Bhupendra Yadav
- D) Piyush Goyal

7) Which of the following airport has achieved a historic milestone by becoming the first airport in India to connect 150 destinations?

- A) Bengaluru Airport
- B) Delhi Airport
- C) Mumbai Airport
- D) None of the above

8) Which of the following state government has received in-principle approval from the center for 47 projects aimed at establishing new or expanding existing distilleries?

- A) Uttar Pradesh
- B) Odisha
- C) Bihar
- D) Andhra Pradesh

9) Who among the following has unveiled Kisan Kavach, India's first anti-pesticide bodysuit, designed to protect farmers?

- A) Dharmendra Pradhan
- B) Jitendra Singh
- C) Nirmala Sitharaman
- D) Shivraj Singh Chouhan

10) Times Internet has collaborated with which of the following bank to launch premium metal card?

- A) HDFC Bank
- B) ICICI Bank
- C) SBI Bank
- D) Yes Bank

11) Which of the following country officially reopened its embassy in the Syrian capital Damascus after 13 years?



- A) Qatar
- B) Kuwait
- C) Dubai
- D) Bahrain

**12) Veteran \_\_\_\_\_ and Dadasaheb Phalke Award winner Shyam Benegal recently passed away at the age of 90.**

- A) Writer
- B) Journalist
- C) Filmmaker
- D) None of the above

**13) Where did the 2024 National Science Drama Festival was held?**

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Delhi
- C) Hyderabad
- D) Surat

**14) Which of the following state was recognized by the Wall Street Journal as one of the top global destinations for 2025?**

- A) Goa
- B) Madhya Pradesh
- C) Maharashtra
- D) Uttar Pradesh

**15) President of India Smt Droupadi Murmu appointed who among the following as the Chairperson of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)?**

- A) V. Ramasubramanian
- B) Ravindra Kumaran
- C) Pratik Chaudhary
- D) None of the above

**16) Which of the following bank has made history by executing the first gold forward deal from the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City)?**

- A) Bank of Baroda
- B) HDFC Bank
- C) ICICI Bank

- D) Yes Bank

**17) The South Indian Education Society (SIES) awarded who among the following the Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi National Eminence Award for Public Leadership?**

- A) Dharmendra Pradhan
- B) Dr. S. Jaishankar
- C) Shivraj Singh Chouhan
- D) None of the above

**18) Which of the following country has extended its visa exemption program for Indian nationals until December 31, 2026?**

- A) Thailand
- B) Singapore
- C) Maldives
- D) Malaysia

**19) Who among the following authored a book titled 'Ente Jeevitham Niraye' launched by Governor of Goa P.S. Sreedharan?**

- A) Gauri Grover
- B) Dr. K. Thomas Mathew
- C) Bob Budward
- D) None of the above

**20) The Central Government has appointed Justice GS Sandhawalia as the Chief Justice of \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) Uttar Pradesh
- B) Maharashtra
- C) Himachal Pradesh
- D) Bihar

**21) Which of the following country's company SHEIN has returned to the Indian market after 4 years?**

- A) America
- B) China
- C) Japan
- D) Russia



**22) Which of the following has become India's first zero waste airport?**

- A) Chennai Airport
- B) Delhi Airport
- C) Indore Airport
- D) Mumbai Airport

**23) Which of the following states will host the 'Women's Kabaddi World Cup' in 2025?**

- A) Bihar
- B) Haryana
- C) Punjab
- D) Uttar Pradesh

**24) Who among the following regained the top spot in the recent ICC Men's Test Bowling Rankings?**

- A) Jasprit Bumrah
- B) Jose Hizbul
- C) Kagiso Rabada
- D) None of the above

**25) Veteran politician Aisake Valu Eke was elected as the Prime Minister of which of the following country?**

- A) Tonga
- B) Norway
- C) Iceland
- D) None of the above

**26) When the Veer Bal Diwas was observed?**

- A) 22 December
- B) 24 December
- C) 25 December
- D) 26 December

**27) Indian lifters won a total of \_\_\_\_\_ medals at the recently-concluded Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships 2024 in Doha.**

- A) 12
- B) 25
- C) 30
- D) 33

**28) Which of the following bank has announced Amitav Chatterjee as its new managing director (MD) and CEO?**

- A) Bandhan Bank
- B) Jammu and Kashmir Bank
- C) Punjab Bank
- D) Yes Bank

**29) Bald eagle was officially declared national bird of which of the following country?**

- A) China
- B) Japan
- C) Russia
- D) USA

**30) In which of the following state the Hero Future Energies (HFE) unveiled a 29 MW solar project?**

- A) Andhra Pradesh
- B) Kerala
- C) Karnataka
- D) Odisha

**31) When was the first case of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) detected in Bengaluru?**

- A) January 5, 2025
- B) January 6, 2025
- C) January 7, 2025
- D) January 8, 2025

**32) Which rare butterfly was recently spotted in Tripura?**

- A) Monarch Butterfly
- B) Painted Lady Butterfly
- C) Banded Royal Butterfly
- D) Swallowtail Butterfly

**33) What is the monthly financial support provided under the Maharashtra Ladki Bahin Scheme?**

- A) ₹1,000
- B) ₹1,500
- C) ₹2,000
- D) ₹2,500



**34) World Day of War Orphans is observed globally on which date?**

- A) January 5
- B) January 6
- C) January 7
- D) January 8

**35) What was one of the main focuses of Jake Sullivan's visit to India?**

- A) Strengthening defense partnerships
- B) Discussing global health concerns
- C) Promoting cultural exchanges
- D) Addressing climate change

**36) President Droupadi Murmu conferred how many children with Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2024?**

- A) 12
- B) 17
- C) 18
- D) 20

**37) Who among the following is set to be honoured with honorary cricket membership of the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC)?**

- A) Virat Kohli
- B) Sachin Tendulkar
- C) Rohit Sharma
- D) Mahendra Singh Dhoni

**38) Which of the following country has approved the construction of what will be the world's largest hydropower dam?**

- A) America
- B) China
- C) Russia
- D) Saudi Arabia

**39) Lakshya Sen won which of the following medal at King Cup International Badminton Open 2024?**

- A) Bronze
- B) Gold

- C) Silver
- D) None of the above

**40) Which of the following country has launched its sixth-generation fighter jet 'J-36'?**

- A) Russia
- B) Germany
- C) China
- D) America

**41) Which of the following state launched the SWAR platform to overcome language barriers?**

- A) Tamil Nadu
- B) Kerala
- C) Gujarat
- D) Andhra Pradesh

**42) Who among the following clinched the women's World rapid chess championship held in New York?**

- A) Tan Zhongyi
- B) Lei Tingjie
- C) Koneru Humpy
- D) None of the above

**43) Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has entered into a strategic alliance with which company to provide mentorship and guidance to Indian startups?**

- A) Amazon
- B) Boat
- C) Flipkart
- D) HCL

**44) Who among the following became the world's youngest female to conquer highest peaks on all seven continents?**

- A) Soumya Srinath
- B) Kaamya Karthikeyan
- C) Amarjyoti Reddy
- D) None of the above

**45) Who among the following became the fastest Indian pacer to register 200 Test wickets?**

- A) Jasprit Bumrah
- B) Mohammed Shami
- C) Ravindra Jadeja
- D) None of the above

**46) Which of the following IIT has developed a needle-free shock syringes for painless, safe drug delivery?**

- A) IIT Delhi
- B) IIT Guwahati
- C) IIT Kanpur
- D) IIT Bombay

**47) Which of the following country will host the World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) for the first time in February 2025?**

- A) France
- B) Germany
- C) India
- D) Sri Lanka

**48) Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India is projected to grow at \_\_\_\_\_ in 2024-25, said a RBI report.**

- A) 6.1%
- B) 6.5%
- C) 6.6%
- D) 6.9%

**49) A statue of former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh is set to be installed in which of the following city?**

- A) Delhi
- B) Hyderabad
- C) Jaipur
- D) Shimla

**50) ISRO successfully launched PSLV-C60 carrying the SpaDeX mission from \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Indore
- C) Jaisalmer

D) Sriharikota

**51) Which of the following state government has appointed K Vijayanand as the new chief secretary of the state?**

- A) Andhra Pradesh
- B) Karnataka
- C) Madhya Pradesh
- D) Tamil Nadu

**52) The Income Tax Department has extended the deadline of Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme 2024 from December 31, 2024 to \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) 01 April 2025
- B) 31 March 2025
- C) 01 February 2025
- D) 31 January 2025

**53) When the Global Family Day was observed?**

- A) 04 January
- B) 03 January
- C) 02 January
- D) 01 January

**54) The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has declared 2025 as the \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) Year of Reforms
- B) Year of AI
- C) Year of Technology
- D) None of the above

**55) Which of the following team won its 33rd Santosh Trophy title by defeating Kerala?**

- A) West Bengal
- B) Mizoram
- C) Meghalaya
- D) Assam

**56) Which of the following airline has launched India's first in-flight Wi-Fi services on domestic flights?**

- A) SpiceJet
- B) IndiGo



- C) Gagan
- D) Air India

**57) Which of the following state government approved the creation of Vav-Tharad district recently?**

- A) Gujarat
- B) Karnataka
- C) Kerala
- D) Madhya Pradesh

**58) India's coffee exports increased how much percentage in between April and November in the financial year 2024?**

- A) 22%
- B) 25%
- C) 29%
- D) 35%

**59) When the World Introvert Day was observed?**

- A) 04 January
- B) 03 January
- C) 02 January
- D) 01 January

**60) Majid Takht Ravanchi, the deputy foreign minister of which of the following country recently visited India?**

- A) Iran
- B) Kuwait
- C) Saudi Arabia
- D) UAE

**61) Renowned \_\_\_\_\_ and Padma Shri awardee K S Manilal, aged 86, passed away due to age-related ailments.**

- A) Writer
- B) Singer
- C) Botanist
- D) None of the above

**62) Who among the following has released a book, titled 'Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh Through the Ages' in New Delhi?**

- A) Ajit Paswan
- B) Amit Shah
- C) Piyush Goyal
- D) Rajnath Singh

**63) Who among the following was conferred the Gangadhar National Award for Poetry 2023 by the Sambalpur University?**

- A) Rajat Verma
- B) Pratibha Satpathy
- C) Jitendra Mishra
- D) None of the above

**64) When the World Braille Day was observed?**

- A) 01 January
- B) 02 January
- C) 03 January
- D) 04 January

**65) The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has achieved a remarkable milestone in 2024, securing a \_\_\_\_\_ conviction rate.**

- A) 50%
- B) 60%
- C) 70%
- D) 100%

**66) After 40 years, toxic waste from the Bhopal gas tragedy site has been removed and transported to \_\_\_\_\_ for incineration.**

- A) Dhar
- B) Gwalior
- C) Indore
- D) Shivpuri

**67) The 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention was held in which of the following city?**

- A) Bhubaneswar
- B) Jaipur
- C) Mumbai
- D) New Delhi



**68) Who among the following was appointed as the chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Subordinate Services Selection Commission (UPSSSC)?**

- A) Abhijeet Sharma
- B) Dr. Satya Narayan Sabat
- C) Punit Goenka
- D) Sanjay Murthy

**69) In which of the following city quick-commerce company Blinkit launched a 10-minute ambulance service?**

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Gwalior
- C) Gurugram
- D) Noida

**70) Who among the following was appointed as new Secretary General of ASSOCHAM?**

- A) Bhavnesh Kumar
- B) Manish Singhal
- C) Sanjay Murthy
- D) Sanjay Prasad

**71) The 31st National Children's Science Congress (NCSC) was held in which of the following city?**

- A) Bhopal
- B) Bhubaneswar
- C) Gwalior
- D) Indore

**72) Who among the following took over as the new chief of ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition?**

- A) Anjani Singh
- B) Bharati Kulkarni
- C) Jyotika Mishra
- D) Pratima Joshi

**73) Which of the following bank has launched the Har Ghar Lakhpati Scheme?**

- A) BOB
- B) HDFC
- C) PNB

D) SBI

**74) Who among the following won the US House speaker election?**

- A) Caroline Levitt
- B) Mike Johnson
- C) Scott Bessant
- D) None of the above

**75) Eminent \_\_\_\_\_ Rajagopala Chidambaram recently passed away at 88.**

- A) Writer
- B) Physicist
- C) Journalist
- D) None of the above

**76) Which of the following state government has declared unseasonal rain as natural calamity to provide relief to farmers?**

- A) Odisha
- B) Kerala
- C) Haryana
- D) Andhra Pradesh

**77) Which of the following state government has decided to celebrate the birth anniversary of Savitribai Phule on January 3 as 'Women Teacher's Day' annually?**

- A) Bihar
- B) Jharkhand
- C) Telangana
- D) Uttar Pradesh

**78) Where did the Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually laid the foundation stone for the new Central Ayurveda Research Institute (CARI)?**

- A) Leh
- B) Jammu and Kashmir
- C) Delhi
- D) Chandigarh

**79) Which of the following country has emerged as the second most targeted nation in terms of cyber attacks in the world?**

- A) Japan
- B) India
- C) China
- D) America

**80) Which of the following country ranks 3rd in the world for metro rail networks, surpassing 1000 km?**

- A) China
- B) India
- C) Japan
- D) Russia

**81) Union Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh launched the country's first organic fisheries cluster in \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) Assam
- B) Bihar
- C) Jharkhand
- D) Sikkim

**82) Which of the following country has announced a ban on new offshore oil and gas drilling along most of its coastline?**

- A) America
- B) China
- C) Japan
- D) Russia

**83) Which of the following country has officially joined the BRICS as a full member?**

- A) Nepal
- B) Indonesia
- C) Bhutan
- D) Argentina

**84) 2025 edition of the Indus Food was held in which of the following city?**

- A) Surat
- B) Jaipur

- C) Greater Noida
- D) Bhubaneswar

**85) Who among the following clinched the U-17 British Open squash title?**

- A) Anahat Singh
- B) Gargi
- C) Pramila Singh
- D) None of the above

**86) When the Earth Rotation Day was observed?**

- A) 6 January
- B) 7 January
- C) 8 January
- D) 9 January

**87) Defence minister Rajnath Singh recently held bilateral discussions with Defense Minister of which of the following country in New Delhi?**

- A) Afghanistan
- B) Bangladesh
- C) Iran
- D) Maldives

**88) Which of the following company has launched a mobile application, CipAir, to aid in asthma screening in India?**

- A) Cipla
- B) Mankind
- C) Sanjivini
- D) None of the above

**89) Who among the following took charge as the chairman of ISRO?**

- A) V Narayanan
- B) Sundaram Singh
- C) Pramila Ahuja
- D) None of the above

**90) Who among the following became the world's oldest living person after the death of Japan's Tomiko Itooka?**

- A) John Tinniswood
- B) Lang Ji Nom
- C) Inah Canabarro
- D) Marcelino Abad

**91) Signature Global Ltd announced who among the following as its Chief Financial Officer (CFO)?**

- A) Ajit Sharma
- B) Bahadur Singh
- C) Devjit Sakia
- D) Sanjeev Kumar Sharma

**92) Who among the following has announced the launch of the "Cashless Treatment" scheme to provide financial aid to road accident victims?**

- A) Amit Shah
- B) Nitin Gadkari
- C) Rajnath Singh
- D) None of the above

**93) Veteran \_\_\_\_\_ and Padma Shri awardee British Nandy recently passed away at the age of 73.**

- A) Director
- B) Film producer
- C) Actor
- D) Cricketer

**94) Which of the following state Chief Minister has pledged a USD 1 million reward to decode the enigmatic script of the Indus Valley Civilisation?**

- A) Tamil Nadu
- B) Kerala
- C) Karnataka
- D) Andhra Pradesh

**95) BHEL has announced the successful commissioning of two units of the Punatsangchhu-II hydropower project in which of the following country?**

- A) Bhutan
- B) Maldives
- C) Nepal

- D) Sri Lanka

**96) Mount Ibu volcano of which of the following country erupted recently?**

- A) Singapore
- B) Japan
- C) Indonesia
- D) Ethiopia

**97) Who among the following has launched special songs dedicated to the Maha Kumbh 2025?**

- A) Rajnath Singh
- B) Piyush Goyal
- C) Narendra Modi
- D) Ashwini Vaishnav

**98) Martin Gupthill, the former opening batsman of which of the following country has announced his retirement from international cricket?**

- A) Australia
- B) England
- C) New Zealand
- D) West Indies

**99) Which of the following state government has launched an innovative scheme PARTH Yojana (Police Army Recruitment Training & Hunar) recently?**

- A) Gujarat
- B) Madhya Pradesh
- C) Odisha
- D) Rajasthan

**100) Who among the following was appointed as the new secretary of the Department of Revenue (DoR), Ministry of Finance succeeding Arunish Chawla?**

- A) Devjit Saikia
- B) Sanjeev Kumar Sharma
- C) Tuhin Kant Pandey
- D) None of the above

**101) Which of the following state became the second state after Haryana to launch the 'Bima Sakhi Yojana'?**





- A) Rajasthan
- B) Punjab
- C) Maharashtra
- D) Goa

**102) What is the rank of India in the 2025 Henley Passport Index?**

- A) 75
- B) 02
- C) 85
- D) 95

**103) Who among the following launched a special FM channel of All India Radio named Kumbhvani dedicated to Maha Kumbh 2025?**

- A) Amit Shah
- B) Ashwini Vaishnav
- C) Narendra Modi
- D) Yogi Adityanath

**104) Which of the following company launched a dedicated app called 'Snacc' that will deliver beverages, snacks, tiffin items, and meals in 10 to 15 minutes?**

- A) Blinkit
- B) Swiggy
- C) Zomato
- D) None of the above

**105) Who among the following awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award 2025 for his remarkable contributions to healthcare, community welfare, and strengthening ties between India and Saudi Arabia?**

- A) Devjit Saikia
- B) Dr. Syed Anwar Khursheed
- C) Sanjeev Kumar Sharma
- D) None of the above

**106) Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to attend the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit held in which of the following country?**

- A) France
- B) Japan

- C) Saudi Arabia
- D) South Korea

**107) In which of the following city South India's first infectious disease research and diagnosis laboratory is set to be established?**

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Chennai
- C) Hyderabad
- D) Telangana

**108) India's National Highway network has grown how much percent over the past decade?**

- A) 30%
- B) 40%
- C) 50%
- D) 60%

**109) Japan has approved more sanctions against which of the following country due ongoing war in Ukraine?**

- A) US
- B) Somalia
- C) Russia
- D) Maldives

**110) Who among the following presided the regional conference on Drug Trafficking and National Security in New Delhi?**

- A) Rajnath Singh
- B) Piyush Goyal
- C) Narendra Modi
- D) Amit Shah

**111) When the National Youth Day (India) was celebrated?**

- A) 10 January
- B) 11 January
- C) 12 January
- D) 13 January



**112) Respected sports magazine, Track and Field News of which of the following country named Neeraj Chopra as the best javelin thrower of 2024?**

- A) Russia
- B) India
- C) Australia
- D) America

**113) India recently dispatched humanitarian assistance to which of the following country in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Rafael?**

- A) Cuba
- B) Maldives
- C) Philippines
- D) Ukraine

**114) India along with which of the following country will mark 2026 as 'dual year' to celebrate culture, tourism and AI in both countries?**

- A) Germany
- B) Malaysia
- C) Norway
- D) Spain

**115) Who among the following released a book titled "Yuva Shakti's Vision For Viksit Bharat @2047"?**

- A) Amit Shah
- B) Narendra Modi
- C) Piyush Goyal
- D) Draupadi Murmu

**116) \_\_\_\_\_ has joined the United Nations Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics (UN-CEBD).**

- A) Bangladesh
- B) India
- C) Myanmar
- D) Nepal

**117) Who will chair the ID verification and data sharing platform Equal's newly formed Advisory Board?**

- A) Devjit Saikia
- B) B.N. Srikrishna
- C) Sanjeev Kumar Sharma
- D) None of the above

**118) Where did the Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Z-Morh tunnel?**

- A) Assam
- B) Himachal Pradesh
- C) Jammu and Kashmir
- D) Uttarakhand

**119) When did the 'Lohri festival' was celebrated?**

- A) 10 January
- B) 11 January
- C) 12 January
- D) 13 January

**120) \_\_\_\_\_ has launched 'HIMKAVACH', a multi-layered clothing system designed to protect soldiers in extreme temperatures.**

- A) BHEL
- B) DRDO
- C) ISRO
- D) TATA

**121) In which of the following city the Indian Railways has organised the 'Paint My City' campaign?**

- A) Bhopal
- B) Gorakhpur
- C) Prayagraj
- D) Varanasi

**122) Who among the following was honoured with the 'Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award' at the annual award ceremony of West Bengal Film Journalists Association?**

- A) Aparna Sen
- B) OP Singh
- C) Rajiv Ranjan
- D) Suseela Sharma

**123) The nuclear reactor for the sixth unit of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KNPP) in Tamil Nadu was shipped from which of the following country?**

- A) America
- B) China
- C) Japan
- D) Russia

**124) The 85th All India Presiding Officers Conference (AIPOC) was held in which of the following city?**

- A) Gorakhpur
- B) Meerut
- C) Patna
- D) Varanasi

**125) \_\_\_\_\_ became the 34th state to join the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana scheme.**

- A) Assam
- B) Manipur
- C) Mizoram
- D) Odisha

**126) Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has launched the second Multi-Purpose Vessel (MPV) for the Indian Navy named \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) INS Surat
- B) INS Utkarsh
- C) INS Vagsheer
- D) None of the above

**127) Who among the following was named ICC Men's Player of the Month for December 2024?**

- A) Jasprit Bumrah
- B) Ravindra Jadeja
- C) Pat Cummins
- D) None of the above

**128) Who was assigned additional charge of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)?**

- A) Nidhi Khare
- B) Pratik Sinha

- C) Sanjay Singh
- D) None of the above

**129) \_\_\_\_\_ become the fourth country in the world to successfully accomplish an unmanned docking in space.**

- A) America
- B) India
- C) Japan
- D) Russia

**130) Which country has launched its first National Autism Strategy with a \$42.3 million budget to improve the lives of people with autism?**

- A) Russia
- B) France
- C) Australia
- D) America

**131) India is celebrating its \_\_\_\_\_ Republic Day in 2025.**

- A) 74th
- B) 75th
- C) 76th
- D) None of the above

**132) Who was the Chief Guest at India's 76th Republic Day celebrations in 2025?**

- A) Emmanuel Macron
- B) Abdel Fattah El-Sisi
- C) Sheikh Hasina
- D) None of the above

**133) India and Indonesia recently signed agreements on various sectors under which partnership?**

- A) Economic Cooperation Pact
- B) Comprehensive Strategic Partnership
- C) Indo-Pacific Alliance
- D) None of the above

**134) What is the proposed percentage increase in India's agriculture budget for the next fiscal year?**





- A) 10%
- B) 12%
- C) 15%
- D) None of the above

**135) The Indian government plans to increase spending on major subsidies by \_\_\_\_\_ in the upcoming fiscal year.**

- A) 5%
- B) 8%
- C) 10%
- D) None of the above

**136) Which country's armed forces participated for the first time in India's Republic Day parade in 2025?**

- A) Indonesia
- B) France
- C) Japan
- D) Australia



**137) What is the capacity of the dam China plans to build on the Yarlung Tsangpo River?**

- A) 40 gigawatts
- B) 50 gigawatts
- C) 60 gigawatts
- D) 70 gigawatts

**138) What was the value of government bonds purchased by the Reserve Bank of India recently?**

- A) ₹101.75 billion
- B) ₹95 billion
- C) ₹125.50 billion
- D) ₹110 billion

**139) When does the current SEBI chairperson's term end?**

- A) February 15, 2025
- B) February 28, 2025
- C) March 1, 2025
- D) January 31, 2025

**140) Which key issue was emphasized during the recent India-China diplomatic meeting?**

- A) Border dispute resolution
- B) Enhanced mutual understanding
- C) Free trade agreements
- D) Maritime security

**141) During which event did a tragic stage collapse occur in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh, on January 28, 2025?**

- A) Nirvana Laddu Parv
- B) Kumbh Mela
- C) Ram Navami Festival
- D) Diwali Celebrations

**142) Which two countries recently agreed to resume air travel and facilitate journalist exchanges in 2025?**

- A) India and Pakistan
- B) India and the United States
- C) India and China
- D) India and Russia

**143) What major challenge is India's banking sector facing in 2025?**

- A) Declining interest rates
- B) Rising non-performing assets (NPAs)
- C) Excessive foreign investments
- D) Overregulation by the government

**144) Which country is India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) visiting to expedite the extradition of Tahawwur Rana?**

- A) United Kingdom
- B) United States
- C) Pakistan
- D) Canada

**145) Why has OpenAI been sued by several Indian digital news firms?**

- A) For manipulating news content
- B) For using their copyrighted content without permission
- C) For spreading misinformation

D) For refusing to collaborate with Indian news agencies

**146) Anti-corruption minister \_\_\_\_\_ resigned from the UK government recently.**

- A) Tulip Siddiq
- B) Rachel Reeves
- C) Emma Reynolds
- D) None of the above

**147) The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) has signed an agreement with which of the following IIT for the development of indigenous 6G optical chipset?**

- A) IIT Delhi
- B) IIT Guwahati
- C) IIT Kanpur
- D) IIT Bombay

**148) The government has appointed who among the following as Secretary, Department of Higher Education?**

- A) Tuhin Kant
- B) Vineet Joshi
- C) Abhijit Majumdar
- D) None of the above

**149) David Lynch, the renowned \_\_\_\_\_ has died at the age of 78.**

- A) Athlete
- B) Film producer
- C) Journalist
- D) Scientist

**150) In which of the following city Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the Archaeological Experiential Museum recently?**

- A) Jaipur
- B) Kolkata
- C) Mumbai
- D) Vadnagar

## ANSWERS

### 1) Correct Answer: A

The 72nd Plenary of the North Eastern Council (NEC) was held in Agartala, Tripura from 20 to 21 December 2024. Home Minister Amit Shah chaired the 72nd NEC Plenary which was founded in 1972. He acknowledged the effective roles played by the regional body in ensuring development and growth in the region in the past 52 years.

### 2) Correct Answer: D

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor Arvind Kejriwal announced that under the Sanjeevani Yojana, the Delhi government will provide free treatment for senior citizens aged 60 and above. Kejriwal stated that registration for the Sanjeevani Yojana has commenced in the Jangpura assembly constituency.

### 3) Correct Answer: B

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors has approved an \$800 million loan to support the Amaravati Integrated Urban Development Programme in Andhra Pradesh. This initiative aims to establish Amaravati as a climate-resilient, well-managed urban centre that promotes economic growth, and improves living standards, particularly for vulnerable communities.

### 4) Correct Answer: C

Madath Thekkepaattu Vasudevan Nair, a celebrated Malayalam author, screenwriter, and filmmaker has passed away in Kerala. Born in Kerala's Kudallur in 1933, MT's works captured the ethos of Malayali society, often weaving intricate tales of human relationships, cultural dilemmas, and existential struggles of post-independence Kerala.

### 5) Correct Answer: B

Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (TPREL) has recently entered into an important agreement with Canara Bank. This partnership has been done with the aim of promoting the Prime Minister's Surya Ghar Free Electricity Scheme.

**6) Correct Answer: C**

The 18th biennial India State of Forest Report (ISFR-2023) was released by Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav on December 21 at the Forest Research Institute in Dehradun. The ISFR is released biennially and involves forest cover mapping of the country using satellite data.

**7) Correct Answer: B**

The New Delhi airport has become the first airport in India to connect 150 destinations, said Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL). The airport operator said that the ongoing induction of wide-body aircraft by Indian carriers is set to transform Delhi Airport into a super-connector hub, reinforcing its position as a leading choice for international and long-haul travel.

**8) Correct Answer: C**

A total of 47 projects from Bihar have been issued in-principle approvals for interest subvention on bank loans for establishing new or expanding existing distilleries, the government said. Currently, 22 ethanol distilleries - 8 molasses-based and 14 grain-based - are operational in Bihar.

**9) Correct Answer: B**

Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister for Science and Technology unveiled Kisan Kavach, India's first-of-its-kind anti-pesticide bodysuit. Designed to protect farmers from the harmful effects of pesticide exposure, this innovation marks a transformative step in ensuring farmer safety.

**10) Correct Answer: B**

Times Internet, the digital arm of The Times of India Group, in partnership with ICICI Bank and Visa, has launched the Times Black ICICI Bank Credit Card, a super-premium co-branded metal credit card to cater to

affluent Indians and the growing base of high net-worth individuals (HNIs).

**11) Correct Answer: A**

Qatar has reopened its embassy in Damascus, 13 years after closing it during the early stages of Syria's civil war. The move comes as foreign governments seek to establish relations with Syria's new leadership. The Qatari embassy in Damascus had been closed since July 2011, when Doha withdrew its ambassador in response to violent crackdowns on protesters by Assad's regime.

**12) Correct Answer: C**

Celebrated filmmaker Shyam Benegal, renowned for his significant contributions to Indian cinema, passed away in December 2024 at the age of 90. Throughout his nearly seven-decade-long career, Benegal explored a wide range of themes, mediums, and perspectives, addressing topics such as rural hardships, feminist issues, incisive satire, and biographical narratives.

**13) Correct Answer: B**

One of the premier events of the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), the National Science Drama Festival 2024 was held at the National Science Centre, Delhi on 27th and 28th December 2024. The Chief Guest of the ceremony was Shri Robin Kumar Das, Eminent Theatre Director & Actor, National Awardee in Scenic Design and Former Professor, National School of Drama, New Delhi.

**14) Correct Answer: B**

Madhya Pradesh has garnered international recognition as one of the Wall Street Journal's "Go-To Global Destinations for 2025," highlighting its rich legacy, diverse wildlife, and natural beauty. This coveted recognition adds to the state's continuous attempts to position itself as a top vacation destination.

**15) Correct Answer: A**

President of India Smt Droupadi Murmu appointed retired Supreme Court Justice V. Ramasubramanian as the Chairperson of National Human Rights Commission. The post of NHRC chief was lying vacant since June 2024.



President also appointed Priyank Kanoongo and retired Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi as the Members of the NHRC-India.

**16) Correct Answer: B**

HDFC Bank said it has become the first domestic bank to execute a gold forward deal from GIFT City, Gujarat. The deal was executed by HDFC Bank GIFT City IBU in collaboration with Hindustan Platinum Private Limited, a refiner and manufacturer of precious metal products and industrial services.

**17) Correct Answer: B**

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar received the Shri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati National Award of Excellence for Public Leadership from the South Indian Education Society (SIES). In his speech, Jaishankar stressed India's self-sufficiency and while commemorating the Maha Parivar's lessons about the significance of worldwide collaboration and universal brotherhood.

**18) Correct Answer: D**

Malaysia has announced an extension of the visa exemption for Indian nationals until December 31, 2026. A similar exemption has been granted to Chinese nationals. The exemption allows Indian nationals to visit Malaysia without a visa for up to 30 days.

**19) Correct Answer: B**

Goa Governor P.S. Sreedharan Pillai released 'Ente Jeevitham Niraye: The Autobiography of a Nephrologist' written by Dr. K. Thomas Mathew, in Kozhikode. Chairman and managing director of Baby Memorial Hospital Dr. K.G. Alexander received the book while Thottathil Raveendran, MLA, presided over the event.

**20) Correct Answer: C**

The Central Government has notified the appointment of Chief Justices of two High Courts – Himachal Pradesh & Uttarakhand High Court. While Justice G. Narendar has been appointed as the Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court, Justice GS Sandhawalia has been appointed as the Himachal Pradesh High Court's Chief Justice.

**21) Correct Answer: B**

Mukesh Ambani, along with his daughter Isha Ambani, is spearheading the pilot launch of Shein's casual women's western wear on the Ajio platform through Reliance Retail. This marks the return of the Chinese fast-fashion brand to the Indian market after a ban of nearly four and a half years.

**22) Correct Answer: C**

On December 22, Indore Airport officially became the first zero-waste airport in India. The airport has adopted a comprehensive waste management system where garbage from both the aircraft and the airport will be recycled, with wet waste converted into fertilizer.

**23) Correct Answer: A**

Bihar is all set to script history once more as it prepares to host the Women's Kabaddi World Cup in March 2025. This is the second time, Bihar will organize this prestigious international event, following its successful debut as the host in 2012.

**24) Correct Answer: A**

Jasprit Bumrah's exploits in Australia have resulted in him setting records in both the ICC ratings and rankings. Bumrah, the No. 1 Test bowler in the men's game, has 904 points in the Test Ratings. He is only the second Indian after Ravichandran Ashwin to score 900-plus points.

**25) Correct Answer: A**

Tonga's government elected a new leader, two weeks after the previous premier resigned abruptly after a power struggle with the Pacific nation's royal family. Veteran politician Aisake Valu Eke was voted prime minister by secret ballot in parliament.

**26) Correct Answer: D**

Veer Bal Diwas, which falls every year on December 26, is a national day of remembrance in India that marks the extraordinary bravery and martyrdom of the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Sikh Guru. The decision to commemorate this day was made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 9, 2022.

**27) Correct Answer: D**

India's medal-winning athletes are aiming to reach higher levels in the new year after their impressive show at the December 19-25 Asian youth and junior weightlifting championships 2024 in Doha. Overall, India won 33 medals across youth and junior categories.

**28) Correct Answer: B**

J&K Bank has announced the appointment of Amitava Chatterjee, currently Deputy Managing Director of State Bank of India (SBI), as its new managing director (MD) and CEO. Chatterjee, in his banking career spanning over more than three decades in diverse geographical locations and strategic positions, also served as MD and CEO of SBI CAPS.

**29) Correct Answer: D**

The bald eagle has finally got an official status of the national bird of the US, after President Joe Biden signed a law on Christmas Eve. The legislation, introduced by Senator Amy Klobuchar and Representative Brad Finstad, both from Minnesota, highlights the bald eagle as "a historic symbol of the United States, representing independence, strength, and freedom."

**30) Correct Answer: C**

Hero Future Energies (HFE) recently launched a 29 MW solar power project in Chitradurga, Karnataka, marking a significant step in the company's renewable energy portfolio. The project is expected to produce 33 million units of clean energy each year, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 31,624 tonnes annually.

**31) Correct Answer: B**

The first confirmed case of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) in Bengaluru was detected on January 6, 2025. This respiratory virus, similar to the common cold, poses a significant threat as it can lead to severe complications, particularly in children and the elderly. States like Delhi, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh have responded by strengthening surveillance, implementing testing protocols, and establishing isolation facilities to mitigate risks and prevent a potential outbreak.

**32) Correct Answer: C**

The Banded Royal Butterfly, a rare and strikingly beautiful species, was spotted in the forests of Tripura. Its distinctive black and white patterns make it one of India's lesser-seen species, and its presence highlights the region's rich biodiversity. Environmentalists emphasize the need to protect such species as they play an essential role in pollination and ecological balance. Conservation efforts are expected to intensify in the region to safeguard the butterfly's habitat.

**33) Correct Answer: B**

Under the Ladki Bahin Scheme, launched in June 2024, eligible women from economically weaker sections receive ₹1,500 per month. This initiative aims to provide financial stability and uplift the beneficiaries. However, concerns about the scheme's sustainability have arisen, as its annual expenditure is estimated to be ₹46,000 crore. The government is reviewing the process to streamline operations and verify beneficiaries, ensuring the program's long-term viability.

**34) Correct Answer: B**

World Day of War Orphans, observed on January 6, highlights the struggles faced by children who have lost their parents to war and conflict. These children often deal with displacement, lack of education, and limited access to healthcare. Various non-governmental organizations and international bodies conduct awareness campaigns, fundraisers, and initiatives to support these vulnerable children. In India, programs were organized in conflict-affected regions to address their challenges and protect their rights.

**35) Correct Answer: A**

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan's visit to India focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation in critical areas such as defense, artificial intelligence, and space exploration. This high-profile visit underscores the deepening strategic partnership between the two nations. Sullivan's discussions with Indian officials also covered collaborative strategies to address security

challenges in the Indo-Pacific region and foster advancements in emerging technologies.

**36) Correct Answer: B**

The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu conferred the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar on 17 children, in seven categories, for their exceptional achievements at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre on December 26, 2024.

**37) Correct Answer: B**

Indian batting great Sachin Tendulkar has accepted an invitation to become an honorary member of the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC). MCC is one of the oldest sports clubs in Australia and is responsible for managing the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG).

**38) Correct Answer: B**

China has approved the construction of the world's largest dam, stated to be the planet's biggest infra project costing \$137 billion, on the Brahmaputra River in Tibet close to the Indian border, raising concerns in neighbouring countries— India and Bangladesh.

**39) Correct Answer: A**

India's Lakshya Sen finished third in the King Cup International Badminton Open 2024 after beating French shuttler Alex Lanier at Shenzhen, the People's Republic of China. Sen beat world No. 18 Lanier by a 21-17, 21-11 scoreline in the third-place playoff match.

**40) Correct Answer: C**

While other countries are showcasing their fifth-generation fighter jets or striving to acquire them, China has stunned the world by flying its sixth-generation fighter jet. Equipped with advanced stealth technology and versatile combat capabilities, the J-36 marks a significant leap in China's military aviation power.

**41) Correct Answer: C**

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel has launched a new citizen-centric initiative called the SWAR (Speech and Written Analysis Resource) platform. The Chief Minister's Office (CMO), in collaboration with the

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's Bhashini Team (National Language Translation Mission), has developed the SWAR platform.

**42) Correct Answer: C**

Koneru Humpy regained the women's World rapid chess championship after a gap of five years. The 37-year-old from Vijayawada finished with 8.5 points after beating Indonesia's Irene Sukandar in the final round in New York.

**43) Correct Answer: B**

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has entered into a strategic alliance with boAt, an Indian company in audio and wearables market. This collaboration aims to foster innovation and provide tailored support to DPIIT recognised Startups including startups in D2C and manufacturing domains.

**44) Correct Answer: B**

Kaamya Karthikeyan, 17, has etched her name in history as the youngest female to conquer the highest peak on each of the seven continents. She had previously conquered Mt Kilimanjaro in Africa, Mt Elbrus in Europe, Mt Kosciuszko in Australia, Mt Aconcagua in South America, Mt Denali in North America, and Mt Everest in Asia.

**45) Correct Answer: A**

Jasprit Bumrah achieved a remarkable feat recently, becoming the fastest Indian bowler to reach 200 Test wickets during the Boxing Day Test against Australia in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

**46) Correct Answer: D**

A team of researchers at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay have developed a shock syringe, which doesn't rely on piercing the skin with a sharp tip. Instead, it uses high-energy pressure waves (shock waves) that can travel faster than the speed of sound to pierce the skin.

**47) Correct Answer: C**



India will host the World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) for the first time from February 5 to 9, 2025. This summit will bring together global leaders from the media and entertainment industry, marking a significant step towards establishing India as a hub for content creation.

**48) Correct Answer: C**

The Indian economy is exhibiting resilience and stability, and the gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to grow at 6.6 per cent in 2024-25, aided by a revival in rural consumption, a pickup in government consumption and investment, and strong services exports, an RBI report said.

**49) Correct Answer: B**

The Telangana Assembly unanimously resolved to recommend Bharat Ratna for former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh who passed away recently. The Assembly also approved a proposal to install a statue of Dr. Manmohan Singh in Hyderabad to commemorate him as a great leader who fulfilled the 60-year aspirations of the Telangana people.

**50) Correct Answer: D**

ISRO successfully launched PSLV-C60 carrying the SpaDeX mission and 24 payloads from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. The SPADEX mission is a pivotal project by ISRO aimed at developing and demonstrating technologies for spacecraft rendezvous, docking, and undocking using two small satellites.

**51) Correct Answer: A**

Senior IAS officer K Vijayanand was appointed as new chief secretary of Andhra Pradesh in place of Neerabh Kumar Prasad. In a statement, Vijayanand thanked chief minister N Chandra Babu Naidu for reposing faith and giving an opportunity to serve the state as the chief secretary.

**52) Correct Answer: D**

The Income Tax Department has extended the deadline of Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme 2024 from December 31, 2024 to January 31, 2025. This scheme helps taxpayers

to settle an ongoing dispute by paying a lower amount of income tax.

**53) Correct Answer: D**

Every year, Global Family Day is celebrated on January 1. In 1999, the members of the United Nations received a formal invitation to dedicate the first day of the year to developing strategies to bring peace to the world. Since then, Global Family Day has been celebrated every year on the same date.

**54) Correct Answer: A**

The Defence Ministry has declared 2025 as the year of reforms. The reform measures would be rolled out to transform the armed forces into a technologically-advanced combat-ready force capable of multi-domain integrated operations.

**55) Correct Answer: A**

West Bengal extended their supremacy in the National Football Championship for Santosh Trophy with a 1-0 win over Kerala in the summit showdown in Hyderabad, claiming the title for an unprecedented 33rd time. Robi Hansda scored the only goal of the match in the added-time of the second half.

**56) Correct Answer: D**

Air India has become the first airline to offer in-flight Wi-Fi on both domestic and international routes. Passengers on Airbus A350, Boeing 787-9, and select A321 neo flights will be able to connect to the internet while flying above 10,000 feet.

**57) Correct Answer: A**

The Gujarat government has approved the bifurcation of Banaskantha district to form a new administrative unit named Vav-Tharad district, with its headquarters in Tharad town. State health minister and government spokesperson Rushikesh Patel said the creation of the new district addresses a longstanding public demand and aims to enhance administrative efficiency.

**58) Correct Answer: C**

India's coffee exports rose to a record high of \$1,146.9 million between April and November in FY24, compared to \$803.8 million during the same period last year, registering a 29 per cent rise. This figure is nearly double the exports during the same period in FY21, which stood at \$460 million.

**59) Correct Answer: C**

World Introvert Day, celebrated on January 2, honours the quiet strength and creativity of introverts. It raises awareness of misconceptions, promotes self-acceptance, and encourages appreciation for different personality traits.

**60) Correct Answer: A**

Iran's deputy foreign minister Majid Takht Ravanchi was on a visit to India for talks aimed at resuming energy trade, which stopped in 2019 because of US sanctions. The expansion of trade was discussed in the 19th round of India- Iran political consultations held in New Delhi during January 2-3.

**61) Correct Answer: C**

Dr. K.S. Manilal, the esteemed botanist who brought the ancient botanical treasure Hortus Malabaricus to the modern world, passed away early on January 1, 2025. Dr. Manilal dedicated around 35 years of his life to researching, translating, and annotating Hortus Malabaricus, a 17th-century Latin manuscript compiled by Dutch Governor Hendrik Adrian van Rheede.

**62) Correct Answer: B**

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, released the book 'Jammu Kashmir & Ladakh Through the Ages: A Visual Narrative of Continuities and Linkages' in New Delhi. In his address, the Union Home Minister emphasized that the National Book Trust (NBT), through its latest publication, has effectively dismantled a long-standing myth about India by presenting facts and evidence, thereby establishing historical truths.

**63) Correct Answer: B**

Odia poet Pratibha Satpathy was conferred with the Gangadhar National Award for Poetry-2023 during the

58th foundation day celebration of Sambalpur University. The award, instituted in memory of poet Gangadhar Meher (1862-1924), honours distinguished Indian poets annually.

**64) Correct Answer: D**

World Braille Day, observed on January 4th, commemorates the birthday of Louis Braille, the visionary who developed a tactile script that revolutionized communication for blind and partially sighted individuals. Celebrated globally since 2019, this day highlights the significance of Braille in empowering visually impaired individuals to access education, information, and opportunities, fostering their full participation in society.

**65) Correct Answer: D**

In a rare feat, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has secured a 100 per cent conviction rate in cases in which trial was complete in 2024 and solved several high-profile cases while arresting 210 accused across various crime categories, the agency said in a statement.

**66) Correct Answer: A**

Four decades after the Bhopal gas tragedy, toxic waste, totalling 337 metric tonnes, from the defunct Union Carbide India Ltd factory in Madhya Pradesh finally left the site on January 1, 2025, reaching Pithampur industrial area in Dhar district for disposal.

**67) Correct Answer: A**

The 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention was held from January 8-10, 2025, in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The theme for this year was "Diaspora's contribution to a Viksit Bharat". The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is the flagship event of the Ministry of External Affairs.

**68) Correct Answer: B**

The Yogi Adityanath government of Uttar Pradesh has appointed former IPS officer Dr Satya Narayan Sabat as the new chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Subordinate Services Selection Commission (UPSSSC). Dr. Sabat, whose career spanned over three decades, was selected for the Indian Police Services in 1990.

**69) Correct Answer: C**

Blinkit recently launched a rapid-response ambulance service in Gurugram, to help deliver aid within 10 minutes. CEO and co-founder Albinder Dhindsa announced this initiative on January 2, highlighting plans to expand the service to other major cities.

**70) Correct Answer: B**

The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) has appointed Manish Singhal as its new Secretary General. Singhal brings over 35 years of experience in both corporate India and chambers of commerce, having previously served as the Deputy Secretary General of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

**71) Correct Answer: A**

The 31st National Children's Science Congress (NCSC) was held at Ravindra Bhavan, Bhopal from January 3 to January 6, 2025. The four-day programme centred on a theme 'Understanding Ecosystem for Health and Well-being', offering students a platform to demonstrate their scientific aptitude.

**72) Correct Answer: B**

Dr Bharati Kulkarni, an acclaimed physician-scientist recently took over as the Director of the ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN). Dr Kulkarni has a specialization in paediatrics from Pune University and has a Master's degree in public health from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, USA.

**73) Correct Answer: D**

State Bank of India (SBI) has launched two new deposit schemes--Har Ghar Lakhpati and SBI Patrons. Har Ghar Lakhpati is a pre-calculated Recurring Deposit (RD) scheme designed to help customers accumulate Rs 1,00,000 or multiples thereof.

**74) Correct Answer: B**

The United States House of Representatives has re-elected Republican Mike Johnson as its speaker. Johnson emerged victorious after an uncertain first round of voting, as some members of his party initially withheld

their votes over issues like his role in the recent bipartisan budget negotiations.

**75) Correct Answer: B**

Eminent physicist Rajagopala Chidambaram, who played a key role in the nuclear tests of 1974 and 1998, died, according to the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). He was also the longest serving Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) to the Indian government from 2002-2018.

**76) Correct Answer: A**

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has declared the unseasonal rain in December last year a natural calamity. The move was aimed at facilitating the disbursement of compensation to farmers for crop damage due to the untimely weather event from the the state disaster response fund (SDRF).

**77) Correct Answer: C**

The Telangana government has decided to celebrate the birth anniversary of Savitribai Phule on January 3 as 'Women Teacher's Day' every year to honour the late social reformer and teacher's contributions to women's education.

**78) Correct Answer: C**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually laid the foundation stone for the new Central Ayurveda Research Institute (CARI) building in Rohini, New Delhi recently. The state-of-the-art facility, spanning 2.92 acres and built at a cost of ₹187 crore, is poised to become a global hub for Ayurvedic research and healthcare.

**79) Correct Answer: B**

India has become the second highest target for cyber attacks globally in 2024, with 95 entities affected by data theft, following the United States. Key sectors impacted include finance, banking, and government. Major breaches involved millions of records and ransomware incidents were significant.

**80) Correct Answer: B**

India's metro systems have revolutionised urban travel, spanning over 1,000 km across 11 states and 23 cities.



They offer millions of people a quick, affordable, and reliable mode of transportation. With this growth, India now boasts the third-largest metro network globally, reshaping how cities function and thrive.

**81) Correct Answer: D**

Union Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh launched the country's first organic fisheries cluster in Sikkim. The Union Fisheries Ministry said the organic fish cluster in Soreng District of Sikkim will boost farmer incomes and promote sustainability in aquaculture.

**82) Correct Answer: A**

US President Joe Biden has announced a ban on new offshore oil and gas drilling along most of America's coastline, weeks before Donald Trump takes office. The ban covers the entire Atlantic coast and eastern Gulf of Mexico, as well as the Pacific coast off California, Oregon and Washington and a section of the Bering Sea off Alaska.

**83) Correct Answer: B**

Indonesia has officially joined the BRICS as a full member, Brazil's government announced. The group, which brings together major emerging economies, now consists of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and Indonesia.

**84) Correct Answer: C**

The 8th edition of Indusfood, Asia's premier Food and Beverage (F&B) Trade Show, was inaugurated by Chirag Paswan, Union Minister of Food Processing Industries, on 8th January 2025 at the India Exposition Mart Ltd in Greater Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar.

**85) Correct Answer: A**

India's rising squash star Anahat Singh won the U-17 title in the British Junior Open with a fighting win over Egypt's Malika El Karaksy. Anahat has won the tournament previously in the U-11 and U-15 categories. She lost the U-17 final last year.

**86) Correct Answer: C**

January 8 is recognized as Earth Rotation Day every year. This day marks the anniversary of French physicist Leon Foucault's 1851 proof that the Earth revolves on its axis. He devised a pendulum to demonstrate the earth's rotation about a fixed axis.

**87) Correct Answer: D**

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh held bilateral discussions with the Defence Minister of Maldives Mr. Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon in New Delhi on January 08 and comprehensively reviewed various aspects of bilateral defence & security cooperation.

**88) Correct Answer: A**

Drug firm Cipla said it has launched a mobile application CipAir designed to enable the first line of screening for asthma in India. According to the Global Burden of Disease report, the total burden of asthma in India is estimated to be around 34.3 million.

**89) Correct Answer: A**

V. Narayanan, a noted rocket and spacecraft propulsion expert, has succeeded S. Somanath as the new Chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Dr. Narayanan was appointed as Secretary, Department of Space and Chairman, Space Commission, "for a period of two years" from January 14, 2025.

**90) Correct Answer: C**

The world's oldest living person has been revealed - and she is a 116-year-old nun from Brazil. Sister Inah Canabarro, who was born on 8 June 1908, became the world's oldest person following the death of a woman from Japan on 29 December.

**91) Correct Answer: D**

Signature Global (India) Limited, a Gurugram-based real estate company, has announced the appointment of Sanjeev Kumar Sharma as its Chief Financial Officer (CFO). This announcement follows the resignation of the former CFO, Gaurav Malik, who stepped down from the position in November 2024.

**92) Correct Answer: B**

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has announced the launch of the "Cashless Treatment" scheme to provide financial aid to road accident victims. Under the scheme, the government will cover treatment costs of up to ₹1.5 lakh for seven days, provided the police are informed about the accident within 24 hours.

**93) Correct Answer: B**

Indian poet, journalist, film producer and former parliamentarian Pritish Nandy has passed away at 73 on January 8. Nandy was conferred the Padma Shri in 1977 for his contributions to Indian literature. He was conferred the Karamveer Puraskar in 2008.

**94) Correct Answer: A**

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has announced a \$1 million prize for experts or organisations that succeed in deciphering the scripts of the Indus Valley Civilisation for everyone to understand. The state also allocated ₹2 crore to establish a research chair in the name of Iravatham Mahadevan, an epigraphist and civil servant, and to present an annual award to two scholars to encourage research in archaeology.

**95) Correct Answer: A**

Bharat Heavy Electricals (BHEL) has achieved yet another milestone in Bhutan with the successful commissioning of two units of the 6x170 MW Punatsangchhu-II Hydroelectric Project (PHEP-II). PHEP-II is a greenfield hydro project located in the Wangdue district of Western Bhutan.

**96) Correct Answer: C**

Mount Ibu of Halmahera island in North Maluku province in eastern Indonesia erupted on 11 January, spewing hot lava and releasing a column of smoke and ash four kilometres (3.1 miles) into the air. Ibu is one of Indonesia's most active volcanoes, erupting more than 2,000 times last year.

**97) Correct Answer: D**

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has launched special songs produced by Akashvani and Doordarshan dedicated to the Maha

Kumbh 2025. Sung by Kailash Kher, the song 'Mahakumbh Hai' produced by Doordarshan encapsulates the spirit of devotion, celebration, and the vibrant cultural essence of the festival, an official statement said.

**98) Correct Answer: C**

New Zealand opener Martin Guptill has announced his retirement from international cricket after playing for 13 years. The 38-year-old made his debut against West Indies in 2009 in an ODI at Auckland when he registered his debut ton.

**99) Correct Answer: B**

Madhya Pradesh Chief minister Mohan Yadav announced the launch of "PARTH Yojana" to provide training to the state's youth aspiring to join the Army and police. Under the "PARTH Yojana", the sports department will conduct self-financed training at 10 locations, requiring participants to pay a nominal fee.

**100) Correct Answer: C**

Within two weeks of his appointment as Revenue Secretary, the government shifted 1992-batch Bihar cadre IAS officer Arunish Chawla to the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM). Finance Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey, who had the charge of Secretary, DIPAM, has now been appointed as Revenue Secretary.

**101) Correct Answer: D**

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant launched the 'Bima Sakhi Yojana' in the state with the aim of providing "insurance for all". With this, Goa became the second state after Haryana to launch this flagship scheme envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a government release said.

**102) Correct Answer: C**

India's ranking has dropped by five points to 85 this year in 2025 Henley Passport Index, topped by Singapore for the second consecutive year. Japan's ranking stood at 2nd this year, while it had the top slot from 2018-2023. In 2024, both Japan and Singapore shared the top rank.

**103) Correct Answer: D**

The Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has launched a special FM channel of All India Radio 'Kumbhvani' dedicated to Maha Kumbh 2025. The live commentary on Kumbhvani will be especially beneficial for those who would not be able to come to Prayagraj to participate in the Kumbh.

**104) Correct Answer: B**

Bengaluru-based Swiggy rolled out a standalone app labelled Snacc for 10-minute food delivery. Snacc will be Swiggy's second rapid food delivery offering after it launched Bolt back in October 2024. The application was launched on January 7 and is available in select parts of Bengaluru only.

**105) Correct Answer: B**

Dr. Syed Anwar Khursheed, a distinguished Indian physician based in Saudi Arabia was awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award 2025, the highest recognition for overseas Indians by the Government of India. The award celebrates his remarkable contributions to healthcare, community welfare, and strengthening ties between India and Saudi Arabia.

**106) Correct Answer: A**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Summit in France from February 10 to 11, said French President Emmanuel Macron. He also highlighted that the summit will focus on innovation, talent, and positioning France and Europe at the centre of the global AI landscape.

**107) Correct Answer: A**

Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI) has been chosen by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to establish South India's first Infectious Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (IRDL) in Bengaluru.

**108) Correct Answer: D**

India's National Highway network has grown by 60% over the past decade, expanding from 91,287 km in 2014 to 146,195 km by 2024, as per the Ministry of Road

Transport and Highways (MoRTH). In addition, high-speed corridors have surged from 93 km to 2,474 km, significantly enhancing road connectivity across the nation.

**109) Correct Answer: C**

Japan has approved additional sanctions against Russia over its war on Ukraine, including freezing the assets of dozens of individuals and groups and banning exports to dozens of organisations in Russia and several other countries that have allegedly helped it evade sanctions.

**110) Correct Answer: D**

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah, chaired a regional conference on 'Drug Trafficking and National Security' at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi. The Home Minister also launched the Drug Disposal Fortnight, inaugurated the new office complex of Bhopal Zonal Unit of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and extension of MANAS-2 helpline to all 36 states and Union Territories.

**111) Correct Answer: C**

The National Youth Day is celebrated every year on January 12 to mark the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. The Government of India declared the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda as National Youth day in 1984. Since January 12, 1985, the day has been celebrated in India every year as National Youth Day.

**112) Correct Answer: D**

India's Neeraj Chopra was named the best javelin thrower of 2024 by the respected US-based sports magazine Track and Field News. The recognition follows a season of remarkable consistency for the 27-year-old Indian athlete, who secured a silver medal at the Paris 2024 Olympics.

**113) Correct Answer: A**

India sent humanitarian assistance to Cuba following the devastation caused by Hurricane Rafael. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that a consignment of essential medicines, including



antibiotics, and painkillers were dispatched to aid the people of Cuba in their recovery efforts.

**114) Correct Answer: D**

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held an interaction event with the members of the Indian diaspora during his official visit to Spain. He expressed confidence in boosting India-Spain trade ties and announced that India and Spain will mark 2026 as a 'dual year' to celebrate culture, tourism and AI in both countries.

**115) Correct Answer: B**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a book titled "Yuva Shakti's Vision For Viksit Bharat @2047" at Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2025, held at Bharat Mandapam in Delhi, on the occasion of National Youth Day commemorating Swami Vivekananda's 163rd birth anniversary.

**116) Correct Answer: B**

India has joined the United Nations Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics (UN-CEBD), an entity that was created to further investigate benefits and challenges of big data, including potential for monitoring and reporting on sustainable development goals.

**117) Correct Answer: B**

Retired Supreme Court justice B. N. Srikrishna will chair the ID verification and data sharing platform Equal's newly formed Advisory Board. Equal provides identity authentication services for large firms, boasting digital integrations with several ID providers.

**118) Correct Answer: C**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 6.5 km long Z-Morh tunnel in Ganderbal district of Jammu and Kashmir that will make the Sonamarg tourist resort accessible throughout the year. Along with the PM, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and chief minister Omar Abdullah was also present there at the event.

**119) Correct Answer: D**

Celebrated primarily by Sikhs and Hindus, the Lohri festival marks the end of the winter solstice and harvesting of the rabi crops. The festival is celebrated every year on January 13 with much enthusiasm and zeal. The people worship the sun and the fire and thank them for the good harvest.

**120) Correct Answer: B**

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

**121) Correct Answer: C**

In a bid to help the state government in the city's beautification efforts, the Indian Railways, through its 'Paint My City' campaign, is also playing a role in showcasing Prayagraj's cultural and spiritual grandeur. Prayagraj's railway stations have been transformed into centres highlighting Indian art and heritage.

**122) Correct Answer: A**

Eminent director Aparna Sen was honoured with the 'Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award' at the annual award ceremony of West Bengal Film Journalists Association for her contributions to Indian cinema. The event saw 'Manik Babur Megh' win Best Bengali Film, with Chandan Sen receiving Best Actor for his role in the film.

**123) Correct Answer: D**

The VVER-1000 reactor vessel for the sixth power unit of the Kudankulam nuclear power plant, Tamil Nadu designed by Russia is being transported to the construction site. The equipment weighing 320 tonnes was manufactured at the Atomash plant (Rosatom's Machine-Building Division) and shipped to the customer,

according to a release from Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation (Rosatom).

**124) Correct Answer: C**

The 85th All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC) inaugurated by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla was held in Patna, Bihar. The two-day conference was focused on the theme, "75th Anniversary of Constitution: Contribution of Parliament and State Legislative Bodies in Strengthening Constitutional Values."

**125) Correct Answer: D**

Odisha became the 34th state to implement the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) after the National Health Authority (NHA) of the Union Ministry of Health entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Odisha.

**126) Correct Answer: B**

Infrastructure major Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has launched the second multi-purpose vessel for the Indian Navy from its Kattupalli Shipyard near Chennai. The launch of the vessel, christened INS Utkarsh, comes within three months of the launch of the first MPV INS Samarthak.

**127) Correct Answer: A**

India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was named ICC Men's Player of the Month for December 2024 after his sensational performance during the recent tour of Australia for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. In a challenging tour for the Indian team, Bumrah emerged as the lone warrior, earning him the Player of the Series Award.

**128) Correct Answer: A**

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

**129) Correct Answer: B**

After Russia, China and the United States, India became the fourth nation to successfully achieve 'Space Docking' capabilities essential for future human and space missions. Docking is a process by which a spacecraft can manoeuvre and attach to a space station by itself. It basically refers to the joining of two separate free-flying space vehicles.

**130) Correct Answer: C**

The Australian government has launched the first national strategy to improve the lives of people with autism. Amanda Rishworth, the minister for Social Services unveiled the first National Autism Strategy, promising improved inclusion, support and life outcomes for all autistic Australians.

**131) Correct Answer: C**

India celebrates its 76th Republic Day on January 26, 2025, commemorating a pivotal moment in its history—the adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950. This historic day marked the transformation of India into a sovereign, democratic republic, where the Constitution replaced the Government of India Act 1935 as the governing document of the nation. Republic Day celebrations are an annual showcase of India's military prowess, cultural heritage, and technological advancements, making it a day of pride and unity for citizens across the country.

**132) Correct Answer: B**

The Chief Guest for India's 76th Republic Day parade was Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. His presence symbolized a significant strengthening of ties between India and Egypt, highlighting the growing cooperation in areas such as defense, trade, and cultural exchanges. Hosting an international leader as the Chief Guest at Republic Day underscores India's diplomatic efforts to build stronger global partnerships, and President El-Sisi's visit marked a milestone in bilateral relations between the two nations.

**133) Correct Answer: B**

India and Indonesia strengthened their cooperation under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, a framework that fosters collaboration across diverse sectors such as health, maritime security, cultural exchanges, and digital transformation. This partnership reflects the shared historical and cultural ties between the two nations, dating back to ancient trade routes and cultural exchanges. Key agreements included joint maritime exercises and enhancing trade in pharmaceuticals, further emphasizing the importance of peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. This development underscores the mutual commitment of both nations to address global challenges like climate change and public health crises collaboratively.

**134) Correct Answer: C**

The Indian government plans to increase the agriculture budget by 15%, which represents the largest hike in over six years. This substantial increase, amounting to nearly \$20 billion, highlights the government's commitment to addressing the challenges faced by the agricultural sector. The additional funds will focus on key areas like crop insurance, farm mechanization, irrigation, and research in sustainable farming practices. By promoting rural income growth and modernizing the supply chain, this budget aims to not only secure food supplies but also achieve the government's ambitious goal of doubling farmers' incomes by 2025.

**135) Correct Answer: B**

The government has announced an 8% increase in spending on key subsidies, including food, fertilizers, and LPG, amounting to a total allocation of \$47.41 billion. This move is particularly important given the ongoing global challenges such as rising food and energy prices. Subsidies play a crucial role in stabilizing the prices of essential commodities, ensuring food security for millions of citizens, and supporting economically vulnerable groups, including small farmers. Additionally, the increased subsidy for LPG under the Ujjwala Yojana aims to empower rural women and reduce indoor air pollution. While this measure provides immediate relief, it also raises concerns about the growing fiscal burden.

**136) Correct Answer: A**

For the first time, the Indonesian National Armed Forces participated in India's Republic Day parade on January 26, 2025. This historic gesture highlighted the strengthening defense cooperation between India and Indonesia, two maritime nations with shared interests in the Indo-Pacific region. The participation symbolized the deepening strategic partnership, underscoring joint efforts to promote regional stability, maritime security, and mutual growth. The parade, which showcased India's military prowess and cultural diversity, served as a platform for both nations to reaffirm their commitment to closer ties.

**137) Correct Answer: C**

China is planning to construct a 60-gigawatt dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River, making it the largest dam in the world. This project is proposed near the disputed region of Arunachal Pradesh, raising significant ecological and geopolitical concerns. India has expressed apprehension over potential disruptions to downstream water availability and environmental sustainability. Despite China's assurances of minimal impact, skepticism remains among India and neighboring nations like Bangladesh, which rely on the river for critical water resources. In response, India is exploring its own projects, such as the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project, though these efforts face local opposition.

**138) Correct Answer: A**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) purchased ₹101.75 billion worth of government bonds, marking its first such purchase in over three years. This move has increased liquidity in the banking system and reduced bond yields to 6.67%, nearing the repo rate of 6.50%. Analysts believe these actions signal a possible interest rate cut in February 2025 to support India's slowing economy. With the GDP growth rate projected to decline to a four-year low in the fiscal year 2024-25, the RBI is likely prioritizing economic growth over inflation control.

**139) Correct Answer: B**



Madhabi Puri Buch, the current chairperson of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), will complete her term on February 28, 2025. During her tenure, she spearheaded major investigations into market manipulation and the misuse of tax havens, enhancing SEBI's regulatory framework. The Ministry of Finance has initiated the search for a new chairperson, with applications open until February 17. The new appointee will hold the position for five years or until the age of 65, with expectations of continued reforms in India's financial markets.

**140) Correct Answer: B**

The recent diplomatic dialogue between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri focused on fostering enhanced mutual understanding. Both sides called for reducing suspicion and alienation to build a relationship grounded in trust and cooperation. Wang Yi emphasized the need for collaborative measures to address bilateral issues and strengthen ties in areas of mutual interest. This meeting reflects ongoing efforts to de-escalate tensions and work toward long-term stability in the region.

**141) Correct Answer: A**

A tragic incident occurred at the Nirvana Laddu Parv in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh, where a makeshift stage collapsed, resulting in five deaths and over 60 injuries. The event, which attracted a large crowd, led to chaos and panic. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered an investigation and immediate relief for the victims.

**142) Correct Answer: C**

In a significant diplomatic move, India and China have decided to resume direct air travel services after nearly five years of suspension due to border tensions and the COVID-19 pandemic. They have also agreed to facilitate journalist exchanges to enhance cultural and informational ties.

**143) Correct Answer: B**

India's banking sector is facing difficulties due to a surge in non-performing assets, particularly in unsecured loans

like credit cards and personal loans. The economic slowdown, high inflation, and rising interest rates have exacerbated the issue.

**144) Correct Answer: B**

The NIA is preparing to visit the United States to expedite the extradition of Tahawwur Rana, a key figure in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. A recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling has cleared legal barriers for the extradition process.

**145) Correct Answer: B**

Several Indian news firms, including those owned by Gautam Adani and Mukesh Ambani, have filed a lawsuit against OpenAI, accusing it of using their copyrighted content without consent to train its AI models, including ChatGPT.

**146) Correct Answer: A**

Anti-corruption minister Tulip Siddiq resigned from the UK government after being named in graft probes in Bangladesh launched when her aunt, Sheikh Hasina, was ousted as the country's leader. Siddiq, 42, has been dogged by claims about her links to Hasina, who fled Bangladesh in August 2024 after a student-led uprising against her decades-long, increasingly authoritarian tenure as prime minister.

**147) Correct Answer: D**

The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), the premier telecom R&D centre under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India, has signed an agreement with the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT Bombay) for the development of an "Optical Transceiver Chipset for High-Bandwidth 6G Wireless Links".

**148) Correct Answer: B**

The government has appointed Vineet Joshi, former National Testing Agency Director General, to the post of secretary, department of higher education. Before being appointed as secretary of higher education, Joshi was serving as the chief secretary of Manipur in 2023.

**149) Correct Answer: B**

Renowned filmmaker David Lynch, celebrated for his visionary works like Mulholland Drive and Blue Velvet, and revered for his unique portrayal of American life, has passed away at the age of 78. Lynch also created the iconic TV series Twin Peaks. He earned three Oscar nominations for Best Director and received an honorary Oscar in 2019.

**150) Correct Answer: D**

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah inaugurated the Archaeological Experiential Museum, Prerna Complex, and Sports Complex in Vadnagar, Gujarat. The event was attended by several dignitaries, including Union Minister of Education Shri Dharmendra Pradhan and Gujarat Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel.



## SECTION 3

# Detailed Analysis of Important Events





## Economics

### QS World Future Skills Index



#### Why in the News?

PM has expressed his happiness as the QS World Future Skills Index ranks India 2nd for Digital Skills, ahead of Canada and Germany.

#### About the QS World Future Skills Index

The index is launched by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), a London-based higher education firm, the index evaluates countries on their readiness to meet evolving job market demands.

It assesses over 190 countries, analyzing:

280 million job postings

5 million employer skill demands

17.5 million research papers

4 Key Indicators:

Skills Fit: Alignment between workforce skills and employer demands.

Academic Readiness: Higher education's capability to prepare students for future skills.

Future of Work: Job market readiness for emerging skills in digital, AI, and green technologies.

Economic Transformation: Capacity for innovation and sustainable growth.

Countries are classified into 4 categories as:

Future Skills Pioneers

Practitioners

Contenders (India's category)

Aspirants

#### Key Observations

India demonstrates its leadership in technology and sustainability by ranking second in the world in digital, artificial intelligence, and green capabilities.

It demonstrated significant growth potential by earning a flawless score in economic capacity.

However, India's low scores in sustainability innovation (15.6) and skills fit (59.1) revealed weaknesses in the alignment of innovation and education.

As "future skills pioneers," developed countries like the USA, UK, and Germany take the lead.

#### Significance of the Index

The report acts as a global standard for preparedness in response to changing needs in the labour market.

It emphasises how crucial digital, artificial intelligence, and green skills will be for sectors of the future.

It offers practical advice for changing educational and workforce training policies.

It puts India in a position to fill up the gaps and play to its strengths in order to gain a competitive position in the world.

## Environment & Diversity

### In news: Similipal Tiger Reserve



#### Why in the News?

Tigress Zeenat, originally from Maharashtra's Tadoba, was relocated to Odisha's Similipal Tiger Reserve after straying through Jharkhand into West Bengal, complicating tracking efforts.

#### About Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR)

	Details
Geographical Features	Surrounded by hills and high plateaus in Northern Odisha's Mayurbhanj District.
	Standing at 1515 meters above mean sea level, Khairiburu and Meghashini are twin peaks.
Geographical Features	The topography is hilly and undulating, with woodland and open pastures dotted throughout.
	Tribes such as Kolha, Santhala, Bhumija, Gondas, Khadia, Mankadia, and Sahara call it home.
Flora and Fauna	incorporated into Project Tiger in 1973 after being designated a Tiger Reserve in 1956.
	2009 saw its inclusion in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
Flora and Fauna	Flora: Sal is the predominant tree species, and there are 1078 plant species there, including 94 orchid species.

**Fauna:** A diverse range of animals, such as sloth bears, mongoose, flying squirrels, porcupines, pythons, sambars, pangolins, elephants, spotted deer, leopards, gaurs, and langurs.

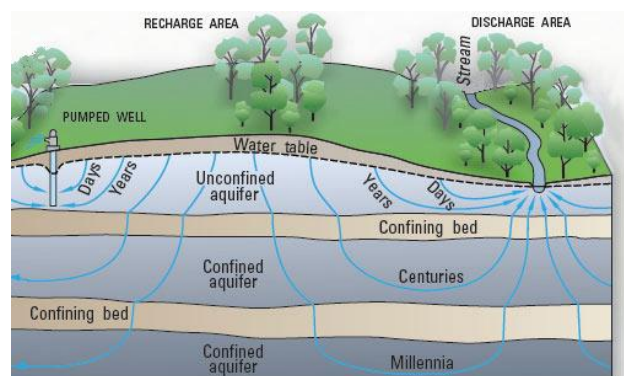
In addition to providing vital habitat for migratory birds like Bar-Headed Geese and Brahmini Ducks, its water bodies are also home to freshwater snails (*Radix* genus).

#### Melanistic Tigers:

Of the 30 tigers in Odisha (AOTE-2023-24), 27 live in Similipal, including 13 pseudo-melanistic tigers that have distinctive black stripes because of a Taqpep gene mutation.

It is the only natural environment where pseudo-melanistic tigers may be found worldwide.

### Annual Ground Water Quality Report – 2024



#### Why in the News?

The Annual Groundwater Quality Report 2024 was released by the Union Minister of Jal Shakti. Conducted by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), the report

provides a scientific baseline for groundwater quality across India.

### **Annual Groundwater Quality Report, 2024: Key Highlights**

#### **Monitoring Scale**

Data collected from 15,200 locations and 4,982 trend stations both before and after the monsoon.

#### **Contamination Levels**

##### **Nitrate**

20% of samples exceeded the safe limit of 45 mg/L.

Hotspots include Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra (>40% of samples), Telangana (27.48%), Andhra Pradesh (23.5%), and Madhya Pradesh (22.58%).

States such as Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland remain within safe limits.

##### **Fluoride**

9.04% of samples above permissible limits.

Affected states: Rajasthan, Haryana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana.

##### **Arsenic**

Detected in Ganga-Brahmaputra floodplains (West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh).

Linked to cancer and skin lesions.

##### **Uranium**

42% of Rajasthan and 30% of Punjab samples exceed 100 ppb.

Over-exploited zones in Gujarat, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh also show elevated levels, posing kidney damage risks.

#### **Agricultural Suitability**

SAR (Sodium Adsorption Ratio) & RSC (Residual Sodium Carbonate): 81% of samples suitable for irrigation; 100% suitability in North-Eastern states.

High Sodium: Elevated levels in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, risking soil degradation.

Salinity (as a measure of Electrical Conductivity (EC)): High in Rajasthan, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Karnataka.

#### **Temporal Trends**

Seasonal Improvements: Post-monsoon recharge improves EC (salinity) and fluoride levels.

Stable Nitrate since 2015 in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat.

Rising Nitrate (2017–2023) in Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana.

#### **Hotspots of Contamination**

##### **Nitrate:**

Rajasthan (Barmer, Jodhpur), Maharashtra (Wardha, Jalgaon), Andhra Pradesh (Palnadu), Tamil Nadu (Villupuram), Punjab (Bathinda).

##### **Uranium:**

Over-exploited aquifers in **Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat.**

##### **Arsenic:**

Ganga-Brahmaputra floodplains in West Bengal, Assam, Bihar.

#### **What are the key factors contributing to decline in Groundwater quality?**

Groundwater quality declines due to:

Agricultural operations, where overuse of pesticides and fertilisers causes nitrate contamination, and industrialisation, where untreated waste introduces chemicals and heavy metals into aquifers.

Landfill pollution, sewage leaks, and inappropriate waste disposal are some of the ways that urbanisation exacerbates the issue.

Water tables are lowered by excessive extraction for home and agricultural usage, exposing aquifers to contaminants like uranium and arsenic.

Aquifer recharging is decreased and contamination is made worse by climate change and inadequate management of livestock manure.



## Chhattisgarh first state to link Forest Ecosystem with Green GDP



### Why in the News?

Chhattisgarh has implemented a novel framework for the first time in India that incorporates the ecosystem services provided by its forests into the Green GDP calculation. This program emphasises how important forests are to maintaining environmental sustainability and fostering economic expansion.

### Highlights of the Chhattisgarh's Plan

The state's economic planning will now formally quantify the benefits of forests, such as carbon absorption, climate management, and biodiversity preservation.

The program makes ensuring that forests are recognised for their wider ecological functions as well as their resources.

With 44% of its territory covered by forests, Chhattisgarh's natural resources are essential to millions of people's lives and help to slow down global warming.

The program, which emphasises long-term ecological and economic sustainability, is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Developed India 2047" goal.

### About Green GDP

An alternate indicator of economic growth that takes into account the environmental consequences of economic activity is called "green GDP."

To give a more realistic view of economic well-being, it deducts the value of environmental

deterioration and the depletion of natural resources from traditional GDP.

introduced as part of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) framework in the 1993 United Nations Handbook of National Accounting: Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting.

### Key Features:

Seeks to quantify how sustainable economic growth is.

emphasises the value of ecosystem services such as water resources, soil preservation, and carbon sequestration.

gives information about the compromises made between environmental preservation and economic progress.

### Calculation:

Green GDP = Traditional GDP – Costs of Environmental Degradation – Costs of Resource Depletion.

### Government Initiatives for Green GDP Accounting

Environmental factors are included into national accounting systems through the Green National Account Framework. It accounts for the advantages of ecosystem services like clean air and water, the costs of pollution, and the value of natural resources.

The 2012 SEEA (System of Environmental-Economic Accounting): India implemented it in accordance with UN principles to establish databases for the accounting of natural capital and well-informed policymaking.

RBI Predictions: A 10% adjustment from traditional GDP was reflected in the 2019 green GDP of ₹167 trillion. Organisations such as the Indian Statistical Institute and TERI encourage the improvement of valuation techniques.

### Challenges in Implementing Green GDP

Absence of thorough and trustworthy data on ecosystem services and environmental costs.

Green GDP estimations are less accurate when they rely on arbitrary assumptions.

It can be difficult to put a monetary value on environmental services like climate management, biodiversity, and cultural legacy. Critics contend that these ideals might oversimplify or commercialise the inherent value of nature. There is no standard methodology for determining Green GDP.

### What is Net-Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA)?



#### Why in the News?

Several major US banks have recently withdrawn from the Net-Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA), raising concerns about the banking sector's commitment to combating climate change.

#### What is Net-Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA)?

Founded as a UN-convened initiative driven by banks, the NZBA pledges its members to integrate their capital market, lending, and investment activities with reaching net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050.

As a climate accelerator, it is a component of the Principles for Responsible Banking of the UNEP Financial Initiative.

The majority of the \$64 trillion in assets held by the alliance's 142 members, who come from 44 different nations, are European banks.

This NZBA has no Indian banks as signatories.

#### Structural Mandate:

Overseen by a steering group that reflects a range of company strategies and geographical areas.

overseen by papers revised in August 2023 and March 2024, and supported by the UNEP FI Secretariat.

#### Commitments of Member Banks:

Adjust portfolio and operational emissions to conform to net-zero routes.

Within 18 months of joining, set 2030 goals (or earlier), and every five years, set intermediate goals.

Release yearly reports on emissions intensity and absolute emissions.

#### What is the Net-Zero Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Target by 2050?

The goal of reaching net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 is to balance the quantity of GHGs released into the environment with the amount that is eliminated or offset by technological or natural sources.

As stated in the Paris Agreement, this goal is essential to keeping global warming to 1.5°C over pre-industrial levels.

#### About the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ)

A worldwide alliance of top financial institutions, GFANZ is dedicated to hastening the shift to a net-zero economy and reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Prior to the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow in April 2021, it was founded.

More than 550 financial firms from 50 countries are members.

include financial institutions that collectively control \$150 trillion in assets, such as banks, insurers, asset managers, and others.

Mark Carney, the current UN Special Envoy for Climate Action and Finance and a former governor of the Bank of England, serves as its chair.

Global programs like the UN Race to Zero campaign and other funding partnerships assist it.

### The Dam Safety Act of 2021



### Why in the News?

The Supreme Court has criticized the Union government for its inaction in fully implementing the Dam Safety Act, 2021, nearly five years after its enactment.

### What is the Dam Safety Act of 2021?

<b>Details</b>	<p>Enacted to ensure the structural and operational safety of over 5,700 large dams in India.</p> <p><b>Objectives (Section 3)</b></p> <p>Prevent dam-related disasters by ensuring dam safety.</p> <p>Establish institutions for monitoring, maintenance, and emergency preparedness.</p>
<b>Structural Mandate</b>	<p>The Central Water Commission (CWC) chairperson chairs the National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS) (Sections 5–6), which is reorganised every three years to provide standards, guidelines, and regulations.</p> <p>Section 9: National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA): Regulates dam safety standards, implements NCDS guidelines, and settles conflicts between dam owners and State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs).</p> <p>Section 14: State Committees on Dam Safety (SCDS): Offer supervision at the state level.</p>

	<p>State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs) (Section 15): Report to NDSA on state-level dam monitoring and inspections.</p>
<b>Other Provisions:</b>	<p>Dam owners' duties (Section 38) include creating Dam Safety Units, creating and carrying out Emergency Action Plans (EAPs), and performing routine Comprehensive Safety Evaluations (CSEs).</p> <p>Section 39: Emergency Preparedness: EAPs are required for prompt emergency response.</p> <p>Penalties for Non-Compliance (Section 45): Failure to comply with Act provisions may result in penalties, imprisonment for up to two years, or both.</p>

### Why is Dam Safety a priority concern in India?

After China and the United States, India has the third-highest number of dams in the world, with around 4,407 major dams.

**Ageing Dams:** More than 1,115 dams will be older than 50 by 2025; 4,250 dams will be older than 50 by 2050, with 64 dams older than 150.

**Decreased Storage Capacity:** Sedimentation lowers reservoir efficiency, which impacts the amount of water available for hydropower, drinking, and irrigation. For example, the lifespan of Bhakra Dam has been shortened by siltation rates that are 139.86% higher than anticipated.

**Structural Vulnerabilities:** Over time, many dams become structurally weak due to poorly constructed sedimentation management systems. Floods and other extreme environmental events can make these vulnerabilities worse.

**Absence of Data and Monitoring:** A lack of readiness results from inadequate reporting of sedimentation rates, storage loss, and other important parameters.



**In news: Chincholi Wildlife Sanctuary****Why in the News?**

The Kalaburagi Forest Department have initiated efforts to persuade residents of a hamlet deep within the Chincholi Wildlife Sanctuary on the Karnataka-Telangana border, to relocate to a safer area.

**About the Chincholi Wildlife Sanctuary**

<b>Details</b>	<p>Declared a wildlife sanctuary in <b>2011</b>, covering <b>134.88 sq. km.</b></p> <p>Recognized as the <b>first dryland Wildlife Sanctuary in South India.</b></p> <p>Located in the <b>Kalaburagi District</b>, renowned for its <b>floristic diversity.</b></p> <p>Contributes to the conservation of <b>dryland ecosystems.</b></p>
<b>Geographical Location</b>	Situated in the <b>Hyderabad Karnataka region.</b>

	Features the <b>Chandrapalli Dam</b> and four smaller dams within the sanctuary.
<b>Flora and Fauna</b>	<p><b>Flora:</b> Rich in <b>medicinal plants</b> and tree species like <b>Red Sanders, Sandalwood, Acacia, and Teak.</b></p> <p><b>Fauna:</b></p> <p>Mammals: Blackbuck, Common Fox, Four-horned Antelope, Indian Wolf, Hyena, and Fruit Bat.</p> <p>Birds: Over 35 species, including Black Drongo, Black-winged Kite, Blossom-headed Parakeet, Blue Pigeon, Black-headed Oriole, and Grey Partridge.</p>
<b>Climatic/Geographical Features</b>	<p>Comprises dry deciduous and moist deciduous forests.</p> <p>Fringes are planted with Acacia and Teak.</p> <p>Supports a dryland ecosystem with water bodies like the Chandrapalli Dam.</p> <p>Features a mix of arid and semi-moist climatic conditions.</p>

## History

### Indus Valley Script



#### Why in the News?

In a landmark announcement, Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin offered a \$1 million prize to anyone who successfully deciphers the ancient Indus Valley Script.

#### Recent Efforts and Theories

##### **Bahata Ansumali Mukhopadhyay's Theory:**

Suggests the script served commercial purposes, such as trade permits and tax stamps.

Highlights its practical use rather than religious or literary functions.

##### **Asko Parpola's Dravidian Hypothesis:**

Proposes a logo-syllabic system, where pictograms represent words or phonetic rebuses.

Links the script to Dravidian languages, challenging Sanskrit-based interpretations.

Tamil Nadu's Keezhadi excavations also draw parallels to IVC practices.

#### About the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC)

Early settlements of the Harappan Civilisation, sometimes called the Indus Valley Civilisation, date back to 3200 BCE. The Harappan Civilisation flourished between 2600 and 1900 BCE.

This civilization's roots can be found in Mehrgarh, Balochistan, which dates back to 7000 BCE.

It is regarded, along with Egypt and Mesopotamia, as one of the three oldest civilisations.

The civilisation spanned present-day India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, covering an area of more over 1.5 million square km.

Remains of the civilization include:

Cities that are well-planned, featuring fortified buildings, intersecting streets, and a grid form.

sophisticated drainage systems that prioritise sanitation, including covered drains and subterranean sewers.

Dockyards, granaries, and warehouses are examples of organised commerce and food storage systems.

The finding of steatite seals, frequently etched with animals and an unintelligible writing, points to a highly developed administrative structure.

craftsmanship in weaving, metal artefacts, terracotta figurines, beadwork, and pottery.

Wells, reservoirs, and baths are examples of water management systems that demonstrate a sophisticated grasp of hydraulic engineering.

Two ASI archaeologists were credited with the discovery:

In 1921–1922, Daya Ram Sahni conducted an excavation in Harappa and found beads, earthenware, and seals.

In 1922, Rakhal Das Banerji started digging Mohenjo-daro and discovered comparable artefacts like metal objects and seals.

Despite the fact that Mohenjo-daro and Harappa are 640 km distant, John Marshall observed similarities in the artefacts discovered at both locations.

**What were the Artifacts and Sculptures found at the site?**

The IVC is well known for its amazing sculptures and artefacts that depict its sophisticated culture and way of life.

Important discoveries include clay figures of animals and mother deities, seals with animal themes and inscriptions, and elaborately carved decorations and beads created from semi-precious stones, gold, and silver.

Artistic refinement is emphasised by iconic sculptures such as the steatite "Priest-King" and the bronze "Dancing Girl."

Tools, toys, and ceramics are examples of useful objects that show societal organisation and technological advancement.

These findings provide insight into the trade, religious convictions, and artistic accomplishments of the civilisation.

## 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention in Odisha



### Why in the News?

Prime Minister has inaugurated the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention. The theme for this year was the "Diaspora's contribution to a Viksit Bharat".

### About Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)

The Ministry of External Affairs' premier event, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, honours the accomplishments and efforts of Indians residing overseas.

Every two years on January 9, this event commemorates the day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi, considered the greatest Pravasi, returned to India from South Africa to spearhead the nation's independence campaign.

The event has been hosted every two years since 2015, with theme-based conferences being held in between.

The convention's site shifts to highlight the development and diversity of India's various regions.

### Who are the Girmitiyas?

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Girmitiyas were taken from British India as indentured servants to work on plantations across the globe.

The phrase "Girmitiyas" refers to the contracts they signed and is derived from the Indian pronunciation of the English word "agreement."

Fiji, Mauritius, Seychelles, Reunion, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, British Guiana (now Guyana), Suriname, Malaysia, and Kenya were among the countries to which the Girmitiyas were sent.

These workers were obligated to work by a single employer for three to five years at a set rate under contracts known as Girmits (agreements).

### Contributions of the Indian Diaspora

**Economic Contributions:** Remittances to India totalled \$129.1 billion in 2024, making up 14.3% of all remittances worldwide. An essential source of economic support has been this influx.

**Professional Contributions:** High-skilled fields like STEMM, business, law, and academia employ more than 73% of Indian-Americans. By serving as a conduit between India and international markets, the diaspora promotes trade, foreign direct investment, and skill transfer.

**Cultural and Soft Power:** The Indian diaspora promotes customs like Bollywood, yoga, and holidays like Diwali by acting as cultural ambassadors.

**Global Presence:** With 31.3 million Indians living in nations including the US, the UAE, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia, the Indian diaspora is widely dispersed throughout the world.



## Centre has notified grant of classical language status to Marathi



### Why in the News?

Months after conferring classical language status to Marathi, the Union Government issued an official notification formalizing the recognition.

### What is the Criteria for declaring a Classical language?

Akademi's Linguistic Experts Committee (LEC), which was founded in November 2004, assesses languages for Classical status by considering their literary, cultural, and historical value. In order to guarantee a thorough and broad evaluation, the criteria have changed throughout time.

**Original Criteria (2004):** Introduced alongside the recognition of **Tamil** as the first Classical Language:

- Recorded history or early texts must span over 1,000 years.
- A body of ancient literature must be regarded as valuable by generations.
- Literary traditions should be original, not borrowed from another speech community.

**Revised Criteria (2005):** The criteria were revised to include stricter parameters, leading to the recognition of **Sanskrit**:

- Antiquity of early texts over 1,500–2,000 years.
- A significant corpus of ancient literature considered heritage.
- Distinctiveness of classical language from modern forms.

A discontinuity between classical language and its later offshoots.

**Recent Upgrade (2024):** The LEC refined the criteria further to incorporate broader evidence and diverse literary forms. Five additional languages—**Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali**—were granted Classical status under these parameters:

Early texts/recorded history over 1,500–2,000 years.

Ancient literature/texts considered a cultural heritage.

Inclusion of knowledge texts, prose, epigraphical evidence, and inscriptions.

Classical language distinct from or discontinuous with its modern or evolved forms.

**Classical languages:** Tamil (2004), Sanskrit (2005), Telugu (2008), Kannada (2008), Malayalam (2013), Odia (2014); Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali (2024) along with Marathi.

### What are the significance of Classical Language?

A classical language's historical foundations are preserved and cultural legacy is brought together through recognition.

It encourages scholarly career possibilities, translation, and research.

Its application in technology, academia, and international discourse is expanded by developing global consciousness.

Funding and assistance from the government guarantee ongoing research, preservation, and institutional growth.

### Historical Significance of Marathi Language

The 2,000-year history of Marathi satisfies the requirement for antiquity.

Its evolution is indicated by early references to "Marathi" in a variety of forms, including Prakrit Marathi, Jain Maharashtra, and Maharashtra Prakrit.

More than 100 stone inscriptions, such as those found in the Naneghat Caves (20 BCE), combine

Sanskrit benedictions with Marathi commandments.

**Literary milestones:** Works from the **Yadava period** (12th–13th century AD) such as:

Leelacharitra: A biography of Chakradhar Swami.

Dnyaneshwari: A commentary on the Bhagavad Gita by Sant Dnyaneshwar.

The **Pathare Committee (2013)** and **Sahitya Akademi** supported Marathi's case.

A massive postcard campaign with 500,000 letters sent to the Prime Minister demanding recognition.

Dnyaneshwar Mulay's Committee addressed administrative hurdles to finalize the proposal in February 2024.

Millions of devotees attend the ceremony, chanting "Swamiye Saranam Ayyappa" in honour of Lord Ayyappa.

The celebration usually starts on Makara Sankranti and lasts for seven days.

#### Key Rituals and Events:

On the evening of Makara Sankranti, a symbolic lamp known as "Makaravilakku" is lit at Ponnambalamedu, a hill close to Sabarimala.

It is thought that the heavenly star Makara Jyothi, which represents Lord Ayyappa's blessings, appears in the sky.

A rigorous 41-day penance (Vratham) is performed by devotees prior to their temple pilgrimage.

### Makaravilakku Festival



#### It's Significance:

The event honours self-control, devotion, and purity while signifying the blending of spiritual and cosmic powers.

All adherents wear black or blue clothing and carry the "Irumudi Kettu," a sacred bundle, as part of the tradition's emphasis on equality.

### Who are the Namdharis?



#### Why in the News?

At a ceremony held at the Namdhari Shaheed Smarak in Malerkotla, the chief minister of Punjab paid respects to the Kuka martyrs. The day honours the 66 Namdhari Sikhs (Kukas) who were put to death by British colonial authorities on January 17 and 18, 1872.

#### Who are the 'Namdharis'?

#### Why in the News?

The Makaravilakku festival was celebrated at the hill shrine of Sabarimala Ayyappa temple.

#### About the Makaravilakku Festival

The Sabarimala Temple in Kerala, which is devoted to Lord Ayyappa, hosts the important Hindu festival of Makaravilakku every year.

It corresponds with Makara Sankranti and commemorates the astronomical occurrence of the Sun entering the Capricorn sign (Makaram Rashi).

The focal point of the festivities is the Sabarimala Temple, which is tucked away in Kerala's Periyar Tiger Reserve.

On April 12, 1857, Satguru Ram Singh established the Namdharis, commonly known as the Kukas, as a Sikh sect in Ludhiana, Punjab.

Their characteristic high-pitched recitation of Gurbani—kook in Punjabi meaning "cry" or "scream"—is the source of the term Kuka.

#### Social Reforms:

Argued against eating meat, drinking wine, and engaging in other social vices.

encouraged people to boycott British services, foreign products, and educational institutions in order to advance Swadeshi ideals.

The movement, which emphasised independence and opposition to colonial control, was a forerunner of the national Non-Cooperation Movement.

#### About the Kuka Rebellion

One of the regional rebellions against British control following the Rebellion of 1857 was the Kuka Rebellion.

The slaughter of cows was one of the main targets of the Namdharis' aggressive opposition to British policies.

#### Key events leading to the rebellion:

Following a cow slaughter event at Malerkotla in January 1872, Namdharis, led by Hira Singh and Lehna Singh, clashed with British officials.

They launched an attack on the British-aligned Malaudh Fort in Ludhiana, but the uprising was put down.

#### British Retaliation:

The British reacted violently, putting 49 Namdharis to death on January 17, 1872, and another 17 on January 18.

To scare onlookers, the Kukas were positioned in front of cannons and detonated in a public display.

#### Kuka Martyrs' Day

It is observed on January 17 and 18 each year to honor the 66 Namdharis who were executed in 1872.

#### Significant Stories of Bravery:

Bishan Singh (12 years old): Refused to renounce his sect despite being offered his life and was brutally executed after tugging the beard of a British official.

Waryam Singh: Courageously used stones to elevate himself to the cannon's mouth for execution, showing unwavering dedication.

#### Legacy:

After the rebellion, Satguru Ram Singh and other Namdhari leaders were exiled to Rangoon.

Namdharis believe Ram Singh is still alive and mourn his absence by wearing white.

### 1st Battalion of NDRF celebrates 20th Raising Day



#### Why in the News?

The 1st Battalion of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) celebrated its 20th Raising Day.

About the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)

	Details
About	Established for specialised catastrophe response under Section 44 of the catastrophe Management Act of 2005.



	<p>is led by a Director General (DG), usually an IPS official, and operates under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).</p> <p>Originally formed in 2006 with eight battalions, it has since grown to sixteen.</p> <p>functions under the direction of the Prime Minister-led National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).</p>
<b>Powers and Functions</b>	<p>Rescue and relief efforts during man-made and natural catastrophes, including earthquakes, landslides, floods, cyclones, building collapses, and accidents, are the main role.</p> <p>Strategic Deployment: To reduce damage, resources are positioned in advance of impending disasters. actively involved in global relief initiatives, such as those for the 2015 Nepal earthquake and the 2011 Fukushima accident.</p> <p>offers highly specialised, multi-skilled responses that can manage challenging crisis situations.</p>
<b>Composition</b>	Comprises 16 battalions with 1,149 soldiers apiece.

	<p>The CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, SSB, and Assam Rifles are among the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) from which personnel are recruited.</p> <p>Members receive training in relief, recovery, and catastrophe response.</p> <p>To guarantee prompt reaction during emergencies, concentrate on proactive availability and pre-positioning.</p>
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#### Facts: National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF)

The Disaster Management Act of 2005 established the NDRF as a statutory agency.

If sufficient monies are not available in a state's State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), it serves as a complement in the event of a major disaster.

According to the July 2015 guidelines, the NDRF will provide rapid relief aid for natural disasters such as cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, fires, floods, tsunamis, hailstorms, landslides, avalanches, cloud bursts, pest attacks, cold waves, and frost.

The NDRF is administered under "Reserve Funds not bearing interest" in the "Public Accounts" section.

The NDRF's financial statements are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

## International Relations

### In news: Trinidad and Tobago



#### Why in the News?

The government of Trinidad and Tobago declared a state of emergency on December 30, 2024, in response to escalating violence in the Caribbean nation.

#### About Trinidad and Tobago

##### Geography:

Located in the southern Caribbean, near Venezuela.

A dual-island nation consisting of Trinidad (4,768 sq. km) and Tobago (300 sq. km).

Total land area: 5,128 sq. km.

Climate: Tropical, with a dry season from January to May and a rainy season from June to December.

#### Population:

Approximately 1.5 million people.

Ethnic Composition: African (36.3%), Indian (35.4%), Mixed (22.8%), European, Chinese, and others.

Religions: Christianity (64%), Hinduism (18%), Islam (5%), and others.

#### Capital and Cities:

Capital: Port of Spain (Trinidad).

Other key cities: San Fernando, Chaguanas, and Scarborough (Tobago).

#### Political System:

Government Type: Parliamentary democracy under a constitutional republic.

Member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Gained independence from the UK on August 31, 1962, and became a republic in 1976.

#### Infrastructure:

Ports: Port of Spain, Point Lisas, and Scarborough are critical for trade.

Airports: Piarco International Airport (Trinidad) and A.N.R. Robinson International Airport (Tobago).

#### Culture and Heritage:

Known for the Carnival, one of the world's largest pre-Lenten celebrations.

Birthplace of Calypso music, Soca, and the Steelpan (the only acoustic musical instrument invented in the 20th century).

#### Geo-Political Significance

T&T supplies markets in the United States, Europe, and Latin America with liquefied natural gas

(LNG) and petrochemicals (methanol and ammonia).

It is a gateway between North and South America, situated at the meeting point of the Atlantic and Caribbean Seas.

As a founding member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), it promotes collective security, disaster relief, and regional economic integration.

It actively promotes climate change resilience and sustainable development programs as a member of the Commonwealth and the UN.

### Indonesia officially joined BRICS as the 11th member



Indonesia is now a full member of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) organisation. Brazil, which will serve as the BRICS president in 2025, revealed the decision, which was unanimously adopted during the 2023 BRICS Summit in Johannesburg.

#### What is BRICS?

BRICS represents a coalition of nations committed to fostering economic growth, development cooperation, and global governance reform.

BRICS focuses on collaboration across 3 key pillars:

Political and Security Cooperation: Ensuring peace, global stability, and governance reform.

Economic and Financial Cooperation: Promoting trade, investment, and economic resilience.

Cultural and People-to-People Cooperation: Enhancing mutual understanding and societal linkages.

**Present Members of BRICS**

Original Members: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

Recent Additions: Indonesia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the UAE.

**Evolution of BRICS:**

2001: The term "BRIC" was coined by Jim O'Neill, an economist at Goldman Sachs, in a report highlighting Brazil, Russia, India, and China as fast-growing economies.

2006: BRIC leaders held their first meeting during the G8 Outreach Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia.

2009: The first BRIC Summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia, to formalize the grouping.

2010: South Africa joined, transforming BRIC into BRICS.

2014 Fortaleza Declaration: The establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB) and Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) marked significant steps toward financial collaboration.

Recent Expansion: In 2023 Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the UAE joined, reflecting BRICS' expanding influence in the Global South.

2025: Indonesia officially joins.

Economic Growth: Contributes more than 16% of world commerce and 24% of global GDP, making it a major force behind global economic growth.

By opposing Western domination in global governance, multipolar world advocacy works to establish a multipolar world order.

By tackling common problems like poverty and climate change, South-South cooperation helps developing countries work together more effectively.

Alternative Financial Systems: Examines ways to lessen dependency on US dollars and Western financial institutions, such as the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) and the New Development Bank (NDB).

**Challenges Faced by BRICS:**

Divergent Interests: Members hold different positions on international problems and have different priorities, such as the tensions between China and India.

Economic Disparities: China leads the BRICS GDP, yet there are significant disparities in economic size and capability.

Institutional Weakness: The bloc's efficacy is restricted by the lack of a formal framework and legally binding agreements.

Geopolitical Pressures: The unity and neutrality of the BRICS are put to the test by outside factors such as US-China tensions and Western sanctions on Russia.

**Significance of BRICS:**

## Polity

**Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0****Why in the News?**

"Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0," which aims to educate more than 500 women members from Panchayati Raj institutions nationwide about the Constitution and legislative processes, was launched by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

**About "Panchayat Se Parliament"**

The National Commission for Women (NCW), in partnership with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs



and the Lok Sabha Secretariat, organised the program's second iteration.

502 elected female delegates of Scheduled Tribes from 22 Indian states and Union Territories participated in the program.

Goals: Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0's main goals were to: Strengthen women representatives' knowledge of parliamentary processes, constitutional requirements, and governance frameworks.

Honour the contributions made by female leaders in fields like community welfare, education, and rural development.

Panchayat Se Parliament 1.0, the program's inaugural round, took place in January 2024.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) and the Lok Sabha Secretariat collaborated to organise the event, which included more than 500 women sarpanches from all over India.

#### About National Commission for Women (NCW)

The NCW is a statutory body formed on 31 January 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990, to address women's issues.

First Chairperson: Jayanti Patnaik.

Constitutional Provisions: Articles 15(3), 14, and 21 provide gender-neutral safeguards.

#### Objectives:

Represent women's rights in India and provide a platform for their concerns.

Campaign topics: Dowry, politics, labor exploitation, police abuses, and equal representation in jobs.

#### Composition:

Chairperson: Nominated by the Central Government.

Five Members: Experts from fields like law, education, health, and women's welfare.

Special Representation: One member each from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

#### Powers:

Provide policy consultations.

Issue summons and requisition public records.

Receive evidence on affidavits and enforce attendance.

#### Functions:

Annual Reports: Submit reports on women's safeguards.

Investigation: Examine laws and constitutional protections.

Scrutiny: Review laws and recommend amendments.

Complaint Handling: Address rights violations and welfare laws.

Development Assessment: Monitor progress at national and state levels.

Systemic Improvements: Identify and resolve limitations in women's welfare systems.

### State Public Service Commission (SPSC)



#### Why in the News?

The Vice President addressed the inauguration ceremony of the 25th National Conference of Chairpersons of State Public Service Commissions (SPSCs) in Bengaluru.

#### About State Public Service Commission (SPSC):

Details	Articles 315 to 323 of Part XIV of the Indian Constitution establish
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	<p>SPSCs as autonomous constitutional bodies.</p> <p>modelled after the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), which is responsible for hiring state employees and providing personnel-related advice to the state government.</p> <p>Following the recommendations of the "Lee Commission (1924)," it was formally formed by the Government of India Act (GoI), 1919.</p> <p>act as the state's main hiring organisation, separate from the General Administration or Personnel Departments.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Recommendations made by SPSCs are advisory, and the government has discretion to accept or reject them, subject to accountability to the Legislature.</p>		<p>After a Supreme Court investigation, the President may remove someone for reasons such as insolvency, paid work, incapacity, or misbehaviour.</p>
<b>Composition</b>	<p>Made up of a chairman and additional members chosen by the state governor.</p> <p>At least half of the members must have served for at least ten years in a Central or State government position.</p> <p>Members serve for six years or until they turn sixty-two, whichever comes first.</p> <p>The makeup, terms of service, and temporary appointments of acting chairpersons during vacancies are all under the governor's discretion.</p> <p>Members may submit a resignation letter to the governor.</p>	<b>Powers and Functions</b>	<p>Exams are administered for appointments to state civil services and positions as part of the recruitment and appointment process.</p> <p><b>Advisory Role:</b> Offers direction on hiring practices, transfers, promotions, and disciplinary issues.</p> <p><b>Judicial Appointments:</b> Rules governing appointments to the state judiciary (apart from district judges) were discussed with the State High Court.</p> <p><b>Annual Reporting:</b> Provides the Governor with a performance report, which he then provides to the State Legislature along with justifications for the advice's rejection.</p> <p><b>Disciplinary Action:</b> In conjunction with the State Vigilance Commission, the government consults in matters involving disciplinary actions for civil personnel.</p>
		<b>Security and Independence</b>	<p><b>Tenure Protection:</b> Only constitutionally mandated grounds may be used to remove members.</p> <p><b>Financial Independence:</b> Without a legislative decision, costs are deducted from the state's Consolidated Fund.</p> <p><b>Post-Tenure Appointments:</b></p>

Although they cannot be nominated to other government positions, chairpersons can be appointed as members or chairs of the UPSC or another SPSC.

Members may be appointed to other government positions, but not as chairpersons of UPSCs or other SPSCs.

## Science, Technology, Art & Culture

### Google Quantum AI's Chip 'Willow'

#### Why in the News?

Google has unveiled its latest quantum processor, 'Willow', which has sparked excitement about the potential of quantum computers to solve practical problems.



#### About Willow Quantum Processor:

The researchers at Google created Willow and published their findings in the scientific journal Nature.

Qubits, the fundamental building blocks of information in quantum computers, number 105 in Willow.

Some qubits, referred to as data qubits, carry out the actual computations.

Others (referred to as measuring qubits) detect and correct errors.

To maintain the stability of its qubits, it functions at a very low temperature—nearly absolute zero, or -273.15°C.

Willow took only a few minutes to tackle a challenging task. Ten septillion years—one

followed by twenty-four zeros—would be needed for the world's greatest regular computer to complete the same work.

A significant advancement for quantum computers is the ability of each qubit to remain stable for 100 microseconds, or minuscule fractions of a second.

#### Features and Significance

##### Smarter Error Handling:

Because quantum computers are so sensitive, even the slightest disruption can result in mistakes.

In Willow's system, certain qubits (referred to as measurement qubits) are devoted to identifying and correcting faults without interfering with the primary qubits (referred to as data qubits) performing the computations.

##### Bigger, Better Performance:

About half of Willow's 105 qubits are used for calculations, and the remaining portion is used for error correction.

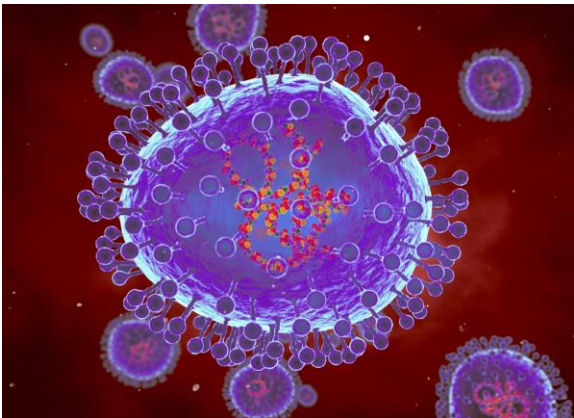
The more qubits added, the less dependable most quantum computers become. Willow is different; in fact, the more qubits it has, the better it performs.

##### Longer Stability:

Qubits in Willow remain stable for 100 microseconds—a significant improvement that allows it to perform more complex tasks.

### What is Human Metapneumo- Virus (HMPV)?





### Why in the News?

Due to dramatic media coverage, human metapneumovirus, or HMPV, has recently gained a lot of attention in India. According to these reports, a "new dangerous virus" has emerged from China, causing needless public anxiety and disinformation.

### What is Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV)?

The respiratory virus known as human metapneumovirus (HMPV) is mainly responsible for mild to moderate respiratory infections.

It is a member of the Paramyxoviridae family of viruses, which also includes parainfluenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

HMPV has been around for decades and was first discovered in 2001.

Most infections are mild and self-limiting, but HMPV can cause severe illness in vulnerable groups such as:

Elderly individuals.

Young children (especially under five years).

Immunocompromised individuals or those with chronic illnesses.

### Transmission:

Spread primarily through respiratory droplets, direct contact with contaminated surfaces, or close contact with infected individuals.

### Diagnosis:

Advanced PCR-based respiratory panels can detect HMPV. However, these tests are not routinely performed unless required

in vulnerable patients or during hospital outbreaks.

### Symptoms and Treatment for HMPV:

The symptoms of HMPV and other respiratory viruses, such as influenza and RSV, are similar.

Mild symptoms include fatigue, fever, coughing, sore throat, and runny nose.

In susceptible groups, severe symptoms include bronchitis, wheezing, pneumonia, dyspnoea, and in severe situations, hypoxia.

No Particular Antiviral or vaccination: HMPV does not have a specific antiviral treatment or vaccination, in contrast to RSV and flu.

Supportive care includes rest and fluids, as well as over-the-counter drugs (such acetaminophen or ibuprofen) to treat temperature and pain.

In severe cases, nebulisation, oxygen treatment, or other supportive measures may necessitate hospitalisation.

### Present Scenario- Global and National:

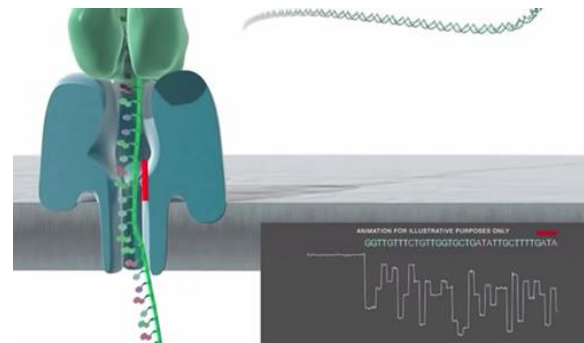
After RSV and influenza, HMPV is one of the main causes of respiratory infections globally.

According to studies, 5–10% of respiratory infections in children and susceptible adults occur each year as a result of HMPV.

Two HMPV instances involving infants who had previously had bronchopneumonia were recently reported by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in Karnataka.

Following a spike in HMPV cases in China, these are the first cases found utilising PCR diagnostic methods.

### Nanopore Technology



**Why in the News?**

Researchers at the University of California, have developed a nanopore-based diagnostic tool capable of detecting illnesses more quickly and accurately by analyzing signals from individual molecules.

**What is the Nanopore-Based Tool?**

Scientists at UC Riverside created the groundbreaking Nanopore-Based Tool for illness diagnosis.

It makes use of nanopores, which are minuscule apertures that can identify particular molecules such as proteins and DNA.

The device makes it possible to identify diseases with extreme sensitivity and accuracy by monitoring electrical signals produced when molecules move through the nanopore.

**How does it Work?**

Salts are added to the system together with biological material.

When salts separate into ions, a flow through the nanopore is produced.

Ion flow is blocked while a DNA or protein molecule moves through the nanopore.

Electrical signals are produced when the flow is reduced by this obstruction.

The chemical is identified by the system by measuring the decrease in ion flow.

Precise detection is ensured by sophisticated circuitry that compensates for lost signals.

Unlike conventional systems that need external filters, nanopores remove background noise, protecting vital information for precise diagnosis.

**Significance and Features of Nanopore Technology**

Compared to conventional approaches, it helps diagnose infections significantly faster—within 24 to 48 hours.

It is essential for infections that spread quickly because it allows for prompt action.

Large biological samples are no longer necessary because it can detect signals from individual molecules.

It has the potential to transform diagnostics in clinics and at home.

It supports individualised treatment approaches by assisting in the identification of minute variations in proteins.

It encourages a better comprehension of the role proteins play in health and illness.

It provides insights beyond DNA sequencing and opens the door for single-molecule protein sequencing.

**Third launchpad at Satish Dhawan Space Center, Sriharikota****Why in the News?**

The building of a third launchpad in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, was authorised by the Union Cabinet. The PM lay the cornerstone for ISRO's second rocket launchport in the Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu's Kulasekarapattinam in 2024. (Dr. Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha is the first.)

**Who was Satish Dhawan?**

Born in Srinagar, Satish Dhawan was a prominent Indian rocket scientist and is hailed as the 'Father of Experimental Fluid Dynamics Research' in India.

Succeeded Vikram Sarabhai as ISRO Chairman in 1972.

Oversaw a period of extraordinary **growth in India's space program**, including the development of:

INSAT: India's telecommunications satellite system.

IRS: The Indian Remote Sensing satellite program.

PSLV: Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, which positioned India as a major spacefaring nation.

#### Legacy:

Passed away in 2002, after which the Sriharikota space center was renamed the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in his honor.

#### About the New Launchpad

India's space capabilities are intended to be strengthened with the new launchpad at Sriharikota.

It will improve ISRO's ability to launch cutting-edge satellites and spacecraft and support Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV) missions.

Significance: Since its founding, this spaceport—India's only operational spaceport—has been the centre for satellite and spacecraft launches.

#### How and why was Sriharikota selected as the Launch Site?

Search in the 1960s: When India made the decision to build its own satellites and launch vehicles, it started looking for the best place to launch.

The father of India's space program, Vikram Sarabhai, gave EV Chitnis the assignment to locate a location on the east coast.

Survey and Purchase: About 40,000 acres of land in Sriharikota had been purchased by October 1968.

#### Reasons for Choosing Sriharikota:

**East Coast Location:** By utilising Earth's rotational speed, rockets launched eastward add an additional 450 m/s of velocity, which is particularly advantageous for geostationary satellites.

**Near the Equator:** Rockets that launch close to the equator need less energy to achieve geostationary orbits, which makes the area perfect for these kinds of missions.

**Uninhabited Area:** The site's low population reduces the risk of component re-entry and rocket launches.

**Sea Access:** Being close to the Bay of Bengal guarantees that rocket debris will fall into the ocean, preventing risks to land or populated areas.

**Strategic Accessibility:** The construction of a strong launch facility was made possible by sufficient access to infrastructure, resources, and government backing.

## Security Issues

### Commissioning of INS Nilgiri, INS Surat, and INS Vaghsheer



#### Why in the News?

Three frontline combatants—INS Nilgiri, INS Surat, and INS Vaghsheer—were commissioned into the Indian Navy at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai.

#### About the Ships/Vessels

	Details
INS Nilgiri	<p>Type: First Ship of Project 17A (Nilgiri-class stealth frigates)</p> <p>Role: Multi-mission operations in deep-sea environments</p> <p>Builders: Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai, and GRSE, Kolkata</p>



	<p>Features: Integrated construction, supersonic missiles, MRSAMs, advanced weaponry</p> <p>Timeline: Keel laid Dec 28, 2017; Launched Sep 28, 2019; Delivered Dec 20, 2024</p> <p>Significance: Enhances anti-surface, anti-air, and anti-submarine warfare capabilities</p>
INS Surat	<p>Type: Last Ship of Project 15B (stealth guided missile destroyers)</p> <p>Role: Advanced stealth destroyer for offensive and network-centric warfare</p> <p>Builders: MDL</p> <p>Features: AI-enabled systems, advanced weaponry (surface-to-air missiles, torpedoes), COGAG propulsion</p> <p>Timeline: Commissioned in 2024; follows Visakhapatnam, Mormugao, and Imphal</p> <p>Significance: India's first AI-enabled warship with advanced IT tools</p>
INS Vaghsheer	<p>Type: Last Submarine of Project 75 (Scorpene-class submarines)</p> <p>Role: Stealthy, multi-role operations (anti-surface, anti-submarine warfare)</p> <p>Builders: Collaboration with French Naval Group</p> <p>Features: Diesel-electric propulsion, wire-guided torpedoes, modular design for future AIP upgrades</p> <p>Timeline: Sixth and final Scorpene-class submarine; follows Kalvari, Khanderi, Karanj, Vela, and Vagir</p> <p>Significance: Enhances India's underwater warfare capabilities</p>

#### Significance of the Triple Commissioning

**Pioneering Milestone:** This is the first time a destroyer, a frigate, and a submarine have

been commissioned together in the Navy's history.

**Indigenous Development:** All three platforms were indigenously designed and constructed, reflecting India's growing self-reliance in defense manufacturing.

#### Strategic Impact:

Enhances India's maritime deterrence capabilities in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Bolsters the Navy's capacity to counter regional threats and secure India's strategic interests.

### India successfully tests Indian Army's first 'Bhargavastra' counter-drone micro missiles



#### Why in the News?

India has successfully tested its first indigenously produced Bhargavastra micro-missile system, intended to counter swarm drone threats, marking an important milestone in defence technology.

#### What is Bhargavastra?

The first micromissile-based counterdrone system in India, Bhargavastra was created to counter the growing threat posed by swarm drones.

At distances greater than 6 km, it can identify and destroy small airborne vehicles.

The technology, which was created by Economic Explosives Ltd., is intended for the Indian Army,

however the Indian Air Force has also shown interest.

The technology is designed to combat drone threats at a reasonable cost while saving more sophisticated air defence systems for more difficult problems.

### Features of the Bhargavastra Missile System

**Detection Range:** Able to identify tiny aerial aircraft over a distance of more than 6 km.

**Neutralisation Capability:** Engages and eliminates drone targets using directed micromunitions.

The ability to discharge more than 64 micro missiles at once allows for efficient countermeasures against swarm formations.

**Mobile Platform:** Installed on a mobile platform for quick deployment in a variety of environments, including those with high elevations.

**Versatile Design:** Designed to function in a variety of environments and satisfy the unique needs of the Indian military.

### Significance of Bhargavastra

Bhargavastra bridges a crucial gap in India's defence plan against aerial threats with the extensive deployment of drones, especially in swarm formations.

Faster deployment and increased operational efficiency are guaranteed by the technology, especially in difficult and high-altitude environments.

The military is better prepared to fend off widespread drone assaults because to its capacity to engage several targets at once.

lessens reliance on imported defences, supporting the Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) program.

There aren't many similar systems in the world, which emphasises Bhargavastra's strategic value to the Indian military.

### Pinaka Rocket Systems



### Why in the News?

The Indian Army is bolstering its artillery strength with a significant ₹10,200 crore order for ammunition associated with the Pinaka Multi-Launch Rocket System (MLRS).

### About the Pinaka Rocket System

<b>Details</b>	<p>A multi-barrel rocket launcher developed by DRDO and manufactured by Indian defence firms.</p> <p>Named after the legendary bow of Lord Shiva, symbolizing power and precision.</p>
<b>Key Features</b>	<p><b>Multiple Launch Capability:</b> Fires 12 rockets in just 44 seconds, delivering overwhelming firepower.</p> <p><b>Mobility:</b> Mounted on 8×8 or 6×6 trucks, allowing rapid deployment in diverse terrains.</p> <p><b>Range:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pinaka Mk-I: 40 km.</li> <li>Pinaka Mk-II and Enhanced Versions: 60–75 km.</li> <li>Guided Variant: 90 km, with improved accuracy and reduced collateral damage.</li> </ul> <p><b>Precision and Guidance:</b> Outfitted with satellite-based guidance to enable accurate targeting.</p> <p><b>Multiple warheads,</b> such as high explosives, incendiaries, anti-personnel, and anti-tank</p>

	<p>bomblets, are among the payload options.</p> <p>Fast Deployment and Reloading: Counterattacks can be launched quickly thanks to rapid deployment.</p> <p>Expandability and Modularity: Advanced technological integration for network-centric warfare is supported by modular design.</p>
<b>Operational Use</b>	<p>Proven effectiveness in mountainous and rugged terrains.</p> <p>Played a critical role in Indian Army operations, showcasing its adaptability and firepower.</p>

<b>Significance</b>	<p>Boost to Artillery Strength: By adding fresh regiments and long-range rockets, the Indian Army's firepower is increased.</p> <p>Modernization's cornerstone: essential to India's modernisation of its artillery for accuracy and adaptability.</p> <p>Deterrence and Border Security: Protects borders and serves as a tactical warning to enemies.</p> <p>Global Success: Promotes defence diplomacy and expands India's market for defence exports.</p>
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## Trivia

### What is Pink Fire Retardant?



#### Why in the News?

Air tankers have dropped thousands of litres of pink fire retardant (PFR) to slow the spread of wildfires in Los Angeles.

#### Pink Fire Retardant (PFR) and its properties

The PFR is a chemical mixture designed to slow or suppress wildfires by reducing the flammability of vegetation and other materials.

The most recognized brand of PFR is Phos-Chek, manufactured by Perimeter Solutions.

It is primarily made of ammonium phosphate-based slurry, including:

Monoammonium phosphate (80%-90%).

Diammonium phosphate.

Performance additives for enhanced effectiveness.

Pink dye for visibility.

It is sprayed as a foam or slurry to coat vegetation ahead of wildfires.

It slows combustion by:

Depleting oxygen needed for flames.

Altering how cellulose (plant material) decomposes, creating non-flammable carbon.

Unlike water, which evaporates quickly, PFR's chemical components remain effective for days or weeks, providing long-term protection.

#### Significance of PFR

Provides fire-fighters with critical time to control wildfires.



Creates firebreaks by coating vegetation and preventing ignition.

Effective in diverse terrains, slopes, and weather conditions.

Helps protect natural habitats and human infrastructure by slowing wildfire spread.

Reduces the scale and intensity of wildfires, minimizing ecological damage.





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