

THE HINDU REVIEW

- **Monthly capsule**
- **Current Affairs**

(हिन्दी)

Economy | Appointment | Awards | Ranking
Government Scheme | Summit | Partnership | GDP
Banking & Financial | Defence | Sports |
Book and Author | Science and technology



The Hindu Review (January 2026)

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Chapter 1: Appointment (National, International)

(National)

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Person</u>
Assigned Additional Charge as Interim DG of NIA Following Sadanand Date's Repatriation	Rakesh Aggarwal (Updated 2 January)
Appointed as Director General of the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet	Lav Aggarwal (Updated 2 January)
Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) appointed as Managing Director & CEO	Tarun Garg (Updated 3 January)
Assumed charge as the Vice Chief of the Air Staff	Air Marshal Nagesh Kapoor (Updated 5 January)
ESAF Small Finance Bank has appointed as its new Chairman	Karthikeyan Manickam (Updated 5 January)
Maharashtra's first woman Director General of Police (DGP), retired on 3 January 2026	Rashmi Shukla (Updated 5 January)
Canara Bank has appointed as Managing Director & CEO (Interim)	Hardeep Singh Ahluwalia (Updated 6 January)
Elected as President of Atal Smriti Nyas Society	Former Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu (Updated 6 January)
Named International Event Ambassador for the 21st Tata Mumbai Marathon	Olympic sprint champion Andre De Grasse (Updated 6 January)

Reappointed as Chief Coach of the Indian women's hockey team	Dutch coach Sjoerd Marijne (Updated 6 January)
The Centre has approved the appointment as the Chief Justice of the Jharkhand High Court	Justice Mahesh Sharadchandra Sonak (Updated 7 January)
Reliance Consumer Products Limited (RCPL) has signed as the brand ambassador for its packaged drinking water brand Campa Sure.	Amitabh Bachchan (Updated 8 January)
Sworn in as the 24th Chief Justice of the High Court of Sikkim	Justice A. Muhamed Mustaque (Updated 9 January)
General Insurance Council (GI Council) appointed as CEO, Health Insurance Ecosystem and Strategic Partnerships	S. Prakash (Updated 12 January)
Assumes Charge as Chairman of Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)	Shri A. K. Balasubrahmanian (Updated 13 January)
Taken charge as Chairman of the Council for Leather Exports (CLE)	Ramesh Kumar Juneja (Updated 13 January)
Sworn in as the first woman Chief Justice of the Meghalaya High Court	Justice Revati Mohite Dere (Updated 16 January)
Sworn in as the Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court	Justice Soumen Sen (Updated 16 January)
Kotak Mahindra Bank appointed as its whole-time director	Anup Kumar Saha (Updated 17 January)
The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) approved the appointment as Director General (DG) of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)	Shatrujeet Singh Kapoor (Updated 19 January)

<p>About Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It is a central armed police force in India, under the Ministry of Home Affairs. •Formed- 24 October 1962 •Headquarters- New Delhi •Director General - Shatrujeet Singh Kapoor 	
<p>Appointed as Director General of the Border Security Force (BSF)</p> <p>About Border Security Force (BSF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It is a central armed police force in India, under the Ministry of Home Affairs. •Founded- 1 December 1965 •Founder- Khusro Faramurz Rustamji •Constituting instrument - Border Security Force Act 1968 •Headquarters - New Delhi •Director General- Praveen Kumar 	<p>Praveen Kumar (Updated 19 January)</p>
<p>The ACC also cleared the appointment as Director General of the National Investigation Agency (NIA)</p> <p>About National Investigation Agency (NIA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It is the principal counter-terrorism law enforcement agency in India. •It was established under the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008. •It operates under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs. •Formed- 2009 •Headquarters- New Delhi •Director General - Rakesh Aggarwal 	<p>Rakesh Aggarwal (Updated 19 January)</p>
<p>President Droupadi Murmu appointed as Vigilance Commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission, as informed by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions</p>	<p>Praveen Vashista (Updated 20 January)</p>

Appointed Goodwill Ambassador for the Pune Grand Tour 2026	MS Dhoni (Updated 20 January)
ICICI Bank has approved the re-appointment as Managing Director and CEO <i>About Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI) Bank</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Founded - 1994</i> • <i>Headquarters – Mumbai</i> • <i>MD & CEO - Sandeep Bakhshi</i> • <i>Tagline - Hum Hai Na Khayal Apka</i> 	Sandeep Bakhshi (Updated 21 January)
Elected unopposed as the BJP National President	Nitin Nabin (Updated 22 January)
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the re-appointment as Whole-time Director and Deputy Managing Director of HDFC Bank	Kaizad Bharucha (Updated 23 January)
Step down as Founder and Group CEO of Eternal	Deepinder Goyal (Updated 23 January)
Set to take over the role as Founder and Group CEO of Eternal	CEO Albinder Dhindsa (Updated 23 January)
Tata Communications has appointed as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer-Designate of Tata Communications Limited	Ganesh Lakshminarayanan (Updated 26 January)
Appointed as the new Chairman of IndusInd Bank, effective January 31, 2026 <i>IndusInd Bank</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Founded - 1994</i> • <i>Founder - S.P. Hinduja</i> • <i>Headquarters - Mumbai, Maharashtra,</i> 	Arijit Basu (Updated 27 January)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MD & CEO – Rajiv Anand • Tagline - We Make You Feel Richer 	
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(International)

<u>Organization / Country</u>	<u>Person</u>
<p>The United Nations General Assembly has appointed as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)</p>	<p>Barham Salih (Updated 1 January)</p>
<p>The leader of Guinea's 2021 military coup won the presidential election</p> <p>About Guinea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital- Conakry • Currency- Franc • Prime Minister- Bah Oury 	<p>Mamady Doumbouya (Updated 4 January)</p>
<p>HSBC announced as CEO of HSBC Private Bank</p>	<p>Ida Liu (Updated 12 January)</p>
<p>Meta, the parent company of Facebook, has appointed as its President and Vice Chairman</p>	<p>Dina Powell McCormick (Updated 16 January)</p>
<p>Resigned from the post of Prime Minister of Yemen</p>	<p>Salem bin Breik (Updated 20 January)</p>
<p>Uganda President has won a seventh term in office</p> <p>About Uganda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital - Kampala • Currency - Ugandan shilling • Official languages- Swahili, English • President - Yoweri Museveni 	<p>Uganda President Yoweri Museveni (Updated 21 January)</p>
<p>The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has appointed as the head coach of the senior Indian women's football team</p>	<p>Amelia Valverde (Updated 29 January)</p>

<p>Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) members elected as the new OCA President</p> <p><i>About Olympic Council of Asia</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation- 16 November 1982 • Headquarters- Kuwait City, Kuwait 	<p>Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani</p> <p>(Updated 31 January)</p>
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Chapter 2: Awards (National, International)

(National)

<u>Award</u>	<u>Person/Organization</u>	<u>Purpose/ Field</u>
<p>The Nritya Kalanidhi award at the 19th Dance Festival</p>	<p>Renowned Bharatanatyam exponent Urmila Satyanarayanan</p>	<p>For her artistic excellence and lifelong contribution to preserving and propagating Bharatanatyam, drawing parallels with classical Japanese dance traditions</p>
<p>Rated "Excellent" by the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) for FY 2024–25</p>	<p>Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC)</p>	<p>The consistent recognition reflects robust corporate governance, disciplined financial management, and stable performance, even amid changing market conditions.</p>
<p>Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE) announced the Science Literature Awards 2024</p>	<p>Biju Dharmapalan (Popular Science), Gopakumar Cholayil (In-depth Science), and Pradeep Orkkatteri (Children's Literature)</p>	<p>For their outstanding books published in 2024.</p>
<p>The 'Best Fintech & DPI Adoption' award at the Indian Banks'</p>	<p>Karnataka Bank</p>	<p>The award recognises banks that effectively leverage fintech</p>

Association Banking Technology Awards		solutions and India's digital public infrastructure (DPI) to improve service delivery, scalability, security, and customer impact.
The SKOCH Award 2025	C-DOT (Centre for Development of Telematics)	For its Cell Broadcast Solution (CBS) during the 104th SKOCH Summit under the theme "Resourcing Viksit Bharat," recognising excellence in technology-driven governance and public service.
Padma Vibhushan 2026	Shri Dharmendra Singh Deol (Posthumous)	In the field of Art
The Subhas Chandra Bose National Award for Disaster Management 2026 in the individual category	Lieutenant Colonel Sita Ashok Shelke	For her exceptional contributions in disaster management
The Subhas Chandra Bose National Award for Disaster Management 2026 in the institutional category	The Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority	These awards honour outstanding efforts in disaster preparedness, response, and resilience, recognising exemplary contributions across India.
The Ashok Chakra, India's highest peacetime gallantry award	Shubhanshu Shukla	The honour recognises his significant role, including participation in the Axiom Mission to the International Space Station (ISS) , marking a milestone in India's space and defence achievements.

The President's Police Colour (Nishaan)	Sikkim Police	For their outstanding service, professionalism, bravery, discipline, and dedication
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(International)

<u>Award</u>	<u>Person/Organization</u>	<u>Purpose/ Field</u>
The 2026 IEEE Medal of Honor, the highest recognition of IEEE	NVIDIA founder and CEO Jensen Huang	He was honoured for a lifetime of visionary leadership and pioneering contributions to accelerated computing, which positioned NVIDIA at the forefront of global technological innovation, Carrying a \$2 million prize.
New South Wales' Scientist of the Year, becoming the first mathematician	Indian-origin mathematician Nalini Joshi	To receive the state's highest science honour , in recognition of her pioneering contributions to applied mathematics
The Cavaliere dell'Ordine della Stella d'Italia	Goa-based industrialist Shrinivas Dempo	For his contributions to Italian citizens and bilateral interests in India.
The UN Secretary-General's Award 2025 for her initiative "Equal Partners, Lasting Peace"	Major Swathi Shantha Kumar of the Indian Army	Serving with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) , she made significant contributions toward strengthening gender parity and community-level engagement.
The Asia Best Employer Brand Award 2026 at the Hong Kong	The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)	The award recognises BSE's strong people-first approach, focus on employee empowerment,

Leadership Awards & CMO Asia Awards.		professional development , and building an inclusive, high-performance work culture.
The world's largest AI Film Award	Tunisian filmmaker Zoubeir Jlassi	For his film Lily , receiving a \$1 million prize from Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum at the 1 Billion Followers Summit in Dubai.
Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement, often referred to as the "Nobel for the environment"	American evolutionary biologist Toby Kiers	For her pioneering research on underground fungal networks
The Wiley Research Heroes Prize 2025	Dr Chandrakant Lahariya	For his significant contributions to health policy research

Awards 2026: Complete winners list

Government Announces 131 Padma Awards for 2026

- Padma Awards, among India's highest civilian honours, are conferred in three categories: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri.
- For 2026, the government announced 5 Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan, and 113 Padma Shri awards.
- The list includes 19 women awardees, 6 individuals from Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI category, and 16 posthumous honours.

5 Padma Vibhushan 2026

SN	Name	Field	State / Country
1	Shri Dharmendra Singh Deol (Posthumous)	Art	Maharashtra
2	Shri K T Thomas	Public Affairs	Kerala
3	Ms. N Rajam	Art	Uttar Pradesh

SN	Name	Field	State / Country
4	Shri P Narayanan	Literature and Education	Kerala
5	Shri V S Achuthanandhan (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Kerala

13 Padma Bhushan 2026

SN	Name	Field	State / Country
6	Ms. Alka Yagnik	Art	Maharashtra
7	Shri Bhagat Singh Koshyari	Public Affairs	Uttarakhand
8	Shri Kallipatti Ramasamy Palaniswamy	Medicine	Tamil Nadu
9	Shri Mammooty	Art	Kerala
10	Dr. Nori Dattatreyaudu	Medicine	United States of America
11	Shri Piyush Pandey (Posthumous)	Art	Maharashtra
12	Shri S K M Maeilanandhan	Social Work	Tamil Nadu
13	Shri Shatavadhani R Ganesh	Art	Karnataka
14	Shri Shibu Soren (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Jharkhand
15	Shri Uday Kotak	Trade and Industry	Maharashtra
16	Shri V K Malhotra (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Delhi
17	Shri Vellappally Natesan	Public Affairs	Kerala
18	Shri Vijay Amitraj	Sports	USA

113 Padam Shri 2026

SN	Name	Field	State / Country
19	Shri A E Muthunayagam	Science and Engineering	Kerala
20	Shri Anil Kumar Rastogi	Art	Uttar Pradesh
21	Shri Anke Gowda M.	Social Work	Karnataka
22	Ms. Armida Fernandez	Medicine	Maharashtra
23	Shri Arvind Vaidya	Art	Gujarat
24	Shri Ashok Khade	Trade and Industry	Maharashtra
25	Shri Ashok Kumar Singh	Science and Engineering	Uttar Pradesh

SN	Name	Field	State / Country
26	Shri Asok Kumar Haldar	Literature and Education	West Bengal
27	Shri Baldev Singh	Sports	Punjab
28	Shri Bhagwandas Raikwar	Sports	Madhya Pradesh
29	Shri Bharat Singh Bharti	Art	Bihar
30	Shri Bhiklya Ladakya Dhinda	Art	Maharashtra
31	Shri Bishwa Bandhu (Posthumous)	Art	Bihar
32	Shri Brij Lal Bhat	Social Work	Jammu and Kashmir
33	Shri Buddha Rashmi Mani	Others - Archaeology	Uttar Pradesh
34	Dr. Budhri Tati	Social Work	Chhattisgarh
35	Shri Chandramouli Gaddamanugu	Science and Engineering	Telangana
36	Shri Charan Hembram	Literature and Education	Odisha
37	Shri Chiranji Lal Yadav	Art	Uttar Pradesh
38	Ms. Deepika Reddy	Art	Telangana
39	Shri Dharmiklal Chunilal Pandya	Art	Gujarat
40	Shri Gadde Babu Rajendra Prasad	Art	Andhra Pradesh
41	Shri Gafruddin Mewati Jogi	Art	Rajasthan
42	Shri Gambir Singh Yonzone	Literature and Education	West Bengal
43	Shri Garimella Balakrishna Prasad (Posthumous)	Art	Andhra Pradesh
44	Ms. Gayatri Balasubramanian and Ms. Ranjani Balasubramanian (Duo)*	Art	Tamil Nadu
45	Shri Gopal Ji Trivedi	Science and Engineering	Bihar
46	Shri Guduru Venkat Rao	Medicine	Telangana
47	Shri H V Hande	Medicine	Tamil Nadu
48	Shri Hally War	Social Work	Meghalaya
49	Shri Hari Madhab Mukhopadhyay (Posthumous)	Art	West Bengal
50	Shri Haricharan Saikia	Art	Assam
51	Ms. Harmanpreet Kaur Bhullar	Sports	Punjab
52	Shri Inderjit Singh Sidhu	Social Work	Chandigarh

SN	Name	Field	State / Country
53	Shri Janardan Bapurao Bothe	Social Work	Maharashtra
54	Shri Jogesh Deuri	Others - Agriculture	Assam
55	Shri Juzer Vasi	Science and Engineering	Maharashtra
56	Shri Jyotish Debnath	Art	West Bengal
57	Shri K Pajanivel	Sports	Puducherry
58	Shri K Ramasamy	Science and Engineering	Tamil Nadu
59	Shri K Vijay Kumar	Civil Service	Tamil Nadu
60	Shri Kabindra Purkayastha (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Assam
61	Shri Kailash Chandra Pant	Literature and Education	Madhya Pradesh
62	Ms. Kalamandalam Vimala Menon	Art	Kerala
63	Shri Kewal Krishan Thakral	Medicine	Uttar Pradesh
64	Shri Khem Raj Sundriyal	Art	Haryana
65	Ms. Kollakal Devaki Amma G	Social Work	Kerala
66	Shri Krishnamurty Balasubramanian	Science and Engineering	Telangana
67	Shri Kumar Bose	Art	West Bengal
68	Shri Kumarasamy Thangaraj	Science and Engineering	Telangana
69	Prof. (Dr.) Lars-Christian Koch	Art	Germany
70	Ms. Liudmila Viktorovna Khokhlova	Literature and Education	Russia
71	Shri Madhavan Ranganathan	Art	Maharashtra
72	Shri Maganti Murali Mohan	Art	Andhra Pradesh
73	Shri Mahendra Kumar Mishra	Literature and Education	Odisha
74	Shri Mahendra Nath Roy	Literature and Education	West Bengal
75	Shri Mamidala Jagadesh Kumar	Literature and Education	Delhi
76	Ms. Mangala Kapoor	Literature and Education	Uttar Pradesh
77	Shri Mir Hajibhai Kasambhai	Art	Gujarat

SN	Name	Field	State / Country
78	Shri Mohan Nagar	Social Work	Madhya Pradesh
79	Shri Narayan Vyas	Others - Archaeology	Madhya Pradesh
80	Shri Naresh Chandra Dev Varma	Literature and Education	Tripura
81	Shri Nilesh Vinodchandra Mandlewala	Social Work	Gujarat
82	Shri Nuruddin Ahmed	Art	Assam
83	Shri Othuvaar Thiruthani Swaminathan	Art	Tamil Nadu
84	Dr. Padma Gurmet	Medicine	Ladakh
85	Shri Palkonda Vijay Anand Reddy	Medicine	Telangana
86	Ms. Pokhila Lekthepe	Art	Assam
87	Dr. Prabhakar Basavprabhu Kore	Literature and Education	Karnataka
88	Shri Prateek Sharma	Medicine	United States of America
89	Shri Praveen Kumar	Sports	Uttar Pradesh
90	Shri Prem Lal Gautam	Science and Engineering	Himachal Pradesh
91	Shri Prosenjit Chatterjee	Art	West Bengal
92	Dr. Punniamurthy Natesan	Medicine	Tamil Nadu
93	Shri R Krishnan (Posthumous)	Art	Tamil Nadu
94	Shri R V S Mani	Civil Service	Delhi
95	Shri Rabilal Tudu	Literature and Education	West Bengal
96	Shri Raghupat Singh (Posthumous)	Others - Agriculture	Uttar Pradesh
97	Shri Raghuv eer Tukaram Khedkar	Art	Maharashtra
98	Shri Rajastapathi Kaliappa Goundar	Art	Tamil Nadu
99	Shri Rajendra Prasad	Medicine	Uttar Pradesh
100	Shri Rama Reddy Mamidi (Posthumous)	Others - Animal Husbandry	Telangana
101	Shri Ramamurthy Sreedher	Others - Radio Broadcasting	Delhi
102	Shri Ramchandra Godbole and Ms. Suneeta Godbole (Duo)*	Medicine	Chhattisgarh

SN	Name	Field	State / Country
103	Shri Ratilal Borisagar	Literature and Education	Gujarat
104	Shri Rohit Sharma	Sports	Maharashtra
105	Ms. S G Susheelamma	Social Work	Karnataka
106	Shri Sangyusang S Pongener	Art	Nagaland
107	Sant Niranjana Dass	Others - Spiritualism	Punjab
108	Shri Sarat Kumar Patra	Art	Odisha
109	Shri Saroj Mandal	Medicine	West Bengal
110	Shri Satish Shah (Posthumous)	Art	Maharashtra
111	Shri Satyanarayan Nuwal	Trade and Industry	Maharashtra
112	Ms. Savita Punia	Sports	Haryana
113	Prof. Shafi Shauq	Literature and Education	Jammu and Kashmir
114	Shri Shashi Shekhar Vempati	Literature and Education	Karnataka
115	Shri Shrirang Devaba Lad	Others - Agriculture	Maharashtra
116	Ms. Shubha Venkatesha Iyengar	Science and Engineering	Karnataka
117	Shri Shyam Sundar	Medicine	Uttar Pradesh
118	Shri Simanchal Patro	Art	Odisha
119	Ms. Sivasankari	Literature and Education	Tamil Nadu
120	Dr. Suresh Hanagavadi	Medicine	Karnataka
121	Swami Brahmdev Ji Maharaj	Social Work	Rajasthan
122	Shri T T Jagannathan (Posthumous)	Trade and Industry	Karnataka
123	Shri Taga Ram Bheel	Art	Rajasthan
124	Shri Tarun Bhattacharya	Art	West Bengal
125	Shri Techi Gubin	Social Work	Arunachal Pradesh
126	Shri Thiruvaarur Bakthavathsalam	Art	Tamil Nadu
127	Ms. Tripti Mukherjee	Art	West Bengal
128	Shri Veezhinathan Kamakoti	Science and Engineering	Tamil Nadu

SN	Name	Field	State / Country
129	Shri Vempaty Kutumba Sastry	Literature and Education	Andhra Pradesh
130	Shri Vladimer Mestvirishvili (Posthumous)	Sports	Georgia
131	Shri Yumnam Jatra Singh (Posthumous)	Art	Manipur

President Murmu Approves Gallantry Awards for 70 Armed Forces Personnel on 77th Republic Day Eve

- **President Smt Droupadi Murmu** approved gallantry awards for **70 Armed Forces personnel**, including six posthumous recognitions, on the eve of the 77th Republic Day.
- The awards include **1 Ashok Chakra, 3 Kirti Chakras, 13 Shaurya Chakras (including 1 posthumous), 1 Bar to Sena Medal (Gallantry), 44 Sena Medals (Gallantry) (including 5 posthumous), 6 Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry), and 2 Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry).**
- These awards honour the exceptional courage, sacrifice, and gallantry of personnel from the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force.
- **Kirti Chakra Recipients**
 - IAF officer and astronaut Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair
 - Major Arshdeep Singh of 1 Assam Rifles
 - Naib Subedar Doleshwar Subba of 2 Para (SF)

President Murmu honors 30 individuals with Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards

- **President Droupadi Murmu** has approved the conferment of the **Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards-2025 on 30 persons.**
- This includes the Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak to six persons, the Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak to six persons, and the Jeevan Raksha Padak to 18 persons. Six of the awardees are being honoured posthumously.
- Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards is given to individuals for meritorious acts of human nature in saving the life of a person.
- The awards are given in three categories, namely, Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak, Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak and Jeevan Raksha Padak. Persons of all walks of life are eligible for these awards. The award can also be conferred posthumously.

Dr Chandrakant Lahariya Becomes First Indian to Win Wiley Research Heroes Prize 2025

- Dr Chandrakant Lahariya becomes the **first Indian to receive the Wiley Research Heroes Prize 2025**, recognised for his significant contributions to health policy research.
- He was selected from over 2,000 global nominations and won in the “**Impact Beyond Academia**” category for research that directly influences policy, programmes, and societal outcomes.
- Dr. Lahariya is a health policy researcher and medical professional with prior experience at the World Health Organisation, focusing on bridging research evidence and health system decision-making.
- Other winners of the 2025 award are:
 - Dr Katie Brooker - Australia
 - Professor Trevor Charles - Canada
 - Professor Deborah Esan - Nigeria
 - Dr Maria Elena Indelicato - Portugal

Chapter 3: Government Scheme/ campaign

SCHEME	PURPOSE
<p>The ‘Ulagam Ungal Kaiyil’ scheme (Tamil Nadu)</p>	<p>The Tamil Nadu government will distribute free laptops to college students under the ‘Ulagam Ungal Kaiyil’ scheme, with Chief Minister M.K. Stalin launching the distribution.</p>
<p>A ₹4,531 crore Market Access Support (MAS) scheme for FY 2025–26 to 2030–31</p>	<p>To enhance the global reach, visibility, and competitiveness of Indian exporters.</p>
<p>The ‘Akka Pade’ scheme (Karnataka)</p>	<p>Akka Pade is a women- and community-oriented safety programme aimed at preventing violence, harassment, exploitation, and social evils such as child marriage</p>

The Mukhya Mantrir Eti Koli Duti Paat scheme (Assam)	The Mukhya Mantrir Eti Koli Duti Paat scheme, marking the 200th anniversary of the Assam tea industry
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Chapter 4: Summit/ Conference

Summit/Conference	Location	About
The 50th PRAGATI meeting	New Delhi	Reviewing five major infrastructure projects across Road, Railways, Power, Water Resources and Coal sectors , spanning five states with a cost of ₹40,000+ crore .
The Rajasthan Regional AI Impact Conference 2026	Jaipur	The conference will discuss the role of Artificial Intelligence in governance reforms, economic growth, innovation, and inclusive development at the regional level .
A two-day Human Capital Working Group Meeting	IIT Guwahati campus	The meeting brought together policymakers, academic leaders and industry experts to discuss education reforms, workforce transition and human-centric AI adoption .
The first meeting of the Payments Regulatory Board (PRB)	Mumbai	The meeting reviewed the functioning of the Department of Payment and Settlement Systems and discussed key issues related to domestic and global payment systems, including the draft Payments Vision 2028 and findings of the RBI's Digital Payments Survey .
A conference of Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs)	New Delhi	Theme: Democracy for an inclusive, peaceful, resilient and sustainable world
The National Textiles Ministers' Conference 2026	Guwahati, Assam	Theme- "India's Textiles: Weaving Growth, Heritage & Innovation"
The Regional AI Impact Conference as a precursor to the India AI Impact Summit 2026	Rajasthan	The conference highlighted Centre-State collaboration for inclusive and responsible AI, with leaders announcing major initiatives such as training one million youth in AI skills and a ₹10,000 crore India AI Mission to deploy AI across sectors like agriculture, healthcare and education.
The 56th edition of the World Economic Forum	Switzerland	The meeting will bring together world leaders, policymakers, business executives,

(WEF) Annual Meeting 2026		economists and civil society representatives to deliberate on major global challenges. Theme - A Spirit of Dialogue.
The 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC)	New Delhi	The Conference aims to promote parliamentary democracy, strengthen legislative institutions, and encourage knowledge-sharing among different democratic systems , with Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla serving as the Chairperson.
The BRICS Presidency (18th) for 2026	India	The theme " Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability " and the lotus-'Namaste' based logo symbolise unity, prosperity, respect, and mark 20 years of BRICS as a key platform for emerging economies.
A meeting on the NIRANTAR platform	-	NIRANTAR's four verticals focus on research, assessment of outcomes, and their ultimate utilisation, enhancing effective use of India's natural resources.
The 9th International Spice Conference (ISC 2026)	Kochi, Kerala	Organised by the All India Spices Exporters Forum (AISEF), the four-day conference themed "Spice 360 – Getting Future Ready" will address challenges like changing trade dynamics, climate change and evolving consumer preferences
The Bharat Electricity Summit 2026	India	The four-day summit will be held under the theme " Electrifying Growth. Empowering Sustainability. Connecting Globally ", highlighting India's leadership in the global energy transition and fostering international cooperation in the electricity sector.
The G7 Critical Minerals Ministerial Meeting	Washington DC, USA	Ashwini Vaishnaw highlighted that secure supply chains for critical minerals are vital for achieving the vision of ' Viksit Bharat ', especially in high-technology and manufacturing sectors.
Bharat Steel 2026 Summit	New Delhi	The summit will focus on global steelmaking issues, including sustainability, supply chain resilience, and technological transformation in the steel sector.
The 88th Meeting of the Standing Committee of	New Delhi	During the meeting, the committee considered 70 proposals related to public utility services, defence requirements, and infrastructure

the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL)		development in and around Protected Areas, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Tiger Reserves, and Eco-Sensitive Zones , ensuring compliance with the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 .
The 6th ASEAN-India Digital Ministers Meeting	Virtual meeting	The theme " Adaptive ASEAN: From Connectivity to Connected Intelligence ", focusing on regional digital cooperation, inclusion, and integration.
The 7th India International Seaweed Expo & Summit	Kochi	Delegates from countries including the US, Russia, Australia, France, Maldives, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Tanzania will discuss the economic, nutritional and environmental potential of seaweed , highlighting it as a sunrise sector for India.

Chapter 5: Partnership/ Agreement

Partnership/ Agreement	Aim
LIC has entered into a strategic partnership with Sahaj Insurance Services Pvt. Ltd.	To expand insurance penetration in rural and semi-urban India
The Delhi government, in partnership with IIT Kanpur, will launch an AI-based Unified Grievance Redressal System	To ensure faster complaint resolution and real-time monitoring .
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB) partnered with FinTech provider TechFini	To strengthen its UPI acquiring and issuing capabilities, supporting higher transaction volumes and complex digital payment use cases across India's growing UPI ecosystem.
Simplilearn has partnered with the IndiaAI Mission (MeitY)	To host and roll out the ' YUVA AI for ALL ' foundational course, supporting India's vision of building a digitally skilled and AI-literate society.
GAIL (India) Limited has partnered with PNGRB	For the National PNG Drive 2.0 initiative , joining the nationwide #NonStopZindagi campaign to promote Piped Natural Gas (PNG) and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) adoption across India.

Canara Bank has partnered with NPCI BHIM Services Limited (NBSL)	To integrate UPI services into its payment application Canara aiPe
IT services firm LTIMindtree has secured a ₹3,000 crore contract from the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)	To develop an AI-based programme for modernising India's national tax analytics platform.
India and the UAE agreed to double bilateral trade to over \$200 billion by 2032	To expand cooperation in large nuclear reactors and Small Modular Reactors (SMRs).
The Wikimedia Foundation, the parent body of Wikipedia, has partnered with companies like Amazon, Meta, Microsoft, Mistral AI, and Perplexity	To provide paid access to Wikipedia content for AI training.
Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) to sign a term contract with Brazil's Petrobras	To source 12 million barrels of crude oil, valued at around \$780 million
Department of Posts (DoP) signed an agreement with Stock Holding Services Limited (SSL) at Dak Bhawan, New Delhi	To promote access to regulated capital market services nationwide.

Chapter 6: Ranking Index

Index	Index released by	India's Rank	1st Rank
The world's largest rare earth reserves	-	3 rd At about 6.9 million tonnes of rare earth oxide (REO)	China (44 million tonnes)
The ICJS 2.0 rankings	The NCRB's CCTNS/ICJS Progress Dashboard	-	Uttarakhand Police (With a score of 93.46)

India's best city for women in 2025	The study, released by Avtar	-	Bengaluru (Score of 53.29)
The Henley Passport Index 2026	-	80th	Singapore
The Responsible Nations Index (RNI)	The aegis of the World Intellectual Foundation (WIF)	16th (Score- 0.55151)	Singapore (Score-0.61945)
Top performers in the 14th Integrated Rating and Ranking Report	The Power Ministry	-	Gujarat's power distribution utilities
The artificial intelligence (AI) ecosystem between 2010 and 2024, measured as a percentage of 2024 GDP	The World Economic Forum (WEF)	8th (1.2–1.8%)	US (3.4–5.1%),

Chapter 7: Mergers and Acquisitions

Merger Company	About
The Go Digit General Insurance board has approved the merger of its holding company, Go Digit Infoworks Services, with the listed insurer, marking a landmark move	This will be the first merger of an insurance company with a non-insurance holding company following recent liberalisation of insurance laws
The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of Krosaki Harima Corporation by Nippon Steel Corporation, Japan	Under the proposed combination, Nippon Steel will acquire 53.4% additional stake in Krosaki through a tender offer and potential squeeze-out, increasing its total shareholding to 100%.
Bajaj Finserv, along with Bajaj Holdings & Investment and Jamnalal Sons, acquired Allianz SE's 23% stake in Bajaj General Insurance and Bajaj	The acquisition raises the Bajaj Group's ownership in both insurance companies from 74% to 97% , giving Bajaj Finserv complete control over the businesses.

Life Insurance for Rs 12,190 crore and Rs 9,200 crore, marking the largest transaction in the Indian insurance sector

Chapter 8: Loan

Organization/Bank	Loan Amount	To which country	Purpose
The Asian Development Bank (ADB)	4,100 crore (\$500 million)	The Telangana Government	For parts of Phase I of the Musi River Development Project
Piramal Finance Limited	\$350 million	The International Finance Corporation (IFC) – \$200 million and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) – \$150 million	Marking its first borrowing from development finance institutions (DFIs)

Chapter 9: App/Website/Portal

Chapter 10: Important MoU

MoU	Between Which Countries
Signed an MoU to strengthen quality control, inspection and third-party testing in national highway and infrastructure projects	National Test House (NTH) with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)
Signed an MoU to conduct Contact Point Verification (CPV) of informal micro enterprises registered on the Udyam Assist Platform, aiming to enhance data integrity, formalisation, and access to institutional credit	The Department of Posts and SIDBI
ONGC Ltd. signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NSTFDC	To support infrastructure development and welfare initiatives for Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) , aimed at tribal youth empowerment.

Signs MoU, allowing it to act as banker, debt manager, and financial agent for the state	Delhi government with RBI
Signed an MoU to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in media, entertainment, broadcasting, and communication technologies	WaveX , the startup accelerator initiative of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting with the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT) , IIT Delhi
Signed an MoU to strengthen cooperation for inclusive and sustainable rural development, with a focus on expanding financial services in rural areas	The Department of Posts (DoP) and the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)
Signed an MoU to promote the exchange of young legal professionals and strengthen judicial cooperation between the two countries	The Supreme Court of India with the Supreme Court of Bhutan
Signed an MoU to create a pan-India logistics framework for transporting pesticide, seed, and fertiliser samples to testing labs.	The Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (DA&FW) and the Department of Posts (DoP)
Signed an MoU to strengthen collaboration in multidisciplinary research, innovation, and capacity building across the dairy sector	The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) with the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)
Signed an MoU to invest ₹5,100 crore in setting up a large-scale bio-fuel complex in Devbhumi Dwarka district	Essar Future Energy Limited with the Gujarat government
Signed an MoU to strengthen India's skills and Technical & Vocational Education and Training (TVET) ecosystem	The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship with the World Economic Forum
Signed a landmark MoU with to deepen cooperation in skill development, vocational education, and training	The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) with the World Economic Forum (WEF)
Signed an MoU to digitise, transcribe, and standardise geographical place names (toponyms) using AI-based speech and language technologies	Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD) , MeitY with the Survey of India (Sol)

Signed an MoU to enhance outreach and strengthen MSME participation in public procurement	Government e-Marketplace (GeM) and World Trade Centre (WTC) Mumbai
Signed an MoU to facilitate online access to Ayush medicines and wellness products across India	The Ayush Ministry signed an MoU with Zepto Limited via its Export Promotion Council
Signed an MoU to establish India's first commercial aircraft final assembly line (FAL)	Adani Defence & Aerospace and Brazilian aircraft maker Embraer
Signed an MoU to develop a fully indigenous AI-based system, focusing on research and innovation to tackle emerging digital information challenges	The Indian Army with IISc Bengaluru

Chapter 11: GDP Forecasting

India's GDP Projected to Grow 6.9% in FY 2026-27: Ind-Ra

- This projected growth is lower than the **estimated 7.4% GDP growth for the Financial Year 2025-26.**
- This projected growth is lower than the estimated 7.4% GDP growth for the Financial Year 2025-26.

Goldman Sachs Projects India's GDP Growth at 6.8% in FY 2026-27

- Goldman Sachs has projected that **India's GDP growth will moderate to 6.8% in FY 2026-27, compared to an estimated 7.3% in FY 2025-26.**
- Goldman Sachs is an American multinational investment bank and financial services company, known for its global economic and financial forecasts.

Government Pegs India's GDP Growth at 7.4% for FY 2025-26 in First Advance Estimates

- The **government has estimated real GDP growth at 7.4% for FY 2025-26, higher than 6.5% in FY 2024-25, while nominal GDP growth is projected at 8%, as per the First Advance Estimates released by MoSPI.**
- With Q1 and Q2 growth at 7.8% and 8.2%, respectively, growth in the second half of FY26 is expected to moderate to an average of 6.8%; the RBI has projected overall growth at 7.3% for the year.

Federal Bank Unveils 'The Fortuna Wave' Brand Identity to Reflect Modern, Future-Ready Vision

- **Federal Bank unveiled The Fortuna Wave, its updated brand identity, symbolising the Bank's evolution toward being contemporary and future-ready, in the presence of its leadership and Brand Ambassador Vidya Balan in Mumbai.**

- The new identity emphasises Authenticity, Prosperity, and Togetherness, reflecting the Bank's commitment to its customers, investors, and employees.

UN Projects India's GDP Growth at 7.4% in 2025-26

- **India's economic growth** is projected at **7.4% for the current financial year (2025-26)**, driven primarily by strong consumption and public investment, according to the UN DESA World Economic Situation and Prospects 2026 report.
- The report forecasts India's GDP growth at 6.6% in 2026-27 and 6.8% in 2027-28, supported by recent tax reforms, monetary easing, and targeted policy measures that boost domestic demand.

World Bank Raises India's GDP Growth Forecast to 7.2% for FY 2025-26

- The **World Bank** has revised **India's GDP growth forecast upward to 7.2% for FY 2025-26**, citing strong domestic demand, supportive tax reforms, and resilient exports despite global trade uncertainties.
- In its flagship report "Global Economic Prospects", the World Bank raised the estimate by 0.9 percentage points from its earlier 6.3% projection made in June.
- India is expected to remain the fastest-growing major economy, though growth is projected to moderate to 6.5% in 2026-27 and 6.6% in 2027-28.

CareEdge Projects 7% GDP Growth for India in FY 2026-27 Despite Global Economic Uncertainties

- **CareEdge Ratings** has projected that **India's economy will grow at 7% in FY 2026-27**, indicating continued resilience despite global economic uncertainties, while real GDP growth for FY 2025-26 has been pegged at 7.4% as per the First Advance Estimates.
- For FY 2026-27, CareEdge estimates real GDP growth at 7% and nominal GDP growth at 10.1%, with India's macroeconomic outlook remaining constructive, while the RBI has projected 7.3% GDP growth for FY 2025-26.

IMF Upgrades India's GDP Growth Forecast to 7.3% for FY 2025-26

- **The IMF raised India's GDP growth forecast for FY 2025-26 to 7.3%**, up from its earlier estimate of 6.6%, reflecting stronger economic momentum.
- According to the January 2026 World Economic Outlook (WEO) update, India's growth is projected to moderate to 6.4% in both 2026 and 2027.
- The IMF expects global economic growth to remain resilient, at 3.3% in 2026 and 3.2% in 2027, broadly stable compared to 3.3% in 2025.

FDI inflows to India surged by 73 per cent to \$47 billion in 2025: UN

- **FDI inflows to India surged 73% to USD 47 billion in 2025**, driven mainly by large investments in services (finance, IT, R&D) and manufacturing, supported by policies integrating India into global supply chains.
- **China's FDI declined for the third consecutive year**, falling 8% to USD 107.5 billion, while global FDI rose 14% to USD 1.6 trillion in 2025.

- Data centres were a major driver of FDI in 2025, with greenfield investments reaching USD 125 billion and India ranking among the top 10 recipients, alongside countries like France, the US, and South Korea.

Chapter 12: Current Affairs (National)

Rajasthan Launches “e-Swasthya Samvad” Digital Platform to Strengthen Medical Education Governance

- The **Rajasthan government** has launched a **new digital communication platform, “e-Swasthya Samvad,”** to enhance governance, transparency, and coordination in the state’s medical education system.
- The initiative has been introduced under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma and Medical Education Minister Gajendra Singh Khimsar as part of technology-driven health reforms.

Army Hospital Creates History with India’s First 3D Flex Aqueous Angiography with iStent

- **India’s first 3D Flex Aqueous Angiography with iStent** was successfully performed by the **Ophthalmology Department at Army Hospital (Research & Referral), Delhi Cantt,** marking a major milestone in glaucoma treatment.
- The procedure used a stand-mounted Spectralis imaging system and a 3D operating microscope, enabling real-time visualization of aqueous outflow pathways for highly precise, minimally invasive surgery.

Gujarat CM Approves Establishment of Indian AI Research Organisation (IAIRO) to Boost AI R&D

- **Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel** granted in-principle approval for the **establishment of the Indian AI Research Organisation (IAIRO)** to boost AI research and development in the state.
- The facility will be set up as a public-private partnership (PPP) through collaboration between the State government, Central government, and Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA), with operations based in GIFT City, Gandhinagar, as a Section 8 non-profit entity.

Amit Shah Inaugurates ₹227 Crore Redeveloped Batadrava Than Honouring Srimanta Sankardeva in Assam

- **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** inaugurated the **₹227 crore redeveloped Batadrava Than, the birthplace of Vaishnavite saint Srimanta Sankardeva, in Assam's Nagaon district.**
- The decision to redevelop the site, named as Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva Abhirbhav Kshetra, was first proposed in the 2021-22 State budget.

C R Patil Launches ‘Jal Seva Aankalan’ to Boost Community-Led Water Governance under Jal Jeevan Mission

- **Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil** virtually **launched Jal Seva Aankalan** to strengthen service delivery and community ownership under the Jal Jeevan Mission.
- Jal Seva Aankalan is a Gram Panchayat-led digital assessment tool available on the Jal Jeevan Mission portal to evaluate drinking water service functionality at the village level.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana Completes Nine Years

- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)**, a flagship maternity benefit scheme for pregnant women and lactating mothers, has **completed nine years**, having been **launched on 1 January 2017**.
- Under PMMVY, **beneficiaries receive ₹5,000 for the first child and ₹6,000 for the second girl child, in instalments linked to pregnancy registration and childbirth.**

Goa to Get Third District Named 'Kushavati', Quepem to Be Headquarters

- **Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant** announced that the **state's proposed third district will be named 'Kushavati'**, after a river flowing through the region, and it will be developed as an aspirational district.
- The new district will comprise four talukas—Dharbandora, Quepem, Sanguem and Canacona (currently in South Goa), with Quepem town as its headquarters; interim administration will be managed by South Goa district authorities.

India's First Vande Bharat Sleeper Train to Run Between Guwahati and Howrah

- **India's first Vande Bharat Sleeper Train** will run between **Guwahati (Assam) and Howrah (West Bengal)**, connecting the **Northeast with eastern India**.
- The sleeper train has been **designed by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF)** and **manufactured by BEML Ltd, Bengaluru**, marking a key collaboration in railway production.

President Droupadi Murmu Launches 'Skill The Nation' AI Challenge to Prepare India's Workforce for an AI-Driven Future

- **President Droupadi Murmu** has launched the **'Skill The Nation' AI Challenge** under the **Skilling for AI Readiness (Soar) initiative** of the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** and virtually inaugurated the IGNOU Regional Centre and Skill Centre at Rairangpur, Odisha.
- Artificial Intelligence is transforming economies, education and workplaces, and for a young country like India, it represents a major opportunity for inclusive social and economic change, not just a technological shift.

MoSPI Unveils New Logo and Mascot 'सांख्यिकी' to Promote Data-Driven

Governance and Public Trust

- The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** unveiled a **new logo and mascot to modernise** its institutional identity and enhance public outreach, reinforcing the role of official statistics in policy formulation and nation-building.

- The new logo is based on the **theme “Data for Development”**, featuring the **Ashoka Chakra symbolising truth and transparency, the Rupee symbol highlighting the role of data in economic planning, and numerical elements with an upward growth bar indicating progress through reliable statistics.**
- The logo’s colour palette—**saffron, white, green and deep blue**— reflects India’s national colours and signifies growth, sustainability, stability and knowledge, aligning with data-driven governance and transparency.

Sagarmala Finance Corporation Begins Lending Operations, Sanctions ₹4,300 Crore to Boost India’s Maritime Sector

- **Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL)**, India’s first maritime-focused NBFC, has formally **commenced lending operations by sanctioning loans worth around ₹4,300 crore**, marking a major step towards strengthening India’s maritime finance ecosystem.
- The loan approvals were cleared **at SMFCL’s 51st Board meeting (30 December 2025)**, in line with its board-approved strategy and AGM roadmap, which set a borrowing limit of ₹25,000 crore and a lending target of ₹8,000 crore, with the sanctioned amount to be disbursed within the current financial year.

18-Year-Old Kaamya Karthikeyan Becomes Youngest Indian to Ski to the South Pole

- **Kaamya Karthikeyan, 18**, became the **youngest Indian and second-youngest woman in the world to ski to the South Pole**, completing a 115 km expedition in Antarctica under extreme conditions, including -30°C temperatures, gale-force winds, and whiteouts.
- Daughter of Indian Navy officer S Karthikeyan and educator Lavanya Karthikeyan, Kaamya’s early exposure to discipline and outdoor pursuits shaped her into one of India’s most accomplished young adventurers.

India Extends PLI Scheme for Textiles to March 2026 to Boost MMF and Technical Textile Production

- **India extends PLI Scheme textile application deadline to March 31, 2026**, following strong response from textile companies across priority segments like MMF Apparel, MMF Fabrics, and Technical Textiles.
- As of September 9, 2025, 91 companies have been selected under the scheme, **with investments of ₹7,731 crore, exports of ₹733 crore, turnover of ₹7,290 crore, and creation of around 30,838 jobs.**

Punjab to Launch ‘Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojna’ on January 15

- **Punjab to launch 'Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojna'** on January 15, 2026, **offering free cashless medical treatment up to ₹10 lakh per family** for all 65 lakh families in the State.
- Any resident of Punjab with a valid Aadhaar card and voter ID can avail the benefits; the scheme aims to cover 100% of the state’s population.

Assam Becomes First State to Constitute 8th State Pay Commission Ahead of 7th Pay Commission Expiry

- **Assam** becomes the **first Indian state to constitute its 8th State Pay Commission**, taking proactive action ahead of the 7th Pay Commission's expiry on January 1, 2026, signalling early focus on salary and pension revisions for state employees.
- Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced the formation, appointing former chief secretary Subhas Das as the head of the new pay commission, positioning Assam ahead of other states and even the Union Government's 8th Pay Commission.

NHAI-Backed Raajmarg Infra InvIT Rated AAA (Stable) by CARE Ratings, Signaling Strong Creditworthiness

- **Raajmarg Infra InvIT**, backed by NHAI, **receives a AAA (Stable) rating from CARE Ratings**, reflecting strong credit quality and investor confidence in the infrastructure investment trust.
- The rating underscores the InvIT's robust revenue model, largely supported by toll collections from national highways and long-term contracts with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

Union Government Launches Integrated E-Bill Platform for ₹2 Lakh Crore Fertiliser Subsidy

- **Union Government** has launched an **integrated e-bill platform to digitally process fertiliser subsidies of nearly ₹2 lakh crore annually**, replacing manual and paper-based systems.
- Inaugurated by Union Fertilisers Minister J.P. Nadda, the platform enables end-to-end online submission, processing and approval of fertiliser subsidy claims, reducing delays and bottlenecks.

India Loses 166 Tigers in 2025, Madhya Pradesh Records Highest Deaths

- **India** lost **166 tigers in 2025**, forty more than 2024, according to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), highlighting increasing threats to the world's largest tiger population.
- Madhya Pradesh accounted for the **highest number of tiger deaths (55)**, followed by **Maharashtra (38)**, **Kerala (13)**, and **Assam (12)**; 31 of the deceased tigers were cubs.

Government Removes 3-Year Eligibility Condition for Startups to Access RDI Fund

- **The government** has removed the mandatory **three-year existence condition for startups to access the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund**, allowing even newly formed startups to apply through DSIR.
- The announcement was made by Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh at the 41st Foundation Day of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) in New Delhi.

PM Modi Inaugurates Grand Exposition of Sacred Piprahwa Relics of Lord Buddha in New Delhi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Grand International Exposition of Sacred Piprahwa Relics, titled “The Light and the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One”, at Rai Pithora Cultural Complex, New Delhi.
- Discovered in 1898 and linked to ancient Kapilavastu, the Piprahwa relics—repatriated after 127 years—have been reunited for the first time from the National Museum, New Delhi, and Indian Museum, Kolkata, symbolising India’s civilisational commitment to Buddhist heritage.

Transport Ministry Proposes ‘Battery Pack Aadhaar’ for End-to-End Tracking and Recycling of EV Batteries

- The Transport Ministry has proposed a 21-character Battery Pack Aadhaar Number (BPAN) for each EV battery to enable end-to-end traceability, transparency, and efficient recycling.
- Battery producers or importers must assign BPAN, upload dynamic battery data on an official portal, and ensure the ID is clearly visible, durable, and accessible on each battery pack.

Tamil Nadu’s First Jallikattu of 2026 Begins at Thatchankurichi

- Tamil Nadu’s first Jallikattu event of 2026 was inaugurated at Thatchankurichi near Gandharvakottai, marking the traditional start of the Jallikattu season in the State.
- About 900 bulls and 300 tamers are participating, with nearly 7,000 spectators expected; officials from Animal Husbandry, Health, and Revenue departments are present to ensure safety and animal welfare norms.

Bhoramdev Corridor Project Launched Under Swadesh Darshan 2.0 in Chhattisgarh

- Chhattisgarh CM Vishnu Deo Sai and Union Tourism & Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat laid the foundation stone of the Bhoramdev Corridor Development Project at Bhoramdev Dham in Kabirdham district.
- The project will be developed under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme 2.0 at an estimated cost of ₹146 crore, on the lines of the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor in Varanasi.

Jaipur to Host 78th Army Day Parade on January 15

- Jaipur will host the 78th Army Day Parade for the first time on January 15, with the event taking place on Mahal Road.
- For the first time in India, the parade will be organised in a public setting outside a cantonment area, marking a historic move.

India Becomes World’s Largest Rice Producer, Surpassing China with Record Output

- India has become the world’s largest rice producer, surpassing China, with a record output of 150.18 million tonnes, marking a major milestone in food security and exports.

- Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan released 184 improved varieties of 25 crops, developed by ICAR, aimed at higher yields, better quality, and increased farmers' income.

AYUSH Gets Formal Recognition in Trade Agreements with Oman and New Zealand

- India's traditional medicine system, AYUSH, has received formal recognition in bilateral trade agreements with Oman and New Zealand.
- Exports of AYUSH and herbal products grew by 6.11%, rising from USD 649.2 million (2023-24) to USD 688.89 million (2024-25).

Gaan Ngai Festival of Kabui Community Begins in Manipur, Marking New Year

- The Gaan Ngai festival of the Kabui community has commenced across Manipur, marking the beginning of the New Year and being celebrated after the harvest season.
- The State Level Gaan Ngai Festival 2026 was held at Konthoujam Mamang Kabui Village in Imphal West district, with widespread participation of the Kabui community.

Indian Army Launches 'Radio Sangam' in Rajouri, J&K to Strengthen Border Communication

- The Indian Army, in collaboration with the local administration, has launched a community radio station 'Radio Sangam' (88.8 FM) in Keri village, Dongi area, Rajouri, J&K, near the Line of Control (LoC).
- Radio Sangam is the first community radio station in the region, aimed at strengthening outreach to border residents and providing a credible local communication platform.

SAMPANN Integrated Pension System Enhanced with DigiLocker Access for DoT Pensioners

- SAMPANN (System for Accounting and Management of Pension) is an integrated online pension management system for Department of Telecommunications (DoT) pensioners, enabling end-to-end processing, sanctioning and direct bank transfer of pensions.
- The platform provides online grievance redressal, digital profile management and transaction records, improving transparency, efficiency and service delivery for telecom retirees.

IBBI Chairperson Ravi Mittal Launches IICA PGIP Programme Website

- IBBI Chairperson Shri Ravi Mittal launched the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) PGIP programme website while presiding as Chief Guest at an event on the IICA campus.
- He encouraged students interested in research to apply for the upcoming IBBI research programme, offering selected candidates an opportunity to work with IBBI.

Dharmendra Pradhan Releases 55 Literary Works in Classical Indian Languages

- Union Minister for Education Shri **Dharmendra Pradhan** released **55 literary works in classical Indian languages** at an event held in New Delhi.
- Additionally, 13 books and a Tirukkural Sign Language series were brought out by the Central Institute of Classical Tamil (CICT), covering Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, Odia, and Tamil.

CSIR-NIScPR, IIT Indore and IIT Jodhpur Organise Third Technical Hindi Symposium “Abhyuday-3”

- **CSIR-NIScPR, IIT Indore, and IIT Jodhpur** jointly organised the **third Technical Hindi Symposium “Abhyuday-3” at IIT Indore**, which concluded as a two-day academic event.
- The symposium aimed to promote the use of Technical Hindi and enhance the outreach of science and technology to wider sections of society through effective communication.

NITI Aayog Unveils Fifth Edition of Trade Watch Quarterly

- **NITI Aayog** released the **fifth edition of its flagship publication Trade Watch Quarterly**, presenting a data-driven assessment of **India’s trade performance in Q1 FY 2025–26 (April–June 2025)**, with a special focus on automotive exports.
- The report was unveiled in New Delhi on January 6 by Dr. Arvind Virmani, Member, NITI Aayog, and highlights structural shifts in India’s trade, including rising technology-intensive exports and resilient services-led growth.

Siddaramaiah Becomes Longest-Serving Chief Minister of Karnataka

- **Chief Minister Siddaramaiah** created history by **becoming the longest-serving Chief Minister of Karnataka**, surpassing the record of late Devaraj Urs, a key figure in the state’s social justice and land reform movement.
- On January 6, during his second term, the 77-year-old leader equalled Urs’ total tenure of 2,792 days in office, combining service across two terms.

UIDAI Launches Aadhaar Mascot ‘Udai’ to Make Services More People-Friendly

- The **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** launched the **official Aadhaar mascot, Udai**, to make Aadhaar-related information more relatable and people-friendly.
- Udai will help simplify the communication of Aadhaar services, including updates, authentication, and offline verification.
- UIDAI held a Mascot Design Contest on the MyGov platform last year, receiving 875 entries from across India.
- **Arun Gokul from Thrissur, Kerala**, bagged the **first prize in the mascot design competition**. Idris Dawaiwala of Pune, Maharashtra, and Krishna Sharma from Ghazipur in Uttar Pradesh were the second and third prize winners, respectively.
- **Riya Jain of Bhopal** won the **first prize in the mascot name competition**, followed by Idris Dawaiwala of Pune and Maharaj Saran Chellapilla of Hyderabad in the second and third position respectively.

India Becomes First Country to Commercially Produce Bio-Bitumen for Sustainable Road Construction

- **India** becomes the **first country in the world to commercially produce bio-bitumen for road construction**, announced by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari at the CSIR Technology Transfer Ceremony in New Delhi.
- Bio-bitumen, made from biomass and agricultural waste, reduces dependence on fossil fuels and addresses crop residue burning, a major source of air pollution.

Nagauri Ashwagandha Gets GI Tag

- The Centre has granted a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag to Nagauri Ashwagandha**, giving **Nagaur district of Rajasthan** a distinct global agricultural identity.
- Nagaur's dry climate and sandy soil produce Ashwagandha with longer, thicker roots and bright red berries, making it high-quality and the basis for the GI status.

New Delhi World Book Fair 2026 Begins at Bharat Mandapam

- **New Delhi World Book Fair (NDWBF) 2026** begins at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**, and runs till January 18, 2026, and for the first time offers free entry to promote a stronger reading culture across India.
- The fair will be inaugurated by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and is based on the **theme "Indian Military History: Valour & Wisdom @ 75"**, honouring the legacy and sacrifices of India's armed forces.

New Reed Snake Species Calamaria mizoramensis Discovered in Mizoram

- **Researchers have discovered a new reed snake species in Mizoram**, named **Calamaria mizoramensis**, after the state where it was found.
- The discovery was led by Prof. H. T. Lalremsanga of Mizoram University, along with Indian and international collaborators, and was published in Zootaxa.

India Energy Week 2026 to be held in Goa from January 27-30

- **India Energy Week (IEW) 2026** will be held in **Goa** from **January 27 to 30**, bringing together global ministers, CEOs, policymakers, academia and technology leaders to discuss energy security, investment and decarbonisation.
- **Organised under the patronage of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas**, and jointly hosted by FIPI and dmg events, IEW 2026 will be the first major international energy event of the year, with participation expected from 120+ countries.

India's First Fully Paperless District Judiciary Inaugurated in Kalpetta, Kerala

- **Chief Justice of India Surya Kant** virtually **inaugurated India's first fully paperless district judiciary at Kalpetta in Wayanad district, Kerala**, marking a major milestone in judicial reform.
- Describing the initiative as "**green jurisprudence**," the CJI said the move ends the "tyranny of the file," enhances transparency, accessibility, accountability, and builds greater public trust in the justice delivery system.

NHAI Sets Four Guinness World Records During Construction of Bengaluru–Kadapa–Vijayawada Corridor

- **NHAI created four Guinness World Records** during construction of the **Bengaluru–Kadapa–Vijayawada Economic Corridor (NH-544G)**, showcasing unprecedented speed and scale in highway paving works.
- On January 6, two global records were set near Puttaparthi, including the longest continuous laying of bituminous concrete (28.89 lane km) and the highest quantity laid in 24 hours (10,655 metric tons).

Union Minister Chirag Paswan Inaugurates Indusfood 2026 in Greater Noida

- **Union Minister Chirag Paswan** of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries **inaugurated the 9th edition of Indusfood 2026 at the India Expo Centre and Mart**, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.
- The event was organised by the Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Bamanwas Kankar Becomes Rajasthan's First Fully Organic Certified Gram Panchayat

- **Bamanwas Kankar gram panchayat in Rajasthan** has become the **State's first fully organic certified village body**, located in the newly formed Kotputli–Behror district.
- The shift towards organic farming began after villagers collectively addressed declining soil fertility, falling groundwater levels, rising input costs, and health issues linked to chemical-based agriculture, focusing on long-term sustainability.

Navi Mumbai International Airport to Be Named After D B Patil

- **Navi Mumbai International Airport** will be named after **late D B Patil**, a prominent leader linked with farmers' and local rights movements, as announced by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at a public meeting in Airoli.
- Navi Mumbai is set to become the next economic growth engine of Maharashtra, with the airport acting as a catalyst for sectors like pharmaceuticals, food processing, services, innovation-driven enterprises, and import–export activities.

Andhra Pradesh Cabinet Approves Dagadarthi Greenfield Airport in Nellore District

- The **Andhra Pradesh Cabinet** approved the **Dagadarthi Greenfield Airport project in Nellore district**, marking a major boost to regional aviation infrastructure.
- The airport is strategically located near major National Highway corridors and close to Krishnapatnam Port and Ramayapatnam Port, enabling strong multimodal transport integration.

Indian Mountaineer Aritra Roy Conquers Mount Aconcagua in Argentina

- **Indian mountaineer Aritra Roy** successfully summited **Mount Aconcagua in Argentina**, the highest peak outside Asia at 6,967.15 meters above sea level.

- The solo expedition, sponsored by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), is part of Roy's Seven Summits challenge, following his earlier climb of Mount Everest.

NITI Aayog Releases Export Preparedness Index 2024

- NITI Aayog released the **Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2024, the 4th edition of the index**, which assesses export readiness across **India's States and Union Territories**; the **first edition was published in August 2020**.
- The EPI 2024 aligns with India's goals of achieving USD 1 trillion in merchandise exports by 2030 and the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, providing an evidence-based framework for strengthening subnational export ecosystems.
- The EPI 2024 framework is based on **4 pillars, 13 sub-pillars, and 70 indicators**, enabling a granular and policy-relevant assessment of export preparedness.
- The **four pillars are Export Infrastructure, Business Ecosystem, Policy & Governance, and Export Performance**, covering areas such as logistics, finance, MSMEs, human capital, and trade facilitation.

Makaravilakku Festival Celebrations Commence at Sabarimala Temple in Kerala

- The annual **Makaravilakku festival** celebrations have begun at **the Sabarimala temple in Kerala**, attracting thousands of devotees of Lord Ayyappa.
- The festival is observed on Makara Sankrama night, considered one of the most sacred occasions in the Sabarimala pilgrimage calendar.
- The highlight of the festival is the Makarajyothi, a divine celestial light that appears in the evening at Ponnambalamedu, witnessed by lakhs of pilgrims.

Government and Netflix Conclude 'Inspiring Innovators – Naye Bharat Ki Nayi Pehchaan' Initiative

- The **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** and the **Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser**, in collaboration with **Netflix Fund for Creative Equity**, concluded the **'Inspiring Innovators – Naye Bharat Ki Nayi Pehchaan' initiative**.
- The programme aimed to promote social innovation through impactful storytelling while training young creative talent across India.

IPA Launches Pharmaceutical Academy for Global Excellence (PAGE) in Ahmedabad to Bridge Industry Skill Gap

- The **Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA)** has launched the **Pharmaceutical Academy for Global Excellence (PAGE) in Ahmedabad, Gujarat** to address the gap between academic output and industry-ready skills in India's pharmaceutical sector.
- The initiative was inaugurated in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the Gujarat Chief Minister, with IPA committing USD 50 million to establish and operate the programme.

Centre Launches 'Paripoorna Mediclaim Ayush Bima' for CGHS Beneficiaries

- The **Department of Financial Services** launched **Paripoorna Mediclaim Ayush Bima for Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) beneficiaries**,

offering cashless treatment, modern medical procedures, and access to a wide hospital network.

- Beneficiaries can choose a sum insured of ₹10 lakh or ₹20 lakh, with an optional co-payment structure of 70:30 or 50:50 between the insurer and the subscriber.

NHAI Extends 'Clean Toilet Picture Challenge' Initiative Till June 30

- The **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** has extended its citizen-centric '**Clean Toilet Picture Challenge**' initiative till **30 June**, to improve cleanliness and user experience at toilet facilities along National Highways.
- Under the extended campaign, clean toilet photos submitted by highway users will be evaluated daily, and eligible FASTag recharge rewards will be processed in a time-bound manner, with credits made within five days of validation to the linked Vehicle Registration Number (VRN).

University of New South Wales to Open Bengaluru Campus in August 2026

- **University of New South Wales (UNSW), Australia**, to open its **Bengaluru campus at Manyata Tech Park in August 2026**, following the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in the presence of Ministers M.B. Patil and M.C. Sudhakar.
- The campus will initially offer undergraduate programmes in commerce, media, computer science, and data science, along with a postgraduate programme in cyber security.

VP C. P. Radhakrishnan Releases Hindi Edition of Dr. C. Palanivelu's Autobiography "Palanivelu GUTS"

- **Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan** released the **Hindi edition of Dr. C. Palanivelu's autobiography "Palanivelu GUTS"** in New Delhi.
- Dr C. Palanivelu is an eminent surgeon who recognised the potential of laparoscopic surgery in the early 1990s and introduced it in Coimbatore in 1991, setting up South India's first laparoscopic surgery centre.

Union Cabinet Extends Atal Pension Yojana till 2030-31 and Approves Rs 5,000 Crore Equity Support for SIDBI to Boost MSMEs

- The **Union Cabinet** approved the continuation of the **Atal Pension Yojana (APY) up to the financial year 2030-31**, with government support for promotional, developmental activities and gap funding to expand outreach among unorganised sector workers.
- APY, launched on May 9, 2015, provides old-age income security, offering a guaranteed minimum pension of Rs 1,000 to Rs 5,000 per month starting at age 60, based on contributions; as of January 19, 2026, over 8.66 crore subscribers are enrolled.

Union Cabinet Approves ₹5,000 Crore Equity Infusion into SIDBI to Boost Credit for MSMEs

- The Union Cabinet approved an equity infusion of ₹5,000 crore into SIDBI to expand credit availability for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- The infusion will be made in three tranches: ₹3,000 crore in 2025-26 and ₹1,000 crore each in 2026-27 and 2027-28, based on the respective book values of the previous financial years.

Punjab Police Launches "Operation Parhar" to Dismantle Gangster Networks Across the State

- Punjab Police launched "Operation Parhar" to dismantle organised gangster networks and work towards making the state crime-free.
- The operation involved around 2,000 police teams with nearly 12,000 personnel conducting simultaneous raids across Punjab.

DGCA Imposes ₹22.2 Crore Penalty on IndiGo for December 2025 Flight Disruptions

- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has imposed a penalty of ₹22.2 crore on IndiGo for major flight disruptions witnessed in December 2025.
- The regulator stated that the disruptions were primarily caused by overstretching of flight crew, resulting in widespread delays and cancellations.

PM Modi Launches India's First Overnight Sleeper Vande Bharat Train on Howrah–Guwahati Route

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched India's first overnight sleeper Vande Bharat train connecting Howrah (Kolkata) to Kamakhya (Guwahati) during his two-day visit to West Bengal, with the inauguration held in Malda.
- The train was manufactured indigenously by BEML in Bengaluru, incorporating technology from the Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai.

India's First Green Ammonia Project Launched in Kakinada

- India's first Green Ammonia project has been launched in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, with CM N. Chandrababu Naidu laying the foundation stone for large-scale green hydrogen and ammonia plants, aiming to establish a national green energy hub and a future "Green Hydrogen Valley."
- The AM Green project will be the world's largest green ammonia facility, producing 1.5 million tonnes annually from June 2027, primarily for export to Germany.

Ponduru Khadi from Andhra Pradesh Receives GI Tag

- **Ponduru Khadi**, a rare hand-woven cotton fabric from Andhra Pradesh, has been granted the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**, enhancing global visibility, legal protection, and market opportunities for artisans of this traditional craft.
- The GI registration, awarded to the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, legally safeguards Ponduru Khadi—produced exclusively in Ponduru village, Srikakulam district—against imitation and certifies its geographical origin.

PM Modi inaugurated the Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project

- **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project (4-Laning of Kaliabor-Numaligarh section of NH-715)**, worth over Rs. 6,950 Crore in Kaliabor, Assam.
- Under this, a 90-kms corridor from Kaliabor to Numaligarh is being developed at a cost of about Rs. 7,000 crore, including a 35-kilometre elevated wildlife corridor.

India's Electronics Exports Surge Past \$47 Billion in 2025

- **India's electronics exports crossed \$47 billion in 2025**, registering a **37% growth over \$34.93 billion in 2024**, with smartphones—mainly iPhones—contributing nearly two-thirds (~\$30 billion) of total exports, driven by PLI-linked manufacturing.
- December 2025 exports stood at \$4.17 billion, up 16.8% year-on-year, with electronics crossing the \$4 billion monthly mark in 7 out of 12 months, making it the fastest-growing export category among India's top 10 sectors.

IIT Delhi Launches Centre of Excellence for Regulatory Affairs in the Power Sector

- Union Minister of Power, **Shri Manohar Lal**, inaugurated the **Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Regulatory Affairs in the Power Sector** at IIT Delhi, envisioned as a national-level hub for regulatory research, capacity building, advisory support, and knowledge dissemination.
- By situating the Centre within a premier academic institution and collaborating closely with CERC and Grid India, it integrates policy, regulation, system operations, and academic research under a single institutional framework to address key sectoral challenges.

PM Modi Addresses Bagurumba Dwhou 2026 in Assam

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** addressed **Bagurumba Dwhou 2026**, a major cultural festival celebrating the heritage of the Bodo community, at Sarusajai Stadium, Guwahati, Assam.

- The festival showcased the traditional Bodo folk dance and featured performances by over 10,000 artists, highlighting Assam's rich cultural heritage.

Tamil Nadu Announces Semmozhi Illakiya Virudhu to Honour Literary Excellence in Major Indian Languages

- The **Tamil Nadu government** announced a **state-sponsored annual award** called the **Semmozhi Illakiya Virudhu (Classical Language Literary Award)** to recognise outstanding works in major Indian languages other than Hindi, with a cash prize of ₹5 lakh.
- Unveiled by CM M K Stalin at the Chennai International Book Fair, the award will be conferred annually and will have a national-level character, celebrating literary excellence across linguistic boundaries.

Madrid to Host Laureus World Sports Awards for Third Consecutive Year

- **Madrid** will host the **Laureus World Sports Awards** for the **third consecutive year**, with the ceremony scheduled at Cibeles Palace on April 20.
- The Laureus World Sports Awards is an annual global ceremony that honours sportspersons, teams, and outstanding sporting achievements from across the world.
- The awards were established in 1999 by the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation to celebrate excellence in sports and promote social change through sport.

Republic Day 2026 Parade to Feature 30 Tableaux at Kartavya Path

- A total of **30 tableaux** will **roll down Kartavya Path**, New Delhi, during the **77th Republic Day celebrations** on **26 January 2026**.
- Based on the themes 'Swatantrata ka Mantra: Vande Mataram' and 'Samridhhi ka Mantra: Aatmanirbhar Bharat', the tableaux will highlight 150 years of the national song 'Vande Mataram' along with India's rapid progress and self-reliance.

Election Commission launches ECINET digital platform at IICDEM 2026

- During the India **International Conference on Democracy and Election Management** in New Delhi, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar **launched ECINET**, a **unified digital platform integrating 40+ election-related apps and web services** to enhance citizen participation.
- ECINET connects citizens, candidates, political parties, and election officials on a single platform and has been **developed in 22 Indian languages along with English**.

Lucknow Becomes UP's First Zero Fresh Waste Dump City

- **Lucknow** has become **Uttar Pradesh's first 'Zero Fresh Waste Dump' city** after achieving 100% scientific processing of municipal solid waste.

- Lucknow generates about 2,000 metric tonnes of waste daily, managed through three plants of 700 MT/day capacity each, with waste segregated into 55% organic and 45% inorganic components.

Punjab Launches First Dog Sanctuary in Ludhiana as Pilot Project

- Punjab launched its **first Dog Sanctuary in Ludhiana at the Haibowal Dairy Complex** as a pilot project to address the stray dog issue.
- The initiative aims to reduce dog bite cases and improve public safety through organised management of stray dogs.

Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana Completes 11 Years of Empowering the Girl Child

- Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY) has completed **11 years since its launch on 22 January 2015** under the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao initiative, aimed at securing the financial future of the girl child.
- Investments qualify for Section 80C tax deduction; the minimum annual deposit is ₹250, while the maximum is ₹1.50 lakh.

Amit Shah to Launch ODOC Scheme at Uttar Pradesh Day Celebrations in Lucknow

- **Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah** will attend the **Uttar Pradesh Day celebrations as the Chief Guest in Lucknow**, with the event being held at Rashtra Prerna Sthal.
- On the occasion, he will launch the **'One District One Cuisine' (ODOC) scheme**, aimed at identifying and promoting the traditional cuisine of each district of Uttar Pradesh through quality improvement, branding, and market access.

CDS Releases Military Quantum Mission Policy Framework to Integrate Quantum Technologies in Armed Forces

- **CDS General Anil Chauhan** released the **Military Quantum Mission Policy Framework**, outlining a policy and roadmap for adopting Quantum Technologies in India's Armed Forces.
- The framework focuses on integrating four key pillars—Quantum Communication, Quantum Computing, Quantum Sensing & Metrology, and Quantum Materials & Devices—across the Tri-Services to prepare for future warfare and achieve technological dominance.

Hyderabad to Host Wings India 2026, Asia's Largest Civil Aviation Event

- **Hyderabad to host Wings India 2026, Asia's largest civil aviation event**, at Begumpet Airport, bringing together aviation leaders, aircraft manufacturers, and government delegations from over 20 countries.
- The theme for Wings India 2026 is: **"Indian Aviation: Paving the Future From Design to Deployment, Manufacturing to Maintenance, Inclusivity to Innovation, and Safety to Sustainability"**.

India Partners with World Economic Forum to Launch Skills Accelerator for Future-Ready Workforce

- **The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** signed an MoU with the **World Economic Forum** to strengthen India's skills and **Technical & Vocational Education and Training (TVET) ecosystem**.

- Under this MoU, a Skills Accelerator will be launched in India to bridge critical skill gaps and enhance the global employability of Indian youth.

Indian Railways Deploys Humanoid Robot 'ASC ARJUN' at Visakhapatnam Station to Enhance Passenger Safety

- **Indian Railways** has deployed a **humanoid robot named 'ASC ARJUN'** at **Visakhapatnam Railway Station**, marking a first-of-its-kind initiative to enhance passenger safety, security, and service delivery.
- ASC ARJUN has been fully designed and developed in Visakhapatnam using home-grown technology, with a dedicated team working over a year to integrate advanced systems into daily railway operations.

Government releases 32nd NeSDA Way Forward Monthly Report for States/UTs

- **The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG)** released the **32nd edition of the NeSDA Way Forward report (December 2025)**, providing a comprehensive overview of e-service delivery across States and Union Territories.
- As per the report, 24,090 e-services are being delivered across States/UTs, with the Local Governance & Utility Services sector accounting for the highest share (8,656 services); additionally, 156 new e-services were added in November 2025.
- 21 States/UTs achieved over 90% saturation of 59 mandatory e-services, while portals such as Assam (Sewa Setu), J&K (e-UNNAT), Karnataka (Seva Sindhu), Odisha (Odisha One), MP (MP e-Service), Uttarakhand (Apuni Sarkar) and Kerala (e-Sevanam) provide 100% services.

President Droupadi Murmu Inaugurates Granth Kutir at Rashtrapati Bhavan to Promote India's Classical Languages

- **President Droupadi Murmu** inaugurated the **Granth Kutir at Rashtrapati Bhavan**, housing around **50 manuscripts and 2,300 books in 11 Indian classical languages** covering subjects like epics, philosophy, science, history, governance, devotional literature, and the Constitution.
- The Granth Kutir aims to enhance awareness of India's rich cultural and literary heritage, promote the spirit of unity in diversity, and support the preservation and promotion of classical languages through universities, libraries, and youth engagement.

NSD to Host 25th Bharat Rang Mahotsav 2026 Across 40 Locations

- **National School of Drama (NSD)** will organise the **25th Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM) 2026** from January 27 to February 20, **across 40 locations in India**, featuring productions from all seven continents, making it the largest and most inclusive edition ever.

- The festival will present 277 Indian productions (136 selected/invited), 12 international productions, and performances in 228 Indian and foreign languages and dialects, selected from 817 national and 34 international applications, highlighting unparalleled linguistic diversity.

PM Modi Launches PM SVANidhi Credit Card, Flags Off Multiple Amrit Bharat Trains in Kerala

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** launched the **PM SVANidhi Credit Card** during his visit to Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- The credit card aims to benefit street vendors, hawkers, and footpath workers by providing easy access to formal credit across India.

Indian Scientists Discover Rare Worm-Like Amphibian 'Gegeneophis valmiki' in Northern Western Ghats

- **Indian scientists discovered** a rare worm-like amphibian, **Gegeneophis valmiki**, in the **northern Western Ghats**, marking the first addition to its genus in over a decade.
- Gegeneophis valmiki is a caecilian, a limbless, blind amphibian that lives mostly underground, with eyes covered by bone and skin, making it nearly invisible.

Simran Bala Becomes First Woman CRPF Officer from Rajouri

- **Simran Bala**, a 26-year-old Assistant Commandant, became the **first woman CRPF officer from Rajouri (Jammu & Kashmir)** to lead an **all-male CRPF marching contingent** at the 77th Republic Day Parade on Kartavya Path.
- **Breaking Barriers:** Her leadership at the national parade marks a significant milestone for women in central armed police forces, inspiring greater gender inclusion in uniformed services.

India Ranks 8th in Global AI Investment: WEF White Paper

- **India ranked 8th** among 11 countries in terms of historical accumulated investments in the **AI ecosystem (2010–2024)** as a **percentage of 2024 GDP**, according to a WEF white paper.
- The US and Singapore led the rankings, with AI investments at 3.4–5.1% and 3.1–4.6% of GDP, respectively, followed by South Korea and China.

Adani to Begin ₹9,700-Crore Phase 2 of Vizhinjam Port

- **Adani Vizhinjam Port Pvt Ltd (AVPPL)** will begin **Phase 2 construction of the Vizhinjam International Seaport in Kerala**, with an investment of ₹9,700 crore, expected to be completed by 2028.
- Phase 2 will increase the port's capacity from 1 million TEUs to 5 million TEUs, significantly expanding container handling capabilities.

- Phase 1 involved an investment of about ₹28,867 crore, and the inauguration of Phase 2 will be led by Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan, with Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal as chief guest.

Madhya Pradesh to Observe 2026 as ‘Year of Agriculture’ Under “Prosperous Farmers – Prosperous State” Vision

- **Madhya Pradesh** will observe 2026 as the ‘Year of Agriculture’, announced by Governor Mangubhai Patel during the 77th Republic Day function in Bhopal.
- Under the theme “**Prosperous Farmers – Prosperous State**”, a 10-point agricultural development model has been adopted, focusing on technology transfer, income growth, natural farming, marketing, exports, innovation, and digital transparency.

Amit Shah to Inaugurate Assam’s Largest Multi-Sports Stadium in Dibrugarh on January 30

- **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** will inaugurate the **first phase of Assam’s largest multi-sports stadium in Dibrugarh**, marking a key step in the state’s sports infrastructure development.
- Built at Khanikar, Dibrugarh at a cost of Rs 233 crore, the stadium spans 104 bighas, has a 35,000 seating capacity, and is designed to host national and international sporting events, positioning Dibrugarh as a future sports hub in Northeast India.

NITI Aayog Launches Reports to Boost Circular Economy for ELVs, E-Waste, Tyres, and Lithium-ion Batteries

- **NITI Aayog** launched **three reports** at the **Material Recycling Association of India (MRAI)** during the **International Material Recycling Conference (IMRC)** in Jaipur, focusing on **End-of-Life Vehicles (ELVs), Waste Tyres, E-waste, and Lithium-ion Batteries**.
- The reports highlight challenges in India’s circular economy and provide recommendations for infrastructure development, sector formalisation, strengthening the **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** framework, and boosting revenue potential.

Swiggy Integrates AI Tools Like ChatGPT, Claude, and Google Gemini for Grocery, Food, and Dining Orders

- **Swiggy** now allows users to order groceries, food, and make dining reservations through popular AI tools like **ChatGPT, Claude, and Google Gemini**, with current transactions supporting cash on delivery.
- **Model Context Protocol (MCP)** integration enables Swiggy Food, Instamart, and Dineout to interact seamlessly with AI agents, acting as a “universal connector” standardising API communication.

Government Approves ₹200 Crore Smart Fishing Harbour at Mayabunder Under PMMSY

- The Government approved a ₹200 crore smart and integrated fishing harbour at Mayabunder (Andaman & Nicobar Islands) with 100% central funding under PM Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).
- The harbour will offer safe landing and berthing for 430 fishing vessels and support an annual fish landing capacity of 9,900 tonnes with modern infrastructure.

Civil Aviation Minister Inaugurates Wings India 2026 at Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad

- Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu inaugurated Wings India 2026 at Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad.
- Wings India is a biennial (once every two years) event hosted by the Ministry of Civil Aviation with support from the Government of Telangana.
- The theme of Wings India 2026 is “Indian Aviation: Paving the Future – From Design to Deployment, Manufacturing to Maintenance, Inclusivity to Innovation and Safety to Sustainability.”

Bharat Parv 2026 Inaugurated at Red Fort to Showcase India's Cultural and Tourism Heritage

- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Union Culture & Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat inaugurated the six-day Bharat Parv 2026 at the Red Fort, New Delhi, to showcase India's rich cultural heritage.
- The festival aims to promote unity in diversity, strengthen constitutional values, and boost tourism potential, while supporting Aatmanirbhar Bharat through livelihoods in handicrafts, handloom, and cuisine.

12th Smile International Film Festival for Children and Youth (SIFFCY) 2026 Kicks Off in New Delhi

- The 12th Smile International Film Festival for Children and Youth (SIFFCY), organised by Smile Foundation in collaboration with the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, began in New Delhi as a seven-day event.
- This year's festival focuses on diversity, equity, and inclusion, showcasing films that raise awareness about social, moral, and world issues, including productions by disabled children.

11th Ajanta-Ellora International Film Festival Begins in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

- The 11th Ajanta-Ellora International Film Festival (AEIFF) began in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, celebrating national and international cinema.

- Legendary composer Ilaiyaraaja will be honoured with the Padmapani Award for his outstanding contribution to Indian cinema, with filmmakers Ashutosh Gowariker and sound designer Resul Pookutty also attending.

Chapter 13: Current Affairs (International)

Australia to Grant Duty-Free Access to All Indian Exports from January 2026 under ECTA

- From January 1, 2026, Australia will provide **duty-free access to all Indian exports under the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)**, marking **100% zero-duty tariff lines**.
- India's exports to Australia grew by 8% in 2024-25, with significant gains across manufacturing, chemicals, textiles, plastics, pharmaceuticals, petroleum products, and gems & jewellery.

Iran Launches Three Indigenous Satellites into Orbit with Russian Soyuz Rocket

- Iran placed **three domestically developed satellites—Paya, Zafar-2, and Kowsar (second unit)**—into **low-Earth orbit (LEO)** using **Russian Soyuz** launch vehicles, as confirmed by Iranian state media.
- The LEO satellites are meant for civilian uses such as agricultural monitoring, natural resource management, and environmental assessment in Iran and nearby regions.

Sheikh Khalifa Medical City Makes Global History with First Administration of ITVISMA Gene Therapy

- **Sheikh Khalifa Medical City, Abu Dhabi**, has become the **first hospital in the world to administer ITVISMA**, a one-time gene therapy for spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), marking a significant milestone in precision medicine.
- Developed by Novartis, ITVISMA targets the genetic root cause of SMA by replacing the defective SMN1 gene, enabling the production of the survival motor neuron (SMN) protein.

UN General Assembly Approves \$3.45 Billion Regular Budget for 2026

- The **UN General Assembly** has approved a **\$3.45 billion regular budget for the United Nations for 2026**, authorising funding for core organisational activities including peace, security, sustainable development and human rights.
- The approved amount is about 7 % lower than the 2025 regular budget and is slightly above the Secretary-General's original proposal, highlighting financial constraints and reform priorities under the UN80 initiative.
- **India's share of the United Nation's regular budget is 1.016 per cent**, calculated based on factors such as gross national income, population and economic capacity. The **United States remains the largest United Nation contributor at 22 per cent**, followed by China at 20 per cent.

Bulgaria Officially Joins Eurozone, Adopts Euro as National Currency

- **Bulgaria** officially **joined the Eurozone on 1 January 2026**, adopting the euro as its official currency, replacing the Bulgarian lev after a long transition process.
- With this move, Bulgaria becomes the 21st member of the euro area, deepening its economic and monetary integration with the European Union.

Turkmenistan Legalises Cryptocurrency Mining and Exchanges Under New Law

- **Turkmenistan** has officially **legalised cryptocurrency mining and exchanges**, marking a major policy shift in its tightly controlled and gas-dependent economy; the law was signed by President Serdar Berdimuhamedov.
- The new legislation brings virtual assets under civil law and introduces a licensing framework for crypto exchanges, to be regulated by the Central Bank of Turkmenistan.

Adani Group Launches 570 MW Wangchhu Hydro Electricity Project in Bhutan Under 5,000 MW MoU with DGPC

- **Adani Group** has commenced the **570 MW Wangchhu Hydro Electricity Project in Bhutan**, with the foundation stone laid in the presence of Bhutan's PM Tshering Tobgay and Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani.
- In May 2025, Adani Group and DGPC signed MoUs to jointly develop 5,000 MW of hydropower projects in Bhutan, with Wangchhu being the first project under this agreement.

Israel Becomes First Country to Recognise Somaliland as an Independent State

- **Israel** became the **first country to formally recognise Somaliland as an independent and sovereign state**, a move likely to impact regional dynamics and challenge Somalia's opposition to secession.
- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced immediate cooperation with Somaliland in agriculture, health, technology and the economy, and signed a joint declaration of mutual recognition with President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi.

EU Leaders Ursula von der Leyen and António Costa to Be Chief Guests at India's Republic Day 2026

- European Union leaders Ursula von der Leyen and **António Costa** will be the **chief guests at India's Republic Day 2026 celebrations on January 26, 2026**, marking a significant diplomatic moment for the event.
- Ursula von der Leyen serves as President of the European Commission and António Costa as President of the European Council, representing the top leadership of the EU.

India Launches e-B-4 Visa for Chinese Business Professionals to Boost Industrial and Investment Activities

- **India** has introduced the **e-Production Investment Business Visa (e-B-4 Visa)** for Chinese business professionals, allowing travel to India for specified industrial and commercial activities as part of measures to stabilise and reset bilateral ties.

- The e-B-4 Visa, effective from January 1, can be **applied for entirely online**, permits a stay of up to six months, and is designed to facilitate production-linked and investment-related business operations.

US Withdraws from 66 International Organisations, Including UN Bodies and ISA

- The United States, under President Donald Trump, has **withdrawn from 66 international organisations**, including **31 UN entities and 35 non-UN organisations**, citing that membership is contrary to US interests.
- The withdrawal covers prominent bodies such as the International Solar Alliance (India-France-led), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Science and Technology Centre in Ukraine, and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Germany Allows Visa-Free Transit for Indian Passport Holders

- Germany has permitted **visa-free transit for Indian passport holders**, allowing them to pass through German airports without a transit visa under specified conditions.
- The move aims to facilitate smoother international travel for Indian travellers, especially those transiting to third countries.

Finke River Recognised as World's Oldest Flowing River

- The Finke River in central Australia, also known as Larapinta by the Arrernte people, is believed to be the world's oldest river still flowing today, dating back 300–400 million years.
- Stretching over 640 kilometres across the Northern Territory and South Australia, the river cuts through some of Australia's most ancient landscapes, long predating the age of dinosaurs.

United States Officially Withdraws from WHO Citing COVID-19 Mismanagement

- The United States has officially **withdrawn from the World Health Organization (WHO)**, following a one-year notice given by President Donald Trump in 2020.
- The U.S., which was the largest contributor to WHO funding (about 18%), cited poor management and mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic as reasons for withdrawal.

India and Namibia Agree to Deepen Cooperation in Defence, Critical Minerals, and Key Sectors

- India and Namibia held the **5th round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC)** on January 19–20 to enhance **collaboration in health, Digital Public Infrastructure, agriculture, defence, and critical minerals**.
- The meeting was co-chaired by Janesh Kain (Joint Secretary, MEA) and Ambassador Charles Josob (Acting Head, Namibia's Ministry of International Relations and Trade) and conducted in a cordial and friendly atmosphere.

- Both countries reviewed progress from recent high-level exchanges and agreed to hold the next round of consultations in Windhoek, Namibia, at a mutually convenient date to further strengthen bilateral cooperation.

India Sends 7.5 Tonnes of Life-Saving Cancer Medicines to Kabul as Part of Healthcare Cooperation

- **India delivered 7.5 tonnes of life-saving cancer medicines to Kabul, reinforcing its humanitarian and healthcare cooperation with Afghanistan.**
- **The medical assistance aims to support cancer patients in Afghanistan and strengthen access to critical healthcare supplies.**
- The initiative follows a bilateral meeting in December between Afghanistan's Public Health Minister Mawlawi Noor Jalal Jalali and India's Health Minister JP Nadda to enhance healthcare cooperation between the two countries.

Japan Restarts Reactor at World's Largest Kashiwazaki-Kariwa Nuclear Plant After 15 Years

- **Japan restarted Reactor No. 6 at the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear plant, the world's largest nuclear power plant, nearly 15 years after the Fukushima nuclear disaster led to a nationwide shutdown of reactors.**
- The Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant is located northwest of Tokyo, and the reactor restart was delayed by one day due to an alarm malfunction, with commercial operations expected to begin next month.

Gulfood 2026 Makes History in Dubai, India Named Partner Country for First Time

- **Gulfood 2026, the world's largest annual food and beverage exhibition, will be held from January 26-30, 2026, making history as the first exhibition to operate simultaneously across two mega venues—Dubai World Trade Centre and Dubai Exhibition Centre, Expo City Dubai—with India as the partner country for the first time.**
- India's participation marks a major milestone with 161 exhibitors, a doubled Indian pavilion, and the Bharati Pavilion by APEDA, showcasing export-ready agri-food and agri-tech startups, including eight high-potential startups selected from over 100 applicants.

India-EU Free Trade Agreement Concluded: A Strategic Breakthrough in India's Global Trade Engagement

- **PM Narendra Modi and European Commission President H.E. Ms Ursula von der Leyen, jointly announced the conclusion of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement at the 16th India-EU Summit, held during the visit of the European leaders to India.**

- The FTA comes after intense negotiations since the re-launch of negotiations in 2022. India and the EU are the 4th and 2nd largest economies, comprising 25% of Global GDP, and account for one third of global trade. India has secured unprecedented market access for **more than 99% of Indian exports by trade value to the EU** that also bolsters the 'Make in India' initiative.

Chapter 14: Banking & Financial

Rediff.com Gets NPCI Approval for TPAP License

- **Rediff.com India Ltd.** has received final **approval from NPCI for its Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP) license**, enabling the launch of RediffPay.
- The company has started Closed User Group (CUG) testing as a precursor to joining the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) ecosystem.

Government Retains Interest Rates on Small Savings Schemes for 8th Straight Quarter

- **The government** has kept **interest rates unchanged for 12 small savings schemes**, including PPF and Sukanya Samridhi, for the March quarter, marking the 8th consecutive quarter with no rate revision.
- This decision comes despite a 125 basis points cut in the repo rate by the RBI over the past year, bringing the policy rate down to 5.25% during the ongoing easing cycle.

ATM Numbers Decline in FY25 as Digitisation Rises, Bank Branch Network Continues to Expand: RBI Report

- **According to the RBI's Trend and Progress of Banking in India for FY25**, the total **number of ATMs declined moderately to 2,51,057 as of March 31, 2025**, primarily due to the increased digitisation of payments, which reduced customer dependence on cash transactions.
- Both public and private sector banks reduced their ATM networks, with private banks' ATMs falling to 77,117 and public sector banks' **ATMs declining to 1,33,544, largely because of the closure of offsite ATMs.**

IDFC FIRST Bank Launches 'Gaj:' Invitation-Only Premium Metal Credit Card for HNIs

- **IDFC FIRST Bank** has launched "**Gaj: Credit Card**", a premium, invitation-only metal credit card exclusively designed for the Bank's high-net-worth individual (HNI) private banking customers.
- Gaj: Credit Card is the pinnacle of the Ashva–Mayura–Gaj trilogy, drawing inspiration from Sanskrit philosophy, where Gaj (Elephant) symbolises majesty, wisdom, stability, and sovereign power.

UPI Transactions Surge 29% in December, Digital Payments Maintain Strong Growth Momentum

- **UPI transactions rose 29% year-on-year in December**, reaching **21.63 billion transactions**, while the transaction value increased 20% to around ₹28 lakh crore, as per NPCI data.
- On a month-on-month basis, UPI showed steady growth, with the average daily transaction value rising to ₹90,217 crore in December from ₹87,721 crore in November 2025.

Gross GST Collections Rise 6.1% in December

- **Gross GST collections in December 2025 rose 6.1% year-on-year** to about **₹1.75 lakh crore**, with CGST and SGST recording growth, while IGST declined compared to the same month last year.
- From April to December 2025–26, gross GST collections increased by 8.6% to around ₹16.5 lakh crore, with all major components—CGST, SGST, and IGST—showing growth, reflecting stronger economic activity and improved compliance.
- GST revenues have shown a steady upward trend over the years, rising from ₹11.37 lakh crore in 2020–21 to ₹20.18 lakh crore in 2023–24, with 2024–25 marking the highest-ever gross collection of ₹22.08 lakh crore.

Ashika Group Gets SEBI Nod to Launch Ashika Mutual Fund

- **Ashika Group** has received in-principle approval from **SEBI to act as sponsor and establish Ashika Mutual Fund**, allowing it to set up an Asset Management Company (AMC) and prepare for the launch of mutual fund schemes, subject to final regulatory clearances.
- The approval marks a key milestone in Ashika Group's vision to build a future-ready asset management ecosystem, focused on disciplined investing, strong governance and long-term wealth creation.

ICICI Bank Enters Capital Gains Account Scheme, Offering Tax-Saving Option from 2026

- **ICICI Bank** has entered the **Capital Gains Account Scheme (CGAS)** after the Government of India approval, **allowing resident individuals and HUFs to park uninvested long-term capital gains from January 1, 2026**.
- The CGAS account enables taxpayers to earn interest for up to three years while preserving capital gains tax exemptions and planning reinvestment.

HDFC AMC Launches ₹2,500-Crore Structured Credit Fund to Tap Private Credit Market

- HDFC AMC enters the **private credit market with its new Structured Credit Fund-I**, targeting mid-market companies with alternative debt financing.
- **IFC**, part of the World Bank Group, will **invest up to ₹220 crore as an anchor investor**; the fund has already secured ₹1,290 crore in its first close, aiming for a total corpus of ₹1,500 crore with a green-shoe option of ₹1,000 crore.

UPI Sets Record with 21.6 Billion Transactions in December 2025

- **UPI recorded a record 21.63 billion transactions in December 2025**, marking its highest monthly volume ever, **with a total value of ₹27.97 lakh crore**.

- Year-on-year, transaction volumes grew 29% and transaction values increased 20%, with average ticket size around ₹1,293, highlighting UPI's shift toward micro-payments.

SBI Promotes India-Israel Trade in Rupees as FTA Talks Gain Momentum

- SBI**, the only Indian bank in Israel, is promoting bilateral **trade between India and Israel in Indian rupees (INR) as Free Trade Agreement (FTA) discussions gain momentum.**
- Israeli entities can now make and receive payments in INR through SBI's Special Rupee Vostro Account (SRVA) for exports/imports of goods and services.

EXIM Bank Raises \$1 Billion Through Dual-Tranche U.S. Dollar Bonds in First 2026 Debt Issue

- The **Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank)** accepted bids worth **\$1 billion for its dual-tranche**, longer-duration U.S. dollar-denominated bonds, marking India's first such debt issue of 2026.
- The bank raised \$500 million through 10-year bonds at a 5.00% yield, representing a spread of 85 basis points over the 10-year U.S. Treasury yield.

DICGC Insures 41.5% of Bank Deposits, Fund Balance Rises to ₹2.29 Lakh Crore as of March 2025

- As of March 2025, **41.5% of total bank deposits by value and 97.6% by number of accounts in commercial and cooperative banks** were insured by the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), which provides coverage up to ₹5 lakh per depositor.
- Out of ₹241.08 lakh crore total bank deposits, ₹100.12 lakh crore were insured, slightly lower than the previous year's 43.1% (₹94.12 lakh crore) coverage.

Protected Pool				
Bank Group wise insured deposits				
Bank	Number	Insured Deposit	Assessable Deposits	IDR*
PSU Bank	12	59.5	126.1	47.2
Pvt Bank	21	25.7	81.9	31.4
Foreign Bank	44	0.5	10.9	4.8
Small Finance Banks	11	1.1	2.7	39.8
Payments Bank	6	0.3	0.3	99.4
RRB	43	5.3	6.6	79.6
Local Area Banks	2	0.0	0.1	72.2
Urban Coop Banks	1,457	3.8	5.8	65.0
State Coop Bank	34	0.7	1.6	42.2
DCCB	352	3.3	5.1	64.3
Total	1,982	100.1	241.0	41.5

Source: RBI; All number upto March 31, 2025; All number in ₹ lakh crore
 *IDR is Insured Deposits Ratio. It is the ratio of insured deposits to total assessable deposits in %

SBI Launches First Global Capability Centre in Bengaluru

- SBI Chairperson Challa Sreenivasulu Setty** inaugurated the **bank's first-ever Global Capability Centre (GCC) in Bengaluru**, along with 11 new SBI branches, highlighting SBI's support for India's growing GCC ecosystem.

- SBI has set up a specialized relationship management team in Bengaluru to cater exclusively to the banking and financial needs of Global Capability Centres.

Amazon Pay Launches Fixed Deposits Through App in Partnership with NBFCs and Banks

- Amazon Pay expands into fixed income assets by rolling out fixed deposits (FDs) through its fintech app, allowing users to invest in multiple partner institutions without opening separate savings accounts.
- The company has partnered with two NBFCs, Shriram Finance and Bajaj Finance, and five banks including Shivalik Small Finance Bank, Suryoday Small Finance Bank, South Indian Bank, Slice, and Utkarsh Small Finance Bank.

IDFC FIRST Bank Launches Zero-Forex Diamond Reserve Credit Card for Global Travellers

- IDFC FIRST Bank launched the “Zero-Forex Diamond Reserve Credit Card” aimed at affluent global travellers, offering zero forex markup on international spends, along with rewards on hotel and flight bookings and access to travel lounges.
- The card is priced at ₹3,000 + GST, with an annual fee waiver on spending ₹6 lakh per year, making it effectively free from the second year onwards.

Axis Bank Launches ‘Safety Centre’ on Mobile App to Enhance Digital Banking Security

- Axis Bank launched the ‘Safety Centre’ on its mobile banking app ‘open’, allowing customers to control key digital banking functions and safeguard accounts against unauthorized or suspicious activities without visiting a branch.
- The Safety Centre enables customizable security settings, letting users tailor protections according to their usage and comfort.

HDFC Bank Integrates CBDC into SmartGateway to Enable Digital Rupee Payments

- HDFC Bank has integrated the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) into its SmartGateway platform, enabling merchants and enterprises to accept digital rupee payments alongside existing digital modes.
- With CBDC acceptance, SmartGateway strengthens its position as a comprehensive payment hub, allowing businesses to adopt digital currency without altering their core systems.

FSS Becomes First Payments Company in India and APAC to Achieve ISO/IEC 42001 AI Governance Certification

- Financial Software and Systems (FSS) has become the first payments company in India, the Middle East, APAC, and South Africa to be certified as

ISO/IEC 42001 Lead, highlighting its leadership in responsible and ethical AI use in payments and banking technology.

- By achieving ISO/IEC 42001 certification, FSS has shifted from ad-hoc AI usage to a formal, organisation-wide AI governance framework, making AI governance a core business priority alongside information security and quality management.

Skydo Receives RBI Approval to Operate as Cross-Border Payment Aggregator

- **Skydo**, a cross-border payments platform for exporters, has **received final authorisation from the RBI to operate as a Payment Aggregator–Cross Border (PA-CB)**.
- The license will strengthen trust with SMB and enterprise customers, as well as global banks and payment partners, while enabling Skydo to scale payment volumes and expand across products and corridors.

IEPFA Organises Niveshak Shivir in Bengaluru to Resolve Unclaimed Investment Claims

- The **Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA)**, under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, in **collaboration with SEBI and Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs)**, organised a Niveshak Shivir in Bengaluru to facilitate the resolution of unclaimed dividends, shares, and pending IEPFA claims.
- The one-day investor facilitation camp provided a single-window platform for grievance redressal, claim assistance, KYC and nomination updates, with active participation from over 900 investors across Karnataka.

RBI Revises WMA Limits to Strengthen Cash Management for States and UTs

- The RBI has included the **Government of NCT of Delhi (GNCTD)** under its standard cash management framework, fixing a Ways and Means Advances (WMA) limit of ₹890 crore effective from January 9, 2026.
- With Delhi's inclusion, the aggregate **WMA limit for all States and UTs increased to ₹61,008 crore from ₹60,118 crore**, while limits for other States and UTs remain unchanged.

RBI Proposes Mandatory Cooling-Off Period for Directors of Co-operative Banks

- **The RBI** has proposed amendments to its **Governance Directions, 2025 for Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs)** and Rural Co-operative Banks, introducing a mandatory three-year cooling-off period for directors completing the maximum tenure.
- The move aims to prevent circumvention of tenure limits, after RBI observed cases where directors resigned briefly and returned through re-election or co-option, undermining the intent of the Banking Regulation Act.

Retail Inflation Hits 3-Month High at 1.33% in December

- **Retail inflation** rose to a **three-month high of 1.33% in December 2025**, but remained well below the RBI's lower comfort limit of 2%, reflecting overall price stability.

- Broad-based price decline kept inflation low, with food and beverages prices contracting by 1.85% in December, mainly due to a high base effect from 7.7% inflation in December 2024.

DFS Launches Composite Salary Account Package for Central Government Employees with Banking and Insurance Benefits

- **The Department of Financial Services (DFS)**, Ministry of Finance, launched a composite '**Salary Account Package**' for Central Government employees to provide integrated banking and insurance benefits, supporting the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 and Insurance for All by 2047.
- Insurance coverage includes **Personal Accident Insurance up to ₹1.5 crore, Air Accident Insurance up to ₹2 crore, Disability cover up to ₹1.5 crore, Term Life Insurance up to ₹20 lakh**, and comprehensive health insurance with top-up options.

Tripura Gramin Bank Launches India's First Solar-Powered ATM Van to Boost Rural Banking

- Tripura Gramin Bank became the **first Regional Rural Bank in India** to introduce India's **first fully solar-powered mobile ATM van**, named "TGB on Wheels."
- The project was launched with the support of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

Innoviti Technologies Receives RBI Authorization to Operate as Payment Aggregator

- **Innoviti Technologies Private Limited** has received a **Certificate of Authorization from the Reserve Bank of India** to operate as a **Payment Aggregator**.
- The authorization, granted under the Payments and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, allows Innoviti to manage both online and in-store payment transactions across India.

Wholesale Inflation Turns Positive at 0.83% in December 2025

- **Wholesale Price Index (WPI)**-based inflation rose to **0.83% in December 2025**, marking the second consecutive monthly increase and a return to positive territory after deflation in October (-1.21%) and November (-0.32%).
- The rise in wholesale inflation was driven by higher prices of manufactured products, food and non-food articles, with manufactured goods inflation increasing to 1.82% and non-food articles inflation rising to 2.95%, while food deflation moderated sharply.

RBI Approves Japan's SMBC to Set Up Wholly-Owned Subsidiary in India

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has approved **Japan's Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC)** to establish a wholly-owned subsidiary in India, marking its first step to expand operations locally.

- The move allows SMBC to provide full-fledged banking services in India under the subsidiary structure, strengthening its presence in the growing Indian market.

RBI Recognises FEDAI as Self-Regulatory Organisation for All Authorised Dealers

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has officially **recognised the Foreign Exchange Dealers' Association of India (FEDAI)** as a Self-Regulatory Organisation (SRO) for all Authorised Dealers.
- FEDAI applied for recognition under the Omnibus Framework for SROs, and RBI noted that it has already been functioning like an SRO through its rules governing member conduct.

SAMPANN Pension Platform Integrated with DigiLocker to Provide Paperless Access for Pensioners

- The **Office of the Principal Controller of Communication Accounts (Pr CCA) Delhi** has integrated **SAMPANN (System for Accounting and Management of Pension) pension platform** with DigiLocker, enabling digital access to pension documents for retirees under the Department of Telecommunications.
- The integration allows pensioners to retrieve key documents such as Pension Payment Orders (e-PPOs), Gratuity Sanction Orders, Communication Sanctions, and Form-16 electronically, removing the need for physical copies.

Payoneer India Gets RBI In-Principle Approval to Operate as Cross-Border Payment Aggregator

- **Payoneer India**, a subsidiary of Payoneer Global, has **received in-principle approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to operate as a Payment Aggregator – Cross Border (PA-CB).
- The PA-CB licence enables Payoneer India to facilitate cross-border payment transactions for merchants, including both inward (exports) and outward (imports) payments.

JPMorgan to Set Up Branch in GIFT City for Trading Equities and Financial Instruments

- **JPMorgan Chase & Co.** is setting up a branch in **Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City)** to trade equities, derivatives, and other financial instruments, leveraging India's low-tax financial hub.
- The branch is being established by JPMorgan Securities Plc, which has received a license from the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), GIFT City's regulator.

RBI Notifies Revised Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS)

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has notified revised rules under the Reserve Bank–Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS), 2026 to strengthen and streamline customer grievance redressal.
- The Ombudsman has the power to award compensation of up to ₹30 lakh for any consequential financial loss suffered by the complainant.
- Additionally, compensation of up to ₹3 lakh may be granted for loss of time, expenses incurred, and harassment or mental anguish suffered by the complainant.

Razorpay POS Secures RBI Licence to Operate as Offline Payment Aggregator

- Razorpay POS, the offline payments arm of fintech major Razorpay, has secured a licence from the RBI to operate as an offline payment aggregator.
- With this licence, Razorpay now holds all three key RBI authorisations: online payment aggregator, cross-border payment aggregator (obtained in December 2025), and offline payment aggregator.

RBI to Inject Over ₹2 Lakh Crore into Banking System Through Liquidity Measures

- RBI announced liquidity measures to inject over ₹2 lakh crore (~\$23 billion) into the banking system, using a mix of open market bond purchases, foreign exchange swaps, and variable rate repo operations.
- On January 30, 2026, RBI will conduct a 90-day variable rate repo (VRR) of ₹25,000 crore, allowing banks to borrow funds at market-determined rates against collateral.

Payoneer India Receives RBI In-Principle Approval as Cross-Border Payment Aggregator

- Payoneer India, a subsidiary of Payoneer Global, has received in-principle approval from the RBI to operate as a Payment Aggregator – Cross Border (PA-CB), enabling it to facilitate cross-border transactions for merchants.
- The approval comes as 19 entities are now fully authorised with a PA-CB licence, while Payoneer's global parent is a regulated entity in countries including the US, UK, Europe, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, China, and Australia.

ZET Gets NPCI Nod to Launch UPI Payments on RuPay Credit Cards

- ZET, an Indian fintech firm, has received NPCI approval to operate as a Third-Party Application Provider under the UPI framework.
- Following this approval, ZET has launched ZET UPI, allowing users to make UPI payments using RuPay credit cards issued through its platform.

PFRDA Launches NPS Swasthya Pension Scheme As Proof Of Concept For Medical Expenses

- The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has notified the launch of the 'NPS Swasthya Pension Scheme' as a Proof of Concept (PoC) under its Regulatory Sandbox Framework.
- This innovative sector-specific scheme is designed to integrate health-related financial support with the existing National Pension System (NPS) architecture. It allows Indian citizens to voluntarily contribute toward a dedicated fund intended exclusively for out-patient (OPD) and in-patient (IPD) medical expenses.

Bharti AXA Life Insurance launches deferred annuity "Swabhimaan Retirement" plan

- Bharti AXA Life Insurance launches "Swabhimaan Retirement" deferred annuity plan, offering customers the ability to plan early, lock in current annuity rates, and secure guaranteed lifetime income, **with an Atmanirbhar option for emergency withdrawals.**
- The plan provides Premium Payment Terms (2, 3, or 5 years), deferment of up to 7 years, and the option to withdraw part of the surrender value after all premiums are paid, subject to policy conditions.

World Bank Approves Rs 5,700 Crore for 'Jal Sanrakshit Haryana Project'

- World Bank approves Rs 5,700 crore for the 'Jal Sanrakshit Haryana Project' to make Haryana self-reliant in the water sector, including restoration of **115 canals with WB funding, 284 canals from the state budget, and 279 canals through NABARD.**
- Micro-irrigation systems will be implemented over 70,000 acres of agricultural land with Rs 900 crore support from the World Bank, along with promotion of sustainable agriculture practices like crop diversification and direct seeding of rice (Rs 866 crore assistance).

Chapter 15: Committee

Committee	Headed by	Purpose
PFRDA has constituted a high-level expert committee	M. S. Sahoo	To develop an assured pension income product under the National Pension System (NPS) , aimed at attracting risk-averse subscribers.
'The Pension Fund Regulatory and	Narayan Ramachandran, former CEO of Morgan	To review and modernise the investment framework

Development Authority (PFRDA) has set up a high-level committee	Stanley India and current Chairman of TeamLease Services Ltd.	of the National Pension System (NPS) .
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Chapter 16: Defence News

China Launches "Justice Mission 2025" Military Drills Around Taiwan Amid Rising Tensions

- **The Chinese military** has dispatched air, navy, and rocket troops to conduct joint drills around Taiwan, **calling it a "stern warning"** against separatist and external interference forces.
- The **drills, code-named "Justice Mission 2025"**, will focus on sea-air combat readiness, joint seizure of superiority, blockades on key ports, and deterrence around the Taiwan Strait.

IAF's SDI Signs MoU with IIT Madras to Develop Indigenous Digital Communication System for Airborne Use

- **The Indian Air Force's Software Development Institute (SDI)** signed an **MoU with IIT Madras for the joint design and development of an indigenous digital communication system for airborne applications.**
- The collaboration supports the vision of **Atmanirbhar Bharat**, aiming to enhance self-reliance in defence technology and strengthen India's strategic capabilities.

MoD Signs ₹4,666 Crore Defence Contracts for CQB Carbines and Heavy Weight Torpedoes

- **The Ministry of Defence (MoD)** signed **defence procurement contracts worth ₹4,666 crore** for the acquisition of **Close Quarter Battle (CQB) Carbines and Heavy Weight Torpedoes**, in the presence of Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh at South Block, New Delhi.
- This move aligns with the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative, aiming to replace legacy weapon systems and equip Indian soldiers with modern, world-class combat capabilities.

India Successfully Conducts Salvo Launch of Indigenous 'Pralay' Ballistic Missiles off Odisha Coast

- **India** successfully **conducted a salvo launch of two indigenously developed 'Pralay' missiles off the Odisha coast** as part of user evaluation trials.
- The test was carried out by DRDO and witnessed by officials from the Indian Army, Indian Air Force, and industry partners involved in development and production.
- 'Pralay' is a surface-to-surface, short-range ballistic missile with a strike range of 150–500 km, capable of carrying multiple warhead types and equipped with advanced guidance systems for high precision.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Commissions ICGS Samudra Pratap

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh commissioned ICGS Samudra Pratap, India's first indigenously designed Pollution Control Vessel (PCV), built by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL).
- Samudra Pratap, with over 60% indigenous content, is the largest ship in the Indian Coast Guard fleet, integrating pollution control, coastal patrol, maritime safety, fire-fighting, and long-range surveillance capabilities on a single platform.

IAF Commemorates 25 Years of Tejas LCA First Flight

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) commemorated 25 years since the first flight of the indigenous Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), marking a milestone in India's fighter aircraft development.
- Tejas conducted its first flight on 4 January 2001, flown by Wing Commander Rajiv Kothiyal from HAL Airport in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

Military-Civil Fusion Exercise "Sanjha Shakti" Held at Khadki Military Station

- The **Military Civil Fusion exercise "Sanjha Shakti"** was conducted at the **Diggi Range, Khadki Military Station**, under the aegis of MG & G Area, Southern Command.
- Over 350 personnel from 16 civilian agencies, including Maharashtra Police, Force One, and Fire Fighting Departments, participated alongside the Indian Army.

Indian Navy's First Training Squadron Embarks on Long Range Deployment to Southeast Asia

- The **Indian Navy's First Training Squadron (1TS)** will conduct a **Long Range Training Deployment to Southeast Asia** as part of the **110th Integrated Officers' Training Course (IOTC)**, visiting Singapore, Indonesia, and Thailand.
- The deployment includes INS Tir, INS Shardul, INS Sujata, and Indian Coast Guard Ship Sarathi, providing officer trainees with operational and cross-cultural exposure while reinforcing India's maritime engagement under the Act East Policy.

Indian Army Inducts Solar-Powered MAPSS Drone for Long-Endurance Border Surveillance

- **Indian Army** signs ₹168 crore contract for **MAPSS**, a solar-powered surveillance drone system, marking the first induction of a solar-powered unmanned aerial platform for long-endurance border monitoring.
- MAPSS (Medium Altitude Persistent Surveillance System), developed by Bengaluru-based NewSpace Research & Technologies, uses solar energy instead of conventional fuel or batteries, allowing continuous airborne operations for extended periods.

Indian Navy's First Training Squadron Reaches Singapore's Changi Naval Base

- **Indian Navy's First Training Squadron**, comprising INS Tir, INS Shardul, INS Sujata, and Indian Coast Guard Ship Sarathi, arrived at Changi Naval

Base, Singapore, for a training deployment in the South East Indian Ocean Region.

- The visit strengthens maritime security cooperation, highlights India's leadership in the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), and aligns with the MAHASAGAR vision for mutual and holistic advancement of security and growth across regions.

INS Sudarshini to Embark on 10-Month Lokayan 26 Voyage

- **INS Sudarshini** will embark on a **10-month expedition under Lokayan 26**, covering over 22,000 nautical miles and **visiting 18 ports across 13 countries** to showcase India's maritime heritage and promote international naval cooperation.
- The ship will participate in prestigious tall-ship events like Escale à Sète (France) and SAIL 250 (USA), serving as a platform for cultural diplomacy, maritime partnerships, and projecting India's naval capability and goodwill globally.

India Flags Off First Batch of Guided Pinaka Rockets for Armenia

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** flagged off the **first batch of guided Pinaka rocket systems for Armenia**.
- Armenia signed a Rs 2,000 crore deal in September 2022 for four Pinaka batteries, including unguided, extended-range, and guided variants; deliveries of the initial unguided systems began in July 2023 and concluded by late 2024.

Indian Naval Vessel INSV Kaundinya Reaches Muscat, Marking 70 Years of India-Oman Diplomatic Ties

- The **Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Kaundinya** reached **Port Sultan Qaboos, Muscat**, completing its maiden voyage from Porbandar, India, strengthening India-Oman ties.
- The vessel is a traditionally built stitched sail ship, inspired by a 5th-century ship depicted in Ajanta Caves paintings, and is named after the legendary Indian mariner Kaundinya.

ICGS Varaha & Atulya arrive at Port of Colombo for official visit

- **Indian Coast Guard ships ICGS Varaha and ICGS Atulya** arrived at the **Port of Colombo for an official visit**.
- ICGS Varaha, a 96.2-meter Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV), is commanded by Commandant Ashvini Kumar, while ICGS Atulya, a 50-meter Fast Patrol Vessel, is under Commandant Anit Kumar Mishra.

Chapter 17: Sports News

India Tops Global Doping List for Third Consecutive Year, WADA 2024 Report Reveals

- According to the WADA 2024 report, India recorded **260 positive doping cases from 7,113 samples (3.6% positivity rate)**, marking the highest number of doping offenders globally for the third consecutive year.
- **Norway documented the second-highest proportion of positive cases at 1.75%**, followed by the U.S. at 1.15%, while countries like China and Germany reported far fewer violations despite higher testing volumes.

Former New Zealand All-Rounder Doug Bracewell Retires from International Cricket

- **Former New Zealand all-rounder Doug Bracewell (35)** announced his **retirement from all forms of international cricket**, ending a 12-year international career with the Black Caps.
- Bracewell represented New Zealand in 28 Tests, 21 ODIs and 20 T20Is, taking 120 wickets and scoring 915 runs across formats.

Deepti Sharma Becomes Highest Wicket-Taker in Women's T20Is

- **Deepti Sharma** became the **highest wicket-taker in women's T20Is**, overtaking Australia's Megan Schutt by claiming her 152nd wicket during the final T20I against Sri Lanka in Thiruvananthapuram.
- She created history by **becoming the first Indian cricketer (men or women) to take 150 T20I wickets and the first player globally to score 1,000 runs and take 150 wickets in T20Is.**

Usman Khawaja Announces Retirement After Final Ashes Test at Sydney Cricket Ground

- **Usman Khawaja** has announced his **retirement from international cricket** after the fifth and final Ashes Test against England at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG), which will be his 88th and last Test match, at the same venue where his first-class career began.
- Debuting in 2011 at the age of 24, Khawaja enjoyed a 15-year-long Test career, scoring over 6,000 Test runs; his international journey began after an injury to then captain Ricky Ponting opened the door for his debut.

PM Narendra Modi Inaugurates 72nd National Volleyball Tournament in Varanasi

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **72nd National Volleyball Tournament** through video conferencing.
- The tournament, with 1,000+ players from 58 teams, showcases high-level competition and sportsmanship, while positioning Varanasi as a hub for major cultural and sporting events, connecting sports, heritage, and community pride.

2nd Khelo India Beach Games Kicks Off at Ghoghla Beach, Diu with 2,100+ Athletes

- **The 2nd Khelo India Beach Games** will be held at **Ghoghla Beach, Diu**, from 5 to 10 January, organised by the UT of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.
- Over 2,100 athletes will compete in eight beach sports, with **six medal events including Beach Soccer, Beach Volleyball, Beach Kabaddi, Pencak Silat and Open Water Swimming**. Mallakhamb and Tug of War are the non-medal events.
- **Mascot: Pearls - the Dolphin**

Pro Wrestling League Season 5 Auction Sees 63 Wrestlers Sold for Over ₹11 Crore

- **A total of 63 wrestlers** were bought in the **Pro Wrestling League Season 5 auction**, with six franchises spending over ₹11 crore to build their squads.
- **Yui Susaki**, two-time Olympic medallist and four-time world champion, **received the highest bid of ₹60 lakh from Haryana Thunders**.
- Among men, Robert Baran was the most expensive, purchased by Maharashtra Kesari for ₹55 lakh, while Indian wrestlers Sujeet Kalkal and Antim Panghal attracted bids of ₹52 lakh each.

Steve Smith Becomes Second-Highest Run-Scorer in Ashes History, Only Behind Don Bradman

- **Australian batter Steve Smith** became the **second-highest run-scorer in Ashes history on January 6, 2026**, surpassing England's Jack Hobbs during Day 2 of the fifth Test at Sydney Cricket Ground.
- Smith has scored 3644 runs in 41 matches and 73 innings at an average of 56.93, including 13 centuries and 15 half-centuries, placing him only behind Australian legend Don Bradman, who scored 5028 runs.

Australian Open 2026 to Feature Record \$111.5 Million Prize Pool

- The **2026 Australian Open** will feature a **record \$111.5 million AUD prize pool**, the highest in the tournament's history, a 16% increase from last year's \$96.5 million.
- The 2026 edition will be the 114th Australian Open, held annually at Melbourne Park, Victoria, and is the first of the four Grand Slam events each year.

Anahat Singh Wins Silver in Women's U-19 at British Junior Open Squash Championships

- **Top-seeded Indian squash player Anahat Singh** won the **silver medal in the women's under-19 final** at the British Junior Open.
- Anahat reached the final after defeating Egypt's Malika El Karaksy in the semifinals.

Asian Games Gold Medalist Jinson Johnson Announces Retirement from Athletics

- National record-holder and **Asian Games gold-medalist Jinson Johnson** from Kerala **announced his retirement** from athletics at the age of 34.
- Johnson's career highlights include winning gold in the 1500 metres and silver in the 800 metres at the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games, with his 1500m gold timing of 3:44.72 seconds.

Nihal Sarin Clinches Tata Steel Chess India 2026 Open Rapid Title

- **Nihal Sarin** emerged as the **champion of the Open Rapid section at Tata Steel Chess India 2026 in Kolkata**, scoring 6.5 points from nine games with five wins and three draws, while former world champion Viswanathan Anand finished second with six points.
- This is Nihal Sarin's second Open Rapid title at Tata Steel Chess India (first in 2022), earning him a cash prize of \$10,000, and he was a late entry replacing reigning world champion D Gukesh.

Australia Women's Captain Alyssa Healy Announces Retirement from International Cricket

- **Australia women's team captain Alyssa Healy** announced her **retirement from all forms of international cricket** ahead of the T20 World Cup 2026.
- The 35-year-old wicketkeeper-batter ends an illustrious T20I career of nearly 15 years, scoring 3,054 runs at a strike rate of 129.79.

Mitchell Starc and Laura Wolvaardt Named ICC Players of the Month for December 2025

- **Mitchell Starc** has been named **ICC Men's Player of the Month for December 2025**, following his outstanding performance in Australia's Ashes series victory at home, marking the first time he has won this award.
- **South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt** was named **ICC Women's Player of the Month** after key contributions in series victories over Ireland in T20I and ODI formats, earning her second Player of the Month award after previously winning in October 2025.

FIFA World Cup 2026 Trophy Unveiled in India by Mansukh Mandaviya and Gilberto D'Silva

- Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and former **Brazilian footballer Gilberto D'Silva** unveiled the **FIFA World Cup 2026 trophy** during its visit to India.
- The 2026 FIFA World Cup will be jointly hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico and will feature 48 teams for the first time

BCCI Inks ₹270 Crore Gemini Sponsorship Deal Ahead of IPL 2026

- **BCCI** signed a **₹270 crore sponsorship deal with Google's AI platform Gemini** ahead of the IPL 2026 season, marking a major AI entry into Indian cricket.
- The deal comes after real money gaming platforms like Dream11 were banned, forcing BCCI to find new sponsors; Apollo Tyres later took over the jersey sponsorship for ₹579 crore.

Vidarbha Lift Maiden Vijay Hazare Trophy, Beat Saurashtra in Final

- **Vidarbha** clinched their maiden **Vijay Hazare Trophy**, defeating two-time champions Saurashtra by 38 runs in the final.

- The final was played at the BCCI Centre of Excellence, Bengaluru, and the tournament marked the 33rd edition of the Vijay Hazare Trophy.

Olympic Medallist Saina Nehwal Announces Retirement from Competitive Badminton

- **Saina Nehwal** announced her **retirement from competitive badminton** after being out of action for nearly two years due to chronic knee problems and cartilage degeneration.
- Nehwal also achieved World No. 1 ranking in 2015, won the BWF Super Series title (Indonesia Open 2009), Commonwealth Games gold (2010 & 2018), and World Championship silver (2015).

ITBP Clinches Title at 5th LG Cup Ice Hockey Championship in Kargil, Ladakh

- The 5th LG Cup Ice Hockey Championship concluded at the Biamathang Ice Hockey Ground, Kargil, Ladakh.
- ITBP won the men's final by defeating the Ladakh Scouts team of the Indian Army.

Chapter 18: Book and Author

Book	Author
The Urdu book "Khutbat-e-Modi: Lal Qila Ki Faseel Se"	Union Education Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan released the Urdu book

Chapter 19: Important Day

Date	Day	Theme/Importance
1 January	Global Family Day	The day evolved from the "One Day in Peace" initiative and emphasises resolving conflicts through non-violence and understanding.
1 January	DRDO Day	The day highlights India's advancements in defence technology, including missiles, radars, armaments, and aerospace systems.
2 January	World Introvert Day	The day highlights the value of quiet reflection, deep thinking, and

		meaningful communication in personal and professional life.
3 January	International Mind–Body Wellness Day	It encourages adopting healthy lifestyles, including mindfulness, exercise, balanced nutrition , and stress management.
4 January	World Braille Day	The day marks the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, the inventor of the Braille system
5 January	National Birds Day	The day highlights the ecological importance of birds, including pollination, seed dispersal , and pest control
6 January	World Day of War Orphans	The day aims to raise global awareness about the social, psychological, and economic challenges faced by war orphans.
8 January	African National Congress Foundation Day	The day recognises the ANC's contributions to democracy, equality, and social justice , honouring leaders and activists who fought for liberation.
8 January	Earth's Rotations Day	Aims to raise awareness about astronomy and Earth sciences, helping people understand planetary dynamics.
9 January	NRI (Non-Resident Indian) Day / Pravasi Bharatiya Divas:	The day commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India in 1915, who became a key figure in India's freedom struggle.
10 January	World Hindi Day	Theme 2026 - Promoting Hindi on Global Platforms
11 January	National Human Trafficking Awareness Day	The day highlights the need to protect vulnerable groups, especially women and children, from exploitation, forced labour, and trafficking
12 January	National Youth Day	Theme 2026 - Ignite the Self, Impact the World

11 - 17 January	National Road Safety Week	The campaign focuses on promoting safe driving practices, adherence to traffic rules, and use of helmets and seatbelts among motorists and pedestrians
15 January	78th Army Day	For the first time, the parade was hosted outside an army cantonment, in the heart of Jaipur city , and organized by the South Western Command .
16 January	National Startup Day	The day highlights the role of startups and entrepreneurs in driving innovation, employment generation, and economic growth .
20 January	Penguin Awareness Day	Penguin Awareness Day is observed annually on 20 January to spread awareness about penguin species, their habitats, and the environmental threats they face , especially due to climate change and melting polar ice.
21 January	Foundation Day of Tripura, Manipur, and Meghalaya	On 21 January 1972 , under the North Eastern Region (Re organisation) Act, 1971 , these regions were officially granted statehood — Tripura and Manipur transitioned from Union Territories/princely states , and Meghalaya became a separate state from Assam.
23 January	Parakram Diwas	The day celebrates Netaji's courage, leadership, and contribution to India's freedom struggle, especially through the Indian National Army (INA)
24 January	National Girl Child Day	Theme 2026- Empowering Every Daughter, Building a Stronger India .

24 January	International Day of Education	Theme 2026 - The power of youth in co-creating education
25 January	National Voters' Day	The theme for NVD 2026 is " My India, My Vote ", with the tagline "Citizen at the Heart of Indian Democracy."
25 January	National Tourism Day	Theme 2026 - Rural and Community Centric Tourism
25 January	Himachal Pradesh Statehood Day	The day is celebrated with official functions, cultural programmes , and tributes highlighting the state's history, culture, and development.
26 January	International Customs Day	Theme 2026 - Customs Protecting Society Through Vigilance and Commitment
26 January	National Geographic Day	The day highlights the role of maps, exploration, environmental studies and geospatial science in human development. It aims to create awareness about natural resources, climate, biodiversity and sustainable development.
27 January	International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust	The observance promotes remembrance, education , and awareness to prevent genocide and crimes against humanity in the future.
28 January	International Day of Peaceful Coexistence	The day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly to encourage living together in peace despite differences in religion, culture, or ethnicity
28 January	International Data Privacy Day	Theme 2026 - Take Control of Your Data
29 January	Indian Newspaper Day	The day highlights the importance of newspapers and journalism in spreading news, information, and awareness among the public.

30 January	Martyrs Day	The day pays tribute to all freedom fighters and martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the nation's independence and welfare.
30 January	World Leprosy Day	Theme 2026 -- Leprosy is curable, the real challenge is stigma

Chapter 20: Science & Technology

Hyderabad Start-ups TakeMe2Space and EON Space Labs Ready 14-kg Earth Observation Satellite for Sriharikota Launch

- Hyderabad-based start-ups TakeMe2Space and EON Space Labs completed testing and integration of a 14-kg Earth observation satellite along with a miniature space telescope, and shipped the payload to Sriharikota for launch later this month.
- The satellite will be placed in low Earth orbit at around 500 km altitude and is intended to provide data for both commercial and defence applications over its expected 3–5 year lifespan.

SpaceX Successfully Launches Italy's COSMO-SkyMed Second Generation Earth Observation Satellite

- SpaceX's Falcon 9 successfully deployed Italy's COSMO-SkyMed Second Generation low-Earth orbit satellite from Vandenberg Space Force Base, California, in collaboration with the Italian Space Agency and Italian Ministry of Defence.
- The launch marked the 21st mission for the first-stage booster used, which previously supported missions including Crew-7, CRS-29, PACE, Transporter-10, EarthCARE, NROL-186, and multiple Starlink launches.

ISRO's PSLV-C62 Mission Fails to Place 16 Satellites into Orbit

- ISRO's PSLV-C62 mission, the first launch of the year, failed to place its 16 satellites into the intended orbit due to a technical problem in the rocket's third stage.
- The mission carried EOS-N1 (Earth observation satellite) along with 15 other payloads, including satellites from Brazil, Nepal, and the UK, as well as Anvesha, a surveillance satellite developed by DRDO.

NASA Astronaut Sunita Williams Retires After 27-Year Stellar Career

- NASA astronaut Sunita 'Suni' Williams retired after a stellar 27-year career, completing three missions aboard the International Space Station and setting numerous human spaceflight records, including 608 days in space.

- She performed nine spacewalks totaling over 62 hours, became the first person to run a marathon in space, and ranks second in cumulative time in space among NASA astronauts.

SpaceX Completes First-Ever Medical Evacuation from ISS

- **SpaceX**, led by Elon Musk, successfully conducted the first-ever medical evacuation mission from the International Space Station (ISS), safely returning four astronauts to Earth.
- The returning crew included NASA astronauts Zena Cardman and Mike Fincke, JAXA astronaut Kimiya Yui, and Roscosmos cosmonaut Oleg Platonov, who landed aboard SpaceX's Dragon capsule off the coast of San Diego, USA.

Chapter 21: Obituary

Person	About
Veteran Malayalam cinema art director K Shekhar	He is best known for designing the iconic anti-gravity room in the 3D film " My Dear Kuttichathan ", created without computers or CGI using a rotating steel set and practical effects, a landmark achievement in Indian filmmaking .
Former Union Minister and senior Congress leader Suresh Kalmadi	Kalmadi was also the president of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) from 1996 to 2012 and represented Pune multiple times in the Lok Sabha
Manoj Kothari, former IBSF World Billiards Champion and Dhyan Chand Award recipient	He achieved global recognition by winning the IBSF World Billiards Championship in 1990 and later the World Doubles Billiards Championship in 1997 .
Former Union Minister of State and senior BJP leader Kabindra Purkayastha	He was a founding member of the BJP , elected to the Lok Sabha from Silchar in 1991 and 1998 , and served as Minister of State for Telecommunications under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee from 1998 to 1999 .
Renowned ecologist Madhav Gadgil	He was globally known for his path-breaking work on the ecological

	significance of the Western Ghats, for which he received the UN Champions of the Earth Award in 2024.
Singer and actor Prashant Tamang (43)	He rose to fame after winning Indian Idol and was recently seen playing the role of Daniel Lecho in Paatal Lok Season 2.
Senior Kerala Congress Leader Thomas Kuthiravattam	A native of Kallissery, Chengannur, he had a long and notable career in Kerala politics, including serving as a Rajya Sabha member from 1985 to 1991.
Veteran Journalist William Mark Tully	Tully was widely known as the “voice of India” for his long tenure as BBC’s New Delhi bureau chief and his authoritative, trusted reporting on major South Asian events over decades.
Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar	Pawar, a key political leader and long serving Deputy CM, was on his way for public engagements ahead of local polls.
Former BCCI President Inderjit Singh Bindra	He led the Punjab Cricket Association for over three decades (1978–2014), and in recognition of his contributions, the PCA stadium in Mohali was renamed IS Bindra Stadium in 2015.