FEBRUARY 2025

THE HINDU REVIEW

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

(हिन्दी)

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MINISTRY OF FINANCE

The Hindu Review (FEBRUARY 2026)

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Chapter 1: Appointment (National, International)

(National)

Organization	Person
Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has appointed as its new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) *About Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)* • *Founded- 23 December 1940* • *Founder- Walchand Hirachand* • *Headquarters-Bengaluru* • *CMD - Kota Ravi*	Kota Ravi (Updated 3 February)
IRDAI has reconstituted its Reinsurance Advisory Committee and appointed as the Chairman of the committee *About Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)* • *Established- In the year 1999 under the IRDA Act, 1999* • *Headquarters- Hyderabad, Telangana* • *Type- Statutory body under the Ministry of Finance, Government of India* • *Current Chairman - Ajay Seth*	A. V. Girija Kumar (Updated 3 February)
Sworn in as the Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra *About Maharashtra* • *Capital - Mumbai* • *Chief Minister - Devendra Fadnavis (3rd time)*	Sunetra Pawar (Updated 5 February)

• **Deputy Chief Minister** - *Eknath Sindhe & Sunetra Pawar* • **Governor** - *Acharya Devvrat (additional charge)* • **Legislative Assembly Speaker -** *Rahul Narwekar*	
Sworn in as 13th Chief Minister of Manipur *About Manipur* • **Capital** – *Imphal* • **Chief Minister** – *Yumnam Khemchand Singh* • **Governor -** *Ajay Bhalla*	Yumnam Khemchand Singh (Updated 6 February)
RBI approves appointment of SBI MD as MD & CEO of YES Bank *About Yes Bank* • **Founded** - *2003* • **Headquarters** - *Mumbai, Maharashtra* • **MD & CEO** - *Vinay Muralidhar Tonse (replace Prashant Kumar)* • **Chairman** – *Rama Subramaniam Gandhi* • **Tagline -** *Experience our Expertise*	Vinay Muralidhar Tonse (Updated 6 February)
DAC Developers appoints as its brand ambassador	A R Rahman (Updated 6 February)
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment as the new Managing Director & CEO of City Union Bank *About City Union Bank* • *Founded- 1904*	R. Vijay Anandh (Updated 12 February)

• *Founders- R. Santhanam Iyer; S. Krishna Iyer; V. Krishnaswami Iyengar* • *Headquarters- Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu* • *MD and CEO- R. Vijay Anandh*	
Appointed as the Brand Ambassador of the inaugural Delhi Khel Mahakumbh by the Government of Delhi	Shikhar Dhawan (Updated 12 February)
Appointed Chair of the Global Value Chains Committee of the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF)	Rohit Kumar Singh (Updated 13 February)
Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) has appointed its first woman Train Ticket Examiner (TTE)	Sarita Yolmo (Updated 16 February)
The Reserve Bank of India has approved the re-appointment of as Managing Director of AU Small Finance Bank *About AU Small Finance Bank Limited* • *Founded - 1996* • *Founder - Sanjay Agarwal* • *Headquarters - Jaipur, Rajasthan* • *MD & CEO - Sanjay Agarwal* • *Tagline - Chalo Aage Badhein*	Sanjay Agarwal (Updated 16 February)
The Gujarat government has appointed as Chairman of Gujarat International Finance Tec-City Company Ltd	Uday Kotak (Updated 16 February)
GAIL (India) Limited appointed as its new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) *About GAIL (India) Limited*	Deepak Gupta (Updated 17 February)

• GAIL (India) Limited serves as India's leading natural gas processing and transmission company, a Maharatna public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. • Established- 1984 • Headquarters- New Delhi	
The Reserve Bank of India approved the appointment as Managing Director & CEO of Slice Small Finance Bank	Rajan Bajaj (Updated 17 February)
Appointed as the Director (Commercial) of Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) by the Punjab government for a tenure of two years	Harsharan Kaur Trehan (Updated 25 February)
Appointed to the United Nations' Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Professor B. Ravindran (Updated 27 February)

(International)

Organization / Country	Person
Elected as the first female IOC member from Iran, becoming the youngest current member and the 107th member of the International Olympic Committee	Soraya Aghaei (Updated 6 February)
Secures Victory in Thailand's 2026 General Election	Anutin Charnvirakul (Updated 13 February)
Iliana Yotova, President of Bulgaria, has appointed interim prime minister to lead a caretaker government ahead	Andrey Gyurov (Updated 14 February)

of national elections scheduled for April 19. *About Bulgaria* • *Capital- Sofia* • *Currency - Euro* • *Official language- Bulgarian*	
Prime Minister of Barbados secured her third consecutive election victory, with the Barbados Labour Party *About Barbados* • *Barbados is an eastern Caribbean island and an independent British Commonwealth nation* • *Capital- Bridgetown* • *Currency- Barbados Dollar* • *Continent- North America* • *President- Sandra Mason* • *Prime minister- Mia Mottley* • *Official language- English*	Mia Mottley (Updated 16 February)
Sworn in as the new Prime Minister of Bangladesh *About Bangladesh* • *Capital- Dhaka* • *Currency – Taka* • *President – Mohammed Shahabuddin Chuppu* • *Prime Minister - Tarique Rahman*	Tarique Rahman (Updated 18 February)
Japanese Prime Minister resigned along with her cabinet, with all ministers submitting their resignation letters ahead of a new parliamentary session to elect the prime minister *About Japan* • *Capital – Tokyo* • *Currency – Yen* • *Continent - Asia*	Sanae Takaichi (Updated 23 February)

Peru has appointed as the interim (temporary) President following a political transition	Jose Maria Balcazar (Updated 24 February)
Sworn in as the youngest Prime Minister of the Netherlands	Rob Jetten (Updated 25 February)

Chapter 2: Awards (National, International)

(National)

Award	Person/Organization	Purpose/ Field
The First Prize at the Swachhata Pakhwada Awards 2025	Paradip Port Authority (PPA)	For excellence in **cleanliness, sustainability and community** participation under **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**
The 22nd Upendra Nath Brahma 'Soldier of Humanity' Award 2025	**Bhutan's Queen Mother Gyalyum Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck**	In recognition of her lifelong contributions to **humanitarian service, social development and inclusive growth**.
FIP Award 2025 for 'Oil and Gas Production Company of the Year'.	Oil India Limited	For **'Oil and Gas Production Company of the Year'.**
The FIPI Award 2025 by the Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry as 'Oil & Gas Production Company of the Year'	Oil India Limited (OIL)	The award recognises **OIL's strong performance** in boosting **domestic oil and gas production, improving operational excellence**, and contributing to **India's goal of a secure and self-reliant energy sector**.

(International)

Award	Person/Organization	Purpose/ Field

The 2026 Crafoord Prize in Geosciences, often called the "Nobel of Geosciences"	Indian-origin climate scientist Veerabhadran Ramanathan	For his **groundbreaking work on climate science**.
The Global Teacher Prize 2026	Indian teacher Rouble Nagi	She was honoured for **transforming neglected walls into interactive educational murals, teaching literacy, numeracy, public health**, and environmental awareness, and has helped **over 1 million children** enter formal education through art-based learning.
The Award of Merit at the 2025 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation	The 475-year-old Our Lady of Grace Cathedral in Papdy village, Vasai	**For its community-led restoration, highlighting the successful revival of a sixteenth-century Portuguese-era structure**
The BAFTA Award for Best Children's & Family Film	The Manipuri film Boong	**For Best Children's & Family Film** in London, with **debutant director Lakshmipriya Devi** making an emotional plea for peace during her acceptance speech.
The 2025 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Award in the category "Best Airport at Arrivals – Globally	Mangaluru International Airport	The award is presented by **Airports Council International (ACI) World**, marking the second consecutive win for the airport after also securing the title in 2024.
"Speaker of the Knesset Medal," the	Narendra Modi	PM Modi became the first **global leader to receive this prestigious medal**.

highest honour of the Knesset.		

Awards 2026: Complete winners list

Ministry of Culture Wins Double Honour at Republic Day Parade 2026 with 'Vande Mataram' Tableau and Cultural Presentation

- The **Ministry of Culture** achieved a r**are double honour at the Republic Day Parade 2026,** with its tableau "**Vande Mataram – 150 Years Journey**" winning the **First Prize** among Central Ministries and Departments, and its cultural presentation "**Vande Mataram: The Eternal Resonance of Bharat" receiving the Special Prize.**
- The award-winning tableau powerfully traced the 150-year evolution of Vande Mataram, portraying its transformation from a song of national awakening into a symbol of India's freedom struggle, unity, and civilisational consciousness.
- The Special Prize–winning cultural presentation, curated by the Sangeet Natak Akademi with the North Zone Cultural Centre, Patiala, featured 2,500 artists from all States and Union Territories, showcasing India's cultural diversity through classical, folk, and tribal art forms.

Chapter 3: Government Scheme/ campaign

SCHEME	PURPOSE
The Atal Vichal Agragami Assam scheme **(Assam)**	To support **research scholars financially**, aiming to strengthen the **state's academic and innovation ecosystem**
Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana **(Delhi)**	To reduce school **dropouts and build a savings cushion for higher education or adulthood.**

Sthree Suraksha Scheme **(Kerala)**	Providing a monthly pension of **₹1,000** to unemployed women and transwomen in **Kerala**, with the first payment disbursed to **10,18,042 beneficiaries**.
The Nawodhan Scheme **(Kerala)**	To bring **large areas of fallow land back into cultivation and boost self-reliance** in agricultural produce, especially **fruits and vegetables**.
The PM RAHAT (Road Accident Victim Hospitalization and Assured Treatment) Scheme	The **Road, Transport and Highways Ministry** emphasized that the scheme reflects the **government's commitment to ensuring no life is lost due to delayed medical assistance**.
'Meri Rasoi Yojna' **(Punjab)**	Under this scheme **40 lakh families will receive free quarterly food kits starting April**, apart from wheat already provided under NFSA.

Chapter 4: Summit/ Conference

Summit/Conference	Location	About
India–Tanzania 4th Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) meeting	Zanzibar	Both sides discussed expanding collaboration in **military training, maritime security, service-to-service cooperation, defence industry, and explored** new areas like counter-terrorism, peacekeeping, EW, Cyber and AI.
The two-day Black Swan Summit India	Bhubaneswar	**Skill development and employment** are key focuses, with a job fair for youth, and **President Droupadi Murmu** scheduled to attend on the second day along with **Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi.**
The 23rd edition of the international summit	Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC)	**Telangana Chief Minister highlights future of healthcare and biotech** – Delegates will discuss **next-generation biologics, AI-driven R&D, digital transformation**, and strategies under the theme '**Telangana Rising 2047 – World-Class Life Sciences Ecosystem.**'
The India AI Impact Summit 2026	-	**The India AI Impact Summit 2026 witnessed the launch of AI Impact Casebooks – Health & Education**, developed under the guidance of **the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, and the IndiaAI Mission,**

		with support from the World Health Organisation and Central Square Foundation.
The India AI Impact Summit 2026	Bharat Mandapam	The summit was guided by the theme **"Welfare for All, Happiness for All,"** highlighting India's commitment to inclusive and responsible AI development
The G20 Leaders' Summit	Miami	The **2025 G20 Summit** was held in **South Africa, and the United Kingdom** is scheduled to host **the G20 in 2027.**
The 3rd International AYUSH Conference & Expo	Dubai World Trade Centre	The theme **"Evidence-based AYUSH interventions for mind-body health**
The National Round Table Conference of ECI and State Election Commissioners	New Delhi	The conference will be chaired by **Gyanesh Kumar, with Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi,** and attended by State Election Commissioners, Chief Electoral Officers, and their legal and technical experts.
The Tourism Leadership Summit-2026, organised by the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum	New Delhi	He emphasised that **tourism is a major employment generator and stressed investment in skills, entrepreneurship**, and women-led enterprises for inclusive and sustainable growth.
The AI Impact Summit 2027	Geneva	**Switzerland** will partner with the **United Arab Emirates, the host of the 2028 AI Impact Summit**, to ensure continuity and global cooperation in AI development.
The 4th edition of the World Ocean Science Congress 2026	Panaji, Goa	**The congress was co-organised by NIO, the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, and Goa University under the theme "Ocean Health and Sustainable Future**

Chapter 5: Partnership/ Agreement

Partnership/ Agreement	Aim
National Test House (NTH) partners with STQC-ERTL (North) under MeitY	Collaboration aims to support **Electromagnetic Interference (EMI) and Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC)** testing, a critical requirement for drone safety and certification
Equitas Small Finance Bank has entered into a strategic	Under the partnership, **Bharti AXA Life will offer protection, savings, and**

bancassurance partnership with Bharti AXA Life Insurance, a subsidiary of Bharti Life Ventures Pvt. Ltd.	**retirement insurance plans** to Equitas SFB customers through its **1,042+** banking outlets across 18 states/UTs.
The India–US Trade Agreement has opened access to a $118 billion global import market	For **textiles, apparel and made-ups**, significantly boosting **India's textile export potential.**
The Central Government, Nagaland Government and the Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation (ENPO) signed an agreement	To establish the **Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA)** for **6 eastern districts of Nagaland,** in the presence of **Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio**.
Yotta Data Services collaborated with BHASHINI	To deploy an **end-to-end sovereign AI cloud on Yotta's Government Community Cloud (GCC)** and **NVIDIA H100-enabled Shakti Cloud,** highlighting India's readiness for population-scale AI.
Delhi becomes the first Indian state to partner with Bharat Taxi's cooperative platform	To provide **safe, reliable, and transparent urban taxi services** while enhancing the income security and welfare of drivers.
India signed an Agreement on Social Security with the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland in New Delhi	Aimed at avoiding double social security contributions for **employees on temporary assignments of up to 36 months**
NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL), the global arm of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), signed an agreement with Payments Network Malaysia Sdn Bhd (PayNet)	To enable **QR-based cross-border merchant payments between India and Malaysia.**
NTT DATA Business Solutions partnered with NPCI Bharat Connect	To streamline and **digitise B2B payments for SAP-based enterprises** through a unified payment interface.
Amazon India has partnered with the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee	To develop non-wood paper packaging from agricultural waste like **wheat straw and bagasse, promoting recyclable and home-compostable materials.**

Indian Institute of Technology Madras has partnered with the Finnish Meteorological Institute	To establish **VAYYU** – **a Virtual Research Centre focusing on aerosol–meteorology interactions, Himalayan** atmosphere-cryosphere **dynamics, and urban air quality**
Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has approved signing a Joint Venture Agreement with Safran Electronics and Defence, France	For the **HAMMER weapon system project**, as per a stock exchange filing
India and France elevated their ties to a "Special Global Strategic Partnership"	The two countries also launched the **2026 India–France Year of Innovation, enhanced collaboration in AI, startups, and critical minerals, agreed to amend the DTAA** to boost trade and investment, and strengthened **cooperation in climate action, nuclear energy, and the Indo-Pacific region.**
India and Nepal signed an agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters	**To strengthen cooperation in investigations, prosecutions, and judicial proceedings between the two countries**
The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has collaborated with NVIDIA	**To scale and enhance its sovereign AI model capabilities tailored for India's payments ecosystem**
OpenAI has partnered with leading Indian universities	**To embed Artificial Intelligence across management, healthcare, engineering, creative, and multidisciplinary education, aiming to build AI-ready talent for a tech-driven economy**
JioHotstar has partnered with OpenAI	**To introduce a ChatGPT-powered voice and text interface, transforming how Indian audiences discover and engage with streaming content.**
India joined the U.S.-led Pax Silica coalition during the AI Impact Summit, with Union Minister for Electronics and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw signing the agreement to formally include India in the group	**The coalition aims to build a common and resilient supply chain for electronics and critical minerals, reducing dependence on China, especially in refined rare earth elements**

India and Brazil signed key agreements	To enhance cooperation in rare earth and critical minerals, steel and mining, renewable energy, and digital partnership during talks in New Delhi

Chapter 6: Ranking Index

Index	Index released by	India's Rank	1st Rank
The world's most affordable city for international students	A joint report by Knight Frank, Deloitte India, and QS	-	Delhi
The Network Readiness Index (NRI) 2025	The Portulans Institute (Washington DC).	45th (Score- 54.43)	USA (Score- 79.13)
The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2025	Transparency International	91st	Denmark (89 points)

Chapter 7: Mergers and Acquisitions

Merger Company	About
RBI approves Blackstone's investment in Federal Bank, allowing the private equity firm	To acquire up to **9.99% stake** through a preferential issue via private placement.
The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has approved the merger of 17 wholly-owned subsidiaries of Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) as part of a corporate restructuring exercise	Under **Group-A, 12 subsidiaries will merge into POWERGRID Khavda II-C** Transmission Limited, while **Group-B involves the merger of 5 subsidiaries** into **POWERGRID Vataman Transmission Limited**
Power Finance Corporation (PFC) announced that its board has approved the merger with its subsidiary REC Ltd, as part of the	In March **2019, PFC acquired 52.63%** of the **government's stake in REC Ltd for ₹14,500 crore**, and both entities have been operating as holding and subsidiary companies since then

government's plan to enhance efficiency in public-sector NBFCs	
The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of the low-voltage motor business of Siemens Limited by Innomotics India Private Limited through a slump sale arrangement.	The approved combination strengthens Innomotics India's presence in the industrial motors segment by **expanding its portfolio to include low voltage motors, complementing** its existing high and medium voltage motor and large drive systems business.
Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the proposed acquisition of around 6.63% minority shareholding in Valuedrive Technologies Private Limited by the Fidelity Funds	The approved combination involves the acquisition of shares on a fully diluted basis through **primary subscription and secondary acquisition of compulsory convertible preference shares (CCPS) of Valuedrive Technologies.**

Chapter 8: Loan

Organization/Bank	Loan Amount	To which country	Purpose
World Bank	$830 million loan	India	To support the **revamp of India's skills training ecosystem,** particularly the **Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).**
The Asian Development Bank (ADB)	$182 million	Assam	**To strengthen flood and riverbank erosion management along the Brahmaputra River in Assam, enhancing disaster preparedness in Northeast India.**

Chapter 9: App/Website/Portal

App/ Website/Portal	Company / Department	Purpose
A new web based portal called PAIMANA (Project Assessment, Infrastructure Monitoring &	The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)	To strengthen the monitoring of **Central Sector infrastructure projects**.

Analytics for Nation building)		
A digital portal for electronic issuance of Certificates of Origin for cultivated medicinal plants	The **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA),** under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (**MoEFCC**)	The portal supports implementation of the **Biological Diversity (Amendment) Act, 2023**, enabling stakeholders to **avail Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)** exemptions in a transparent and streamlined manner.
NIGRANI App	-	**The NIGRANI App** facilitates real-time tracking and transparent implementation of the **Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK),** ensuring better infrastructure development in **minority-concentrated areas.**

Chapter 10: Important MoU

MoU	Between Which Countries
Signed an MoU to establish an exclusive industrial park for women entrepreneurs in the state	The Andhra Pradesh government with **FICCI Ladies Organisation (FICCI-FLO)**
Signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a fully integrated helicopter manufacturing ecosystem in India, targeting the large defence aviation market	**Adani Defence & Aerospace** with Italian defence major Leonardo **(formerly AgustaWestland)**
Signed an MoU to build a gender-responsive and future-ready skilling ecosystem for young women across India	The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) with IPE Global Limited
Signed an MoU to implement a standardised, faceless and fully traceable logistics system for transporting samples of seeds, fertilisers and pesticides	The **Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare** with the **Department of Posts**

Signed an MoU to introduce regulated, transparent, and passenger-friendly cab services at select airports across India	**Airports Authority of India** (AAI) with **Bharat Taxi**
Signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to boost high-speed digital connectivity across the state	**The Government of Gujarat** with Starlink, **Elon Musk's satellite internet subsidiary**
Signs MoUs to strengthen medicine safety, quality assurance, and capacity building across India.	Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (**IPC**) with **Goa State Pharmacy Council (GSPC), Quality Council of India (QCI), and HLL Infra Tech Services Limited (HITES)**
Signed an MoU to enhance science communication and evidence-based policy research	Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and **National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (CSIR-NIScPR)**
Signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to supply advanced carbon fabrics and high-performance composite materials	**Agneevasthraa** with the Indian Army
Signed an MoU to collaborate on telecom and cybersecurity products, strengthening research and innovation in critical technology domains	Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) and **Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU), Gandhinagar**
The Department of Posts signed an MoU with National Stock Exchange of India Limited	To distribute **mutual fund products through India Post's extensive** network of over **1.64 lakh post offices**.
Signed an MoU to foster collaboration in science communication and policy research.	**Indian National Science Academy and CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research**
Signed an MoU to establish India's first AI-first factory with an investment exceeding ₹175 crore	**Dayananda Sagar University with NVIDIA**
Signed an MoU to establish the Columbia–IIT Bombay Centre of AI for Manufacturing, in the presence of Dharmendra Pradhan at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi	**Indian Institute of Technology Bombay and Columbia University**
Signed an MoU to collaborate on thermal and renewable energy initiatives.	**NLC India Ltd. with National Aluminium Company**

Signed an MoU for the supply of rice to support global humanitarian operations aimed at combating hunger and food insecurity	Food Corporation of India (FCI) and the World Food Programme (WFP)
Signed an MoU to undertake a research study titled "Re-envisioning Ease of Doing Business for Viksit Bharat 2047", aligning reforms with the long-term development vision.	IICA with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs
Signed an MoU to strengthen pharmaceutical education and research in India, under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers	The National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) with a private pharmaceutical company

Chapter 11: GDP Forecasting

Moody's Projects India's GDP Growth at 6.4% for FY 2026-27, Fastest in G20

- **Moody's Ratings** has projected **India's real GDP growth at 6.4% for the Financial Year 2026-27**, marking it as the fastest among G20 economies.
- Comparison with government projection: Moody's estimate of 6.4% is slightly lower than the Finance Ministry's Economic Survey projection of 6.8–7.2% for the same period.

India's GDP growth to ease to 7.2% in Q3FY26: ICRA

- **ICRA** has projected **India's GDP growth to moderate to 7.2% in Q3 FY2025-26**, down from 8.2% in Q2 FY2025-26, indicating a slowdown in overall economic momentum.
- The moderation is mainly due to slower growth in the services sector (7.8% vs 9.2%) and the agriculture sector (3.0% vs 3.5%) compared to the previous quarter.

Chapter 12: Current Affairs (National)

New Plant Species 'Hoya nagaensis' Discovered in Nagaland's Community Forests

- **Researchers from Nagaland University** discovered a **new plant species, Hoya nagaensis,** in the high-altitude community forests of Nagaland, highlighting the region as a biodiversity hotspot.
- The species was identified through botanical surveys in remote, largely unexplored forests, emphasizing the role of community-managed forests in conservation.

Patna Bird Sanctuary and Chhari-Dhand in Kutch Designated as Ramsar Wetlands

- **Patna Bird Sanctuary in Etah (Uttar Pradesh)** and **Chhari-Dhand in Kutch (Gujarat)** have been officially **designated as Ramsar wetlands of international importance.**
- These additions expand India's network of **Ramsar sites to 98**, reflecting the country's strong commitment to protecting wetlands and biodiversity.

Fifth Rusoma Orange Festival Kicks Off in Nagaland

- **The 5th Rusoma Orange Festival** has begun at **Rusoma village, Kohima in Nagaland**.
- The two-day festival is organised under the theme "Abundance of Rüsoma", highlighting horticulture-led rural prosperity.

Andhra Pradesh to establish exclusive women industrial park

- **Andhra Pradesh government** signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with FICCI Ladies Organisation (FICCI-FLO) to establish an exclusive 30-acre industrial park for women entrepreneurs, aiming to promote women-led industrial entrepreneurship in the State.
- The agreement involves FICCI-FLO mobilising and mentoring women entrepreneurs, while Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC) will provide infrastructure, approvals, and statutory support, ensuring seamless development and operation of the park.

Gujarat Launches Mukhyamantri Gramotthan Yojana to Provide Urban-Level Facilities in Villages

- **Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel** launched the state-wide **Mukhyamantri Gramotthan Yojana from Bhadran in Anand district,** aiming to provide urban-equivalent facilities in rural areas and promote inclusive development.
- In the first phase, 114 villages functioning as Taluka headquarters will be upgraded with modern infrastructure such as quality road networks, underground drainage systems, solar street lights, and digital e-Gram services.

Indian Railways launches first-ever LNG-diesel dual-fuel DEMU train in Ahmedabad

- **Indian Railways** has **operationalised the country's first LNG–Diesel dual-fuel DEMU train at Sabarmati in Ahmeda**d, marking a major step towards sustainable and eco-friendly rail operations.
- The 1,400 HP DEMU train's driving power cars have been converted to a dual-fuel system, using Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to replace about 40%

of conventional diesel, and have successfully completed over 2,000 km of field trials.

MP to Introduce 'Garbh Sanskar' in All Universities, Special Rooms Planned in Government Hospitals

- **Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav** has announced that **"Garbh Sanskar"** (education in the womb) will be taught in all universities across the State, and dedicated Garbh Sanskar rooms will be set up in government hospitals.
- Garbh Sanskar means education and nurturing of the child while it is still in the mother's womb.

PM Modi Renames Adampur Airport as Sri Guru Ravidas Ji Airport

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** renamed **Adampur Airport in Jalandhar district, Punjab**, as Sri Guru Ravidas Ji Airport on the occasion of Ravidas Jayanti, marking the 649th birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas.
- The Prime Minister also virtually inaugurated the civil terminal building at Halwara Airport in Ludhiana district, strengthening civil aviation infrastructure in Punjab.

Government Raises Duty-Free Baggage Limit to ₹75,000 Under New Baggage Rules, 2026

- **The government** has increased the **duty-free allowance for passengers arriving in India by air from ₹50,000 to ₹75,000** under the newly **notified Baggage Rules, 2026,** effective from February 2.
- Under the new rules, foreign tourists can bring duty-free goods worth up to ₹25,000, raised from ₹15,000 earlier, while the 2026 rules replace the decade-old Baggage Rules, 2016.

Centre Accepts 16th Finance Commission Recommendation, Allocates ₹1.4 Lakh Crore to States in FY 2026-27

- The **Sixteenth Finance Commission (16th FC)** recommended that the **Central Government retain the 41% share of tax devolution to the States, and the Centre has accepted this recommendation.**
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her Budget 2026 speech, announced that ₹1.4 lakh crore will be provided to States for FY 2026-27 as Finance Commission Grants.

Kochi Airport to Become India's First with Hydrogen-Powered Buses

- **Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL)** is set to **become India's first airport to operate hydrogen-powered buses for passenger transportation**.
- A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was signed between Kerala Hydrogen Valley Innovation Cluster (HVIC) Foundation and CIAL,

exchanged by Kerala Electricity Minister K. Krishnankutty and Industries Minister P. Rajeeve.

Andhra Pradesh CM N. Chandrababu Naidu Launches 'Pilloo AI' Voice-Based Accounting App

- **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu** launched **Pilloo AI**, a voice-based billing and accounting agent that allows businesses to create invoices, record transactions, generate reports, and manage accounts by speaking in their native language.
- Available in five Indian languages, the app enables users to record daily sales and payments, access business reports like balance sheets, receivables, and payables, and automate entries by uploading bills and bank statements for instant data extraction.

Indian Mountaineer Kabak Yano Summits Mount Aconcagua

- **Kabak Yano (27),** a mountaineer from Arunachal Pradesh, successfully **summited Mount Aconcagua in Argentina—**the highest peak in South America and the Western Hemisphere (22,831 feet)—as part of her ambitious 7-Summit Mountaineering Expedition.
- Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen K.T. Parnaik (Retd.) congratulated Yano, recalling that he had flagged off her 7-Summit Expedition from Itanagar on July 28 last year, and described her success as a source of inspiration for the youth of the state.

Amit Shah launched Bharat Taxi, India's First Cooperative-Based Ride-Hailing Platform

- **Bharat Taxi** was launched by Union Home and Cooperation Minister **Amit Shah,** marking **India's first cooperative-based ride-hailing platform.**
- Over 3 lakh drivers onboarded, 1 lakh+ users, 10,000+ daily rides across Delhi-NCR and Gujarat, ₹10 crore distributed to drivers, with nationwide expansion planned within two years.

India Joins BRICS Centre for Industrial Competencies to Boost Manufacturing and MSMEs

- **India** has joined the **BRICS Centre for Industrial Competencies (BCIC) at an event organised by DPIIT,** Ministry of Commerce & Industry, held at Vanijya Bhavan in New Delhi.
- The **BCIC, launched in partnership with UNIDO**, will function as a one-stop centre to provide integrated support to manufacturing companies and MSMEs across BRICS countries, with a focus on Industry 4.0 capabilities.

President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated grand tribal cultural festival 'Bastar Pandum-2026' in Jagdalpur

- **President Droupadi Murmu** has inaugurated the **Bastar Pandum Festival during her one-day visit to Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh.**
- The Bastar Pandum Festival features divisional-level cultural competitions, with over 700 artists from 84 teams showcasing 12 tribal art forms, including folk dances, handicrafts, traditional cuisine, and indigenous musical instruments.

Govt sanctions over 3 crore 87 lakh houses to States & Union Territories under PMAY-G

- The **Government** has **sanctioned over 3.87 crore houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) to States and Union Territories.**
- As of 2nd February, more than 2.95 crore houses have been completed, while 2.10 crore houses were sanctioned in the last five years, highlighting accelerated progress.
- PMAY-G, implemented by the **Ministry of Rural Development since 1st April 2016, aims to construct 4.95 crore rural houses by March 2029.**

Alwar Becomes India's First District to Achieve 100% Insurance Coverage Under 'Insurance for All by 2047'

- **Alwar district** has become **India's first to achieve 100% insurance coverage**, marking a major milestone under the Centre's 'Insurance for All by 2047' vision of a Secure India–Insured India.
- The initiative is a joint effort of the Government of India and IRDAI under the Ministry of Finance, aiming for universal, affordable, and inclusive insurance coverage by the centenary of Independence.

Rajnath Singh Flags Off Joint Indian Expedition to Mount Aconcagua

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** flagged off a **joint expedition to Mount Aconcagua in Argentina from South Block, New Delhi**, led by the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (Uttarkashi) and the Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering & Winter Sports (Pahalgam).
- The expedition begins on 6 February 2026 and concludes by month-end, aiming to scale Mount Aconcagua (6,960 m), the highest peak in South America and the highest mountain outside Asia.

IIT Madras Research Park Launches ₹600 Crore Unicorn Frontier Fund for Deep-Tech Startups

- **IIT Madras Research Park** has launched the **₹600 crore IIT Madras Unicorn Frontier Fund,** a deep-tech–focused venture capital fund, with Unicorn India Ventures appointed as the fund manager and a ₹400 crore greenshoe option.

- The fund will invest ₹5–10 crore per startup, targeting frontier domains aligned with India's strategic priorities such as defence, climate tech, quantum computing, and semiconductors.

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Launches Nationwide Pulse Self-Reliance Mission

- Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the nationwide **Pulses Self-Reliance Mission from the Food Legumes Research Centre (FLRP), Amlaha (Sehore), Madhya Pradesh**, in the presence of senior central and state leaders.
- The mission's roadmap focuses on cluster-based pulse production, seed villages, setting up 1,000 pulse mills, and strengthening research–farmer linkages across the country.

PLASTINDIA 2026 Kicks Off in New Delhi

- **PLASTINDIA 2026,** one of the world's largest plastics exhibitions, is being **held in New Delhi** as a 6-day event focusing on building a self-reliant industrial base, boosting **manufacturing-led growth and large-scale employment.**
- With the **theme "BHARAT NEXT"**, aligned with Atmanirbhar Bharat, PLASTINDIA 2026 is being organized as a zero-wastage exhibition at Bharat Mandapam, concluding on the 10th of this month.

VOC Port Becomes First In India To Deploy Anti-Drone System

- **V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority** has become the **first port in India to begin implementing an advanced Anti-Drone System** to strengthen maritime and coastal security.
- The system integrates RF and radar-based technologies, **offering 360° coverage up to 5 km,** with real-time detection, tracking and neutralisation of unauthorised drones in complex port environments.

Delhi Police Launches 'Operation Shastra' to Curb Online Threats and Fear-Mongering

- **Delhi Police** has launched "**Operation Shastra"** to curb the **misuse of social media platforms for spreading fear, intimidation and criminal posturing.**
- The operation targets individuals posting photos/videos with weapons and using abusive, threatening or fear-mongering language online to maintain public order and digital safety.

Goa Becomes Second State To Publish Bird Atlas

- **Goa** has become the **second state in India, after Kerala,** to publish a comprehensive State-level Bird Atlas, strengthening avian research, biodiversity documentation and conservation planning.

- The Bird Atlas of Goa was released during the **9th Bird Festival of Goa held at Valpoi, themed "Majestic Mhadei"**, highlighting the biodiversity of the Mhadei river basin.

39th Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2026 Begins in Haryana with Theme "Vocal to Global"

- The **39th Surajkund International Crafts Mela** was held in **Faridabad, Haryana**, attracting widespread public participation and enthusiasm.
- This year's theme, "**Vocal to Global**", aims to promote Indian crafts and culture on the international stage.
- **Uttar Pradesh and Meghalaya are the theme states**, showcasing their unique cultural heritage, while **Egypt participates as the partner nation**, adding an international dimension.

Kerala Launches NeophyteID for Invasive Plant Detection

- **Kerala** is set to launch "**NeophyteID", an AI-powered mobile application for detecting and managing invasive plant specie**s, with its formal launch scheduled at the Kerala Science Congress.
- Developed by researchers at the Malabar Botanical Garden and Institute for Plant Sciences, the app uses artificial intelligence to identify non-native plants (neophytes) from smartphone-captured images, aiding early detection and rapid response.

Andhra Pradesh Announces Exclusive 30-Acre Women Industrial Park

- **Andhra Pradesh** has announced an **exclusive Women Industrial Park spread over 30 acres,** dedicated entirely to women-owned and women-managed enterprises, to promote women-led industrial growth.
- The state government has signed an MoU with FICCI Ladies Organisation (FICCI-FLO) to provide institutional support, mentorship, skill development, and ecosystem-building for women entrepreneurs.

India, Canada Finalise Shared Work Plan to Strengthen Security and Law Enforcement Cooperation

- **India and Canada** agreed on a '**shared work plan'** to strengthen cooperation in national security and law enforcement, with a focus on tackling transnational criminal networks and other common security challenges.
- The decision was taken during a meeting between India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Canada's NSA Nathalie Drouin held in Ottawa.

IIT Madras and Unicorn India Ventures Launch ₹600 Crore Deep Tech Fund to Boost IP-Led Startups

- **IIT Madras Research Park (IITMRP) and Unicorn India Ventures** have launched **a ₹600 crore deep tech fund,** with an additional ₹400 crore greenshoe option, to strengthen India's innovation and startup ecosystem.
- The fund aims to invest in 25+ IP-led, engineering-driven startups across sectors such as robotics, spacetech, defencetech, semiconductors, and medtech, aligned with India's strategic priorities.

India Launches iLive Connect, World's First Doctor-Led AI Healthcare Ecosystem for Real-Time Home Monitoring

- **India** launched **iLive Connect, the world's first doctor-led AI healthcare ecosystem,** aimed at providing continuous clinical monitoring and early-intervention care at patients' homes.
- The system integrates AI-powered predictive analytics with real-time oversight by specialised doctors, helping bridge gaps in chronic disease management and post-hospital care, especially in remote areas and for elderly patients.

Telangana Launches 'Aikam' to Boost AI Ecosystem and Global Innovation

- **The Telangana Government** has launched **Aikam,** an autonomous organisation to promote the AI ecosystem in the state, **focusing on workforce upskilling, supporting AI startups,** offering compute infrastructure, and establishing a dedicated AI Fund-of-Funds.
- Aikam aims to position Telangana as a top-20 global innovation hub, inviting international partners to set up pilot and testing facilities in the state.

Uttar Pradesh Becomes First State to Present Its Own Economic Survey Highlighting Rapid Growth

- **Uttar Pradesh** becomes the **first Indian state to present its own Economic Survey,** highlighting rapid development and industrialisation.
- The survey shows the state's contribution to the national economy rising from 8.6% in 2016-17 to 9.1% in 2024-25.

Rajasthan Emerges as India's Largest Wool Producer, Contributing 47.5% of National Output

- **Rajasthan** has become **India's largest wool producer**, with a production of 16,013.50 thousand kg, **contributing 47.5% of the country's total wool output**, followed by Jammu & Kashmir (7,770 thousand kg) and Karnataka (6,472 thousand kg).
- As per Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics 2024-25, India has the second-largest sheep population in the world (77.4 million) and ranks ninth globally in total wool production, with 33.69 million kg produced in FY 2023-24.

Aditya Pandya Becomes India's Youngest Male Analog Astronaut

- **Seventeen-year-old Aditya Pandy**a becomes **India's youngest male analog astronaut** after successfully completing a lunar-habitat-inspired analog mission conducted by AAKA Space Studio in Dholavira, Kutch.
- The mission simulated Moon-like isolation, autonomous operations, and long-duration confinement, with a four-member crew living in a container-based lunar analog habitat, focusing on human–machine interaction and system reliability.

V.O. Chidambaranar Port Becomes India's First IGBC Platinum & Net Zero Certified Major Port

- **V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority** becomes the **first major Indian port** to achieve the prestigious **IGBC Platinum Rating for its sustainable, eco-friendly, and energy-efficient administrative building.**
- The port's administrative **building operates on 100% renewable energy**, while the Hospital and CISF Barracks earned Shunya Plus certification, and the Administrative Building and Guest House earned Shunya certification from BEE, highlighting net zero and net positive energy performance.

Gujarat's Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary Records Over 6.42 Lakh Birds of 270 Species in Bird Census 2026

- **A bird census by the Gujarat Forest Department** recorded **6,42,232 birds of 270 species at the Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary, located near Ahmedabad.**
- The sanctuary was divided into 50 survey zones, and teams conducted two systematic counts (morning and evening) to ensure accurate estimation of bird populations.
- The exercise saw participation from 220 bird experts and wildlife enthusiasts, 12 forest officials, and 99 local boatmen and guides, reflecting strong community involvement.

WWF India Develops Goa's First Biodiversity and Cultural Features Map for School Students

- **WWF India** has developed **Goa's first Biodiversity and Cultural Features Map**, combining ecological and cultural education for students.
- The map showcases **48 commonly found species** along with traditional art forms of Goa, focusing on biodiversity visible in everyday surroundings.

PM Modi Inaugurates Seva Teerth and Kartavya Bhavan Complexes

- **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **Seva Teerth Complex**, which now houses the **Prime Minister's Office, National Security Council Secretariat, and Cabinet Secretariat, along with Kartavya Bhavan-1 and Kartavya Bhavan-2**, accommodating several key Union ministries.

- The new complexes aim to replace fragmented and ageing infrastructure in the Central Vista area by consolidating ministries into modern, digitally integrated, citizen-centric facilities, enhancing coordination, efficiency, security, and governance processes.

PM Modi Inaugurates Kumar Bhaskar Varma Setu in Assam

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated a **six-lane bridge over the Brahmaputra River in Assam.**
- The bridge is named Kumar Bhaskar Varma Setu and cost 3,030 crore.
- It is the 1.24 km-long bridge that connects Guwahati with North Guwahati. **It is the first extradosed bridge in the Northeast.**

India to Establish First National Cow Culture Museum in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh

- **India** will set up its **first National Cow Culture Museum in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh,** within the campus of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Veterinary Science University.
- The museum aims to present a balanced narrative by highlighting the cultural, agricultural, and economic importance of cattle, going beyond purely religious symbolism and integrating scientific awareness.

PM Modi Inaugurates Northeast India's First Emergency Landing Facility in Assam

- **PM Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **Emergency Landing Facility (ELF) on the Moran Bypass along a national highway in Dibrugarh district**, Assam, **marking the first such facility in Northeast** India designed for emergency operations of military and civil aircraft in coordination with the Indian Air Force.
- He also virtually inaugurated the temporary campus of the Indian Institute of Management Guwahati and the National Data Centre for the North Eastern Region, flagged off 225 electric buses under the PM-eBus Sewa Scheme, and later addressed a BJP Booth Sanmilan in Guwahati.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan to Launch AI-Powered Farmer Platform 'Bharat-VISTAAR' in Jaipur

- **Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan** to launch **AI-based farmer platform 'Bharat-VISTAAR' in Jaipur** to empower farmers with technology.
- Farmers can access services via phone calls, chatbot, and in future, a mobile application; initially available in Hindi and English across multiple states like Maharashtra, Bihar, and Gujarat.

Amit Shah Inaugurates India's First CBDC-Based Public Distribution System in Gujarat

- **Amit Shah** inaugurated I**ndia's first CBDC-based Public Distribution System (PDS) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat,** where ration beneficiaries receive digital coupons instead of cash.
- As part of the rollout, Gujarat inaugurated the "Annapurti Grain ATM", an automated 24×7 machine capable of dispensing up to 25 kg of grain in about 35 seconds, enhancing efficiency and accessibility in ration distribution.

Union Cabinet Approves ₹10,000 Crore Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 to Boost Innovation and Non-Metro Startups

- The **Union Cabinet** approved **Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 with a corpus of ₹10,000 crore to support startups,** particularly in non-metro areas, and reduce early-stage funding failures.
- Under Fund of Funds 1.0, the full corpus of ₹10,000 crore was allocated to 145 Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), which invested over ₹25,500 crore, benefiting more than 1,370 startups across India.

Union Cabinet Approves ₹1 Lakh Crore Urban Challenge Fund to Boost Market-Linked, Reform-Driven Urban Development

- **The Union Cabinet**, chaired by Narendra Modi, **approved the ₹1 lakh crore Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)** to promote market-linked, reform-driven urban infrastructure development across India from FY 2025–26 to FY 2030–31 (extendable to FY 2033–34), aiming to leverage ₹4 lakh crore in urban sector investments.
- Key project verticals include:
  - Cities as Growth Hubs – integrated spatial/economic planning, urban mobility, greenfield development, and critical infrastructure.
  - Creative Redevelopment of Cities – renewal of CBDs, heritage areas, brownfield regeneration, climate resilience, and decongestion, especially in northeastern and hilly states.
  - Water and Sanitation – upgrading water supply, sewerage, stormwater systems, integrated solid waste management, and legacy waste remediation.
- To strengthen creditworthiness of smaller cities (particularly Tier-II, Tier-III, and northeastern/hilly ULBs), the Cabinet approved a ₹5,000 crore Credit Repayment Guarantee Scheme, providing central guarantees of up to ₹7 crore or 70% of first-time loans, and up to 50% for subsequent loans, facilitating initial market access for smaller cities.

Balaghat Chosen as Pilot District Under World's Largest Cooperative Grain Storage Plan

- Balaghat district in Madhya Pradesh has been selected as a pilot region under the World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector, with a 500-metric-tonne godown constructed at Parswada and inaugurated by Narendra Modi on 24 February 2024.
- The modern storage facility is operated by the Madhya Pradesh Warehousing and Logistics Corporation and aims to strengthen rural storage capacity, promote scientific warehousing, and support decentralised agricultural infrastructure at the grassroots level.

President Murmu Inaugurates Centenary Celebrations of Ol Chiki Script, Honours Santal Achievers

- The President of India inaugurated the 100-year celebrations of the Ol Chiki script, organised by the Ministry of Culture in New Delhi.
- The script, invented by Pandit Raghunath Murmu in 1925, preserves the Santhali language and serves as a symbol of Santal identity worldwide.

Madras High Court Launches AI-Assisted 'Superlaw Courts' System to Boost Judicial Efficiency

- The Madras High Court has launched an AI-assisted system called Superlaw Courts, aimed at enhancing judicial efficiency by helping judges and legal professionals manage large volumes of case records and reduce delays in proceedings.
- The system acts as an intelligent record assistant, creating a secure digital workspace, converting scanned documents into searchable text using OCR (Optical Character Recognition) technology, and enabling faster retrieval of relevant case information.

Govt Launches First National Call for BIRAC-RDI Fund to Boost High-Impact Biotechnology Innovation

- Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh announced the first national call for the BIRAC-RDI Fund, aimed at scaling high-impact biotechnology innovations under the Government of India's ₹1 lakh crore Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) initiative.
- The Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) has been appointed as a second-level fund manager and will deploy ₹2,000 crore over up to five years, with provisions for future expansion.

JP Nadda Launched SAHI and BODH to Strengthen AI Use in India's Healthcare System

- Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda has launched two national AI-driven healthcare initiatives—SAHI and BODH—at the India AI Summit being held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

- The Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI (BODH), developed by the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur in collaboration with the National Health Authority, will enable privacy-preserving evaluation of AI models using real-world health data.

Kerala Approves India's First Graphene Policy

- Kerala has approved India's first comprehensive Graphene Policy, aiming to position the state as a global hub for graphene research, development, and manufacturing, integrating advanced materials into its long-term economic growth strategy.
- As part of the initiative, the Union Cabinet approved the establishment of Grefine Park, and the state will set up a dedicated graphene industrial park in Palakkad along with a ₹200 crore Digital Innovation Centre to promote graphene-based innovation.

National Consumer Helpline Facilitates ₹52 Crore Refunds Across 31 Sectors in Nine Months

- National Consumer Helpline (NCH) facilitated refunds worth ₹52 crore across 31 sectors by resolving 79,521 refund-related grievances between 25 April and 31 January 2026.
- The E-commerce sector recorded the highest complaints (47,743 cases) with refunds exceeding ₹36 crore, followed by the Travel & Tourism sector, where refunds of over ₹4 crore were facilitated through the Helpline.

NHAI to Create India's First 'BeeCorridors' to Boost Pollinator Conservation

- The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) will develop India's first-ever bee-friendly corridors along national highways to support pollinator conservation.
- NHAI plans to collaborate with environmentalists, ecologists, and research organisations to design and maintain these corridors effectively.

DoP Unveils 8 Commemorative Stamps Celebrating 'Puppets of India' at India Habitat Centre

- The Department of Posts released a set of 8 commemorative postage stamps titled "Puppets of India" at the India Habitat Centre, highlighting India's rich puppetry heritage.
- The stamps were formally released by Vandita Kaul, Secretary (Posts), in the presence of artists and members of the cultural fraternity, celebrating one of India's oldest storytelling traditions.
- The issue showcases eight traditional puppetry forms—Kathputli (Rajasthan), Yakshagana Sutrada Gombeyatta (Karnataka), Daanger Putul & Benir Putul (West Bengal), Kathi Kundhei & Ravanachhaya (Odisha),

Pavakathakali (Kerala), and Tolu Bommalatta (Andhra Pradesh)—covering string, glove, rod, and shadow puppets.

EU Launches First European Legal Gateway Office in India to Boost Study and Work Opportunities

- The **European Union** has opened its **first-ever European Legal Gateway Office** in New Delhi, marking the first such initiative in any partner country.
- The office will function as a one-stop help centre for Indian students and professionals seeking to study or work in EU countries, particularly in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector.

Google Unveils $15 Billion 'America-India Connect' Subsea Cable Project to Boost AI Connectivity

- **Google** announced the '**America-India Connect' initiative** at the **India AI Impact Summit, a $15 billion investment over five years to link India and the USA through new subsea cables.**
- As part of the initiative, a new international subsea gateway will be established in Vizag, along with three new subsea paths connecting India to Singapore, South Africa, and Australia, and four strategic fibre-optic routes.
- Google CEO Sundar Pichai stated that the project will enhance AI connectivity between India, the USA, and multiple locations across the southern hemisphere, supporting India's extraordinary AI growth trajectory.

India's First Private-Sector Helicopter Assembly Line Inaugurated by TASL for Airbus H125

- **India's first private-sector helicopter Final Assembly Line (FAL)** for the **Airbus H125** has been **established at Vemagal, Karnataka**, by **Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL)** and inaugurated virtually by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Emmanuel Macron.
- The "Made in India" H125 aims to serve civil and para-public sectors, including emergency medical services, disaster management, law enforcement, and regional connectivity under the UDAN scheme; it is also notable for being the only helicopter to have landed on Mount Everest and accumulating over 40 million flight hours.

Kerala to launch India's first graphene policy to become global tech hub

- **Kerala** has approved **India's first comprehensive Graphene Policy**, aiming to position the state as a global hub for research, development, and production of graphene, often referred to as the "wonder material" of the future.

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Graphene (Grefine) Park, with the state government offering strategic incentives such as a 50% subsidy on lease payments for manufacturing units set up in government-managed parks to attract domestic and global investors.

India Sets Guinness World Record with Over 2.5 Lakh AI Responsibility Pledges in 24 Hours

- **India** achieved a **Guinness World Record for the "Most pledges received for an AI responsibility campaign in 24 hours,"** securing 250,946 valid pledges between February 16–17 **during the India AI Impact Summit 2026** at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- The achievement was announced by Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister for Electronics and IT, and officially verified by a Guinness World Records adjudicator in the presence of senior officials from MeitY, IndiaAI Mission, and Intel.

UP Government Launches District-Level Manuscript Digitisation Drive Under 'Gyan Bharatam Mission'

- The **Uttar Pradesh Government** has launched a **district-level manuscript digitisation initiative under the 'Gyan Bharatam Mission',** directing all districts to identify, document, and digitally present manuscripts on a global platform to revive India's rich knowledge and intellectual heritage.
- The Chief Development Officer (CDO) of each district has been designated as the nodal officer to supervise the identification, survey, cataloguing, preservation, and digitisation of manuscripts and rare texts.

Rekha Gupta Launches India's First AI-Driven CM Shri School in Delhi

- **Delhi CM Rekha Gupta** inaugurated the **first CM Shri School at Sarojini Nagar**, launching what is described as India's first AI-driven comprehensive education model, **with foundation stones laid for 75 such schools across Delhi.**
- The CM Shri Schools focus on modern infrastructure and academic excellence, targeting students from economically weaker and middle-income families, with the goal of making Delhi's children globally competitive through advanced teaching methods and upgraded facilities.

FAO Awards International Certificate to West Bengal for 'Matir Srishti' Programme

- The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the **United Nations awarded an international certificate to West Bengal**, as announced by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.
- The recognition was given for the **community-based 'Matir Srishti' programme (launched in 2020),** which focuses on converting barren and

dry land into cultivable land and promoting multi-crop farming, horticulture, and vegetable cultivation.

Union Home Minister to Launch Vibrant Villages Programme-II in Assam's Cachar District

- **Amit Shah** will launch the **Vibrant Villages Programme-II in Assam's Cachar district**, a **₹6,800+ crore initiative** aimed at developing border villages and promoting sustainable livelihoods in line with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.
- The programme will be implemented across 15 States and 2 Union Territories through a saturation-based, convergence-driven approach to strengthen border communities and enhance internal security.

NHAI Plans 100% Digital Toll Collection from April 1, 2026

- The **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** is considering **discontinuing cash transactions at National Highway toll plazas from April 1, 2026**, with all payments proposed to be made through digital modes such as FASTag and UPI.
- The initiative aims to create a fully digital tolling ecosystem, improve 'Ease of Commuting', enhance lane throughput, reduce congestion at toll plazas, and ensure greater transparency and consistency in toll collection.

India and UK Launch Offshore Wind Task Force Under Vision 2035 at 4th Energy Dialogue

- **India and the United Kingdom** launched the **India–UK Offshore Wind Task Force in New Delhi under Vision 2035** to strengthen cooperation in renewable energy and offshore wind development.
- The initiative was launched by Union Minister Pralhad Joshi and UK Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy during the 4th India–UK Energy Dialogue.

MeitY Launches 'VoicERA' Open-Source Voice AI Stack at India AI Impact Summit 2026

- The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** launched **VoicERA, an open-source end-to-end Voice AI stack, at the India AI Impact Summit 2026** in New Delhi, aimed at enabling secure and scalable multilingual voice systems.
- Deployed on the BHASHINI National Language Infrastructure, VoicERA serves as a national execution layer for multilingual Voice and Language AI, supporting cloud and on-premises deployment across government and research ecosystems.

C. P. Radhakrishnan Releases Gujarati and Tamil Versions of Constitution of India on International Mother Language Day

- On the occasion of **International Mother Language Day** (21 February), C**. P. Radhakrishnan released** the updated versions of the **Constitution of India in Gujarati and Tamil languages.**
- The Santali version of the Constitution was earlier released on 25 December 2025, further promoting linguistic inclusivity and constitutional awareness.

Bela Gram Becomes India's First Net-Zero Panchayat

- **Bela Gram, a** village in Bhandara district in Maharashtra, has **become India's first net-zero panchayat (net-zero village)** and was honoured during Mumbai Climate Week 2026.
- A net-zero village reduces its greenhouse gas emissions and balances any remaining emissions through eco-friendly measures like tree plantation and renewable energy adoption.

Bihar Approves New International Airport at Sonepur with 4,200-Metre Runway

- **The Bihar Cabinet**, chaired by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, has **approved the construction of a new international airport at Sonepur**, targeted for completion by 2030 to boost air connectivity in north Bihar.
- The airport will have a 4,200-metre runway capable of handling wide-body aircraft, including the Airbus A380, and will support both passenger and cargo operations at an international level.

India Sets Guinness World Records Record for Most AI Responsibility Pledges in 24 Hours

- **India** has set a **Guinness World Records record for receiving the "Most pledges for an AI responsibility campaign in 24 hours,"** as announced by Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.
- A total of 2,50,946 valid pledges were recorded between 16 and 17 February 2026, with the announcement made at the India AI Impact Summit 2026 held at Bharat Mandapam.

J. P. Nadda and Emmanuel Macron Inaugurate Indo-French Centre for AI in Health at AIIMS New Delhi

- **Union Health Minister J. P. Nadda** and **French President Emmanuel Macron** inaugurated the **Indo-French Centre for AI in Health (IF-CAIH) at AIIMS New Delhi**.
- The centre aims to advance AI-based research, medical education, and clinical innovation to address complex healthcare challenges through Indo-French collaboration.

Union Cabinet Approves Renaming of Kerala to 'Keralam'

- The **Union Cabinet** has approved the **proposal to change the name of the State of Kerala to "Keralam"**, following a resolution passed by the Kerala Legislative Assembly on 24 June 2024.
- After Cabinet approval, the President of India will refer the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026, to the State Legislative Assembly for its views, after which it will be introduced in Parliament for final approval.

Nirmala Sitharaman Launches National Monetisation Pipeline 2.0 with ₹16.72 Lakh Crore Potential in New Delhi

- **Nirmala Sitharaman** launched the **National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) 2.0 in New Delhi,** marking the second phase of asset monetisation for Central ministries and public sector entities.
- NMP 2.0 has been developed by NITI Aayog under the '**Asset Monetisation Plan 2025–30' announced in the Union Budget 2025–26.**
- The pipeline estimates a **total monetisation potential of ₹16.72 lakh crore**, including ₹5.8 lakh crore private sector investment, for **the period FY 2025–26 to FY 2029–30.**

Ministry of Home Affairs Unveils 'PRAHAR' – India's New National Counter-Terrorism Strategy

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** unveiled India's **new national counter-terrorism policy and strategy titled PRAHAR.**
- PRAHAR stands for **Prevention, Response, Aggregation of capacities, Human rights & Rule of Law, Attenuation of radicalisation, Alignment of international efforts, and Recovery & resilience,** ensuring a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.

Waaree Energies to Set Up India's Largest 16 GWh Lithium-Ion Battery Gigafactory in Andhra Pradesh

- **Waaree Energies** has announced an **investment of ₹8,175 crore** to set up India's largest integrated **lithium-ion battery gigafactory at Rambilli in Andhra Pradesh**, with a **production capacity of 16 GWh.**
- The greenfield facility, approved in principle by the State Investment Promotion Board, will cover the entire battery value chain — including cell manufacturing, battery pack assembly, and Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

Palamu Tiger Reserve Launches 'Vanjeevi Didi' Initiative to Empower Women in Forest Conservation

- The **Palamu Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Jharkhand** has launched the '**Vanjeevi Didi' initiative,** a community-driven programme aimed at empowering women to protect forests and wildlife.

- Under the scheme, 18 educated women from each of 17 villages have been selected as forest ambassadors to promote awareness and discourage poaching and deforestation.

Maharashtra's Soundala Village Declares Itself 'Caste-Free' with Unanimous Gram Sabha Resolution

- **Soundala village in Maharashtra** has declared itself a "**caste-free" village** through a unanimous Gram Sabha resolution passed, adopting the motto **"Aamchi jaat... manav" (My caste is humanity).**
- Located in the Ahilyanagar district, the village formally renounced caste-based discrimination and social exclusion, promoting equality and shared human values.

President Murmu Unveils Rajagopalachari Bust at Rashtrapati Bhavan

- **President Droupadi Murmu** unveiled a bust of C**hakravarti Rajagopalachari at Rashtrapati Bhavan**, replacing the **statue of British architect Edwin Lutyens**, as part of the government's effort to remove colonial-era symbols.
- The bust has been installed at the Grand Open Staircase near Ashok Mandap, opposite the statue of Mahatma Gandhi, highlighting India's own leaders and traditions within the presidential estate.

Jagat Prakash Nadda Launches Indigenous Td Vaccine at CRI Kasauli

- **Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda** launched the **indigenously manufactured Tetanus & Adult Diphtheria (Td) Vaccine** at the Central Research Institute (CRI), Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh.
- The Td vaccine has been introduced under the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP), with **CRI set to supply 55 lakh doses by April 2026,** and production expected to scale up in the coming years.

Digital Bharat Nidhi and Andhra Pradesh Sign MoC for Fast-Track Implementation of Amended BharatNet Programme

- A **Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC**) was signed **between Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) under the Department of Telecommunications**, Ministry of Communications, and the Government of Andhra Pradesh for faster implementation of the Amended BharatNet Programme (ABP) in the state.
- The agreement provides a collaborative framework where the Andhra Pradesh government will facilitate Right of Way (RoW), infrastructure access, and coordination support to ensure expedited rollout of the programme.

MoEFCC to Host 'Him-CONNECT' in New Delhi to Promote Sustainable Innovations in the Indian Himalayan Region

- The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** will organise 'Him-CONNECT' in New Delhi as part of TERI's World Sustainable Development Summit.
- Over 24 technologies, prototypes, patents, and pilot projects developed under the National Mission on Himalayan Studies will be showcased, with participation from more than 100 start-ups, incubators, investors, and policymakers.

Jean Todt Launches UN Global Road Safety Campaign 'Make A Safety Statement' in India

- **The UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safet**y, Jean Todt, launched the **UN-JCDecuax Global Campaign for Road Safety titled "Make A Safety Statement", a**imed at promoting simple daily measures like wearing seat belts and helmets, following speed limits, and avoiding mobile phone use while driving.
- A new project, "Sustainable Financing for Road Safety in India: A Collaborative Approach," supported by the UN Road Safety Fund and implemented with technical support from WHO, UNICEF, and UN ESCAP, was also launched to strengthen road safety systems and establish sustainable financing mechanisms in India.

Indian Mountaineers Summit Mount Aconcagua in Argentina

- **A six-member team from the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (Uttarkashi**) and the Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering & Winter Sports (Pahalgam) successfully **summited Mount Aconcagua in Argentina.**
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh ceremonially flagged off the expedition on the 5th February.

Cabinet Approves MSP for Raw Jute at Rs. 5,925 per Quintal for 2026-27 Season

- **Cabinet**, chaired by PM Shri Narendra Modi, approves **Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Raw Jute at Rs. 5,925 per quintal for the 2026-27 season.**
- The MSP ensures a 61.8% return over the all-India weighted average cost of production, following the government's principle of at least 1.5 times cost of production.

Cabinet Approves ₹1,677 Crore Expansion of Civil Enclave at Srinagar International Airport

- **The Cabinet** has approved the **expansion of the Civil Enclave at Srinagar International Airport at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,677 crore** to strengthen aviation infrastructure in the Kashmir Valley.
- The new project, **spread over 73.18 acres**, will include a state-of-the-art terminal building with an annual capacity of 10 million passengers and peak-hour handling capacity of 2,900 passengers.

Jayant Chaudhary Launches 'Badhna Hai Toh Yahan Judna Hai' Campaign to Boost Digital Skilling via Skill India Digital Hub

- Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship **Jayant Chaudhary launched** the nationwide campaign '**Badhna Hai Toh Yahan Judna Hai' to boost digital skilling through the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH).**
- To enhance awareness and participation, the **campaign features legendary actor Amitabh Bachchan** as part of its outreach efforts.

Government Launches Mobile Labs to Monitor Quality of National Highway Projects

- **The government** has launched **Mobile Quality Control Vans (MQCVs)** to monitor and **diagnose the quality of ongoing National Highway projects.**
- Pilot projects have been implemented in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Odisha, with each van functioning as a mobile laboratory equipped with advanced non-destructive testing instruments.

West Bengal Launches 'Banglar Yuva Sathi' Scheme to Provide ₹1,500 Monthly Aid to Unemployed Youth

- **The Government of West Bengal** has launched the '**Banglar Yuva Sathi' scheme** in the Budget 2026-27 to provide financial support to unemployed youth.
- Under the scheme, **eligible beneficiaries will receive ₹1,500 per month**, and many may also benefit from the Lakshmir Bhandar Scheme for women.

Ministry of Ayush to Organise National Arogya Fair 2026 in Maharashtra

- The **Ministry of Ayush**, Government of India, in collaboration with the All India Ayurvedic Congress, will organize the **National Arogya Fair 2026 at Shegaon in Buldhana district, Maharashtra.**
- The event will be inaugurated by President Droupadi Murmu at Visava Maidan of Sant Gajanan Maharaj Sansthan.

Chapter 13: Current Affairs (International)

Venezuela Passes Major Oil Law Reform, Opens Doors for Foreign Companies

- **Venezuela's National Assembly** has approved **major reforms to the country's oil laws,** allowing foreign energy companies greater operational control and reduced taxes and royalties to attract international investment, while state ownership through Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) remains intact.

- The overhaul reverses key elements of the 2007 nationalisation era, enabling private firms to engage more directly in production, commercialization, and potentially manage revenues, thus opening the sector to foreign capital after years of strict state monopoly.

India–US Announce Major Trade Deal, Slash Tariffs and Deepen Economic Ties

- **India and the United States** announced a **major bilateral trade agreement to lower reciprocal tariffs and strengthen economic ties,** following a phone conversation between PM Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump.
- As part of the deal, the US reduced tariffs on Indian goods from 25% to 18% with immediate effect, boosting the competitiveness of Indian exports in the American market.
- In return, India agreed to cut tariffs and non-tariff barriers on US products to zero, along with provisions on energy trade, including increased US energy purchases and cessation of Russian oil imports, as per US officials.

Walmart Becomes World's First Retailer to Cross $1 Trillion Market Valuation

- **Walmart** became the **world's first retail company to achieve a market valuation of $1 trillion,** a milestone usually associated with technology giants, following a strong rally in its shares.
- With this achievement, Walmart joins the elite group of trillion-dollar companies such as Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Alphabet, Nvidia and Meta, highlighting its scale and global dominance in retail.

India and Gulf Cooperation Council Sign Terms of Reference for India–GCC Free Trade Agreement

- **India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** signed the **Terms of Reference (ToR) for the proposed India–GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA) at Vanijya Bhawan**, New Delhi, to formally begin negotiations.
- The ToR was signed between Shri Ajay Bhadoo (Department of Commerce) and Dr. Raja Al Marzouqi (GCC Secretariat) and will define the scope, structure, and modalities of the FTA negotiations.

Spain Becomes First European Nation to Ban Social Media for Children Under 16

- Spain has imposed a nationwide ban on social media for children under 16, becoming the first European country and the second globally after Australia to take this step.

New York City Joins WHO-Coordinated Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN)

- **New York City (USA)** has joined the **Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN),** which is **coordinated by the World Health Organisation (WHO).**

- Established in 2000, GOARN is a WHO-coordinated network comprising 360+ institutions worldwide, including public health agencies, laboratories, universities and technical organisations.

Mumbai's Coastal Road Becomes India's First 'Musical Path' Playing 'Jai Ho'

- **Mumbai's Coastal Road** becomes **India's first 'musical path'**, featuring special rumble strips that play the **Oscar-winning song 'Jai Ho' when vehicles drive at 60–80 kmph.**
- The stretch, named 'Sangeet Marg', runs from Nariman Point to Worli, and was inaugurated by Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis and Deputy CM Eknath Shinde.

Russia Blocks WhatsApp

- **Russia** has **blocked WhatsApp** for not complying with local laws, urging users to switch to domestic alternatives.
- Around 100 million Russian users are encouraged to use **the homegrown messaging app Max.**

Switzerland to Host AI Impact Summit 2027 in Geneva

- **S**witzerland announced that the **AI Impact Summit 2027 will be held in Geneva,** reinforcing its position as a global hub for technology and multilateral cooperation.
- The **AI Impact Summit 2028** will be **hosted by the United Arab Emirates (UAE),** continuing the summit's global rotation.

Bangladesh Becomes 89th Signatory as New Delhi Declaration on AI Gains Global Backing at India AI Impact Summit 2026

- **The New Delhi Declaration on AI Impact** was adopted at the **India AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi,** with Bangladesh becoming the 89th signatory, reflecting global consensus on using AI for economic growth and social good.
- **Guided by the principle of "Sarvajan Hitaya, Sarvajan Sukhaya,"** the Declaration emphasises the equitable and inclusive sharing of AI benefits across humanity.

Chapter 14: Banking & Financial

Centre's Capital Expenditure Likely to Cross ₹12 Lakh Crore in FY27: SBI Report

- **Central government capital expenditure** is projected to cross **₹12 lakh crore in FY27**, registering about **10% year-on-year growth, according to a report by the State Bank of India (SBI).**
- The report highlights a consistent rise in government-led capex, with Budget capital expenditure increasing from ₹2.5 lakh crore in FY16 to

₹11.2 lakh crore in FY26, reflecting strong focus on infrastructure and economic growth.

Slice Launches UPI-First Banking Solutions

- **Slice** integrates **savings, credit, and investments into a single UPI-first digital banking experience,** designed around how Indians already transact and pay in daily life.
- Slice has introduced India's first savings account linked to 100% of the RBI repo rate, offering daily interest credit, no minimum balance, instant liquidity, and transparent, market-aligned returns.

Punjab & Sind Bank Receives RBI Approval to Open Branch in GIFT City IFSC

- **State-owned Punjab & Sind Bank** has received the **Reserve Bank of India's approval to open a branch at the IFSC in GIFT City, Gandhinagar (Gujarat).**
- The move marks the bank's entry into international banking and global financial services, strengthening its presence beyond domestic operations.

SBI launches CHAKRA, to invest ₹100 trn in sunrise sectors over 5 years

- **State Bank of India (SBI)** launched **CHAKRA, a Centre of Excellence (CoE), to finance key sunrise sectors that are critical for India's long-term economic transformation.**
- CHAKRA will support sectors such as renewable energy, advanced cell chemistry and battery storage, semiconductors, decarbonisation, smart infrastructure, and data centre infrastructure, with total potential investments estimated at around ₹100 trillion over the next five years.

Paysharp Secures RBI's Payment Aggregator-Physical Licence for Offline Payments

- **Paysharp** has secured the **Payment Aggregator–Physical (PA-P) licence from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI),** enabling it to operate as an offline payment aggregator.
- Earlier, in August 2024, Paysharp had already received the Payment Aggregator–Online (PA-O) licence from the RBI, allowing it to provide online payment aggregation services.

UPI Transactions Hit Record ₹28.33 Lakh Crore in January 2026

- **UPI transactions** in **January 2026 reached a record ₹28.33 lakh crore** in value and 21.70 billion in volume, according to NPCI data, marking strong digital payment adoption in India.
- Compared to December 2025 (₹27.97 lakh crore), UPI showed a month-on-month growth of 21% in value, with an average daily transaction of 700 million and an average daily value of ₹91,4033 crore.

Gross GST Collections Reach ₹1.93 Lakh Crore in January 2026

- Gross GST collections in **January 2026 rose 6.2% to a three-month high of over ₹1.93 lakh crore,** indicating that increased consumption offset the rate cuts implemented in September 2025.
- Net GST revenues grew 7.6% to ₹1.71 lakh crore, as refunds fell 3.1% to ₹22,665 crore, with domestic transaction collections at ₹1.41 lakh crore and import revenues at ₹52,253 crore.
- GST rate changes included cuts on about 375 items, merger of four slabs (5, 12, 18, 28%) into two slabs of 5% and 18%, and a highest 40% slab for ultra-luxury goods and tobacco, which initially led to a dip in collections in November but recovery by January.

SBI Launches Global Trade Finance Centre in Kolkata to Boost Trade and Global Banking

- **State Bank of India (SBI)** has strengthened its **trade finance and global banking operations by launching a Global Trade Finance Centre (GTFC) in Kolkata**, West Bengal.
- SBI had announced two specialised GTFCs in July 2025, at Kolkata and Hyderabad, to mark its 70th anniversary.

India, World Bank Launch Country Partnership Framework to Boost Jobs and Economic Growth

- **India and the World Bank Group** have launched a new **Country Partnership Framework to accelerate job creation and economic growth, starting January 2026.**
- The partnership will provide USD 8–10 billion in financing annually for the next five years, supporting initiatives in both urban and rural areas for inclusive development.

New Insurance Act to Take Effect from Feb 5, Allows 100% FDI with Stronger Policyholder Protection

- **New Insurance Laws** to **come into force from February 5, 2026**, allowing **100% FDI in the insurance sector, except Section 25,** as notified by the Finance Ministry.
- Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Act, 2025 amends the Insurance Act, 1938, LIC Act, 1956 and IRDAI Act, 1999, while mandating that top leadership of insurance companies must be Indian citizens.

RBI MPC Keeps Repo Rate Unchanged at 5.25%, Raises Growth Outlook

- The **RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** kept the **repo rate unchanged at 5.25%,** with the decision announced by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra after the meeting held from February 4–6.
- The quarterly growth projections are as follows:

- o Q1 FY27: 6.9 per cent
- o Q2 FY27: 7 per cent
- The MPC revised its inflation forecast from 2 per cent to 2.1 per cent. The quarterly inflation forecasts are:
  - o Q4 FY26: 3.2 per cent
  - o Q1 FY27: 4 per cent
  - o Q2 FY27: 4.2 per cent

RBI Current Policy Rate are as under

- *Policy Repo Rate – 5.25%*
- *Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) – 5.00%*
- *Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) – 5.50%*
- *Bank Rate – 5.50%*
- *Reverse Repo Rate – 3.35%*
- *Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) – 3.00%*
- *Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) – 18%*

Axis Bank launches Rooftop Solar Finance for MSMEs

- **Axis Bank** has launched **Rooftop Solar Finance,** a customised financing solution aimed at helping MSMEs transition to solar energy and achieve greater energy self-reliance.
- Under the scheme, MSMEs can avail **collateral-free loans ranging from ₹10 lakh to ₹2 crore,** with flexible repayment tenures of 4–7 years, easing pressure on working capital.

RBI Imposes ₹18.76 Lakh Compounding Fee on Paytm for FEMA Violations

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI**) has imposed a com**pounding fee of ₹18.76 lakh on Paytm for FEMA violations** related to investments in one of its subsidiaries.
- Paytm stated that the compounding fee is a regulatory resolution mechanism under FEMA and does not have a material impact on its operations.

RBI Doubles Collateral-Free Loan Limit for Micro and Small Enterprises to ₹20 Lakh

- **RBI** has doubled the **limit of collateral-free loans for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) from ₹10 lakh to ₹20 lakh,** giving a major boost to small businesses.
- The enhanced limit will apply to all MSE loans sanctioned or renewed on or after April 1, aimed at improving access to formal credit, encouraging entrepreneurship, and strengthening last-mile credit delivery.

RBI Proposes Exempting Small Type-1 NBFCs from Registration to Ease Compliance Burden

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has proposed **exempting Type-1 NBFCs with an asset size below ₹1,000 crore** from mandatory registration with the RBI, subject to specified conditions.
- Type-1 NBFCs are entities that do not access public/external funds and have no customer interface, largely covering pure-play, equity-funded investment companies.

SBI Q3FY26 Profit Jumps 24.5% to ₹21,028 Crore on Higher Net Interest Income

- **State Bank of India (SBI)** reported a 24.5% year-on-year rise in standalone profit after tax to ₹21,028 crore in Q3FY26, driven mainly by an increase in Net Interest Income (NII).
- SBI's Net Interest Income grew 9.04% YoY, while the Net Interest Margin (NIM) dipped marginally to 3.12% from 3.15% in the year-ago period.

Ministry of Statistics Revises Consumer Price Index Base Year to 2024

- The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** has revised the **Consumer Price Index base year from 2012 to 2024**. This revision reflects the post-pandemic shift in household consumption patterns across India.
- The first CPI 2024 data will be released on 12 February 2026. A linking factor will be provided to maintain continuity with CPI 2012. Initially, both series will coexist to aid smooth policy transition.

Kotak Mahindra Bank Issues India's First Fully Digital FPI Licence

- **Kotak Mahindra Bank** became the **first custodian in India to issue a fully digital FPI (Foreign Portfolio Investor) licence,** completing the entire account-opening process through electronic signatures.
- The initiative follows SEBI's operationalisation of a unified digital workflow in January 2026, enabling seamless and paperless onboarding for overseas investors.

Ashwini Vaishnaw Launches Qualcomm 2 nm Semiconductor Chip in Bengaluru

- Union Minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw** launched **Qualcomm's 2 nm semiconductor chip** in Bengaluru, highlighting India's growing role in advanced semiconductor design and global engineering operations.
- The Minister stated that 10 semiconductor units are under construction, with 4 already starting pilot production, and the first unit expected to begin commercial production soon.

SBI Crosses ₹10 Lakh Crore Market Capitalisation, Joins Elite Club of India's Top Firms

- **State Bank of India (SBI)** crossed the **landmark of ₹10 lakh crore market capitalisation**, becoming the sixth Indian company to achieve this milestone.

- SBI joined the elite ₹10 lakh crore mcap club, which includes Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), and ICICI Bank.

SEBI Approves IIFL Capital Subsidiary at GIFT IFSC

- **IIFL Capital Services Limited** has received a **No Objection Certificate (NOC) from SEBI** to set up a wholly owned subsidiary **at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City – International Financial Services Centre (GIFT IFSC).**
- The proposed entity, named IIFL Capital Services (IFSC) Limited or IIFL Capital (IFSC) Limited, will operate as a separate legal entity.

CCI Imposes ₹27.38 Crore Penalty on Intel Corporation for Anti-Competitive Practices

- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** has imposed a **penalty of ₹27.38 crore on Intel Corporation for engaging in anti-competitive practices** related to its India-specific warranty policy.
- The Commission found that Intel abused its dominant position in the market for Boxed Micro Processors (BMPs) for desktops in India by enforcing unfair business practices.

RBI Proposes Strict Rules to Curb Harsh and Coercive Debt Recovery Practices

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has issued **draft guidelines to curb harsh and coercive debt recovery practices,** explicitly banning abusive language, threats, harassment, public humiliation, misleading claims, and excessive or anonymous calls by banks or recovery agents.
- Under the **proposed norms, recovery calls and visits will be permitted only between 8 am and 7 pm,** agents must avoid sensitive occasions (such as bereavement or festivals), and recovery agents can interact only with borrowers or guarantors, not relatives or associates.
- For microfinance loans, collections must take place at a mutually agreed location, with home or workplace visits allowed only after repeated failure by the borrower to appear at the designated place.

Reserve Bank of India Digital Payments Index Rises to 516.76 in September 2025

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Digital Payments Index (DPI) increas**ed **to 516.76 in September 2025, up from 465.33 in September 2024**, indicating rapid growth and adoption of digital payments across India.
- The RBI-DPI had **earlier stood at 493.22 in March 2025,** showing a consistent upward trend in digital payment usage over successive reporting periods.

BOBCARD Launches Braille-Enabled Premier Credit Card

- **BOBCARD Limited**, the credit card arm of Bank of Baroda (BOB), launched a **Braille-enabled BOBCARD Premier Credit Card in Manipal, Karnataka.**

- The card features Braille markings to help visually impaired users easily identify and use the card.

India's Retail Inflation Rises to 2.75% in January Under Revised CPI Series

- **India's retail inflation stood at 2.75% in January** under the revised Consumer Price Index (CPI) series, **with the base year updated from 2012 to 2024** — marking the first major revision in over a decade.
- Inflation remained within the tolerance limit of the Reserve Bank of India, despite rising from 1.33% (old series) in December.
- Rural inflation rose to 2.73% and urban inflation to 2.77%, while food inflation stood at 2.13%, reversing the deflation recorded in December.

RBI Slaps Fines on Bank of Maharashtra, DCB Bank, CSB Bank, IIFL Finance and Navi Finserv for Non-Compliance with Norms

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed mo**netary penalties on Bank of Maharashtra (₹32.50 lakh), DCB Bank (₹29.60 lakh), and CSB Bank (₹63.60 lakh)** for non-compliance with regulatory directions.
- The RBI also fined Navi Finserv (₹3.80 lakh) and IIFL Finance (₹5.30 lakh) for regulatory lapses related to customer communication, asset classification, and recovery practices.

NPCI Extends 'UPI One World' Wallet to International Delegates at India AI Impact Summit 2026

- **National Payments Corporation of India** has extended its **UPI One World wallet to international delegates attending the India AI Impact Summit 2026**, enabling UPI payments without an Indian mobile number or bank account.
- The wallet is issued via authorised PPI issuers at New Delhi International Airport and the NPCI Pavilion at Bharat Mandapam; users register through the Transcorp-powered **CheqUPI app using passport/visa verification and a UPI PIN.**

DBS Bank Becomes First in Asia-Pacific to Pilot Visa Intelligent Commerce for AI-Driven Payments

- **DBS Bank** became the **first issuer in the Asia-Pacific region to pilot Visa Intelligent Commerce,** in collaboration with Visa, marking a key step toward agent-initiated, AI-driven digital payments.
- The pilot validates AI-ready card credentials, authentication systems, and payment signals, ensuring secure, consent-based transactions executed by artificial intelligence agents within issuer-controlled safeguards.

India's Wholesale Inflation Rises to 1.81% in January

- **India's Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation** rose to 1**.81% in January 2026,** marking the **highest in 10 months** and continuing its upward trend

for the third consecutive month, driven by rising prices of food, non-food articles, and manufactured items.

- Retail inflation inched up to 2.75% in January 2026, while the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reduced policy interest rates by 1.25 percentage points in the current fiscal year due to overall low inflation.

IOB Launches Online Death Claim Settlement Portal for Faster, Transparent Processing

- **Indian Overseas Bank (IOB)** has launched an **Online Death Claim Settlement Portal,** enabling families and legal heirs to settle claims digitally in a simplified, time-bound manner.
- Claimants can initiate and complete the entire process from home, entering their details along with the deceased customer's account information and uploading required documents directly.

Bharti Airtel arm receives RBI nod to operate as Type II NBFC-ND

- **Bharti Airtel's subsidiary, Airtel Money,** has received a **Certificate of Registration** from the **RBI to operate as a Type II Non-Deposit Accepting Non-Banking Financial Company [Type II-NBFC-ND (ICC)]**, allowing it to commence non-banking financial operations without accepting public deposits.
- The certificate (Registration No. N-14.03676, dated 13 February 2026) was issued under Section 45-IA of the RBI Act, 1934, with RBI clarifying that it does not guarantee the company's financial soundness, correctness of statements, or repayment of liabilities.

IDFC FIRST Bank Launches Hello Cashback Credit Card with Tiered Rewards and Credit-Building Benefits

- **IDFC FIRST Bank** launches **Hello Cashback Credit Card** targeted at digitally savvy young adults (18+) with online-first and UPI-led spending habits, allowing them to build credit history while enjoying cashback rewards.
- 5% on online spends above ₹10,000, 3% on online spends up to ₹10,000, and 1% on in-store, contactless, UPI transactions, including essentials like utilities, education, and insurance.

RBI Imposes ₹38.60 Lakh Penalty on UCO Bank for Regulatory Non-Compliance

- The **Reserve Bank of India** imposed a **monetary penalty of ₹38.60 lakh on UCO Bank** for non-compliance with certain regulatory directions.
- The penalty was **imposed under the provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 and the Credit Information Companies (Regulation) Act, 2005.**

RBI Removes New India Co-operative Bank Ltd. from Second Schedule Following Merger with Saraswat Co-operative Bank

- The **Reserve Bank of India** has excluded **New India Co-operative Bank Ltd**. from the Second Schedule of the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, thereby removing its "scheduled bank" status.**
- Earlier, in August 2025, RBI approved the amalgamation of New India Co-operative Bank with Saraswat Co-operative Bank following a ₹300 crore embezzlement scam, to stabilise the bank and safeguard depositors' interests.

RBI Establishes High-Security Data Centre in Bhubaneswar to Strengthen Financial Infrastructure

- The **Reserve Bank of India** has established a **high-security data centre in Bhubaneswar**, Odisha, to enhance the safety and continuity of India's critical financial infrastructure.
- The greenfield facility has been developed at **Info Valley-II in Khordha, spread across an 18.55-acre campus.**

ICICI Pension Funds Unveils 'NPS Swasthya Equity Plus' in PFRDA Regulatory Sandbox

- **ICICI Pension Fund Management Company** launched **ICICI PF NPS Swasthya Equity Plus under the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** regulatory sandbox, as a pilot within the National Pension System (NPS), not part of regular NPS offerings.
- The scheme links retirement savings with medical access, allowing up to 25% withdrawal of own contributions for treatment through Apollo HealthCo Limited via Apollo 24|7; no cap on number of withdrawals (minimum ₹50,000 corpus required), and emergency exit up to 100% if medical costs exceed 70% of corpus.

PhonePe launches AI-powered search built using Microsoft Foundry

- P**honePe** launches an **AI-powered natural language search feature** built **using Microsoft Foundry**, allowing users to perform tasks via text or voice commands.
- The feature uses intent-based routing to replace traditional navigation, directly guiding users to their desired actions, such as payments, purchases, or support.

RBI Launches March 2026 Urban Consumer Confidence Survey Across 19 Cities

- RBI launches **March 2026 Urban Consumer Confidence Survey (UCCS)** to assess urban household sentiment.
- **Hansa Research Group Pvt Ltd, Mumbai, conducts the survey** on behalf of the Reserve Bank of India.

Chapter 15: Committee

Committee	Headed by	Purpose
The Ministry of Power has set up a three-member **High-Level Committee and a three-member Working Group**	Parminder Chopra (CMD, PFC), Jitendra Srivastava (CMD, REC), and Shashank Mishra, Joint Secretary (Distribution), Ministry of Power	To oversee the proposed merger of Power Finance Corporation and REC Limited.
Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (Meity) has set up a high-level committee	Ajay Sawhney, former Secretary of Meity	To harmonize the **regulatory framework of DigiLocker**

Chapter 16: Defence News

Defence Ministry Grants Miniratna Category-I Status to Yantra India Limited

- **Defence Ministry** has approved the **grant of Miniratna Category-I status to Yantra India Limited (YIL).**
- YIL manufactures key defence products including carbon fibre and glass composites, aluminium alloys, and assembly products for ammunition, armoured vehicles, artillery guns and main battle tanks.

INS Sudarshini Makes First International Port Call at Salalah During Lokayan 26 Expedition

- **INS Sudarshini** makes its **first international port call at Salalah, Oman**, during the transoceanic expedition Lokayan 26.
- Lokayan 26 expedition began on 20 January 2026, undertaken by the Indian Navy's sail training ship INS Sudarshini.
- The 10-month voyage will cover over 22,000 nautical miles, with visits to 18 foreign ports across 13 countries.

India successfully test-fires Agni-III intermediate-range ballistic missile

- **India** successfully **test-fired the Agni-III intermediate-range ballistic missile from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur (Odisha).**
- Agni-III, an indigenously developed, two-stage solid-fuel missile with a range of 3,000–3,500 km, is capable of carrying a 1,500 kg payload, uses advanced inertial navigation with GPS support, and is designed primarily as a nuclear delivery system.

Swan Defence Secures Oman Navy Training Ship Export Contract

- **Swan Defence and Heavy Industries Limited (SDHI)** has secured **a defence export contract from the Government of Oman** to supply a training ship for the Royal Navy of Oman, to be delivered within 18 months.
- The 104.25-metre training vessel will feature classrooms, training offices, an auditorium for 70 officer cadets, advanced navigation and communication systems, and helicopter operation capability.

Defence Acquisition Council Clears ₹3.60 Lakh Crore Defence Procurement, Including 114 Rafale Jets

- The **Defence Acquisition Council,** chaired by Rajnath Singh, accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for capital **acquisition proposals worth ₹3.60 lakh crore**, marking one of the largest defence clearances in recent years.
- For the Indian Air Force and Navy, approvals include **114 Rafale fighter jets** under the MRFA programme from France's Dassault Aviation, **six P-8I long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft from the U.S.**, combat missiles, and **an Air-Ship Based High Altitude Pseudo Satellite (AS-HAPS),** significantly boosting air dominance, ISR, and maritime strike capabilities.

Ministry of Defence Signs ₹2,312 Crore Deal with HAL for 8 Dornier 228 Aircraft for Indian Coast Guard

- The **Ministry of Defence** signed a **₹2,312 crore contract with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for the procurement of eight Dornier 228 aircraft for the Indian Coast Guard,** under the Buy (Indian) category to boost indigenous defence manufacturing.
- The Dornier 228 aircraft, equipped with operational role equipment, will enhance coastal surveillance, maritime reconnaissance, search-and-rescue operations, and strengthen monitoring of India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

First Indigenous Cadet Training Ship Launched at L&T Kattupalli in Chennai

- The **first indigenous Cadet Training Ship (CTS),** built by **M/s L&T Shipyard** for the Indian Navy, was launched at Kattupalli, Chennai, in the presence of Chief of Defence Staff Anil Chauhan.
- The **ship, named 'Krishna'**, pays tribute to the Krishna River, the third longest river in India, and was launched by Anupama, President of DWWA, following maritime traditions.

Indian Army's Konark Corps Conducts Live Firing Test of Strela-10 VSHORADS at Pokhran Range

- The **Indian Army's Konark Corps**, along with the Air Defence Warriors of the Blazing Skies Brigade, **carried out a high-intensity live firing test of the Strela-10 Very Short Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS).**

- The exercise was conducted at the Pokhran Field Firing Range in Rajasthan, demonstrating enhanced air defence preparedness and operational capability.

Defence Exercise	Between	About
A six-day joint training exercise "Agni Pariksha"	The Indian Army and ITBP	The exercise focused on enhancing **combat synergy and jointmanship, ensuring better coordination** between **Army and ITBP** personnel during operations.
The 13th edition of the joint military Exercise KHANJAR between	India and Kyrgyzstan	The **14-day-long military exercise** aims to enhance **interoperability between the Special Forces of both nations**, with a focus on joint operations in **urban warfare and counter-terrorism scenarios** under the **United Nations mandate**.
MILAN, the ten-day mega multilateral naval exercise	Major global powers, including the **US, Russia, Japan, Germany, the Philippines, UAE, and South Africa** (72 nations)	The theme: is "**Camaraderie, Cooperation, Collaboration"**
The 7th edition of Joint Military Exercise DHARMA GUARDIAN	India and Japan	Around **120 personnel from each country are participating**, with the **Japanese side represented by the 32nd Infantry Regiment and the Indian side by the Ladakh Scouts of the Indian Army**.

		The **Indian Army is represented by 45 personnel** from its Special Forces units, while the United **States has deployed 12 Green Berets from the US Special** Forces.
The 16th edition of Joint Special Forces Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR	India and the United States	

Chapter 17: Sports News

Nat Sciver-Brunt Creates History, Becomes First Batter to Score a Century in WPL

- **Nat Sciver-Brunt of England** and **Mumbai Indians created history** by becoming **the first batter to score a century in Women's Premier League (WPL)** history during WPL 2026 Match 16.
- Earlier, the highest WPL individual scores were 99 by Georgi Voll (99 off 56 balls)* and Sophie Devine (99 off 36 balls), before Sciver-Brunt's record-breaking knock.

Elena Rybakina Wins Australian Open 2026

- **Elena Rybakina** defeated World No. 1 **Aryna Sabalenka to win the Australian Open 2026 women's singles title.**
- This victory marked Rybakina's second Grand Slam title, after her earlier triumph at Wimbledon 2022.

Alcaraz defeats Djokovic to win first Australian Open

- **Carlos Alcaraz** defeated **Novak Djokovic in the men's singles final to win his first Australian Open title,** making the match one of the most memorable finals in the tournament's history.
- Alcaraz became the youngest male player to complete a career Grand Slam and also the youngest to win seven Grand Slam titles.

Devika Sihag Wins Maiden BWF Super 300 Title at Thailand Masters

- **Young Indian shuttler Devika Sihag** clinched her maiden **BWF Super 300 crown** after Malaysia's Goh Jin Wei retired midway through the women's singles final of the Thailand Masters at Bangkok.
- The 20-year-old from Haryana was leading 21-8, 6-3 when world No. 68 Goh, a two-time former world junior champion, pulled out due to a hamstring injury, handing the Indian the biggest title of her career.

Anahat Singh Wins Squash on Fire Open

- **Anahat Singh** defeated **England's top seed Georgina Kennedy** to win the **Squash on Fire Open in Washington,** claiming her maiden PSA Bronze-level title.
- This victory marks the biggest title of Anahat's career and her 15th PSA Tour title in just 26 tournaments.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru Clinch Second Women's Premier League Title

- Royal Challengers Bengaluru won their **second Women's Premier League (WPL)** title by defeating Delhi Capitals by six wickets in the final held at Vadodara.
- Chasing a target of 204 runs, RCB scored 204/4 in 19.4 overs, led by captain Smriti Mandhana's 87 runs off 41 balls and Georgia Voll's 79 off 54 balls.
- Delhi's innings was powered by Jemimah Rodrigues (57 off 37 balls), Laura Wolvaardt (44 off 25 balls), and an unbeaten 35 off 15 balls by Chinelle Henry.
    - Player of the series - Sophie Devine (Gujarat Giants)
    - Most runs - Smriti Mandhana (337, Royal Challengers Bengaluru)
    - Most wickets - Sophie Devine (17, Gujarat Giants) & Nandani Sharma (17 Delhi Capitals)

India Clinch Record Sixth U19 Cricket World Cup Title with 100-Run Win Over England

- **India** won the **U19 Cricket World Cup 2026**, clinching the title for a record **sixth time** by defeating England by 100 runs in the final held at Harare, Zimbabwe.
- Batting first, India posted a massive 411/9 in 50 overs, led by 14-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi's stunning 175 off 80 balls, with captain Ayush Mhatre scoring 53 off 51 balls.

Esha Singh Strikes Gold as India Dominates Women's 10m Air Pistol at Asian Championship

- **Esha Singh** won **gold in the women's individual 10m air pistol** event on the opening day of the Asian Rifle and Pistol Championship at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range, New Delhi.
- The 21-year-old scored 239.8 points, finishing ahead of Cheng Yen-Ching (silver, 235.4) and Yu Ai-Wen (bronze, 217.7) of Chinese Taipei.

India to Host Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship 2027 in New Delhi

- **India w**ill host the **Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship 2027** after the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) secured the hosting rights through a successful bid.

- This marks the second consecutive time India will host the prestigious continental shooting championship, to be held from 1–10 December 2027 at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Ranges, New Delhi.

India Crush Bangladesh 4–0 to Win SAFF Under-19 Women's Football Championship

- India clinched the SAFF Under-19 Women's Championship title by defeating Bangladesh 4–0 in the final at the Pokhara Rangasala Stadium, Nepal.
- Captain Julan Nongmaithem opened the scoring, followed by goals from Elizabeth Lakra, Pearl Fernandes, and substitute Anwita Raghuraman, as the Young Tigresses delivered a dominant performance.

Jharkhand Women Win Gold at Para Throwball National Federation Cup 2026

- **Jharkhand's women's team won the gold medal** in the **Para Throwball National Federation Cup 2026**, defeating Rajasthan 21–17 in the final held at Jhunjhunu.
- The competition was held from February 3 to 5, featuring high-quality matches and tactical play, with Jharkhand women delivering a composed and well-structured championship campaign.

Manu Bhaker Wins Silver in Women's 25m Pistol at Asian Shooting Championship

- **Manu Bhaker**, Olympic double bronze medallist, **won silver in the women's 25m pistol** event at the Asian Shooting Championship in New Delhi.
- Manu finished the final tied at 35 with Vietnam's Nguyen Thuy Trang, forcing a shoot-off to decide the gold medal.

Magnus Carlsen Wins Inaugural FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship

- **Magnus Carlsen** won the **2026 FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship**, defeating Fabiano Caruana in the final held at Weissenhaus from 13–15 February, marking the first official Freestyle Chess World Championship recognised by FIDE.
- Carlsen secured the title with a 2.5–1.5 scoreline in the four-game final, sealing victory with a composed draw in the fourth game after gaining a crucial edge earlier in the match.

Rashid Khan Makes History as First Asian Bowler with 150+ T20I and 200+ ODI Wickets

- **Rashid Khan** becomes the **first Asian bowler to take over 150 wickets in T20Is and more than 200 wickets in ODIs.**
- In 115 ODIs, Rashid has 202 wickets at an average of 20.28 and an economy rate of 4.23, including six four-wicket hauls and five five-wicket hauls, with best figures of 7/18.

Norway's Johannes Hoesflot Klaebo wins ninth gold medal in cross-country skiing

- **Norway's Johannes Hoesflot Klaebo** won his **ninth gold medal in cross-country skiing, setting a Winter Games record, at the Milan Cortina Olympics.**
- The 29-year-old anchored the 4 x 7.5-kilometre relay in the men's competition for his fourth gold of the 2026 Games. He had shared the record with three retired Norwegian athletes.

Lucas Pinheiro Braathen Creates History, Wins Giant Slalom Gold for Brazil at Milan Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics

- **Lucas Pinheiro Braathen** won gold in the **Giant Slalom at the Winter Olympics Milano Cortina 2026**, securing Brazil's and **South America's first-ever Winter Olympics medal.**
- The 25-year-old clocked a combined time of 2 minutes 25 seconds, defeating Switzerland's defending champion Marco Odermatt by 0.58 seconds on the challenging Stelvio course amid snow and fog.

Paras Dogra Becomes Second Batter to Cross 10,000 Runs in Ranji Trophy

- **Jammu and Kashmir captain Paras Dogra** became the **second player to cross 10,000 runs in the Ranji Trophy during the 2025-2**6 semi-final against Bengal in Kalyani.
- The 41-year-old right-handed batter has played 151 First Class matches, scoring over 10,000 runs at an average of 48.15, including 34 centuries and 35 fifties, with a highest score of 253.

Smriti Mandhana Named BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025

- **Smriti Mandhana** has been named **BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025** for her outstanding performances.
- As India's vice-captain, she scored 434 runs in the 2025 ICC Women's World Cup, helping her team win the tournament.

6th National Rafting Championship "The Ultimate River Battle" Begins in Doda, J&K

- The **6th National Rafting Championship**, **"The Ultimate River Battle,"** has commenced **at Shibnote in Doda district, Jammu & Kashmir,** aiming to showcase top rafting talent and promote adventure tourism in the region.
- Held on the scenic and challenging Chenab River, known for its strong rapids and breathtaking landscape, the event is expected to attract professional rafting teams, adventure enthusiasts, and tourists from across India.

Pramod Bhagat Wins SL3 Gold at BWF Para World Championships

- India's **Pramod Bhagat** won the **men's SL3 gold medal at the BWF Para World Championships in Bahrain**, defeating Indonesia's Muhammad Al Imran in straight games (21-12, 21-18).
- The 37-year-old secured his fourth consecutive singles gold and sixth overall world title in the SL3 category, surpassing Lin Dan to become the most decorated singles champion in world championship history across the sport.

Harmanpreet Kaur becomes highest capped woman in international cricket

- **Harmanpreet Kaur** became the **highest-capped player in women's international cricket**, making her **356th appearance for India** in a T20I against Australia and surpassing Suzie Bates.
- Since her debut in 2009, **Kaur has played 6 Tests, 161 ODIs, and 189 T20Is**, scoring eight centuries and 38 fifties, and leading India to their first Women's World Cup title on home soil.

Pankaj Advani Wins Inaugural Liber Win Champions Cup 2026, Named Brand Ambassador

- **Pankaj Advani** won the inaugural **Liber Win Champions Cup 2026**, defeating Kamal Chawla 6–3 in the best-of-11 final held at the Karnataka State Billiards Association (KSBA), Bengaluru.
- The **2026 edition marked the formal entry of Liber Win** into the Indian market, and Advani was officially announced as the **brand's Indian ambassador at the conclusion of the tournament.**

India Finishes Asian Shooting Championships 2026 in New Delhi with 33 Medals

- **India** concluded the **Asian Shooting Championships 2026 in New Delhi** with **a total of 33 medals in senior rifle and pistol events, including 13 gold, 11 silver, and 9 bronze;** seven medals were won on the final day.
- Amanpreet Singh won gold in the 25m centre fire pistol with 589 points, while Gurpreet Singh (silver, 584) and Ankur Goel (bronze, 570) completed a clean podium sweep for India in the event.

USA Clinch Men's Olympic Ice Hockey Gold After 46 Years with Overtime Win Over Canada

- **The United States men's national ice hockey** team defeated the **Canada men's national ice hockey team 2–1** to win the men's Olympic ice hockey gold after 46 years.
- Jack Hughes scored the decisive goal 1 minute 41 seconds into overtime, securing the USA's first Olympic title since the historic 1980 "Miracle on Ice" at 1980 Winter Olympics.

Tomas Martin Etcheverry Clinches Maiden ATP Title at Rio Open

- **Tomas Martin Etcheverry** won his **maiden ATP Tour title at the ATP 500 Rio Open,** defeating Alejandro Tabilo 3-6, 7-6(3), 6-4 in the final, despite playing two matches in one day due to rain delays.
- The 26-year-old Argentine secured his first ATP crown after three previous runner-up finishes and also recorded his 100th tour-level match win, improving his head-to-head record against Tabilo to 2-0.

Chapter 18: Book and Author

Book	Author
"E Mati Katha Kahe" (Odia) and "Buxi Jagabandhu: The Great Commander" (English)	Authored by **Biswabhusan Harichandan**, former Odisha Cabinet Minister and former Governor of **Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.**
The book The Sage who Reimagined Hinduism: The Life, Lessons and Legacy of Sree Narayana Guru in New Delhi, authored by MP Shashi Tharoor.	**Launched by Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan**

Chapter 19: Important Day

Date	Day	Theme/Importance
1 February	Indian Coast Guard Day	The Coast Guard's key roles include **search and rescue operations, maritime law enforcement**, **anti-smuggling and anti-piracy measures, and protection of marine resources**.
2 February	World Wetlands Day	Theme 2026 - **Wetlands and traditional knowledge: Celebrating cultural heritage**
1 - 7 February	International Development Week	The week aims to raise awareness about **global development challenges, promote sustainable solutions, and encourage participation** in initiatives that support

		economic, social, and environmental progress worldwide.
2 February	Rheumatoid Arthritis Awareness Day	To highlight the **challenges of living with RA and promote early diagnosis**.
3 February	National Golden Retriever Day	The day highlights the **breed's loyalty, intelligence, friendly nature, and role in therapy, assistance, and companionship**.
4 February	World Cancer Day	Theme 2026 - **United by Unique**
6 February	International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation	To raise awareness about the **harmful practice and promote its complete elimination.**
8 February	National Opera Day	The day highlights the role of **opera** in storytelling **through music, drama, and vocals, and promotes** appreciation of classical and contemporary opera forms.
10 February	National Deworming Day	The program primarily targets children aged 1–19 years in schools, **anganwadis, and communities, ensuring widespread coverage.**
10 February	World Pulses Day	Theme 2026 - **Pulses of the World: From Modesty to Excellence**
10 February	International Epilepsy Day	Theme 2026 - **#EpilepsyPledge: Turning Stories into Action**
11 February	World Day of the Sick	Theme 2026 - **The Compassion of the Samaritan: Loving by Bearing the Pain of Others**
11 February	International Day of Women and Girls in Science	**Theme 2026** - **From Vision to Impact: Redefining STEM by Closing the Gender Gap**
11 February	Safer Internet Day	Theme 2026 - **AI Aware: Safe, Smart, In Control**
12 February	Darwin Day	The day highlights the importance of **scientific thinking, rational inquiry,**

		and evidence-based understanding in explaining natural phenomena.
12 February	National Productivity Day	Theme 2026 - **Clusters as Growth Engine: Maximizing Productivity in MSMEs**
13 February	World Radio Day	Theme 2026 - **Radio and Artificial Intelligence: AI is a tool, not a voice**
14 February	World Congenital Heart Defect (CHD) Awareness Day	The day highlights the importance of early **detection, proper medical treatment, and lifelong care for individuals affected** by congenital heart defects.
17 February	Global Tourism Resilience Day	Theme 2026 - **Tourism Resilience in Action: From Crisis Response to Impactful Transformation**.
19 February	World Anthropology Day	The day was initiated by the **American Anthropological Association in 2015 (originally called National Anthropology Day)** and later renamed to highlight its global significance.
20 February	World Day of Social Justice	Theme 2026 - **Renewed Commitment to Social Development and Social Justice**
21 February	International Mother Language Day	Theme 2026 - **Youth voices on multilingual education**
23 February	World Peace and Understanding Day	The day highlights the importance of **dialogue, tolerance, and international cooperation** in resolving conflicts and strengthening global unity.
24 February	Central Excise Day	The day recognises the contribution of **the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) and excise officials in administering indirect**

		taxes and ensuring revenue collection for the nation.
27 February	World NGO Day	The day highlights the contribution of NGOs in areas such as **human rights, education, health, environment, and social development.**
28 February	National Science Day	The day highlights the importance of **science and technology in national development and encourages a scientific temper among citizens**.

Chapter 20: Science & Technology

IN-SPACe selects Astrome, Azista and Dhruva Space for satellite bus plan
- **The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe)** has selected three Indian start-ups—**Astrome Technologies, Azista Industries, and Dhruva Space—**to develop and test indigenous small satellite bus platforms under its Satellite Bus as a Service (SBaaS) initiative.
- The SBaaS initiative, announced in April 2025, invited proposals from Indian Non-Governmental Entities to create modular satellite buses capable of hosting diverse customer payloads; out of 15 proposals received by July 2025, these three firms were selected after a rigorous multi-stage evaluation.

Union Minister Jitin Prasada inaugurates STQC Lab Automation Portal, SATYA
- **Jitin Prasada,** Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology, **inaugurated the Standardisation Testing and Quality Certification (STQC) Lab Automation Portal – SATYA**, bringing STQC services onto a single, integrated, and user-friendly digital platform.
- The Standardisation Testing and Quality Certification (STQC) Directorate ensures the quality, security, and reliability of electronic and IT products and services, and the SATYA Portal will benefit citizens, industry, startups, MSMEs, and government departments.

GalaxEye Becomes First Private Indian Satellite Operator to Partner with NewSpace India Limited for Global Data Reseller Agreement
- **Space tech start-up GalaxEy**e has signed a data reseller **agreement with NewSpace India Limited (NSIL),** the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation, for providing advanced satellite imagery solutions.
- Under the collaboration, NSIL will resell GalaxEye's full product portfolio, including its 'SyncFused OptoSAR' solutions, enabling high-precision

applications across sectors such as agriculture, disaster management, infrastructure planning, natural resource management, and environmental monitoring.

IIT Madras Global Research Foundation to Launch First Applied AI Innovation Centre at Dubai CommerCity

- The **IIT Madras Global Research Foundation** will establish its f**irst Applied Artificial Intelligence Innovation Centre at Dubai CommerCity** to accelerate applied AI innovation and promote technology-led economic growth, positioning Dubai as a global AI launchpad.
- In its first phase, the Centre will host six applied AI startups with a combined valuation of around US$118 million and projected revenues of US$281 million over five years, reflecting strong global scalability potential.

Chapter 21: Obituary

Person	About
Former Australian hockey great and ex-India men's coach Michael Nobbs	**Nobbs earned 76 international caps for Australia (1979–1985)** and was part of the **Australian squads** at the **1981 Hockey World Cup in Bombay and the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.**
Brazilian mixed martial artist Pablo Oliveira Costa	He died after suffering a fatal **electrocution accident in São José**, when a **metal ladder** he was moving came into contact with a **high-voltage power line.**
Renowned Odia Singer Geeta Patnaik	She was widely respected for her lifelong contribution to **Odia music and remained a prominent cultural figure in Odisha for several decades.**
Internet Pioneer David J. Farber regarded as a "grandfather of the internet	**Farber** began his career at **Bell Laboratories in the 1950s**, where he worked on integrating computing systems with telecommunications, laying **early foundations for modern computer networking**

Mukul Roy, former Union Railway Minister and senior leader of the All India Trinamool Congress	In **2017**, he joined the **Bharatiya Janata Party** and played a key role in its strong performance in the **2019 Lok Sabha elections in West Bengal;** he later won the **2021 Assembly election from Krishnanagar North as a BJP MLA**