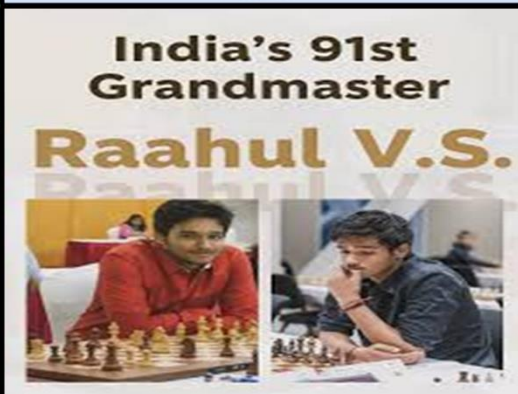




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Contents

NATIONAL NEWS.....	1
International Solar Alliance (ISA) Assembly 2025	1
Lucknow Recognised as UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy	1
Unique Identification Authority of India Launches ‘Aadhaar Vision 2032’	2
EPFO Launches Employees’ Enrolment Scheme – 2025.....	2
International Conference on Green Hydrogen-2025.....	3
Maharashtra Becomes First Indian State to Partner with Elon Musk’s Starlink	3
India’s First Digital Museum of Tribal Freedom Fighters Inaugurated at Nava Raipur	4
Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta Announces Staggered Office Timings	4
Karnataka Becomes the First State in India to Approve 12 Days of Paid Menstrual Leave.....	5
India Launches DRAP and UiWIN.....	5
Gujarat Becomes First Indian State to Launch Genome Sequencing for Tribal Communities.....	6
UIDAI Partners with Behavioural Insights Limited	7
Union Minister Amit Shah Launches ‘Sahakar Digi Pay’ and ‘Sahakar Digi Loan’	7
Assam Government Approves Assam Prohibition of Polygamy Bill 2025	8
Maharashtra Agriculture Department Unveils New Logo and Slogan	8
Punjab Becomes the First State to Fully Implement the Amended Bharat Net Scheme	9
India to Receive 8 Cheetahs from Botswana under Project Cheetah.....	9
7 th India–Canada Ministerial Dialogue on Trade and Investment Held	10
International Tourism Mart 2025 – 13 th Edition Inaugurated in Gangtok	10
India Becomes the World’s 6 th Largest Patent Filer	10
Ambaji Marble from Gujarat Receives Geographical Indication (GI) Tag.....	11
Sixteenth Finance Commission (XVIFC) Submits Report to the President of India.....	11
Union Health Minister Inaugurates 10 New Amrit Pharmacies on 10 th Anniversary	12
The Government of India Launches ‘YUVA Artificial Intelligence (AI) for ALL’ Course	12
Punjab SC Commission Opens India’s First Dedicated Courtroom for SC-Related Cases	13
Switzerland and Ireland Named Country Partners for Hornbill Festival 2025.....	13
India Resumes Tourist Visas for Chinese Nationals from July 24, 2025.....	14
Kashi Tamil Sangamam 4.0 to be Held from 2–10 December 2025.....	14
Jammu & Kashmir to Conduct First-Ever Auction of Limestone Blocks	15
National Commission for Women Launches New 24×7 Short Helpline Number 14490 for Women’s Safety	15
INTERNATIONAL NEWS	16
India and Nepal Ink Power Transmission Deals to Strengthen Energy Co-operation	16
Word of the Year 2025	16
USCIS Ends Acceptance of Cheques and Money Orders for Immigration Payments.....	17
Maldives Becomes First Country to Enforce Generational Tobacco Ban.....	17

China Launches 42 nd Antarctic Expedition to Conduct Scientific Drilling and Study Polar Evolution....	18
Palau Conducts World's First Live Underwater Broadcast.....	18
Sweden Declared the World's First Fully Cashless Nation	18
Australia Sends First-Ever First Nations Business Mission to India.....	19
Egypt and Qatar Ink \$7.5 Billion Deal to Develop Luxury Real Estate and Tourism Project	19
U.N. Water Convention in 2025.....	20
Denmark Moves to Ban Social Media Access for Children Below 15.....	20
Bangladesh Joins UN Water Convention as First Country from South Asia.....	20
Maldives President Muizzu Opens Hanimaadhoo International Airport.....	21
Ethiopia Chosen to Host UN COP32 Climate Summit 2027.....	21
Oman Elected to UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Council for 2025–2029.....	21
United Arab Emirates Executes First Government Transaction.....	22
3 rd International Ayurveda Conference Concludes in Sao Paulo, Brazil	22
'Parasocial' Named Cambridge Dictionary's Word of the Year 2025	23
India and Israel Agree to Start Negotiations on Free Trade Agreement.....	23
USA Names Saudi Arabia as its 20 th Major Non-NATO Ally Under President Trump.....	23
Malaysia To Ban Social Media Access For Users Below Age 16	24
India and Denmark Launch Indo-Danish Business Council	24
UAE–India CEPA Council Signs Partnerships with FAB and Hub71	25
Ukraine Launches Europe's First Starlink Direct-to-Cell Service.....	25
World Health Organization Declares Indonesia Free of Type-2 cVDPV.....	26
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	26
Elon Musk's xAI Unveils AI-Driven Online Encyclopaedia 'Groklopedia'	26
Astronomers Discover 'Super-Earth' Exoplanet GJ 251c	27
Scientists Launch Amazonface Project.....	27
China Launches Shenzhou-21 Mission Carrying Youngest Astronaut.....	27
All India Council for Technical Education Partners with IBM	28
Russia Launches Nuclear-Powered Submarine 'Khabarovsk' from Sevmash.....	28
RBI Develops AI-Powered Digital Payments Intelligence Platform	29
Google Launches Project Suncatcher.....	29
Google Unveils 7 th Gen 'Ironwood' TPU, Challenging Nvidia's AI Hardware Dominance.....	30
Lenskart to Introduce First AI-Powered "B by Lenskart Smartglasses"	30
IN-SPACE Partnered with SIDBI	30
IICA and WNS Global Services Launch Ybrant Programme	31
Godrej Aerospace Delivers First Human-Rated L110 Stage Vikas Engine.....	31
India to Establish West Africa's First IIT Campus in Nigeria Under NEP 2020 Vision	31
Indian Space Research Organization to Launch Oceansat in 2026	32
China Begins Construction of First Nuclear-Proof Floating Artificial Island	32
Airbus to Build and Launch Oman's First Communications Satellite	33

BANKING & FINANCE	33
RBI Rejects Jana SFB's Bid for Universal Bank Licence	33
Reserve Bank of India Reports 10.7% Rise in Prepaid Payment Instrument Cards	34
Paypal Partners With Openai to Become Chatgpt's First Integrated Digital Payments Wallet.....	34
SEBI Proposes Comprehensive Revamp of Mutual Fund Fee Framework	34
Asian Development Bank Sanctions \$460 million Loan to Maharashtra.....	35
RBI Proposes New Rules to Ensure Same-Day Credit for Cross-Border Remittances	36
SBI Foundation Launches SMART-CROP Project	36
International Financial Services Centres Authority Grants in-principle Approval to Infibeam Avenues for Payment Services at GIFT-IFSC.....	37
SEBI Revises Eligibility Norms for Derivatives on Non-Benchmark Indices	37
Finance Minister Inaugurates Newly Constructed CGST Bhawan in Ghaziabad.....	37
City Union Bank Secures \$50 Million Funding from International Finance Corporation	38
Tata AIA Life Insurance Unveils AI-Driven Underwriting Rule Engine for Automated Risk Assessment.....	38
Government to Reposition National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development.....	38
Scapia and Federal Bank Introduce Add-On Credit Card.....	39
IRDAI Fines Liberty General Insurance ₹1 Crore for Regulatory Violations.....	39
RBI Allows Exporters to Retain Foreign Currency Earnings in IFSC Accounts.....	40
Reserve Bank of India Announces Steps to Boost Global Use of Indian Rupee	40
World Bank to Disburse Second \$200 Million Tranche for Amaravati Phase-I	40
RBI Proposes Making BSBD a Standard Banking Service	41
SEBI Urges Social Media and Search Platforms to Curb Fraudulent Investment Promotions	41
SBI Mutual Fund Invests ₹100 Crore in Lenskart	41
City Union Bank Partners with EPFO to Launch EPF Payment Facility	42
Unified Payments Interface Drives RuPay's Rise as India's Preferred Credit Card.....	42
ADB and World Bank Ink \$3 Billion Exposure Exchange Agreement	43
State Bank of India Becomes First Indian Bank to Cross \$100 Billion Market Cap and ₹100 Trillion Total Business	43
RBI Proposes Lowering Risk Weights for NBFC-Financed High-Quality Infrastructure Projects.....	43
AU Small Finance Bank Launches 'M Circle'	44
Axis Max Life Partners with IFC.....	44
NPCI Launches NPCI Tech Solutions Limited to Drive Innovation in the Fintech Sector	44
NPCI International Partnered with BENEFIT	45
World Bank Urges India to Speed Up Financial Reforms and Boost Private Investment	45
Paytm Unveils AI-Powered Redesigned App	46
Asian Development Bank Extends \$331 Million Loan to Andhra Pradesh.....	46
Bartronics India Appointed as CBC Vendor by Bank of Maharashtra.....	46
Government Approves ₹20,000 Crore Credit Guarantee Scheme	47
World Bank's \$13 Billion Climate Investment Funds Launches New Program	47

RBI Fines Three Co-operative Banks for Violating Regulatory Norms	47
Ageas Federal Life Insurance Partners with Muthoot Microfin	48
Federal Bank Launches 'Bharat Surotsav' to Celebrate India's Musical Heritage.....	48
PhonePe Partners with OpenAI.....	48
RBI Imposes ₹39.60 Lakh Penalty on Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Limited	49
Axis Bank Hosts 10 th Edition of EVOLVE MSME Knowledge Series	49
SBI to end mCASH transfer and claim services on OnlineSBI and YONO Lite	49
SBI and BoB to Lead Indian Digital Payment Intelligence Corporation.....	50
Lxme Introduces India's First Women-Exclusive UPI Platform 'LxmePay'	50
RBI Approves Infibeam Avenues and PayU to Operate as Physical Payment Aggregators	50
RBI Grants PayU Integrated Licence to Operate as Payment Aggregator	51
RBL Bank Enters The Premium Credit Card Market with the Launch of 'LUMIERE' and 'NOVA' Cards	51
Master Capital Services Gets SEBI's In-Principle Nod to Launch Mutual Fund Business	52
RBI Expands Alert List of Unauthorised Forex Trading Platforms	52
HDFC Bank Reclaims India's Most Valuable Brand Title in 2025	52
RBI Grants Final Approval to PayGlocal to Operate as a Cross-Border PA	53
South Indian Bank Introduces 'SIB HER Account'	53
RBI Authorises Easebuzz to Operate as a Full-Service Payment Aggregator	54
BoB and Small Industries Development Bank of India Signed MoU	54
RBI Begins Realisation Phase to Link India's UPI with Eurosystem's TIPS.....	54
RBI Imposes ₹4 Lakh Penalty on Odisha-Based Glowmore Finance for Regulatory Non-Compliance	55
SEBI Rolls Out New Threshold Criteria to Assess Materiality in Related Party Deals.....	55
Oman's Central Bank Launches Unified Currency Symbol for the Omani Rial	56
IDFC FIRST Bank Signs Memorandum of Understanding with FPSB India.....	56
DEFENCE.....	56
Pravaig Unveils 'VEER', India's First All-Electric Military Vehicle for Defence Use	56
Indian Navy to Lead Tri-Services Exercise "Trishul" with Indian Army and Air Force.....	57
Indian Army Successfully Conducts Drone and Counter-Drone Exercise 'Vayu Samanvay-II'	58
India and Israel Sign MoU to Strengthen Defence Co-operation.....	58
INS Ikshak, Third SVL-Class Ship, Commissioned into Indian Navy at Kochi.....	59
Indian Naval Ship Sahyadri Joins Multilateral Exercise Malabar-2025 at Guam	59
Thiruvananthapuram to Host Navy Day 2025	59
6 th Edition of India-Vietnam Army Exercise VINBAX Commences in Hanoi	60
11 th Edition of Joint Military Exercise Mitra Shakti-2025	60
Indian Navy Unveils Crest of INS Mahe.....	60
AJEYA WARRIOR-25, the 8 th India-UK Joint Military Exercise	61
Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to Participate in 12 th ADMM-Plus Summit in Kuala Lumpur.....	61

Indian Air Force's Tejas Fighter Jet Crashes at Dubai Airshow, Pilot Killed.....	62
India's First Mahe-Class ASW Shallow Water Craft, Inducted into Western Naval Command.....	62
Bharat Electronics Limited and Safran Sign Joint Venture Agreement.....	63
13 th Joint Military Co-operation Committee meeting between India and Oman.....	63
Hindustan Aeronautics Limited Signs USD 1 Billion Deal with GE.....	64
SUMMITS & CONFERENCES	64
India Hosts First BIMSTEC-India Marine Research Network Conference	64
RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS	65
Reserve Bank of India Releases Quarterly House Price Index.....	65
Moody's Projects India's Growth at 6.5% Through 2027 in 'Global Macro 2026' Report.....	65
Ind-Ra Projects India's Q2 FY26 Gross Domestic Product Growth at 7.2%	66
SBI Research Projects India's Q2 FY26 GDP Growth At 7.5%	66
India Slips to 23 rd Rank in Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2026.....	66
India's Foreign Exchange Reserves Decline by \$2.7 Billion to \$687.73 Billion	67
Moody's Forecasts India's Gross Domestic Product To Grow At 7% In 2025	67
S&P Forecasts India's GDP To Expand 6.5% In FY26 And 6.7% In FY27.....	68
Ind-Ra Revises India's FY26 GDP Growth Forecast Upward to 7% from 6.3%	68
AWARDS & PRIZES	69
Padma Shri Sanjeev Kapoor Honoured as One of the 2025 Top Agri-Food Pioneers	69
South Korea's Highest Civilian Honour – The Grand Order of Mugunghwa.....	69
Karnataka's Rajyotsava Award 2025	70
Sahitya Akademi Releases Hindi Translation of Lithuanian Novel "The Last Day" as "Antim Din"	70
Honorary Doctor of Laws by Karnataka State Law University (KSLU)	71
World Leader for Peace and Security Award 2025	71
Manohar Parrikar Yuva Scientist Award 2025.....	71
2025 Booker Prize.....	72
Palak Muchhal Enters Guinness and Limca Book of Records for Humanitarian Work	73
56 th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) to Be Held in Goa	73
Oscar Piastrri Wins Don Award 2025	73
Tom Cruise Receives Honorary Academy Award at 2025 Governors Awards.....	74
Confederation of Indian Industry Quality Ratna Award 2025.....	74
France's Chevalier Award	75
Fátima Bosch of Mexico Wins Miss Universe 2025.....	76
Velamala Simmanna Selected for Lok Nayak Foundation Literary Award 2025.....	76
APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS	77
President of Seychelles	77
Chief Justice of India.....	77
Financial Advisor of Defence Services	77

Dr. Deepak Mittal Assumes Charge as India's Ambassador-Designate to the United Arab Emirates.....	78
Vishvajit Sahay Assumes Charge as Controller General of Defence Accounts	78
Chairman of IUCN Species Survival Commission.....	78
Director General of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)	79
HDFC Bank Approves Reappointment of Kaizad Bharucha as Deputy Managing Director for Three Years.....	79
40 th Chief of Materiel, Indian Navy	79
Managing Director and CEO of SBICAP Securities	80
IUCN Regional Council Representative for West and South Asia	80
Sergio Gor Sworn In as U.S. Ambassador to India	81
UN Tourism's First Female Secretary-General	81
NITI Aayog's Tax Policy Chair Pushpinder S. Puniha Joins Blue Ocean Corporation's Advisory Board	81
UNICEF Appoints Keerthy Suresh as Celebrity Advocate for Child Rights and Gender Equality	82
MD and CEO of Karnataka Bank.....	82
Justice Surya Kant Takes Charge as India's 53 rd Chief Justice.....	82
Part-Time Chairperson of Jana Small Finance Bank.....	83
President of Tanzania.....	83
Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority.....	83
Chairman of National Company Law Appellate Tribunal	84
SPORTS	84
International Master in Chess	84
India's 90 th Chess Grandmaster.....	85
Jannik Sinner Reclaims ATP World No. 1 After Paris Masters 2025 Triumph	85
FIFA Announces Launch of FIFA Peace Prize – “Football Unites the World”	86
Raahul VS Becomes India's 91 st Grandmaster.....	86
International Tennis Hall of Fame – Class of 2026	86
Max Verstappen Wins 2025 Las Vegas Grand Prix.....	87
5 th Khelo India University Games Inaugurated in Jaipur, Rajasthan	87
Italy wins its 4 th Davis Cup Title	88
BOOKS & AUTHORS	88
Sahitya Akademi Releases Hindi Translation of Lithuanian Novel “The Last Day” as “Antim Din”	88
IMPORTANT DAYS.....	89
National Unity Day	89
National Cancer Awareness Day 2025	89
Infant Protection Day 2025	90
World Radiography Day 2025	90
World Science Day for Peace and Development 2025	91
National Education Day	91

World Usability Day	92
World Kindness Day	92
World Diabetes Day	92
Children's Day	93
World Toilet Day	93
Universal Children's Day	94
National Philosophy Day	94
International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women	94
Constitution Day 2025.....	95
OBITUARY NEWS	95
Hinduja Group Chairman and Business Icon Gopichand Hinduja	95
Padma Shri Environmentalist Saalumarada Thimmakka	95
Coromandel International Chairman Emeritus Arunachalam Vellayan	96

NOVEMBER – 2025

NATIONAL NEWS

International Solar Alliance (ISA) Assembly 2025

- ★ The Eighth International Solar Alliance (ISA) Assembly was held in New Delhi, where India launched major global solar initiatives to promote a just, inclusive, and innovation-led energy transition.
- ★ The event showcased India's leadership in advancing the global solar movement through initiatives that emphasize the circular economy, AI-driven innovation, and equitable access to clean energy.
- ★ **The key initiatives launched include:**
 - SUNRISE (Solar Upcycling Network for Recycling, Innovation & Stakeholder Engagement): Focuses on solar waste upcycling and circular innovation, converting expired solar panels into green jobs and sustainable products.
 - OSOWOG (One Sun One World One Grid): Aims at global solar grid connectivity linking Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa, enabling 24/7 solar energy trade across time zones and reducing global carbon dependency.
 - Global Capability Centre (GCC): Serves as a hub for research, innovation, and startup development, creating a "Silicon Valley for Solar" in India.
 - ISA Academy: An AI-powered global learning platform offering customised education and training in solar technology.
- ★ SUNRISE initiative aims to transform solar waste into a source of economic opportunity by promoting recycling, upcycling, and green manufacturing, creating new jobs and fostering sustainable industries.

Lucknow Recognised as UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy

- ★ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has officially recognised Lucknow as part of its Creative Cities Network (UCCN) under the "City of Gastronomy" category.
- ★ This recognition celebrates the city's centuries-old culinary heritage, rooted in Awadhi cuisine and the region's Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb, symbolising the harmonious blend of Hindu and Muslim cultures.
- ★ The announcement was made during the 43rd UNESCO General Conference held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.
- ★ This marks a historic milestone for Lucknow and strengthens India's cultural diplomacy by placing the city among the world's leading gastronomic destinations.
- ★ The Directorate of Tourism, Government of Uttar Pradesh, prepared the nomination dossier, which was submitted to the Ministry of Culture on 31st January 2025.

- ★ India officially nominated Lucknow for the “City of Gastronomy” title on 3rd March 2025.
- ★ The dossier showcased the city’s culinary diversity, innovation, and sustainable food traditions, reflecting a joint effort by the State Government, local chefs, artisans, and heritage experts to promote Lucknow’s food legacy globally.
- ★ Lucknow’s selection is deeply inspired by its royal Awadhi cuisine, known for timeless recipes and refined culinary techniques.

Unique Identification Authority of India Launches ‘Aadhaar Vision 2032’

- ★ The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has launched ‘Aadhaar Vision 2032’, a long-term roadmap to modernise India’s Aadhaar ecosystem with advanced digital technologies.
- ★ The initiative aims to make Aadhaar more secure, intelligent, and globally competitive by integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, Quantum Computing, and next-generation encryption systems.
- ★ The blueprint focuses on building a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready identity framework that supports both citizens and India’s growing digital economy.
- ★ Core focus areas under Aadhaar Vision 2032 include:
 - AI-powered authentication systems for intelligent and efficient verification.
 - Blockchain technology to ensure tamper-proof records and auditability.
 - Quantum computing readiness to protect against emerging cybersecurity threats.
 - Advanced encryption standards compliant with the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act.
- ★ A High-Level Expert Committee, chaired by Neelkanth Mishra (Chairperson, UIDAI), has been formed to steer the implementation of this vision.
- ★ The expert group will draft the official Aadhaar Vision 2032 framework to guide the roadmap for digital identity advancement.

EPFO Launches Employees’ Enrolment Scheme – 2025

- ★ Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya on 1 November 2025 during EPFO’s 73rd Foundation Day celebrations in New Delhi.
- ★ To promote social security inclusion by enabling employers to voluntarily declare employees missed from EPF coverage between 1 July 2017 and 31 October 2025.
- ★ The scheme will remain open for 6 months, from 1 November 2025 to 30 April 2026.
- ★ Applies to employees who joined between 1 July 2017 and 31 October 2025 but were not enrolled under the Employees’ Provident Fund (EPF).
- ★ All establishments, irrespective of current EPF registration, can declare missed employees through the EPFO portal.
- ★ Waivers and Benefits:
 - Employee share of contribution waived if not deducted earlier.
 - Employer to pay only their own contribution, interest (as per Section 7Q), administrative charges, and a nominal penalty of ₹100 per establishment.

- ₹100 lump-sum penalty covers damages across all three EPF schemes, ensuring simplified compliance.

International Conference on Green Hydrogen-2025

- ★ The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) will host the International Conference on Green Hydrogen-2025 in New Delhi, bringing together global and domestic stakeholders to advance discussions on India's green hydrogen ecosystem.
- ★ The conference aims to explore practical pathways for scaling up green hydrogen production, focusing on technology advancement, cost trends, infrastructure readiness, and demand creation.
- ★ It will facilitate global collaboration by engaging international delegations, industry leaders, and policymakers, supporting India's energy transition and export potential.
- ★ Key discussion areas include financing mechanisms, hydrogen certification standards, port readiness for hydrogen exports, skill development, and localisation of technology.
- ★ Senior ministers from Energy, Petroleum and Natural Gas, and Earth Sciences will participate, highlighting the cross-sectoral significance of green hydrogen in India's clean-energy policy.
- ★ Green hydrogen serves as a cornerstone in India's pursuit of clean, affordable, and self-reliant energy. MNRE Secretary Santosh Kumar Sarangi emphasized the need for clarity in technology selection, infrastructure planning, and demand creation to drive sectoral growth.
- ★ The conference supports the objectives of the National Green Hydrogen Mission, positioning India as a global hub for green hydrogen production and export.
- ★ Discussions will also address infrastructure readiness, including ports and certification systems, which are key to integrating India into global hydrogen markets.

Maharashtra Becomes First Indian State to Partner with Elon Musk's Starlink

- ★ The Government of Maharashtra has signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with Starlink Satellite Communications Pvt. Ltd., a venture under SpaceX, to provide satellite-based internet services across remote and underserved regions of the state.
- ★ With this move, Maharashtra becomes the first Indian state to formally collaborate with Starlink for digital connectivity expansion.
- ★ The agreement aims to deliver high-speed, low-latency internet to Government institutions, rural and tribal communities, and aspirational districts such as Gadchiroli, Nandurbar, Washim, and Dharashiv — areas often limited by terrain and poor terrestrial connectivity.
- ★ The initiative supports the Digital Maharashtra Mission, aligning with the Digital India vision by promoting access to e-governance, telemedicine, smart agriculture, and online education in remote areas.
- ★ The partnership will also enhance disaster management communication, enable EV mobility infrastructure, and strengthen coastal resilience and border area development.
- ★ Starlink, operated by SpaceX, provides broadband internet through a low-Earth orbit (LEO) satellite constellation and currently operates in over 70 countries.

- ★ Starlink conducted demo trials in Mumbai to meet the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) compliance requirements.
- ★ The company plans to establish nine gateway earth stations in cities like Mumbai, Hyderabad, Noida, Chandigarh, Kolkata, and Lucknow, and has applied for 600 Gbps capacity through its Gen 1 satellite network.
- ★ This collaboration is seen as a major step in bridging the digital divide, enabling even geographically isolated communities to access reliable internet connectivity.

India's First Digital Museum of Tribal Freedom Fighters Inaugurated at Nava Raipur

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first Digital Museum of Tribal Freedom Fighters at Nava Raipur, Atal Nagar, Chhattisgarh.
- ★ The museum, named Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Memorial and Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum, commemorates the courage, struggles, and sacrifices of tribal heroes who fought against British colonial rule during India's freedom movement.
- ★ It is India's first fully digital museum, featuring VFX displays, digital projections, interactive screens, and QR-coded storytelling, offering visitors an immersive digital experience.
- ★ The museum is a tribute to Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh (1820–1857), the first martyr from Chhattisgarh, who led a revolt against British grain hoarding during the famine of 1856–57.
- ★ He mobilized peasants and Adivasis against colonial exploitation and was executed in 1857. The Veer Narayan Singh Stadium in Raipur is named in his honour.
- ★ The museum also highlights key tribal revolts and movements such as the Halba Rebellion, Paralkot Uprising, Sarguja Revolt, Bhumkal Movement, Tarapur and Lingagiri Revolts, Rani Chauris Struggle, and Jhanda and Jungle Satyagrahas, showcasing the spirit of resistance and unity among tribal communities.
- ★ It serves as a center for cultural preservation, education, and tourism, bringing focus to the heroic contributions of tribal freedom fighters through modern digital platforms.
- ★ The museum aims to promote awareness, inspire future generations, and position Nava Raipur as a hub of digital and cultural tourism.
- ★ This initiative marks a significant step in blending technology with history, ensuring that the legacy of India's tribal warriors continues to inspire and educate the nation.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta Announces Staggered Office Timings

- ★ Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has announced staggered working hours for Government and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) offices to address worsening air pollution during the winter season.
- ★ The revised timings will be effective from November 15, 2025, to February 15, 2026, a period when the national capital experiences hazardous air quality levels.
- ★ Revised Office Timings:
 - Delhi Government Offices: 10:00 AM to 6:30 PM
 - MCD Offices: 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM

- ★ Previously, Delhi Government offices functioned from 9:30 AM to 6:00 PM and MCD offices from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM, causing heavy traffic congestion due to overlapping commuting hours.
- ★ The new schedule aims to reduce vehicular movement during peak hours, thus helping to lower pollution levels caused by traffic emissions.
- ★ The decision followed a high-level meeting with officials from the Department of Environment and scientific experts to evaluate rising levels of PM 2.5 and PM 10 during winter.
- ★ PM 2.5 and PM 10 are fine particulate matters that penetrate deep into the lungs, causing severe respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses.
- ★ Factors responsible for Delhi's annual winter pollution include stubble burning in neighbouring states, low wind speeds, temperature inversion, and increased use of vehicles and heating appliances.
- ★ During this period, Delhi often records "very poor" to "severe" Air Quality Index (AQI) levels, leading to public health warnings and emergency pollution-control measures.

Karnataka Becomes the First State in India to Approve 12 Days of Paid Menstrual Leave

- ★ Karnataka has become the first state in India to approve 12 days of paid menstrual leave annually for women employees, marking a major step towards gender equality and workplace inclusivity.
- ★ The policy applies to both Government and Private Sector employees, granting one day of paid leave per month for menstruation-related discomfort or health issues.
- ★ The initiative aims to support women's health, dignity, and productivity in the workplace while recognising menstrual health as a legitimate workplace issue.
- ★ This decision represents a gender-sensitive approach, reflecting empathy, equity, and realism in labour policy.
- ★ The move aligns India with global best practices, as countries like Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Taiwan, and Spain already offer menstrual leave provisions.
- ★ It is especially beneficial for women in physically demanding jobs where managing menstrual symptoms can be difficult.
- ★ The policy encourages normalisation of menstrual health, helps reduce stigma, and promotes better morale and performance among women employees.
- ★ Experts have also suggested that a national policy framework could ensure uniformity and protect women from workplace discrimination.
- ★ Additional recommendations include flexible work arrangements, improved hygiene facilities, and sensitisation campaigns to promote understanding and inclusivity.

India Launches DRAP and UiWIN

- ★ The Government of India launched two major initiatives DRAP (Dumpsite Remediation Accelerator Programme) and UiWIN (Urban Investment Window) unveiled by Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar at the National Urban Conclave 2025.
- ★ Both initiatives form part of the 'Viksit Bharat @2047' vision, aimed at transforming India's urban areas into clean, sustainable, and investment-ready cities.

- ★ DRAP focuses on remediating 214 major legacy landfills across 202 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), which together hold about 8.8 crore tonnes of legacy waste, representing nearly 80% of India's remaining dumpsite burden.
- ★ Nationwide, 1,428 dumpsites are under remediation. Cities must prepare micro-action plans, ensure no fresh waste tipping post-clearance, and reclaim land for public/community use.
- ★ The target for complete clearance is September–October 2026.
- ★ The UiWIN (Urban Investment Window) will function as a centralised financing platform managed by HUDCO (Housing and Urban Development Corporation) to mobilise private and multilateral capital for urban infrastructure.
- ★ UiWIN aims to channel long-term concessional finance and attract funding from World Bank, ADB, and other institutions.
- ★ It will promote Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects in solid waste management, urban mobility, water and sewerage, and climate-resilient infrastructure.
- ★ UiWIN supports the Government's goal of creating self-sustaining, investment-friendly urban ecosystems.

Gujarat Becomes First Indian State to Launch Genome Sequencing for Tribal Communities

- ★ Gujarat has become the first Indian state to roll out a dedicated genome sequencing initiative for its tribal communities, marking a significant advancement in the application of biotechnology to public health.
- ★ The initiative is part of the Genome India Project and aims to create a genetic reference database to help diagnose, treat, and prevent inherited disorders such as sickle cell anaemia and thalassemia, which are prevalent among tribal populations.
- ★ The project has been launched by the Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC) and focuses on sequencing the DNA of tribal individuals to identify genetic mutations and patterns linked to rising health issues.
- ★ A total of 4,000 biological samples will be collected, and 2,000 full genome sequences will be generated from individuals across 17 districts making it India's first genome-mapping project with a tribal health focus.
- ★ Tribal communities in Gujarat's eastern belt suffer from high rates of inherited diseases due to endogamous marriages, leading to reduced genetic diversity and increased hereditary conditions such as Sickle Cell Anaemia, Thalassemia, and G6PD deficiency.
- ★ Genome sequencing will help in:
 - Identifying gene mutations causing inherited diseases.
 - Developing targeted DNA test panels for early and affordable diagnosis.
 - Providing genetic counselling to families before conception or during IVF.
 - Supporting research on immunity, nutrition, and disease susceptibility among tribal populations.
- ★ Gujarat has reduced per-sample sequencing costs from ₹85,000 to ₹60,000 through local infrastructure and innovation.

UIDAI Partners with Behavioural Insights Limited

- ★ The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has partnered with Behavioural Insights Limited (BIL), a global research consultancy, to enhance the adoption of the Mandatory Biometric Update (MBU) for children aged 5 and 15 years, ensuring that their Aadhaar credentials remain updated and reliable for authentication in welfare and education services.
- ★ The Mandatory Biometric Update (MBU) is required because, during initial Aadhaar enrolment, a child's biometric data is either incomplete or not captured.
- ★ UIDAI mandates biometric updates at age 5, when fingerprints and iris patterns become stable, and again at age 15, when major biometric changes occur.
- ★ These updates ensure accurate identification and prevent failures during Aadhaar-based services and Government schemes.
- ★ Through the MoU, UIDAI and BIL aim to use behavioural insights and evidence-based strategies to encourage parents and guardians to complete MBU on time.
- ★ The collaboration focuses on raising awareness, removing psychological and social barriers, and simplifying the update process to improve participation.
- ★ To promote compliance, UIDAI has also announced a one-year fee waiver for MBU services for children aged 5 and 15.
- ★ This initiative will increase participation, reduce financial burden on families, and improve Aadhaar authentication success rates for minors.
- ★ The partnership underscores UIDAI's commitment to inclusive digital identity, user-friendly governance, and enhancing service reliability through timely Aadhaar updates.

Union Minister Amit Shah Launches 'Sahakar Digi Pay' and 'Sahakar Digi Loan'

- ★ Union Co-operation Minister Amit Shah launched two innovative mobile applications Sahakar Digi Pay and Sahakar Digi Loan to promote the digital transformation of Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs).
- ★ The launch took place during a two-day international conference on the urban co-operative credit sector, where the Minister emphasized the importance of digitalization for competitiveness and modernization in India's cashless economy.
- ★ Sahakar Digi Pay is a digital payment platform designed to enable seamless transactions for UCB customers.
- ★ Sahakar Digi Loan is a digital lending platform aimed at ensuring easier access to credit for individuals and small businesses.
- ★ The objective is to encourage rapid digital adoption among UCBs to help them compete effectively in the digital economy, with a target of onboarding 1,500 banks within the next two years.
- ★ The national goal is to establish at least one additional UCB in every town with a population over 2 lakh within five years, by converting successful co-operative credit societies into UCBs.
- ★ Focus will be on supporting young entrepreneurs and economically weaker sections through better financial access.
- ★ Financial reforms have significantly improved the sector's performance: Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) reduced from 2.8% to 0.6% over the past two years.

Assam Government Approves Assam Prohibition of Polygamy Bill 2025

- ★ The Government of Assam approved the Assam Prohibition of Polygamy Bill 2025 to prohibit the practice of polygamy (entering into more than one marriage while the first marriage subsists), making it a punishable offence.
- ★ The Bill aims to ensure legal uniformity in marriage practices and safeguard women's rights.
- ★ Under the Bill, any person marrying another while their first marriage is still valid will face imprisonment of up to 7 years.
- ★ A special compensation fund will be established for women affected by polygamous marriages.
- ★ The Bill will be tabled in the Assam Legislative Assembly on 25 November 2025 for approval.
- ★ The law will not apply to Scheduled Tribes (STs) or residents of areas under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution in Assam.
- ★ Muslim marriages in Scheduled Areas before 2005 are also exempted from the Bill.
- ★ The move is aimed at promoting gender justice, legal uniformity, and protection of women from economic and legal vulnerabilities.
- ★ An expert committee earlier confirmed that Assam has the legislative competence to enact such a law as marriage and divorce fall under the Concurrent List of the Constitution.
- ★ Once enacted, this law could serve as a model for other Indian states considering reforms in personal and marriage laws.

Maharashtra Agriculture Department Unveils New Logo and Slogan

- ★ The Maharashtra Agriculture Department has launched a new logo and slogan after 38 years, symbolizing a fresh commitment to modern and sustainable farming.
- ★ The unveiling ceremony in Mumbai was led by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, with Deputy CMs Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, and Agriculture Minister Dattatray Bharne in attendance.
- ★ The new slogan, "Sashwat Sheti, Samruddha Shetkari" (translated as "Sustainable Farming, Prosperous Farmer"), was chosen through a statewide public competition that received over 1,700 entries, reflecting strong public participation.
- ★ The new logo represents innovation in agriculture, farmer empowerment, and sustainability, aligning with the department's vision of progress and prosperity.
- ★ CM Devendra Fadnavis stated that the new identity reflects the state's focus on technology-driven, sustainable farming, while Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar highlighted the need to combine traditional wisdom with modern techniques.
- ★ Minister Dattatray Bharne described the rebranding as a "people-powered campaign" that embodies collective vision.
- ★ The initiative aims to rebrand Maharashtra's agriculture sector as future-ready, addressing issues like drought, crop failure, and farmer distress, while promoting organic farming, irrigation, and market access.
- ★ Through this rebranding, the Government seeks to inspire confidence among farmers and connect with younger agri-entrepreneurs, showcasing agriculture as a tech-savvy and opportunity-rich sector.

Punjab Becomes the First State to Fully Implement the Amended Bharat Net Scheme

- ★ Punjab has become the first state in India to successfully implement the amended Bharat Net Scheme across its entire territory.
- ★ The achievement enables live monitoring of the border state from any location in the country, marking a major step in bridging the digital divide in rural India.
- ★ The Bharat Net Scheme is a flagship initiative of the Government of India aimed at transforming rural digital infrastructure by providing broadband connectivity to Gram Panchayats, households, and institutions.
- ★ Chief Secretary KAP Sinha received an award for Punjab's exemplary implementation from Ajay Kumar Kararha, CGM, BSNL Punjab Circle.
- ★ Broadband services have been rolled out in 43 shadow areas, with only one village pending coverage, expected to be completed by end of November 2025.
- ★ The scheme facilitates e-governance, e-health, and digital education services in rural regions while enabling real-time border monitoring.
- ★ Punjab's model demonstrates effective integration of governance and technology, enhancing service delivery and public monitoring.
- ★ The state's achievement serves as a replicable model for other states, showcasing successful last-mile connectivity through fibre-based broadband in rural and border areas.

India to Receive 8 Cheetahs from Botswana under Project Cheetah

- ★ India is set to receive 8 cheetahs from Botswana under Project Cheetah, reaffirming its commitment to reintroduce the species that went extinct in India in 1952.
- ★ The announcement was made during President Droupadi Murmu's state visit to Botswana, marking a milestone in India-Botswana environmental co-operation.
- ★ A symbolic handover ceremony will be held in Botswana in the presence of President Murmu, underscoring the ecological and diplomatic importance of this initiative.
- ★ Project Cheetah is India's flagship wildlife initiative aimed at restoring ecological balance, promoting eco-tourism, strengthening conservation frameworks, and fostering transcontinental wildlife co-operation.
- ★ Earlier in 2022, cheetahs were translocated from Namibia and released at Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh.
- ★ Botswana, home to one of the largest wild cheetah populations, is donating 8 cheetahs to help strengthen genetic diversity and support India's conservation efforts.
- ★ The move also deepens India-Botswana strategic ties and showcases Africa's support for India's environmental goals.
- ★ President Murmu's visit marks the first-ever State visit by an Indian Head of State to both Angola and Botswana, reflecting India's growing engagement in South-South co-operation across biodiversity, cultural exchange, and capacity building.
- ★ Her participation in the handover event highlights India's commitment to environmental diplomacy and sustainable wildlife conservation.

7th India–Canada Ministerial Dialogue on Trade and Investment Held

- ★ Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Canada’s Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development Maninder Sidhu co-chaired the 7th India–Canada Ministerial Dialogue on Trade and Investment (MDTI) in New Delhi.
- ★ The meeting aimed to renew and strengthen bilateral trade and investment ties, aligned with the Joint Statement “Renewing Momentum towards a Stronger Partnership” which identifies trade as a key pillar of economic co-operation.
- ★ Ministers reaffirmed the strong India–Canada partnership based on shared democratic values, cultural diversity, and economic complementarities.
- ★ They highlighted the role of the Indian diaspora (2.9 million) and over 4.27 lakh Indian students in Canada, who contribute significantly to both economies and deepen bilateral linkages.
- ★ Bilateral trade in goods and services reached USD 18.38 billion in 2023; both sides welcomed the steady rise in two-way investments.
- ★ Ministers committed to maintaining an open, transparent, and predictable business environment supporting sustainable and inclusive growth.
- ★ Dialogue covered collaboration in priority sectors including nutritional security, supply chain resilience, health sector co-operation, and investment facilitation.
- ★ Both sides reviewed trade policy developments, discussed market access, regulatory alignment, and measures to enhance long-term economic resilience.
- ★ Meeting concluded with a commitment to revitalize the India–Canada economic partnership, translating discussions into tangible outcomes that will promote shared prosperity and deepen bilateral relations.

International Tourism Mart 2025 – 13th Edition Inaugurated in Gangtok

- ★ Union Tourism and Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat is set to inaugurate the 13th International Tourism Mart (ITM) for the North Eastern Region in Gangtok, Sikkim.
- ★ Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu, and Tourism Ministers of all North Eastern States will participate in the programme.
- ★ The International Tourism Mart is the annual flagship event of the Ministry of Tourism aimed at showcasing the tourism potential of India’s North Eastern Region.
- ★ The event targets both domestic and international audiences, promoting the region’s culture, heritage, biodiversity, and tourism opportunities.
- ★ The ITM plays a crucial role in enhancing tourism infrastructure, boosting investments, and supporting sustainable tourism growth in the North-East.

India Becomes the World’s 6th Largest Patent Filer

- ★ India has emerged as the world’s 6th largest patent filer, with over 64,000 patent applications, as announced by Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Dr Jitendra Singh during a tech-fest in New Delhi.

- ★ More than 55% of the patent filings are by resident Indian innovators, indicating a major shift from technology consumption to technology creation.
- ★ India's position in the Global Innovation Index (GII) has improved significantly from 81st to 38th, showcasing strengthened innovation capability.
- ★ The patent surge is driven by factors such as:
 - A rapidly growing start-up ecosystem supported by Start-Up India and other Government schemes.
 - Increased focus on skill development and applied sciences, even among those without formal advanced degrees.
 - Supportive Ministry of Science & Technology policies that lower barriers to patent filing.
 - Rising awareness of patents as economic and strategic assets that enhance global competitiveness.
- ★ The announcement highlights:
 - Global credibility, placing India among major global innovation economies.
 - Strengthening domestic innovation capacity, as Indian firms, research institutions and individuals dominate filings.
 - Alignment with national initiatives like Atmanirbhar Bharat, Make in India, and the transition toward a knowledge-driven economy.

Ambaji Marble from Gujarat Receives Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

- ★ Ambaji Marble, known for its milky white colour, durability, and historical value, has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- ★ It is sourced from Banaskantha district, North Gujarat.
- ★ The marble has an ancient legacy, with mines believed to be 1,200–1,500 years old, dating back to the period when the Dilwara Jain Temples of Mount Abu were built, known globally for their intricate marble architecture.
- ★ Unique properties of Ambaji marble include its high calcium content, exceptional durability, natural polish, smooth texture, and its signature milky white appearance, making it highly preferred in temple construction in India and abroad.
- ★ Ambaji marble is believed to have been used in the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, reaffirming its cultural and spiritual significance. It is also used in temples and cultural structures across Miami, Los Angeles, Boston, New Zealand, and England, reflecting strong global demand.

Sixteenth Finance Commission (XVIFC) Submits Report to the President of India

- ★ The Sixteenth Finance Commission (XVIFC), chaired by Dr. Arvind Panagariya, officially submitted its report to the President of India.
- ★ The recommendations will guide India's fiscal framework for 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031, shaping tax devolution, grants-in-aid, and disaster management financing.
- ★ This marks a major development in India's fiscal federal structure.
- ★ The Finance Commission, constituted under Article 280 of the Constitution, recommends:

- Distribution of net tax proceeds between the Centre and States
- Allocation among States
- Principles for grants-in-aid
- Recommendations on disaster management funding
- ★ Any additional matters assigned by the President under the Terms of Reference (ToR) The XVIFC, set up in 2023, has completed its mandate for the 2026–31 award period.
- ★ The Commission held wide-ranging consultations, including: Union and State Governments, local bodies, former Finance Commission members, leading academic institutions, multilateral organisations, and domain experts, supported by deliberations with the Advisory Council.

Union Health Minister Inaugurates 10 New Amrit Pharmacies on 10th Anniversary

- ★ Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda inaugurated 10 new AMRIT (Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment) pharmacies on the scheme's 10th anniversary, reaffirming the Government's commitment to expanding access to affordable medicines and medical devices.
- ★ Launched in 2015, AMRIT has grown into a nationwide network of over 255 outlets across 24 States and 4 UTs, offering essential medicines and implants at up to 50% discount on MRP.
- ★ The newly inaugurated centres are located at: PGI Neuroscience Centre, Chandigarh; GMCH Unit-II, Jammu; State Cancer Institute, Jammu; AIIMS Deogarh; Dental Hospital, Srinagar; SCTIMST, Trivandrum; Mumbai Port Trust; IIT Jodhpur; AIIMS Gorakhpur; AIIMS Kalyani (Unit 3).
- ★ Major achievements include: 6.85 crore+ patients benefited; medicines worth ₹17,000 crore dispensed; total savings of ₹8,500 crore for patients; and availability of 6,500+ drugs and medical devices through the network.
- ★ The programme is operated by HLL Lifecare Limited, a PSU under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- ★ The Minister announced plans to expand AMRIT to at least 500 outlets, ensuring that every medical college and district hospital has access to affordable medicines.
- ★ He also launched Ecogreen 2.0, a new digital platform for operational efficiency, and a customised My Stamp in collaboration with India Post.
- ★ The AMRIT scheme plays a vital role in reducing out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure, improving access to treatment for chronic and life-threatening illnesses, and strengthening India's push toward Universal Health Coverage.

The Government of India Launches 'YUVA Artificial Intelligence (AI) for ALL' Course

- ★ The Government of India has launched 'YUVA Artificial Intelligence (AI) for ALL', a free national-level online course aimed at teaching basic AI skills to 1 crore (10 million) citizens.
- ★ The initiative was announced by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) under the IndiaAI Mission, marking a major step toward AI inclusivity and digital empowerment.
- ★ The course is a 4.5-hour, self-paced programme designed to make AI easy, practical, and accessible, using Indian examples, simple language, and real-life case studies.

- ★ It is available free of cost on platforms such as FutureSkills Prime, Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT) Karmayogi, and other major educational technology platforms.
- ★ After completion, learners receive an official Government of India certificate to showcase their newly acquired AI knowledge and skills.
- ★ The initiative helps bridge the AI knowledge gap by offering foundational AI literacy to citizens across India.
- ★ It supports India's vision of becoming a future-ready, AI-driven digital economy, preparing learners for job markets where AI skills are increasingly important.
- ★ The course promotes ethical, safe, and inclusive AI practices, ensuring awareness of both the opportunities and risks associated with AI.

Punjab SC Commission Opens India's First Dedicated Courtroom for SC-Related Cases

- ★ The Punjab State Scheduled Castes Commission has inaugurated India's first dedicated courtroom for handling cases related to the Scheduled Caste (SC) community, marking a major step toward improving access to justice.
- ★ Commission Chairperson Jasvir Singh Garhi stated that the new courtroom, equipped with modern infrastructure, will ensure faster hearings, quicker case disposal, and greater efficiency in protecting SC rights.
- ★ An Online Court System is set to be launched soon, allowing complainants to appear virtually, reducing travel, time, and financial burden — especially for people from remote areas.
- ★ The dedicated courtroom addresses longstanding issues of delays and backlogs, strengthening the justice delivery system for marginalized communities and reinforcing the state's commitment to equality and constitutional safeguards.
- ★ This is the first such facility under any state-level SC Commission in India and is expected to serve as a model for other states.
- ★ The Commission deals with complaints under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and state social justice mandates; the new courtroom reflects structural reforms and greater reliance on technology-enabled justice systems.

Switzerland and Ireland Named Country Partners for Hornbill Festival 2025

- ★ The Government of Nagaland has officially announced Switzerland and Ireland as country partners for the Hornbill Festival 2025, following meetings between CM Neiphiu Rio and the ambassadors of both nations in New Delhi.
- ★ Switzerland's participation was confirmed after discussions between CM Rio and Swiss Ambassador Maya Tissafi, focusing on deeper co-operation in culture, tourism, and other sectors.
- ★ Ireland's partnership was confirmed by Irish Ambassador Kevin Kelly, with Ireland set to send a cultural delegation featuring folk music, literary exchanges, theatre, public art, and dialogue sessions.
- ★ Both countries join the United Kingdom, which had already been announced as a partner nation, further boosting the festival's international profile.

- ★ Hornbill Festival, known as the “Festival of Festivals”, is held annually from 1–10 December at Kisama Heritage Village, showcasing the traditions of 17 major Naga tribes through dance, music, crafts, sports, and cuisine.
- ★ The festival is named after the Great Indian Hornbill, a revered symbol in Naga folklore.
- ★ Country partnerships enhance:
 - Cultural diplomacy through cross-country exchanges
 - Tourism development by attracting global visitors
 - Creative collaborations in art, literature, and performance
 - Economic growth via increased tourist footfall and local revenue

India Resumes Tourist Visas for Chinese Nationals from July 24, 2025

- ★ India has resumed issuing tourist visas to Chinese nationals from 24 July 2025, ending a five-year suspension that began in 2020 due to border tensions in eastern Ladakh and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ★ The visa freeze, along with suspension of direct flights, had halted almost all tourism and significantly reduced people-to-people exchanges between India and China.
- ★ The resumption follows renewed diplomatic engagement, gradual normalization of ties, and the restoration of direct passenger flights earlier in 2025.
- ★ India aims to revive its inbound tourism sector, and reopening to Chinese travelers — traditionally major contributors to foreign tourist arrivals — supports this economic objective.
- ★ The move is viewed as a strategic diplomatic gesture, signalling India’s willingness to rebuild confidence while maintaining its core security considerations.
- ★ Tourist visas will be issued through the standard online process, with regulated in-person appointments at Indian Visa Application Centres in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, ensuring secure and controlled implementation.

Kashi Tamil Sangamam 4.0 to be Held from 2–10 December 2025

- ★ The Ministry of Education, along with multiple ministries and institutions, will organise the 4th edition of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS 4.0) from 2 to 10 December 2025, inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of strengthening national integration through cultural exchange.
- ★ The event, held under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, is themed “Learn Tamil – Tamil Karkalam”, promoting Tamil language learning and deeper cultural understanding between Tamil Nadu and Kashi (Varanasi).
- ★ Tamil Nadu and Kashi share centuries-old civilisational, spiritual, and linguistic ties, shaped by ancient dynasties such as the Chola, Chera, Pandya, Pallava, Chalukya, and Vijayanagara empires. The initiative aims to revive these connections through people-to-people interactions and traditional knowledge systems.
- ★ Delegates will undertake an 8-day immersive visit to Varanasi, Prayagraj, and Ayodhya, participating in seminars, heritage walks, cultural performances, and academic engagements.

- ★ Key sites in Kashi to be visited include Kedar Ghat, Kasi Matham and “Little Tamil Nadu”, Mahakavi Subramanya Bharatiyar’s ancestral home, Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Mata Annapurna Temple, and the Tamil Department at BHU.
- ★ The programme is co-ordinated by IIT Madras and Banaras Hindu University (BHU), with support from ministries including Culture, Tourism, Textiles, MSME, Food Processing Industries, Information & Broadcasting, and agencies like IRCTC and the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

Jammu & Kashmir to Conduct First-Ever Auction of Limestone Blocks

- ★ Jammu & Kashmir will host its first-ever limestone block auction at the Convention Centre, Canal Road, Jammu, marking a major reform in the mining sector of the Union Territory.
- ★ The event will be attended by Union Minister of Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, and Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary.
- ★ The auction is part of wider mining sector reforms aimed at ensuring transparent and competitive mineral allocation and attracting private investment into the mineral-rich yet underexplored region.
- ★ Limestone, a critical raw material for the cement and construction industries, is expected to unlock multiple benefits including:
 - Increase in private investment in the mining sector
 - Employment generation for local communities
 - Infrastructure development around mining areas
 - Boost to industrial and construction activity in the Union Territory
- ★ The shift from traditional allotment to an auction-based licensing system enhances transparency and supports Ease of Doing Business in J&K.
- ★ The initiative is expected to drive long-term growth in limestone-dependent sectors such as cement, real estate, and infrastructure.

National Commission for Women Launches New 24×7 Short Helpline Number 14490 for Women’s Safety

- ★ The National Commission for Women (NCW) has launched a new 24×7 national short-code helpline number: 14490, offering women across India quick and easy access to support during emergencies involving violence, harassment, or threats.
- ★ The toll-free number connects directly to NCW’s existing helpline system, enabling women to seek help instantly, receive guidance, counselling, and legal aid, and get connected to law enforcement agencies when required.
- ★ The initiative strengthens NCW’s mission to ensure timely assistance, improve accessibility for vulnerable groups, and respond effectively to rising cases of gender-based violence.
- ★ **Key features of 14490:**
 - Toll-free, easy-to-remember short code.
 - Operational 24×7.
 - Support for cases of domestic violence, sexual harassment, cybercrime, mental health concerns, and legal queries.
 - Integrated with NCW’s national helpline network and state authorities.

- ★ The short code is designed to remain memorable even under stress, accessible from any mobile or landline, and aligns with the Government's focus on Digital India and women-led development, ensuring help is just a call away for every woman in distress.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India and Nepal Ink Power Transmission Deals to Strengthen Energy Co-operation

- ★ India and Nepal have strengthened their energy co-operation by signing two major power agreements between POWERGRID Corporation of India and the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA).
- ★ The agreements aim to build two 400 kV cross-border transmission lines and create joint ventures (JVs) in both countries for implementation.
- ★ The signing took place in New Delhi in the presence of India's Power Minister Manohar Lal and Nepal's Energy Minister Kulman Ghising.
- ★ The transmission lines will connect Inaruwa (Nepal) – New Purnea (India) and Lamki/Dododhara (Nepal) – Bareilly (India).
- ★ Each country will establish separate JV entities, ensuring a balanced ownership structure and equal bilateral participation.
- ★ The initiative will boost electricity trade, improve grid resilience, and support Nepal's hydropower exports to India.
- ★ It will also increase interconnection capacity, enabling regional load sharing and enhanced energy security for both countries.
- ★ The project aligns with the goal of creating a South Asian energy market and promoting clean energy diplomacy in the region.
- ★ The co-operation supports India's Neighborhood First Policy, reinforcing its role as a regional development partner.
- ★ It could pave the way for broader South Asian grid integration, potentially involving Bhutan, Bangladesh, and other countries.

Word of the Year 2025

- ★ Dictionary.com has chosen "67" – a number, not a traditional word – as its Word of the Year 2025, marking a first-ever numeric selection in the award's history.
- ★ The number symbolises Gen Z's internet culture, representing absurdist humour, meme-driven slang, and the idea that "vibe" outweighs meaning in modern online communication.
- ★ The term "67" (pronounced six-seven, not sixty-seven) has no fixed meaning, but is used as a reaction or expression of mood, functioning like a shrug, inside joke, or punchline.
- ★ Origins trace back to Skrillex's 2014 song "Doot Doot (67)", NBA star LaMelo Ball (6'7"), and a viral "67 Kid" basketball clip, which helped popularise the term across TikTok and gaming communities.

- ★ The slang falls under “brainrot slang”, where nonsense and randomness define humour; it reflects a cultural shift toward meaningless-but-funny online expression.
- ★ com described “67” as a “linguistic time capsule of 2025”, noting that mentions of it rose sixfold in October 2025 compared to the whole of 2024.
- ★ It is the first Word of the Year that’s more of an interjection than a word, used to shout emotion rather than describe meaning.

USCIS Ends Acceptance of Cheques and Money Orders for Immigration Payments

- ★ US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has stopped accepting cheques and money orders for all immigration-related filings.
- ★ From this week, applicants must authorise payments through electronic debit using Form G-1650, which allows direct withdrawal from a US bank account.
- ★ The change aims to make payments safer, faster, and more efficient, addressing delays, fraud risks, and payment errors previously linked to cheques and money orders.
- ★ Credit card payments remain valid for specific visa categories such as H-1B, green card, and employment authorisation applications using Form G-1450.
- ★ For H-1B employers, the new system helps in better record-keeping and payment tracking, though it requires closer co-ordination between finance teams and immigration attorneys.
- ★ International students (F-1) and new visa holders may face difficulties if they don’t have US bank accounts to authorise debit payments.
- ★ Applicants must ensure accurate account and routing numbers on Form G-1650, as errors can lead to application rejection.
- ★ USCIS advises confirming with banks that Government debits are permitted and sufficient funds are available before submission.
- ★ Alternative payment options include prepaid or reloadable credit cards, but they must meet USCIS payment authorisation standards.
- ★ The change is part of USCIS’s broader digital transformation, aimed at reducing paperwork, preventing fraud, and accelerating processing.
- ★ However, the shift increases applicant responsibility, as manual corrections or late payments will no longer be possible.

Maldives Becomes First Country to Enforce Generational Tobacco Ban

- ★ The Maldives has become the first country in the world to implement a “generational ban” on smoking, prohibiting individuals born on or after January 1, 2007, from purchasing, using, or selling tobacco in any form.
- ★ The ban was enacted through the Second Amendment to the Tobacco Control Act, ratified by President Mohamed Muizzu, marking a historic public health milestone.
- ★ The World Health Organization (WHO) attributes over seven million global deaths annually to smoking, highlighting the significance of the Maldives’ preventive health initiative.

- ★ While New Zealand and the United Kingdom had proposed similar “smoke-free generation” laws, they were never implemented, making the Maldives the first nation to successfully enforce a generational tobacco ban.

China Launches 42nd Antarctic Expedition to Conduct Scientific Drilling and Study Polar Evolution

- ★ China dispatched its 42nd Antarctic Expedition Team on November 1, 2025, to carry out scientific drilling experiments for studying Antarctica’s evolution and natural resources.
- ★ The mission marks China’s first-ever deep drilling operation into the Antarctic ice sheet and subglacial lakes, representing a major milestone in its polar research programme.
- ★ The team will utilize indigenously developed hot-water and thermal-melting drill systems to conduct clean drilling and sampling through over 3,000 metres of ice.
- ★ The expedition aims to perform long-term climate and ocean observations in regions such as the Amundsen Sea and Ross Sea, contributing to a better understanding of global climate change.
- ★ China currently operates five Antarctic research stations, including a newly established fifth base spanning 5,244 sq. metres, which can accommodate 80 members in summer and 30 in winter.

Palau Conducts World’s First Live Underwater Broadcast

- ★ In a historic first, Palau’s President Surangel Whipps Jr. conducted a live underwater interview beneath the Pacific Ocean to highlight ocean conservation, climate threats, and the existential risks faced by small island nations.
- ★ The interview featured marine activist Merle Liivand, and both exchanged remarks in real time underwater using Li-Fi technology, which transmits data via light instead of radio waves, making it suitable for underwater communication.
- ★ The event emphasized the urgency of protecting marine ecosystems, tackling coral bleaching, sea-level rise, and climate impacts disproportionately affecting Pacific Island states.
- ★ Palau is an island nation in the western Pacific Ocean, consisting of around 300 islands with a land area of about 458 sq. km, located in both the Northern and Eastern hemispheres.
- ★ It shares maritime borders with Micronesia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, and Ngerulmud, on Babeldaob Island, is the world’s least populous capital city, while Koror is the largest and most populous city.

Sweden Declared the World’s First Fully Cashless Nation

- ★ Sweden has become the world’s first cashless country, marking a major milestone in digital financial transformation.
- ★ Citizens now rely almost entirely on mobile payments, cards, and phone taps for daily transactions, replacing physical currency with digital convenience.
- ★ The shift began in 2012 with the launch of “Swish”, a real-time mobile payment app developed by major Swedish banks.
- ★ Swish enables users to send and receive money instantly using only a phone number, making it widely adopted across businesses, churches, and street vendors.

- ★ The phrase “No cash accepted” has become common in cafés, shops, and museums throughout the country.
- ★ The Riksbank (Swedish central bank) has led efforts to ensure innovation with financial security, exploring a state-backed digital currency called the “e-krona”.
- ★ Pilot programmes and research initiatives are being undertaken to strengthen cybersecurity and promote financial inclusion, especially for the elderly and rural populations.
- ★ Tourists can make transactions easily through contactless debit and credit cards, but Swish requires a Swedish bank account and BankID, making it inaccessible to foreigners.

Australia Sends First-Ever First Nations Business Mission to India

- ★ Australia is sending its first-ever First Nations business mission to India from October 26 to November 3, 2025, to strengthen trade and investment links.
- ★ The mission is led by the Perth USAsia Centre and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia on behalf of the Australian Government.
- ★ The delegation will visit Mumbai, New Delhi, and Kolkata, focusing on India’s mining and renewable energy sectors.
- ★ Eight Australian First Nations-owned Mining Equipment, Technology and Services (METS) companies will explore partnership opportunities and showcase expertise.
- ★ The businesses will participate in India’s largest mining conference, the International Mining, Equipment and Minerals Exhibition in Kolkata.
- ★ The eight Western Australian companies represent innovations in electric vehicle conversions, sustainable chemicals, engineering, and safety services.
- ★ Electric Power Conversions Australia, Woollahara Group, and Carey Mining Group are among the participating firms, with Carey Mining being Western Australia’s largest 100% First Nations-owned mining company.

Egypt and Qatar Ink \$7.5 Billion Deal to Develop Luxury Real Estate and Tourism Project

- ★ Egypt and Qatar signed a partnership deal to develop a luxury real estate and tourism project on Egypt’s Mediterranean coast, as part of Qatar’s \$7.5 billion investment pledge to Cairo.
- ★ Qatari Diar, the real estate arm of Doha’s sovereign wealth fund, will invest \$29.7 billion in the Alam Al-Roum project, featuring golf courses and marinas along a 7-km undeveloped coastline northwest of Cairo.
- ★ Qatar will pay \$3.5 billion in December 2025 for the land allocated to the project, representing fresh Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) aimed at reducing Egypt’s debt and improving economic indicators.
- ★ Egypt will receive housing units worth \$1.8 billion and 15% of the project’s profits once Qatari Diar recovers its investment costs, according to Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly.

U.N. Water Convention in 2025

- ★ Bangladesh became the first South Asian nation to join the U.N. Water Convention in 2025, aiming to secure transboundary water resources and promote sustainable water management.
- ★ The country faces severe water insecurity, with 50% of its population in drought-prone zones, 60% flood-vulnerable, and major rivers drying due to climate change and population pressures.
- ★ The UN Water Convention, also called the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, was adopted in Helsinki in 1992 and entered into force in 1996, initially regional and opened to all UN member states from 2016.
- ★ India is not a signatory, preferring bilateral and basin-level treaties such as the Indus Waters Treaty (1960) and the Ganga Water Sharing Treaty (1996).

Denmark Moves to Ban Social Media Access for Children Below 15

- ★ Denmark's Government announced on November 7, 2025, a political agreement to ban social media access for children under 15 years of age.
- ★ The policy, led by the Ministry of Digitalization, allows parental consent for children aged 13 and above after a specific assessment.
- ★ The move aims to protect children and teens from harmful content, commercial pressures, and digital risks in online environments.
- ★ The measure is set to become one of Europe's strictest social media regulations, following Australia's 2024 ban for children under 16 years.
- ★ In Australia, platforms like TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Reddit, X, and Instagram face fines up to 50 million AUD for permitting underage users.

Bangladesh Joins UN Water Convention as First Country from South Asia

- ★ Bangladesh became the 1st South Asian country and the 56th globally to join the United Nations (UN) Water Convention, officially known as the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.
- ★ The move aims to protect and manage transboundary waterways, considered a lifeline to peace and prosperity for Bangladesh.
- ★ About 60% of Bangladesh's population faces high flood risk, the second highest globally after the Netherlands, while 45% face high fluvial flood risk, the highest proportion in the world.
- ★ Over 65 million people in Bangladesh lack safe and properly managed sanitation facilities, highlighting the need for improved water and sanitation governance.
- ★ The accession aligns with UN efforts on water governance and sanitation goals ahead of the UN Water Conference 2026 in the UAE.
- ★ The UN Water Convention, adopted in 1992 (Helsinki, Finland) and enforced in 1996, is a legally binding treaty promoting the sustainable management of shared water resources and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Maldives President Muizzu Opens Hanimaadhoo International Airport

- ★ Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu inaugurated the Hanimaadhoo International Airport, developed under India's Line of Credit (LoC), describing it as a gateway to prosperity for northern Maldives.
- ★ The airport project was financed through an USD 800 million Line of Credit extended by EXIM Bank of India under an agreement signed in 2019 between India and Maldives.
- ★ The construction contract for the airport was awarded to India's JMC Projects at a cost of USD 136.6 million.
- ★ President Muizzu hailed the project as a symbol of economic transformation, expected to boost tourism, agriculture, fisheries, and overall socio-economic development in the northern region of the Maldives.

Ethiopia Chosen to Host UN COP32 Climate Summit 2027

- ★ Ethiopia has been selected to host the United Nations COP32 Climate Summit in 2027, defeating Nigeria's rival bid for the event.
- ★ The COP32 conference will be held in Addis Ababa, following endorsement by other African nations at the COP30 plenary session in Brazil.
- ★ Under the regional rotation system, the host country assumes the COP presidency, allowing it to set summit goals, highlight national climate priorities, and mediate negotiations.
- ★ The host for COP31 (2026) is yet to be decided, with Australia and Turkey competing; if no agreement is reached, the summit may default to Bonn, Germany, home of the UN Climate Agency headquarters.
- ★ Africa has hosted the COP summit five times – Morocco (2001, 2016), Kenya (2006), South Africa (2011), and Egypt (2022).
- ★ The West African region has never hosted a COP conference, and Nigeria would have been the first if it had been selected.

Oman Elected to UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Council for 2025–2029

- ★ Oman has been elected as a member of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Council for the term 2025–2029, during the 43rd UNESCO General Conference held in Samarkand.
- ★ This marks a global recognition of Oman's efforts in sustainability, biodiversity conservation, and human–nature harmony.
- ★ The UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, launched in 1971, aims to promote biodiversity conservation, support sustainable ecosystem management, and foster harmony between people and nature.
- ★ The MAB Programme is governed by the International Co-ordinating Council (MAB-ICC), comprising 34 member countries.
- ★ The programme is guided by the MAB Roadmap (2015–2025), with a new roadmap (2025–2035) to be launched at the 5th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Hangzhou, China (2025).

- ★ Oman's election reflects its growing global influence in environmental policymaking and commitment to ecological preservation.
- ★ The membership enables Oman to contribute to global environmental strategies and biosphere management policies.
- ★ Major geographical features include the Al-Hajar Mountains with Mount Shams (2,980 m) as the highest peak, the Rub' al-Khali (Empty Quarter) desert, and fertile regions like Al-Batinah and Dhofar.

United Arab Emirates Executes First Government Transaction

- ★ The United Arab Emirates (UAE) completed its first government transaction using the Digital Dirham, a central bank digital currency (CBDC), in under two minutes.
- ★ The transaction was executed via the mBridge platform, showcasing the UAE's technological readiness and ambition to become a global digital finance hub.
- ★ The Digital Dirham is the UAE's official digital currency, issued by the Central Bank of the UAE (CBUAE) under the Financial Infrastructure Transformation (FIT) Programme.
- ★ Unlike cryptocurrencies, the Digital Dirham is Government-backed, fully regulated, and ensures secure, real-time transactions between public institutions.
- ★ On 12 November 2025, the Ministry of Finance and the Dubai Department of Finance completed the UAE's first Digital Dirham transaction using mBridge.
- ★ The mBridge platform is a multi-central bank digital currency settlement system, developed in collaboration with central banks across Asia and the Middle East, enabling cross-border digital transactions.
- ★ The Digital Dirham project aligns with the UAE's strict digital asset regulations, including stablecoin backing requirements and rigorous audits since March 2023.
- ★ In April 2023, Abu Dhabi institutions like IHC, ADQ, and First Abu Dhabi Bank launched plans for a dirham-backed stablecoin, reflecting strong local interest in regulated digital assets.
- ★ The successful transaction paves the way for Government salaries, subsidies, procurement, and public services to be managed via digital payments, offering benefits like faster transfers, automated reconciliation, reduced paperwork, and increased financial transparency.
- ★ This milestone also sets the stage for public adoption of the Digital Dirham in retail and commercial transactions.

3rd International Ayurveda Conference Concludes in Sao Paulo, Brazil

- ★ Dinesh Bhatia, Ambassador of India to Brazil, inaugurated the 3rd International Ayurveda Conference in Sao Paulo, Brazil.
- ★ The conference was jointly organized by the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC) and Conayur Sao Paulo (Conselho Nacional de Ayurveda).
- ★ The event was held from 14–15 November 2025, marking 40 years of Ayurveda practice in Brazil.
- ★ Brazil is the first South American country to officially recognize Ayurveda.

- ★ The conference aimed to strengthen India-Brazil co-operation in traditional medicine and holistic health systems.
- ★ The theme of the 2025 edition was “Diversity and Inclusion in Ayurveda: Caring for Everybody and Every Being”.
- ★ The event was held under the patronage of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).
- ★ Participants included scholars, Ayurveda practitioners, integrative medicine experts, researchers, students, and health regulators from India, Brazil, and other Latin American countries.
- ★ The WHO–Ministry of AYUSH Global Summit on Traditional Medicine is scheduled in New Delhi from 17–19 December 2025.

‘Parasocial’ Named Cambridge Dictionary’s Word of the Year 2025

- ★ Cambridge Dictionary has declared ‘parasocial’ as the Word of the Year 2025, reflecting the rise of one-sided emotional connections with celebrities, influencers, fictional characters, and AI chatbots.
- ★ The announcement coincided with the inclusion of 6,000 new words in the dictionary, featuring trending internet terms like ‘delulu’, ‘slop’, ‘skibidi’, and ‘tradwife’.
- ★ Parasocial is defined as an adjective describing a relationship or emotional bond felt toward a celebrity, fictional character, or AI personality, despite no real interaction.
- ★ The term ‘parasocial’ was first coined in 1956 by sociologists Donald Horton and Richard Wohl, and gained modern relevance with social media, livestreaming, and AI interaction.
- ★ The word entered the Cambridge Dictionary in 2023 after lexicographers recorded a significant rise in its usage across news and social media.
- ★ Other shortlisted words for 2025 included ‘pseudonymization’, meaning masking personal data, and ‘memeify’, meaning turning something into a meme.

India and Israel Agree to Start Negotiations on Free Trade Agreement

- ★ India and Israel signed the Terms of Reference to begin negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), marking a major step toward expanding bilateral economic co-operation.
- ★ Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal stated that the proposed FTA and Bilateral Investment Treaty will improve market access, capital flows, trade in goods and services, and overall ease of doing business between the two nations.
- ★ The agreement aims to boost collaboration in fintech, agritech, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, quantum computing, pharmaceuticals, space, defence, and infrastructure.
- ★ Piyush Goyal highlighted India’s “Ten D’s” — Democracy, Demographics, Decarbonisation, Digitalisation, Development, Demand, Diversity, Decisive Leadership, Dependability, and Determination as key factors making India an attractive destination for global investment.

USA Names Saudi Arabia as its 20th Major Non-NATO Ally Under President Trump

- ★ United States of America (USA) President Donald Trump designated Saudi Arabia as a Major Non-North Atlantic Treaty Organization Ally (MNNA), strengthening defence ties.

- ★ With this status, Saudi Arabia became the 20th country to receive Major Non-NATO Ally recognition.
- ★ A Strategic Defence Agreement was signed to enhance military co-ordination, strengthen Middle East deterrence, and give priority access to U.S. defence equipment.
- ★ The designation grants military and economic privileges but does not impose binding security commitments.
- ★ The U.S. approved the future sale of F-35 advanced fighter jets to Saudi Arabia.
- ★ Both nations agreed to expand co-operation in civil nuclear energy, artificial intelligence, critical minerals, and joint research.
- ★ Saudi Arabia pledged to increase investments in the U.S. from USD 600 billion to USD 1 trillion, deepening economic partnership.

Malaysia To Ban Social Media Access For Users Below Age 16

- ★ Malaysia will enforce a nationwide restriction banning users under 16 from accessing social media starting next year to improve digital safety.
- ★ The move aims to reduce cyberbullying, scams, and online exploitation affecting minors.
- ★ The Government expects social media platforms to comply with the new age limits by next year.
- ★ Several countries globally are increasing child online regulation, including Australia, France, Spain, Italy, Denmark, and Greece through age verification systems.
- ★ The trend reflects growing concerns about social media's impact on teenage mental health.
- ★ Malaysia has recently intensified scrutiny of online platforms over harmful content such as online gambling and sensitive racial or religious posts.
- ★ A new rule requires digital platforms with over eight million Malaysian users to register with regulators, increasing government oversight.
- ★ Indonesia has also reviewed minimum age policies but currently focuses on content filtering and stronger verification systems.

India and Denmark Launch Indo-Danish Business Council

- ★ India and Denmark have launched the Indo-Danish Business Council (IDBC) in Copenhagen to strengthen bilateral ties through innovation, investment, and sustainable development.
- ★ The launch was led by Manish Prabhat, Ambassador of India to Denmark, commemorating 75 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.
- ★ The IDBC aims to foster structured co-operation that drives strategic collaboration and accelerates business growth.
- ★ The initiative expands the India-Denmark Green Strategic Partnership, promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and knowledge sharing.
- ★ Key focus sectors include Life Sciences, Deep Tech, Healthcare, Green Energy, Fintech, Venture Ecosystems, and Sustainability.

- ★ The Council unites industry leaders, entrepreneurs, investors, and policymakers to create opportunities in sectors advancing the global green and digital transition.
- ★ Freddy Svane, former Danish Ambassador to India, serves as Chairperson, promoting sustainable growth and green international partnerships.
- ★ Sudhir Mishra and Rajat Pandey serve as Co-Chairs, while Subhrangshu Kumar Neogi mentors IDBC's India operations.
- ★ Ravindra Kumar acts as International Representative, enhancing the UK-India-Denmark business corridor through collaboration and investment.

UAE-India CEPA Council Signs Partnerships with FAB and Hub71

- ★ First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) and Hub71 signed strategic partnerships with the UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) Council (UICC) to boost cross-border entrepreneurship and support Indian start-ups.
- ★ The agreements were signed by Nimesh Karwanyun (CEO-India, FAB) and Ahmed Aljneibi (Director, UAE-India CEPA Council).
- ★ FAB will provide tailored banking solutions, expert mentorship, and access to corporate partners, investors, and regulators to one of the top five winning start-ups from the UAE-India Start-Up Series.
- ★ FAB's role includes financial solutions, strategic advisory, and enabling cross-border connectivity under the UAE-India CEPA framework.
- ★ Hub71 will onboard the five winning start-ups into its Immersion Programme to accelerate market entry with mentorship and knowledge sessions.
- ★ One selected start-up will enter Hub71's Access Programme, gaining structured soft-landing, market exploration, and full integration into Abu Dhabi's tech ecosystem.

Ukraine Launches Europe's First Starlink Direct-to-Cell Service

- ★ Ukraine became the first European country to activate Starlink's Direct-to-Cell satellite service in partnership with Kyivstar and Veon.
- ★ The rollout begins with SMS services, expanding to voice and data in 2026, ensuring broader digital connectivity.
- ★ Kyivstar, Ukraine's largest mobile operator, serves around 22.5 million users, supporting communication during power outages and wartime disruptions.
- ★ The Direct-to-Cell technology enables standard 4G smartphones to connect directly with low-Earth orbit satellites, without needing ground towers.
- ★ The service ensures continuous communication during prolonged blackouts, in liberated areas, and during humanitarian and rescue operations.
- ★ Kyivstar has installed generators and batteries capable of providing 10+ hours of backup connectivity during outages.
- ★ Starlink boosts resilience as Russian strikes target energy and telecom infrastructure, protecting national communications capabilities.

- ★ Over 50,000 Starlink terminals are already used by Ukrainian armed forces for battlefield communication and drone operations.
- ★ The partnership aims to strengthen Ukraine's communication infrastructure, ensuring civilian and defence networks remain operational as the conflict continues.

World Health Organization Declares Indonesia Free of Type-2 cVDPV

- ★ The World Health Organization (WHO) declared Indonesia free from Type-2 circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV) after no polio cases reported since June 2024 in children or the environment.
- ★ To achieve polio-free status, a country must have no wild poliovirus cases for at least three years as per WHO criteria.
- ★ The criteria also require robust immunization, effective surveillance, and rapid response systems for suspected cases.
- ★ The outbreak of cVDPV-2 began in Aceh Province in 2022, prompting emergency vaccination measures.
- ★ Indonesia conducted two nationwide vaccination rounds using nOPV2 between 2022–2024 to control the outbreak.
- ★ IPV (2nd dose) immunization coverage increased from 63% to 73% in 2024, strengthening population immunity.
- ★ Indonesia introduced a hexavalent vaccine providing protection against six diseases including polio.
- ★ Indonesia stopped indigenous wild poliovirus transmission in 1995 and was certified wild-polio free in 2014.
- ★ Poliomyelitis (Polio) is a highly contagious viral disease primarily affecting children under 5 years.
- ★ Polio attacks the nervous system, causing paralysis or death in severe cases.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Elon Musk's xAI Unveils AI-Driven Online Encyclopaedia 'Grokikipedia'

- ★ Elon Musk's AI company xAI launched Grokikipedia (v 0.1), an open-source online encyclopedia designed to provide truthful, independent, and AI-driven information to users.
- ★ The platform initially offered over 8 lakh articles at its launch.
- ★ Grokikipedia aims to create an AI-powered knowledge platform that promotes open information sharing and reduces bias found in traditional encyclopedias.
- ★ It is connected to xAI's Grok chatbot, which uses artificial intelligence to create, check, and update information

- ★ Unlike Wikipedia's crowdsourced editing model, Grokipedia relies on AI for content creation and verification, while users can suggest corrections through a reporting system instead of making direct edits.

Astronomers Discover 'Super-Earth' Exoplanet GJ 251c

- ★ Astronomers have discovered a "Super-Earth" exoplanet named GJ 251c, estimated to be about four times the mass of Earth and likely composed of rocky material, qualifying it as a super-Earth.
- ★ The planet was detected using the radial-velocity method, with data supported by high-precision spectrographs and the Habitable Zone Planet Finder (HPF) at Pennsylvania State University's Hobby-Eberly Telescope (HET).
- ★ The discovery of GJ 251c is significant as it provides a valuable opportunity to study one of the nearest potentially habitable rocky exoplanets, contributing to research on planetary formation and the search for extraterrestrial life.

Scientists Launch Amazonface Project

- ★ In October 2025, scientists began the AmazonFACE project in the Amazon rainforest to study how rising carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels will affect the world's largest tropical forest.
- ★ The project aims to simulate future climate conditions and understand how the forest adapts to higher CO₂ levels.
- ★ The experiment is led by the National Institute for Amazon Research (INPA) with support from Universidade Estadual de Campinas and is located near Manaus, Brazil.
- ★ The site contains six large steel rings built above the forest canopy, each enclosing 50–70 mature trees.
- ★ CO₂ gas will be released into three rings to replicate levels expected by 2050–2060, while the other three serve as control groups.
- ★ The technique used is called FACE (Free-Air CO₂ Enrichment), which increases CO₂ concentration in open-air settings without greenhouses.
- ★ Sensors record data every ten minutes, tracking how trees absorb CO₂, release oxygen and water vapor, and respond to sunlight, rain, and storms.
- ★ The goal is to determine whether the Amazon will remain a carbon sink or become less effective at balancing Earth's atmosphere under future conditions.
- ★ The project is jointly supported by Brazil and the United Kingdom and is the first FACE experiment conducted in a tropical rainforest.

China Launches Shenzhou-21 Mission Carrying Youngest Astronaut

- ★ China successfully launched the Shenzhou-21 spacecraft from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in the Gobi Desert, marking a major milestone in its growing space programme.
- ★ The spacecraft was launched aboard a Long March-2F rocket and will dock with the Tiangong Space Station within hours of launch.

- ★ The crew members include Commander Zhang Lu, Engineer Wu Fei, and Specialist Zhang Hongzhang, who will stay in orbit for six months to conduct scientific research and maintenance work.
- ★ Wu Fei (32 years old) became China's youngest astronaut in space, representing the new generation of space explorers and highlighting China's focus on training young talent for future lunar and planetary missions.
- ★ The mission carries four laboratory mice (two male and two female) for China's first in-orbit biological experiment involving rodents, to study microgravity's effects on the body and reproduction of mammals – vital for long-duration space travel.
- ★ Astronauts will also perform spacewalks, install anti-debris shields, and engage in science outreach activities to inspire Chinese students.
- ★ The mission aligns with President Xi Jinping's "space dream", aimed at making China a global space power and preparing for a crewed Moon mission by 2030.
- ★ China has achieved major milestones including the Chang'e-4 lunar far-side landing (2019) and the Mars rover deployment (2021), with the Tiangong Space Station (completed in 2022) serving as a permanent orbital base.

All India Council for Technical Education Partners with IBM

- ★ The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has partnered with IBM to establish an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Lab at its headquarters.
- ★ The initiative aims to provide students and faculty across India's technical education ecosystem with training and exposure in emerging technologies.
- ★ The AI Lab will act as a central hub for upskilling in AI, data science, and related domains, focusing on hands-on learning and certification.
- ★ The collaboration seeks to equip thousands of students and teachers with practical AI competencies, building a future-ready workforce for India.

Russia Launches Nuclear-Powered Submarine 'Khabarovsk' from Sevmash

- ★ Russia launched its nuclear-powered submarine 'Khabarovsk' from the Sevmash shipyard in Severodvinsk on 1–2 November 2025, marking a major development in its strategic underwater capabilities.
- ★ Khabarovsk was designed by the Rubin Central Design Bureau, a key player in Russia's submarine design and construction programs.
- ★ The submarine is intended to carry advanced underwater weapons and robotic systems, notably the Poseidon nuclear-powered unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV).
- ★ Poseidon, according to Russian claims, is a nuclear-powered, deep-diving, high-speed UUV with intercontinental range and massive destructive potential when armed with nuclear warheads.
- ★ Poseidon is seen as an asymmetric strategic weapon, potentially capable of threatening coastal cities and naval bases with radioactive damage, if operational as described.

- ★ The launch of Khabarovsk follows Russia's reported successful tests of the Poseidon system in October 2025, suggesting continued progress in developing novel underwater nuclear delivery systems.

RBI Develops AI-Powered Digital Payments Intelligence Platform

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is developing a Digital Payments Intelligence Platform (DPIP) to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) for detecting and preventing digital payment frauds.
- ★ The prototype of the DPIP is being developed by the RBI Innovation Hub, and a dedicated entity will be created to operate it.
- ★ The platform will collect data from multiple sources such as mule accounts, telecom operators, and geographical location data to train AI-based fraud detection models.
- ★ The DPIP will issue pre-transaction risk alerts, enabling banks and customers to take preventive action before fraudulent transactions occur.

Google Launches Project Suncatcher

- ★ Google unveiled Project Suncatcher, an ambitious research initiative to build AI data centres in space using solar-powered satellites housing Tensor Processing Units (TPUs) for efficient and sustainable AI computing.
- ★ The project aims to overcome energy and sustainability challenges faced by ground-based data centres by leveraging uninterrupted solar energy, eliminating the need for water cooling, and reducing emissions.
- ★ Solar panels in space can be up to eight times more efficient than those on Earth, offering continuous power for AI operations.
- ★ Each satellite in Project Suncatcher's constellation will include Trillium v6e TPUs, solar panels, and free-space optical communication systems capable of tens of terabits per second data transfer.
- ★ The system will function as a distributed AI computing network, with satellites orbiting within a kilometre of each other, similar to Starlink, but optimized for AI workloads.
- ★ Major challenges include maintaining high-speed multi-terabit communication, ensuring precise satellite positioning, improving radiation resistance of AI chips, and adapting hardware for vacuum and temperature extremes.
- ★ Radiation tests under 67 MeV proton beams showed no critical failures up to 15 krad (Si), confirming TPU durability under limited exposure.
- ★ Launch costs remain a barrier, but Google expects them to drop to \$200/kg by the 2030s, making orbital AI compute more feasible.
- ★ Prototype satellites for Project Suncatcher are planned for launch by early 2027 in partnership with Planet.
- ★ The initiative aligns with similar space data projects by Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and Sam Altman, aimed at developing orbiting or lunar data centres for scalable AI infrastructure.

Google Unveils 7th Gen 'Ironwood' TPU, Challenging Nvidia's AI Hardware Dominance

- ★ Google launched 'Ironwood', its 7th generation Tensor Processing Unit (TPU) in November 2025, marking a major challenge to Nvidia's dominance in the AI infrastructure
- ★ Ironwood was first previewed in April 2025 and delivers 4× more performance than its predecessor (TPU v4) with the ability to scale up to 9,216 TPUs per pod for ultra-fast parallel processing.
- ★ It is designed for AI training and real-time inference, offering massive scalability, enhanced energy efficiency, and lower latency crucial for large language models (LLMs) and multi-modal AI systems.
- ★ Anthropic, the company behind the Claude AI models, plans to deploy up to 1 million Ironwood chips, showcasing strong commercial validation and confidence in Google Cloud's TPU infrastructure.
- ★ This deployment by Anthropic marks a direct challenge to Nvidia's GPU ecosystem, which has long dominated AI hardware, emphasizing Ironwood's reliability, scalability, and compute efficiency.
- ★ The launch of Ironwood comes amid intensifying competition between Google, Nvidia, Microsoft, and AWS in the AI and cloud computing.

Lenskart to Introduce First AI-Powered "B by Lenskart Smartglasses"

- ★ Lenskart will launch its first AI-powered smart glasses called "B by Lenskart Smartglasses" by December 2025.
- ★ The smart glasses will feature AI-based interactions, health and wellness insights, and UPI payment integration, highlighting Lenskart's move towards a technology-led lifestyle brand.
- ★ The device is expected to be powered by Qualcomm's Snapdragon AR1 Gen 1 chipset, optimized for AR and camera-enabled AI applications.

IN-SPACe Partnered with SIDBI

- ★ The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) and the Small Industries Development Bank of India Venture Capital Ltd (SIDBI Venture Capital Fund) have signed a contribution agreement to operationalise the ₹1,000-crore Venture Capital Fund for India's private space sector.
- ★ The signing marks the official start of investment activities after receiving SEBI approval on October 31, 2025.
- ★ The Union Cabinet had approved the fund's creation in October 2024, and SIDBI was appointed Fund Manager in March 2025.
- ★ The fund aims to support around 40 space start-ups over the next five years, boosting innovation and scalability in the sector.
- ★ The capital distribution plan includes ₹150 crore in 2025–26, ₹250 crore annually for the next three years, and ₹100 crore in 2029–30.

- ★ The fund will support companies at various growth stages, offering ₹10–30 crore for growth-stage startups and ₹30–60 crore for late-stage startups.
- ★ The initiative is a major step in strengthening India's private space ecosystem by providing early-stage and growth capital to startups in launch, satellite, payload, and in-space technologies.

IICA and WNS Global Services Launch Ybrant Programme

- ★ IICA (Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs) and WNS Global Services launched the IICA–WNS Ybrant CSR, ESG and Sustainability Program on 11 November 2025 to promote sustainability-focused leadership.
- ★ Shri Gyaneshwar Kumar Singh highlighted the program as a major step toward developing sustainability-driven and socially responsible leaders.
- ★ The six-month program features 22.5 hours of academic sessions and 18 hours of fieldwork, covering 15 modules on CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance), sustainability, impact assessment, and governance.
- ★ Over 250 students from institutions like IIM Shillong, CHRIST University, and Symbiosis International attended the launch, which ended with a vote of thanks by Dr. Ankita Sharma.

Godrej Aerospace Delivers First Human-Rated L110 Stage Vikas Engine

- ★ Godrej Enterprises Group (GEG) Aerospace Division delivered the first human-rated L110 Stage Vikas Engine to ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- ★ This delivery marks a major milestone in India's Gaganyaan crewed spaceflight programme.
- ★ The L110 engine serves as the primary propulsion system for the Human-rated Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (HLVM3) rocket, which will launch the Gaganyaan crew module carrying Indian astronauts by 2027.
- ★ The Gaganyaan mission is designed to take the crew module into Earth's orbit and safely return the astronauts to the planet.
- ★ Building on over 40 years of collaboration with ISRO, Godrej Aerospace described the engine delivery as a technical milestone and a moment of national pride.
- ★ The milestone highlights India's increasing self-reliance in high-precision space propulsion.
- ★ The development also supports indigenization and the growth of India's aerospace capabilities.

India to Establish West Africa's First IIT Campus in Nigeria Under NEP 2020 Vision

- ★ India is expanding its global education footprint, with Nigeria set to host West Africa's first IIT campus, aligned with NEP 2020 vision of internationalising Indian education.
- ★ Nigeria's Education Minister, Dr. Maruf Tunji Alausa, confirmed the plan in co-ordination with the Indian High Commission in Abuja.
- ★ The new IIT campus will be located at the Federal Government Academy (FGA), Suleja, upgraded into a centre of excellence with Indian support.
- ★ The model will follow IIT Madras–Zanzibar, with India providing faculty and training, while Nigeria offers infrastructure and logistics.

- ★ IIT Nigeria is part of India's broader globalisation effort, following campuses in Zanzibar (2023) and Abu Dhabi (2024), with future plans in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the UK.

Indian Space Research Organization to Launch Oceansat in 2026

- ★ Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) Chairman Dr. V. Narayanan announced the launch of the Oceansat Satellite in 2026 using the first commercially built Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)-PSLV N1 rocket.
- ★ The announcement was made at the 7th India Manufacturing Show (IMS) 2025 in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- ★ ISRO plans to transfer 50% of PSLV development to an Indian industry consortium led by HAL and L&T.
- ★ Under the 2022 commercialisation initiative, NSIL signed a contract with HAL-L&T for end-to-end production of five PSLV-XL rockets.
- ★ This marks the first fully industry-led manufacturing of PSLV, allowing ISRO to focus more on advanced missions and R&D.
- ★ Earlier, PSLV rockets were entirely manufactured by ISRO.
- ★ Under the agreement, the industry consortium handles manufacturing, full rocket integration, avionics, testing, and launch support.
- ★ ISRO provides technology, design, mission approval, and launch infrastructure.
- ★ The move supports the Government of India's Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) vision in the space sector.

China Begins Construction of First Nuclear-Proof Floating Artificial Island

- ★ China is constructing a 78,000-tonne artificial island designed to withstand nuclear blasts, marking a major advancement in strategic maritime infrastructure.
- ★ The project features a mobile, semi-submersible, twin-hull platform capable of supporting 238 personnel for four months without resupply.
- ★ The structure is similar in size to China's Fujian aircraft carrier and aims to be operational by 2028, as confirmed by project leader Lin Zhongqin.
- ★ The island can withstand harsh ocean conditions including 6–9 metre waves and Category 17 typhoons, the highest-rated tropical cyclones.
- ★ Scientists have equipped the facility with "metamaterial" sandwich panels, which convert catastrophic shock impacts into gentle compressions, offering enhanced protection.
- ★ It is described as a deep-sea major scientific facility designed for all-weather, long-term residency, according to Professor Yang Deqing's team at Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU).
- ★ Officially named the Deep-Sea All-Weather Resident Floating Research Facility, the project represents China's far-sea floating mobile island developed after a decade of research and planning.
- ★ The island measures 138 metres in length and 85 metres in width, with a main deck 45 metres above sea level, providing elevated protection against marine threats.

Airbus to Build and Launch Oman's First Communications Satellite

- ★ Space Communication Technologies (SCT), Oman signed a co-operation agreement with Airbus Defence and Space for the development and launch of “OmanSat-1”, the first communications satellite of Oman.
- ★ The agreement was signed by Saeed bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications & Information Technology, and Alain Faure, CEO of Airbus Space Systems.
- ★ OmanSat-1 is a high-tech, fully reconfigurable satellite, providing high-capacity Ka-band coverage over Oman, its economic waters, and parts of the Middle East, East Africa, and Asia.
- ★ OmanSat-1 is the 10th satellite developed under Airbus’ OneSat series.
- ★ The satellite will enhance national connectivity, support government operations, improve media and broadcasting, and drive economic and social development.
- ★ The project will be managed by SCT under the Oman Investment Authority (OIA).
- ★ OmanSat-1 will support Emergency Response (ER), Transport & Logistics, Cybersecurity, and Internet of Things (IoT) services.
- ★ Airbus will provide the satellite platform, long-life durability, and launch planning and execution support.
- ★ OneSat technology builds on Airbus’ Eurostar GEO satellites and the OneWeb constellation, supported by agencies including ESA, CNES (France), UK Space Agency, DLR (Germany), and the Spanish Space Agency.
- ★ OneSat operates in Geostationary Orbit (GEO) at approximately 36,000 km above Earth.

BANKING & FINANCE

RBI Rejects Jana SFB's Bid for Universal Bank Licence

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has returned the application of Jana Small Finance Bank (Jana SFB) for conversion into a universal bank, citing non-fulfilment of eligibility criteria as per RBI guidelines.
- ★ The Board of Jana SFB will now review the RBI’s communication and decide whether to re-apply for the universal bank licence.
- ★ The RBI’s decision was taken under the framework for “Voluntary Transition of Small Finance Banks (SFBs) to Universal Banks”, which enables eligible SFBs to expand into full-service commercial banking.
- ★ In 2025, AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB) became the first Small Finance Bank to receive RBI’s in-principle approval to transition into a universal bank.
- ★ Eligibility Criteria: SFBs can apply for a universal bank licence after the successful completion of 5 years of operations, provided they meet the minimum paid-up voting equity capital and net worth requirements applicable to universal banks.
- ★ As per RBI guidelines, an SFB must be listed on a recognised stock exchange and have a minimum net worth of ₹1,000 crore as of the end of the previous quarter to qualify for transition.

- ★ The SFB must also have recorded a net profit for the past two financial years and maintained Gross NPA below 3% and Net NPA below 1% over the same period.
- ★ The development highlights RBI's cautious approach in ensuring only financially sound and compliant SFBs are allowed to transition into universal banks.

Reserve Bank of India Reports 10.7% Rise in Prepaid Payment Instrument Cards

- ★ According to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, the number of Prepaid Payment Instrument (PPI) cards increased 10.7% to 483 million as of June 30, 2025, up from 436 million six months earlier.
- ★ The number of active PPI cards surged nearly fourfold to 338 million from 89 million, indicating a strong reactivation trend among users.
- ★ The RBI defines an active card as one that has been used at least once within a year.
- ★ Conversely, the number of PPI wallets declined to 868 million from 890 million, showing a shift from wallets to cards.
- ★ Prepaid Payment Instruments are gaining popularity due to merchant discount rate (MDR) revenue and interoperability via UPI rails, offering banks and fintechs a profitable alternative to zero-cost UPI and debit transactions.

Paypal Partners With Openai to Become Chatgpt's First Integrated Digital Payments Wallet

- ★ PayPal and OpenAI announced a partnership to enable Digital Wallet integration in ChatGPT, allowing users to purchase goods and services directly through the AI chatbot.
- ★ With this collaboration, PayPal became the first digital wallet integrated into ChatGPT.
- ★ PayPal will integrate with OpenAI's Instant Checkout feature, enabling users to make purchases directly using PayPal wallets under the Agentic Commerce Protocol (ACP).
- ★ ChatGPT payments will include PayPal's buyer-seller protection, order tracking, dispute resolution, and a payments API with merchant tools for analytics and catalog management through its "agentic commerce" suite.
- ★ The integration will embed PayPal's digital wallet and Venmo into ChatGPT, enabling seamless in-chat purchases.
- ★ Users will have a "Pay Another Way" option to use credit/debit cards or bank accounts.
- ★ PayPal announced a 2026 feature called "Agent Ready", which will enable purchases from PayPal merchants through other AI platforms such as Google and Perplexity.

SEBI Proposes Comprehensive Revamp of Mutual Fund Fee Framework

- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) released a consultation paper proposing a comprehensive revamp of the mutual fund fee framework in India to make charges clearer, fairer, and more beneficial for investors.
- ★ The reforms aim to simplify rules, enhance transparency, and lower costs for unit holders under the SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 1996.

- ★ Taxes and government levies like Securities Transaction Tax (STT), Goods & Services Tax (GST), and stamp duty will be excluded from the Total Expense Ratio (TER) and shown separately, to be charged directly to investors.
- ★ SEBI proposed removing the temporary 5 basis points (bps) additional expense currently charged by Asset Management Companies (AMCs) on their Assets Under Management (AUM).
- ★ To offset this, SEBI suggested a 5 bps increase in base TER slabs for open-ended active mutual fund schemes.
- ★ A new optional performance-linked TER framework has been proposed, allowing fund houses to charge variable fees depending on a scheme's performance.
- ★ Brokerage and transaction cost caps will be tightened, with the cash market brokerage limit reduced from 12 bps to 2 bps, and derivatives brokerage from 5 bps to 1 bps.
- ★ The proposed framework will improve disclosure and transparency, making it easier for investors to compare fund costs.
- ★ The reforms aim to strengthen investor protection, enhance governance in the mutual fund industry, and align India's mutual fund norms with global standards.

Asian Development Bank Sanctions \$460 million Loan to Maharashtra

- ★ In October 2025, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a USD 460 million results-based loan for the 'Maharashtra Power Distribution Enhancement Program for Agricultural Solarization' to strengthen rural power infrastructure and promote solar-powered irrigation.
- ★ An additional USD 40 million concessional loan from the Clean Technology Fund (CTF), administered by ADB, will complement the program.
- ★ The program aims to transform rural power infrastructure, promote renewable energy adoption, and enhance agricultural productivity through reliable daytime solar power.
- ★ It aligns with Maharashtra's Power Sector Vision 2030, which focuses on boosting renewable energy and rural energy access.
- ★ The project includes grid modernization, upgrading 180 distribution substations, installing 4,500 transformers, developing 3,000 circuit kilometers (ckm) of high-tension and 1,200 ckm of low-tension lines, and deploying 500 MWh of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).
- ★ It will introduce Agricultural Solarization Dashboards and monitoring systems for 2,500 substations to improve transparency and operational efficiency.
- ★ The program provides Viability Gap Funding to support 1,000 MW of decentralized solar generation across Maharashtra.
- ★ It targets to deliver daytime solar power to 900,000 farmers by 2028, reduce 3 million tons of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, lower operational costs, and reduce transformer failures by 25%.
- ★ The initiative will train 5,000 people, including 1,500 women, promoting green livelihoods, women's empowerment, and technical capacity building in the renewable sector.

RBI Proposes New Rules to Ensure Same-Day Credit for Cross-Border Remittances

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released a draft circular (dated 29 October 2025) proposing a major update to India's cross-border payment framework to ensure faster and more transparent remittance processing.
- ★ Banks must credit foreign remittances on the same business day if received during forex market hours, and credit them the next business day if received after market hours.
- ★ The proposal mandates straight-through processing (STP) – a fully automated system to reduce manual errors and transaction delays.
- ★ Nostro account reconciliation must be performed in near real-time, with intervals not exceeding 30 minutes, ensuring timely fund tracking and accuracy.
- ★ Banks are advised to offer digital platforms where customers can upload documents and track transaction status online, enhancing user convenience and transparency.
- ★ The reforms aim to provide seamless, faster, and more reliable foreign fund transfers, benefiting individuals, students, exporters, and migrant families.
- ★ The move aligns India's payment systems with global standards for instant or near-instant cross-border payments, improving the country's financial competitiveness.
- ★ The initiative supports financial inclusion, ensuring low-income households dependent on remittances receive funds quickly for essential needs like healthcare and education.
- ★ Banks should audit and upgrade their current remittance systems, while businesses should integrate faster payment workflows into their financial operations.

SBI Foundation Launches SMART-CROP Project

- ★ In October 2025, the SBI Foundation, CSR arm of State Bank of India (SBI), launched the SMART-CROP (Sustainable Monitoring and Real-time Tracking for Crop Resilience and Optimal Practices) project in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- ★ The project was launched in collaboration with University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), and Agribridge.
- ★ It is a three-year initiative supported under SBI Foundation's LEAP (Livelihood and Entrepreneurship Accelerator Programme).
- ★ The project aims to strengthen the resilience and productivity of over 8,000 smallholder farmers in Karnataka (Bidar, Kalaburagi, Raichur) and Telangana (Sangareddy, Vikarabad).
- ★ It uses satellite imaging, remote sensing, and AI/ML analytics to provide real-time crop stress monitoring.
- ★ The monitoring helps enable preventive actions against climate risks, pests, diseases, and soil degradation.
- ★ The project primarily focuses on pulse crops, specifically chickpea and pigeonpea.

International Financial Services Centres Authority Grants in-principle Approval to Infibeam Avenues for Payment Services at GIFT-IFSC

- ★ In October 2025, IA Fintech IFSC Private Limited (IA Fintech), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Infibeam Avenues Limited (IAL), received in-principle approval from the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) to operate as a Payment Service Provider (PSP) at GIFT-IFSC, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- ★ IA Fintech was approved to offer Escrow Services, Cross-Border Money Transfers, and Merchant Acquisition within the GIFT-IFSC ecosystem, subject to final authorization.
- ★ The initiative aims to provide faster, cost-effective, and transparent digital payment and settlement solutions for businesses operating in GIFT-IFSC.
- ★ The approval marks a strategic expansion for Infibeam Avenues, creating a new revenue stream and supporting India's goal to develop GIFT-IFSC as a global financial hub.
- ★ The operational framework will reduce reliance on traditional correspondent banking systems, cut settlement time from 36–48 hours, lower transaction costs, and enhance efficiency in cross-border transactions.

SEBI Revises Eligibility Norms for Derivatives on Non-Benchmark Indices

- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has directed stock exchanges to adopt revised eligibility norms for derivatives on non-benchmark indices (like Bank Nifty, Bankex, and Fin Nifty) to reduce index concentration risk.
- ★ The new norms require an index to have at least 14 constituents, with the top stock's weight capped at 20% and the combined weight of the top three stocks capped at 45%.
- ★ All constituent stocks must have descending weights, ensuring a balanced representation within the index.
- ★ Rebalancing deadlines:
 - Bankex (BSE) and Fin Nifty (NSE) – by December 31, 2025.
 - Bank Nifty (NSE) – in phases until March 31, 2026 for smoother fund transition.
- ★ Exchanges and clearing corporations must update systems, notify market participants, and amend rules and bye-laws to implement SEBI's new norms effectively.

Finance Minister Inaugurates Newly Constructed CGST Bhawan in Ghaziabad

- ★ Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the newly constructed Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Bhawan at Rani Jhansi Marg, Ghaziabad.
- ★ The ₹116-crore complex brings together the CGST Ghaziabad Commissionerate, CGST Audit Commissionerate, CGST Appeals Commissionerate, and Pay & Accounts Office under one roof to ensure administrative synergy and operational efficiency.
- ★ The new state-of-the-art green building has two basements and seven floors spread across 21 acres, with parking space for nearly 300 vehicles.
- ★ It features eco-friendly systems such as solar panels and rainwater harvesting, and has received the GRIHA Five-Star Award for sustainable design.

- ★ The building includes GST Sewa Kendra, Taxpayers' Lounge, and Digital Kiosks, reflecting modern, citizen-oriented administration.
- ★ The new CGST Bhawan as a symbol of modern India's commitment to good governance, where infrastructure meets innovation and efficiency aligns with empathy.

City Union Bank Secures \$50 Million Funding from International Finance Corporation

- ★ City Union Bank (CUB), one of India's oldest private sector banks, has received a \$50 million funding commitment from the International Finance Corporation (IFC), part of the World Bank Group.
- ★ The funding aims to support MSMEs in transitioning to energy-efficient and cost-effective renewable solutions, particularly solar and wind power projects.
- ★ CUB will use the funds for new lending and refinancing of solar-related loans for MSMEs, reinforcing its focus on green financing.
- ★ The bank stated that MSMEs contribute around 30% to India's GDP, but high energy costs affect their competitiveness.
- ★ Access to renewable and efficient power will help MSMEs reduce costs, enhance efficiency, and support sustainable growth.

Tata AIA Life Insurance Unveils AI-Driven Underwriting Rule Engine for Automated Risk Assessment

- ★ Tata AIA Life Insurance has launched an AI-driven Underwriting Rule Engine (URE) to automate the underwriting process using machine learning, GenAI, and big data analytics.
- ★ The URE analyses applicant data such as medical history and lifestyle factors, applying pre-set rules for real-time risk assessment and instant policy decisions.
- ★ The system eliminates manual intervention, thereby reducing paperwork and speeding up policy processing.
- ★ It uses AI-based reflexive questioning during tele-medical exams to collect accurate health data, minimising physical medical tests and enhancing efficiency in underwriting.

Government to Reposition National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development

- ★ The Government of India is set to reposition the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) established in 2021 as a global financial institution, reflecting a major policy and institutional shift.
- ★ NaBFID will be renamed as the Infrastructure Development Bank (IDB), with a new logo and brand identity, symbolising its expanded global role in infrastructure financing.
- ★ NaBFID was established under the NaBFID Act, 2021, as a 100% government-owned Development Finance Institution (DFI) and is classified as an All-India Financial Institution (AIFI) under the RBI Act, 1934.

- ★ Its core mandate includes providing long-term non-recourse financing for infrastructure projects, refinancing existing infrastructure debt, and mobilising private investment in the sector.
- ★ The rebranding to IDB aligns the institution with global peers such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC).
- ★ The shift aims to enable cross-border infrastructure financing, international capital mobilisation, and adoption of global best practices in project finance.
- ★ This move highlights India's ambition to enhance its global influence in infrastructure development and financing frameworks.
- ★ Domestically, it reinforces infrastructure as a key growth engine, supporting the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) and long-term development strategy.

Scapia and Federal Bank Introduce Add-On Credit Card

- ★ Scapia and Federal Bank have launched an add-on credit card feature, allowing primary cardholders to share credit limits and travel benefits with up to 3 family members aged 18 or older.
- ★ The add-on card feature enables independent app access, OTPs, and transaction visibility for additional users while allowing both primary and add-on holders to earn and redeem Scapia Coins and enjoy unlimited domestic lounge access.
- ★ The onboarding process is fully digital, with instant virtual card issuance after KYC and physical delivery within 5–7 days.
- ★ Scapia launched Scapia Store, India's first travel-focused shopping platform, featuring brands like Columbia, Daily Objects, Tripole, and Nasher Miles across apparel, accessories, and luggage categories
- ★ These developments are part of Scapia's Winter Product Release, which also includes Scapia Experiences, expanding its presence across seven travel categories.

IRDAI Fines Liberty General Insurance ₹1 Crore for Regulatory Violations

- ★ The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has imposed a ₹1 crore penalty on Liberty General Insurance Company for violating multiple regulatory norms.
- ★ The violations relate to outsourcing practices, payment of commissions and remuneration to intermediaries, and protection of policyholders' interests.
- ★ The penalty was imposed under Section 102 of the Insurance Act, 1938, which empowers IRDAI to take action against insurers for non-compliance with regulations.
- ★ IRDAI's order also directed the insurer to review existing agreements with vendors, intermediaries, and related parties to ensure full compliance with current outsourcing and regulatory guidelines.
- ★ The regulatory action highlights IRDAI's strict enforcement of governance and compliance standards within the insurance sector.

RBI Allows Exporters to Retain Foreign Currency Earnings in IFSC Accounts

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has amended the Foreign Exchange Management (Foreign Currency Accounts by a Person Resident in India) Regulations, 2015 to allow exporters to retain export proceeds in foreign currency accounts at International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) for up to three months.
- ★ For foreign currency accounts maintained in other jurisdictions, the utilisation or repatriation period will remain one month from the date of receipt of export proceeds.
- ★ The amendment aims to enhance operational flexibility and global competitiveness for exporters, especially in high-value sectors such as gems and jewellery.
- ★ Earlier, under the Exchange Earners' Foreign Currency (EEFC) scheme, exporters were required to convert foreign exchange earnings quickly, resulting in higher conversion costs and currency risks.

Reserve Bank of India Announces Steps to Boost Global Use of Indian Rupee

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced new measures to promote the internationalisation of the Indian Rupee (INR) and increase its use in cross-border transactions.
- ★ Authorised Dealer (AD) banks are now allowed to extend INR-denominated trade-related loans to non-residents from Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, strengthening rupee trade settlement with neighbouring nations.
- ★ RBI will now establish transparent reference rates for the currencies of key trading partners, including the Indonesian Rupiah and UAE Dirham, to ensure predictable pricing and reduce cross-currency dependence.
- ★ Currently, RBI publishes reference rates only for the U.S. dollar, euro, Japanese yen, and pound sterling.
- ★ These initiatives build on earlier efforts such as bilateral rupee trade agreements, cross-border UPI linkages, and measures to reduce rupee volatility, making the INR more globally attractive.

World Bank to Disburse Second \$200 Million Tranche for Amaravati Phase-I

- ★ World Bank to release a second tranche of \$200 million for Amaravati Capital Phase-I development by end of 2025.
- ★ Both World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have committed \$800 million each, totalling \$1.6 billion (₹13,600 crore) for Phase-I of the project.
- ★ Government of India has committed an additional ₹1,400 crore, taking the total Phase-I funding to ₹15,000 crore.
- ★ The first disbursement of \$207 million from the World Bank was made in March 2025, with 50% utilisation so far.
- ★ The next tranche will be released after 75% of the first instalment is utilised and verified through World Bank and ADB inspections.

RBI Proposes Making BSBD a Standard Banking Service

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a draft circular directing all banks to offer Basic Savings Bank Deposit (BSBD) accounts with free basic facilities and no minimum balance requirement to enhance financial inclusion and digital adoption.
- ★ The RBI stated that the move aligns with the digitisation of the banking sector and aims to improve customer service for BSBD account holders.
- ★ Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) accounts are classified as BSBD accounts, with over 566 million accounts holding ₹2.67 trillion in deposits as of 2025.
- ★ BSBD accounts require no minimum balance and offer free basic services, including ATM/debit card, internet and mobile banking, cheque book (minimum 25 leaves per year), and passbook or monthly statement at no extra cost.
- ★ Account holders are entitled to unlimited deposits via cash, electronic channels, or ATMs/cash deposit machines, and at least four free withdrawals per month, including ATM transactions.
- ★ Digital transactions such as UPI, NEFT, RTGS, IMPS, and Point of Sale (PoS) are free and unlimited, promoting digital payments and inclusion.
- ★ Customers can convert their existing savings account into a BSBD account within seven days if they choose to do so.
- ★ Each individual can hold only one BSBD account across all banks; any other savings account must be closed within 30 days of opening a BSBD account, though term deposits are allowed.
- ★ Banks may offer additional services to BSBD account holders on a non-discretionary and non-discriminatory basis, with full disclosure of any applicable charges.

SEBI Urges Social Media and Search Platforms to Curb Fraudulent Investment Promotions

- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has urged major social media platforms and internet search engines to implement stronger safeguards against fraudulent investment activities.
- ★ The initiative aligns with the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO)'s global call to protect investors from online financial harm.
- ★ SEBI has directed platforms to fast-track mandatory advertiser verification in the securities market, allowing only SEBI-registered entities to advertise investment products and services.
- ★ The regulator recommended introducing a distinct verification label for registered intermediary trading apps to help investors identify authentic platforms.
- ★ SEBI has advised investors to verify the registration status of entities and use validated UPI handles and authentic trading applications for all transactions.

SBI Mutual Fund Invests ₹100 Crore in Lenskart

- ★ SBI Mutual Fund invested ₹100 crore in Lenskart ahead of its IPO through a pre-offer placement.
- ★ The fund purchased 24.87 lakh shares at ₹402 per share from promoter Neha Bansal via SBI Optimal Equity Fund and SBI Emergent Fund AIF.

- ★ Following the deal, Neha Bansal's stake in Lenskart decreased slightly from 7.61% to 7.46%.
- ★ The ₹7,278-crore IPO will open on October 31 with a price band of ₹382–₹402 per share, valuing the company at over ₹69,700 crore at the upper end.
- ★ Lenskart, founded in 2008, is one of India's largest omni-channel eyewear brands and will be listed on stock exchanges on November 10, 2025.

City Union Bank Partners with EPFO to Launch EPF Payment Facility

- ★ City Union Bank (CUB), a private sector bank headquartered in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, has launched a new EPF payment remittance feature in collaboration with the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).
- ★ The feature enables corporate customers to remit provident fund (PF) amounts directly through CUB's net banking portal, enhancing ease of compliance and digital convenience for employers.
- ★ The launch event was conducted by Vijay Anandh, Executive Director of City Union Bank, and Maneesh Agnihotri, Regional PF Commissioner, Tamil Nadu.
- ★ Tamil Nadu currently records ₹283.44 crore in annual provident fund collections, contributed by 52 lakh members from 78,416 establishments.
- ★ CUB is also exploring cross-selling opportunities with EPFO to expand its customer base and strengthen digital banking services.

Unified Payments Interface Drives RuPay's Rise as India's Preferred Credit Card

- ★ The Indian payments ecosystem has witnessed a major transformation driven by the adoption of UPI (Unified Payments Interface).
- ★ RuPay, India's domestic card network, is one of the biggest beneficiaries of this digital payment revolution.
- ★ UPI-linked credit card transactions now make up nearly 40% of total transactions by volume, a fourfold increase from 10% at the end of FY24.
- ★ In terms of transaction value, UPI-linked credit card usage has increased from 2% to 8%, indicating rapid growth.
- ★ RuPay's credit card market share has increased to 16%, up from 3% two years ago, showing strong market expansion.
- ★ The RBI's 2022 approval allowing exclusive linkage of RuPay credit cards to UPI significantly boosted user convenience and adoption.
- ★ Exclusive UPI integration has enabled seamless digital transactions, especially among young and tech-savvy users.
- ★ UPI has become the backbone of India's digital payments infrastructure, with billions of monthly transactions, directly benefiting RuPay.
- ★ As a domestic card network, RuPay supports the government's push for indigenous financial solutions under the Digital India initiative.
- ★ RuPay cards offer lower transaction fees than international networks (Visa, Mastercard), providing a cost advantage and encouraging wider usage.

ADB and World Bank Ink \$3 Billion Exposure Exchange Agreement

- ★ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$3 billion sovereign exposure exchange agreement (EEA) with the World Bank to enhance lending capacity for developing member countries.
- ★ This marks ADB's first EEA with the World Bank and sixth overall since 2020, bringing the total exchanged amount to \$9 billion.
- ★ The EEA aims to reduce portfolio concentration risks by allowing multilateral development banks (MDBs) to exchange sovereign exposures with countries having lower or no credit risk.

State Bank of India Becomes First Indian Bank to Cross \$100 Billion Market Cap and ₹100 Trillion Total Business

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI) achieved a historic dual milestone by crossing \$100 billion in market capitalization and ₹100 trillion in total business, becoming the first Indian bank to reach this scale and reflecting the strength of India's public sector banking system.
- ★ SBI's market cap surged past \$100 billion after strong Q2 FY26 performance, joining global banking giants and major Indian firms like Reliance Industries and TCS, showing rising investor confidence and a robust retail, SME, and corporate lending base.
- ★ SBI's total business the sum of advances and deposits exceeded ₹100 trillion, marking a first in Indian banking history, with advances of ₹44.2 lakh crore and deposits of ₹55.9 lakh crore, highlighting its nationwide financial reach.
- ★ The bank recorded 12.7% year-on-year credit growth, driven by retail, SME, and agricultural lending, supported by festive demand and digital loan initiatives.
- ★ Net profit rose by 10% in Q2 FY26, aided by improved asset quality, lower gross NPAs, and a focus on cost efficiency and digital banking.

RBI Proposes Lowering Risk Weights for NBFC-Financed High-Quality Infrastructure Projects

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed lowering risk weights on high-quality infrastructure projects financed by Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) to boost long-term project lending.
- ★ Projects where the borrower has repaid at least 10% of the sanctioned amount will attract a 50% risk weight, and those with 5–10% repayment will attract 75%, instead of 100% earlier.
- ★ If such projects later fail to meet repayment or quality criteria, a 100% risk weight will apply.
- ★ To qualify as high-quality, the project must have completed one year of satisfactory operations after the Date of Commencement of Commercial Operations (DCCO).
- ★ Borrowers must maintain sound funding arrangements and cannot raise additional debt on project cash flows without lender consent.
- ★ Feedback on the draft is open till November 21, 2025, with implementation effective from April 1, 2026.

AU Small Finance Bank Launches 'M Circle'

- ★ AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB) has launched an exclusive women-focused banking programme called 'M Circle', aimed at promoting financial inclusion and empowerment of women.
- ★ The 'M Circle' initiative caters to the evolving financial and lifestyle needs of modern Indian women, focusing on wealth creation, legacy preservation, and holistic well-being.
- ★ The "M" in 'M Circle' stands for Money, Motivation, and Modernity, symbolising women's growing role in financial management, entrepreneurship, and investment.
- ★ 'M Circle' offers premium benefits beyond traditional banking, including financial, healthcare, and lifestyle privileges for women customers.
- ★ The key objectives of 'M Circle' include:
 - Financial empowerment through enhanced savings, investment, and loan options.
 - Health awareness via preventive health check-ups and consultations.
 - Lifestyle enhancement with exclusive offers and brand discounts.
 - Community building among financially literate and independent women.
- ★ The initiative aligns with AU SFB's goal of transitioning into a universal bank, driven by innovation, inclusion, and customer-first service.

Axis Max Life Partners with IFC

- ★ Axis Max Life Insurance Limited, a Joint Venture (JV) between Max Financial Services Limited (MFSL) and Axis Bank Limited, partnered with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the lending arm of the World Bank (WB), to promote inclusive life insurance services in India.
- ★ The aim of the partnership is to expand access to life insurance for underserved and low-income communities, with a special focus on women, promoting financial inclusion across India.
- ★ IFC invested ₹285 crore (approximately USD 33 million) in Axis Max Life Insurance through long-dated subordinated debt instruments to strengthen the insurer's solvency ratio.
- ★ This marks IFC's first-ever investment in a licensed life insurance company in India, demonstrating its support for the insurance sector's development.
- ★ The initiative aligns with India's vision of "Insurance for All by 2047", aiming to enhance household financial security and build a more resilient future.

NPCI Launches NPCI Tech Solutions Limited to Drive Innovation in the Fintech Sector

- ★ The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has established a new subsidiary, NPCI Tech Solutions Limited (NTSL), to promote experimentation and breakthrough innovations in the fintech sector.
- ★ NTSL becomes the fourth subsidiary under NPCI, after NPCI BHIM Services Limited (NBSL), NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL), and NPCI Bharat BillPay Limited (NBBL).
- ★ Ajay Kumar Choudhary, Non-Executive Chairman and Independent Director of NPCI, stated that NTSL will act as a "cradle for future tech innovation" in digital payments and fintech.

- ★ NPCI, the operator of Unified Payments Interface (UPI), now handles over 20 billion monthly transactions, underscoring India's global leadership in digital payments.
- ★ The announcement of NTSL was made during the Global Fintech Fest 2025 in Mumbai, highlighting India's focus on expanding fintech innovation and global payment partnerships.

NPCI International Partnered with BENEFIT

- ★ NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL), the international arm of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has partnered with BENEFIT, Bahrain's leading fintech and electronic financial transactions company, to enable real-time cross-border remittances between India and Bahrain.
- ★ The partnership connects India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) with Bahrain's Fawri+ electronic fund transfer system, allowing users in both countries to send and receive money instantly and securely.
- ★ Established under the guidance of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB), the initiative aims to advance cross-border payment connectivity and promote digital financial inclusion.
- ★ The UPI-Fawri+ linkage will create a strategic remittance corridor, benefiting the large Indian community in Bahrain, which makes up around 30% of Bahrain's population.
- ★ NPCI Bharat BillPay Limited (NBBL), a wholly owned subsidiary of NPCI, has partnered with Clearcorp Dealing Systems (India) Ltd (Clearcorp), a subsidiary of the Clearing Corporation of India Ltd (CCIL), to launch forex services on Bharat Connect.
- ★ The new forex feature allows customers to buy foreign currency, reload Forex Cards, and make outward remittances through Third Party Application Providers (TPAPs) and mobile banking apps integrated with Bharat Connect (BBPS).
- ★ The forex service was unveiled during the Global Fintech Fest 2025, highlighting India's push for innovation in digital and cross-border payments.

World Bank Urges India to Speed Up Financial Reforms and Boost Private Investment

- ★ The World Bank's Financial Sector Assessment (FSA) report emphasized that India must accelerate financial sector reforms and mobilise private capital to achieve its goal of becoming a USD 30-trillion economy by 2047.
- ★ The report praised India's world-class Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and inclusive government programmes, which have enhanced financial inclusion and improved access to financial services for both men and women.
- ★ It recommended steps to increase account usage among women and expand access to diverse financial products for individuals and MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises).
- ★ The Financial Sector Assessment Program (FSAP), jointly conducted by the IMF and World Bank, assesses financial sector stability every five years, and India undergoes this assessment as a systemically important economy.

- ★ The report noted that India's financial system has become more resilient, diversified, and inclusive since the 2017 assessment, supported by reforms that helped recovery from past crises and the pandemic.
- ★ India's capital market depth increased from 144% to 175% of GDP since 2017, and the report advised developing credit enhancement tools, risk-sharing facilities, and securitisation platforms to mobilise more private investment.

Paytm Unveils AI-Powered Redesigned App

- ★ Paytm (One97 Communications Limited) has launched a redesigned flagship app powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) to make digital payments faster, smarter, and more personalised.
- ★ The company has also introduced an upgraded version of its travel platform to enhance user experience.
- ★ Paytm has rolled out a feature allowing users to convert loyalty points into digital gold, offering a new rewards redemption option.
- ★ Loyalty points can be converted once they reach ₹15, and users earn double points for payments made using RuPay cards.
- ★ One hundred gold coins are equivalent to ₹1 worth of digital gold, which can be redeemed directly through the Paytm app.

Asian Development Bank Extends \$331 Million Loan to Andhra Pradesh

- ★ ReNew Energy Global Plc has secured \$331 million (₹2,935 crore) in debt financing from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for a clean energy project in Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ The total project funding is \$477 million, with \$146 million to be mobilised by ADB from other lenders.
- ★ The project integrates 837 MWp of wind and solar capacity with a 415 MWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).
- ★ ADB's debt package includes \$291 million in local-currency financing and \$40 million from the LEAP 2 fund.
- ★ LEAP 2 is an ADB-managed fund with a \$1.5 billion commitment from the Japan International Co-operation Agency.
- ★ Established in 2023, it focuses on sustainable private sector infrastructure projects that reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, and provide affordable health care, education, and communication services to ADB's developing member countries

Bartronics India Appointed as CBC Vendor by Bank of Maharashtra

- ★ Bartronics India has been empanelled as a Corporate Business Correspondent (CBC) Vendor by the Bank of Maharashtra for a five-year term.
- ★ The company currently operates 1,800 CBC locations, serving over 15 million people across 1,800 villages.
- ★ Under this partnership, Bartronics aims to expand its network to 3,000 banking touchpoints within 6–9 months.

- ★ The expansion focus areas include Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Karnataka.

Government Approves ₹20,000 Crore Credit Guarantee Scheme

- ★ The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the introduction of the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Exporters (CGSE) to provide 100% credit guarantee coverage by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC).
- ★ The scheme offers additional credit facilities up to ₹20,000 crore to eligible exporters, including MSMEs, through Member Lending Institutions (MLIs).
- ★ The Department of Financial Services (DFS) will implement the scheme through NCGTC to provide additional credit support to exporters.
- ★ A Management Committee, chaired by the Secretary, DFS, will oversee the progress and implementation of the scheme.
- ★ The scheme aims to enhance the global competitiveness of Indian exporters and support diversification into new and emerging markets.
- ★ By providing collateral-free credit access, the scheme will strengthen liquidity, ensure smooth business operations, and reinforce India's progress toward achieving the USD 1 trillion export target.
- ★ The initiative aligns with the government's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India).

World Bank's \$13 Billion Climate Investment Funds Launches New Program

- ★ The Climate Investment Funds (CIF), a \$13 billion multilateral initiative under the World Bank, has launched a new program to strengthen climate resilience in poor countries.
- ★ The new initiative, named ARISE (Accelerating Resilience Investments and Innovations for Sustainable Economies), has secured \$100 million in funding from Germany and Spain.
- ★ The ARISE program aims to help developing nations convert climate risks into economic opportunities by integrating resilience into national economic development strategies.
- ★ The announcement was made during the COP30 Climate Summit in Belem, Brazil, where climate adaptation is a major agenda focus.

RBI Fines Three Co-operative Banks for Violating Regulatory Norms

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed monetary penalties on three co-operative banks for regulatory non-compliance, signalling stricter supervision during Co-op Kumbh 2025.
- ★ Mumbai District Central Co-operative Bank, Maharashtra fined ₹2 lakh for violating Section 20 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, which prohibits loans to directors/related parties.
- ★ Karaikudi Co-operative Town Bank, Tamil Nadu fined ₹1.5 lakh for violating capital adequacy norms and KYC guidelines, both essential for financial stability and anti-money laundering compliance.
- ★ District Co-operative Central Bank, Eluru (AP) fined ₹50,000 for KYC violations under Section 47A(1)(c) read with Sections 46(4)(i) & 56 of the Banking Regulation Act.

- ★ Key legal provisions enforced: Section 20 (no lending to directors), Section 47A(1)(c) (RBI penalty powers), Sections 46(4)(i) & 56 (penalties applicable to co-operative banks).
- ★ RBI action highlights the need for discipline, transparency, and accountability in co-operative banking operations.
- ★ The enforcement act serves as a wake-up call for co-operative banks amid concerns over weak governance and lax compliance.

Ageas Federal Life Insurance Partners with Muthoot Microfin

- ★ Ageas Federal Life Insurance formed a strategic distribution partnership with Muthoot Microfin Limited to expand life insurance access across India.
- ★ The collaboration targets underserved markets and small business owners to help reduce India's life insurance protection gap.
- ★ Sadaf Sayeed (MD & CEO, Muthoot Microfin) and Jude Gomes (MD & CEO, Ageas Federal Life Insurance) emphasized that the partnership strengthens their digital-first strategy and supports IRDAI's 'Insurance for All by 2047'.

Federal Bank Launches 'Bharat Surotsav' to Celebrate India's Musical Heritage

- ★ Federal Bank launched its cultural initiative 'Bharat Surotsav' by unveiling the festival poster in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- ★ The inaugural Bharat Surotsav will be held on 22 November 2025 at the Madras Music Academy, celebrating India's musical heritage.
- ★ Bharat Surotsav is a cultural Intellectual Property (IP) of Federal Bank, designed as an immersive dance and music fusion festival highlighting India's artistic heritage.
- ★ The objective is to bring together iconic performers and contemporary sounds, promoting regional pride and cultural connection through a multi-city festival series.
- ★ Each city will feature artists reflecting local cultural ethos, strengthening regional identity and audience engagement.
- ★ Featured artists include Shobana Chandrakumar Pillai, Agam Band, Charumathi Raghuraman, and Ravi Chari.

PhonePe Partners with OpenAI

- ★ PhonePe Limited announced a strategic collaboration with OpenAI to boost ChatGPT adoption in India and enhance digital user experience.
- ★ The partnership aims to showcase the value of consumer AI in India and drive mutual business growth.
- ★ ChatGPT integration into the PhonePe consumer app, PhonePe for Business app, and Indus Appstore will accelerate generative AI adoption.
- ★ The feature will offer AI-powered assistance for daily tasks such as travel planning, shopping, and other user interactions.

- ★ The collaboration leverages the PhonePe ecosystem, including its apps and marketplace, to enable new AI-driven applications in the payments and fintech sector.

RBI Imposes ₹39.60 Lakh Penalty on Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Limited

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), imposed a monetary penalty of ₹39.60 lakh on Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Limited.
- ★ The penalty was for violating provisions of section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 (PSS Act) and section 26A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 (BR Act).
- ★ The penalty was imposed under section 30(1) read with section 26(6) of the PSS Act and section 47A(1)(c) read with section 46(4)(i) of the BR Act.
- ★ The Statutory Inspection for Supervisory Evaluation (ISE 2024) of the bank was conducted by RBI with reference to its financial position as on 31 March 2024.
- ★ RBI issued a show-cause notice to the bank based on contraventions of the PSS Act and BR Act and considered the bank's written and oral submissions.
- ★ RBI found that the bank had:
 - Indirectly imposed charges on Basic Savings Bank Deposit (BSBD) account holders for UPI payments.
 - Failed to transfer eligible amounts to the Depositor Education and Awareness Fund within the prescribed period.
 - The penalty was imposed due to statutory compliance deficiencies and does not question the validity of any customer transaction or agreement.

Axis Bank Hosts 10th Edition of EVOLVE MSME Knowledge Series

- ★ Axis Bank Limited organised the 10th edition of EVOLVE, its flagship multi-city knowledge series for MSMEs, in Kozhikode, Kerala.
- ★ The session, themed “MSMEs Powering the USD 10 Trillion Economy”, brought together 100+ entrepreneurs and experts to discuss India's growth from USD 4.1 trillion to USD 10 trillion by 2032.
- ★ The aim of EVOLVE is to empower MSMEs with tools to improve operational efficiency, adopt digital solutions, and expand market reach.
- ★ Over the past decade, EVOLVE has engaged 10,000 entrepreneurs across 50 cities, supporting businesses in navigating changing market dynamics.

SBI to end mCASH transfer and claim services on OnlineSBI and YONO Lite

- ★ The State Bank of India (SBI) will discontinue the mCASH sending and claiming facility on OnlineSBI and YONO Lite from 30 November 2025, making the service unavailable from 1 December 2025.
- ★ The move reflects SBI's shift towards more secure, modern, and widely adopted digital payment systems.
- ★ mCASH enabled instant transfers using just the recipient's mobile number or email ID, without needing beneficiary registration.

- ★ Recipients claimed funds through a secure link and 8-digit passcode sent via SMS or email, then logged into the State Bank mCASH app with an MPIN to transfer money and save bank account and IFSC details.
- ★ SBI advises customers to use UPI, IMPS, NEFT, or RTGS as alternatives, with UPI available via the BHIM SBI Pay app for money transfers, bill payments, recharges, and merchant transactions.

SBI and BoB to Lead Indian Digital Payment Intelligence Corporation

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI) and Bank of Baroda (BoB) will lead the creation of the Indian Digital Payment Intelligence Corporation (IDPIC) to detect and prevent digital payment frauds in real time.
- ★ All 12 public sector banks will take equity stakes in IDPIC, which will be established as a Section 8 company with ₹500 crore authorised capital and ₹200 crore paid-up capital.
- ★ Initially, two Senior Executives from SBI and BoB will join as directors, and SBI and BoB will each contribute ₹10 crore as initial funding.
- ★ The platform aims to strengthen fraud detection, as bank fraud amounts surged to ₹36,014 crore in FY25, nearly three times the FY24 level.
- ★ Banks currently use tools like AI and co-ordinate with the Indian Cyber Crime Co-ordination Centre (I4C) to curb cybercrimes and detect mule accounts.
- ★ The establishment of IDPIC follows the A.P. Hota Committee's recommendation to create a Digital Payments Intelligence Platform.

Lxme Introduces India's First Women-Exclusive UPI Platform 'LxmePay'

- ★ Lxme has launched LxmePay, India's first UPI platform exclusively for women, promoting smarter and conscious financial behaviour.
- ★ The platform addresses challenges women face with fast UPI payments, such as overspending, lack of tracking, and minimal long-term rewards.
- ★ Unlike typical cashback-based apps, LxmePay rewards every transaction — including receiving money with digital gold, helping women build long-term wealth.

RBI Approves Infibeam Avenues and PayU to Operate as Physical Payment Aggregators

- ★ Infibeam Avenues and PayU received Reserve Bank of India (RBI) authorisation to operate as Payment Aggregators – Physical (PA-P), enabling them to offer offline payment aggregation services.
- ★ The PA-P licence permits the use of PoS devices and soundboxes for accepting digital payments at physical retail stores.
- ★ Both companies already hold the Payment Aggregator – Online (PA-O) licence, allowing them to operate digital payments in the online ecosystem.
- ★ PayU is authorised to operate across PA-O, PA-P, and PA-CB (cross-border), including inbound and outbound payments.

- ★ The PA-P licence covers PoS and soundbox devices, which banks and fintechs deploy to expand digital payment acceptance in physical outlets.
- ★ Infibeam expanded offline payments after launching its CCAvenue SoundBox Max, an all-in-one PoS device supporting UPI, credit/debit cards, and QR-based payments.
- ★ The PA-P approval becomes Infibeam's fourth RBI licence, adding to its existing PA-O, PPI (Prepaid Payment Instruments), and BBPOU (Bharat Bill Pay Operating Unit)
- ★ According to the RBI, a Payment Aggregator – Physical facilitates transactions where the acceptance device and payment instrument are physically present at the same location during the transaction.

RBI Grants PayU Integrated Licence to Operate as Payment Aggregator

- ★ PayU Payments Private Limited received integrated authorisation from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a Payment Aggregator (PA) across online, offline, and cross-border transactions under the Payment and Settlement Systems (PSS) Act 2007.
- ★ The authorisation allows PayU to support merchants in accepting payments through 100+ digital methods, including cards, net banking, QR codes, UPI, and wallets.
- ★ With the new approval, PayU becomes a full-stack digital payments provider with integrated operational scope across all payment channels.
- ★ The licence enables merchants to manage inward and outward cross-border transactions, providing a unified platform for online, in-store, and international payments.
- ★ The approval confirms PayU's compliance with RBI requirements, including capital adequacy, governance standards, and security norms for payment aggregators.
- ★ In May 2025, PayU received the Certificate of Authorization (CoA) from RBI to operate as an online Payment Aggregator (PA-O).

RBL Bank Enters The Premium Credit Card Market with the Launch of 'LUMIERE' and 'NOVA' Cards

- ★ RBL Bank launched two new premium credit cards 'LUMIERE' and 'NOVA', marking its entry into the high-end credit card segment.
- ★ The cards are aimed at High-Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) and affluent customers, reflecting India's expanding premium consumer base.
- ★ LUMIERE is an invitation-only metal card, offering lifestyle and travel benefits including airport service access, and comes with an annual fee of ₹ 50,000.
- ★ NOVA is a premium metal credit card targeted at consumers seeking reward-based value with strong lifestyle features, available with an annual fee of ₹ 12,500.
- ★ NOVA card offers higher reward rates for hotel and flight bookings, saving options at restaurants, and golf access through partner platforms.

Master Capital Services Gets SEBI's In-Principle Nod to Launch Mutual Fund Business

- ★ Master Capital Services Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Master Trust, received in-principle approval from SEBI to set up a Mutual Fund (MF) business.
- ★ After this approval, the company can proceed with regulatory processes to establish an Asset Management Company (AMC) and launch mutual fund schemes, subject to SEBI's final approval.
- ★ The upcoming MF business will offer equity, hybrid, and multi-asset products, catering to diverse investor categories.
- ★ The investment strategy will combine quantitative investment methodologies with a bottom-up research approach to deliver superior risk-adjusted returns over time.

RBI Expands Alert List of Unauthorised Forex Trading Platforms

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has expanded its alert list of unauthorised online forex trading platforms, adding seven new names, taking the total count to 95.
- ★ The latest additions to the list are Starnet FX, CapPlace, Mirrox, Fusion Markets, Trive, NXG Markets, and Nord FX.
- ★ All entities on the list are not permitted to conduct foreign exchange transactions under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999.
- ★ None of these platforms are authorised to operate electronic trading platforms for forex dealings.
- ★ The RBI clarified that the list also includes entities, platforms, or websites that advertise, support, or provide training for unauthorised forex operations.

HDFC Bank Reclaims India's Most Valuable Brand Title in 2025

- ★ HDFC Bank, with a brand value of \$44.9 billion, has regained its position as India's most valuable brand, surpassing Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in the 2025 Kantar BrandZ India rankings.
- ★ The bank's brand value has increased by 377% since 2014, reflecting its strong long-term brand growth and market credibility.
- ★ HDFC Bank had earlier lost the top position to TCS in 2022, but reclaimed it in 2025, supported by brand initiatives such as "Vigil Aunty" and 30-minute digital auto loans.
- ★ The top five Indian brands in 2025 are HDFC Bank (\$44.9bn), TCS (\$44.23bn), Airtel (\$41.07bn), Infosys (\$25.54bn) and ICICI Bank (\$20.63bn).
- ★ According to the report, India's top 100 brands are valued at \$523.5 billion, representing around 13% of India's GDP, and 34 brands increased their value in 2025.
- ★ Eighteen new brands entered the list, including UltraTech Cement, which debuted at 7th place with a valuation of \$14.5 billion, driven by consumer-focused brand positioning and retail solutions.
- ★ Retail brands Westside (\$3.3bn) and Zudio (\$2.5bn), both from the Tata Group, made their first appearance at ranks 38 and 52, respectively.

- ★ Zomato remained the fastest-growing Indian brand for the second consecutive year, rising 10 places to rank 21 and increasing its valuation by 69% to \$6 billion, driven by expansion beyond food delivery.
- ★ Travel and lifestyle brands posted strong growth, with Taj (\$2.9bn), IndiGo (\$5.1bn), MakeMyTrip (\$2.4bn), and Mahindra & Mahindra (\$5.5bn) reflecting the rise of an “experience economy” in India.

RBI Grants Final Approval to PayGlocal to Operate as a Cross-Border PA

- ★ PayGlocal has received final authorization from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a Payment Aggregator (PA) with expanded scope for inward and outward cross-border transactions.
- ★ The authorization enables PayGlocal to facilitate global payment flows, offering seamless acceptance and remittance services for Indian merchants and international clients.
- ★ This approval strengthens PayGlocal’s role as a regulated digital payments player in India’s fintech ecosystem.
- ★ The new approval follows its earlier Payment Aggregator – Online (PA-O) license granted in September 2024.
- ★ PayGlocal supports merchant onboarding across multiple sectors, including retail, education, exports, software services, and travel, enabling efficient cross-border payment settlements.
- ★ The platform enables Indian exporters, freelancers, and businesses to receive funds from global customers and allows foreign merchants to accept payments from Indian consumers through cards, UPI, and various payment gateways.
- ★ PayGlocal uses a robust technology stack, featuring multi-currency accounts, fraud prevention systems, intelligent payment routing, and automated compliance tools.
- ★ The platform ensures compliance with RBI mandates, including Know Your Customer (KYC), anti-money laundering rules, and sanction screening guidelines.

South Indian Bank Introduces ‘SIB HER Account’

- ★ South Indian Bank (SIB) launched the SIB HER Account, a premium savings account designed exclusively for women including NRI customers, during an event held in Kochi, Kerala.
- ★ The account aims to provide financial, insurance, lifestyle, and wellness benefits tailored to women’s needs throughout their financial planning journey.
- ★ The account is available to women aged 18–54, including NRIs, with a monthly balance requirement of ₹50,000, which is waived if a Fixed Deposit (FD) of ₹1 lakh is maintained or debit card spends reach ₹50,000.
- ★ The account offers an auto-sweep facility above ₹1 lakh, along with unlimited ATM withdrawals and free NEFT, RTGS, IMPS, cheque books, and demand drafts.
- ★ Customers can open up to three family add-on accounts and receive a 50% waiver on locker rent.
- ★ The account provides ₹1 crore air accident insurance, ₹1 lakh personal accident cover, discounted cancer care insurance up to ₹25 lakh, and reduced premium on women-specific term insurance for cover of ₹2 crore and above.

- ★ Customers also receive concessions on retail loans including home, vehicle, and business loans, with up to 50% waiver on processing fees and a one-day sanction facility for the HER Power Business Loan.

RBI Authorises Easebuzz to Operate as a Full-Service Payment Aggregator

- ★ Easebuzz has received authorisation from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a full-service Payment Aggregator (PA).
- ★ With this approval, Easebuzz can now provide online, offline, and cross-border payment services to merchants.
- ★ The approval places Easebuzz alongside other licensed players such as Infibeam Avenues and PayU, which also received PA-P licences for offline digital payments.
- ★ The PA licence enables Easebuzz to offer a complete payment services suite, including online payment acceptance, PoS devices, UPI soundboxes, and cross-border inward and outward payment solutions.

BoB and Small Industries Development Bank of India Signed MoU

- ★ Bank of Baroda (BoB) and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) have signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to scale up credit flow and working capital support for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and startups.
- ★ Under the agreement, both institutions will jointly finance MSMEs, enable SIDBI-sanctioned borrowers to access BoB's working capital platform, and support export-focused enterprises with customized banking solutions.
- ★ SIDBI will contribute through its Venture Debt Programme, while Bank of Baroda will offer advisory services, structured financial products, and customized credit solutions for growth-stage startups.
- ★ The MoU also includes strategic collaboration for incubators, accelerators, and MSME clusters, combining BoB's extensive branch network with SIDBI's expertise in micro-enterprise development.

RBI Begins Realisation Phase to Link India's UPI with Eurosystem's TIPS

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has initiated the realisation phase to interlink India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) with TARGET Instant Payment Settlement (TIPS) operated by the Eurosystem to enable seamless cross-border payments.
- ★ UPI is India's instant payment system developed by NPCI, enabling person-to-person and person-to-merchant transactions across banks via smartphones.
- ★ TIPS is the European Central Bank's real-time settlement system, facilitating instant euro transactions across the Eurozone 24/7 in under 10 seconds.
- ★ The UPI-TIPS integration aims to enable faster, cheaper, and transparent remittances between India and the Euro Area, reducing reliance on SWIFT and intermediary banks.
- ★ The linkage provides convenience for NRIs and businesses, supporting cross-border trade and remittances with predictable costs and timelines.

- ★ This initiative strengthens India's fintech diplomacy, aligning with G20 goals of improving cross-border payment systems
- ★ RBI and NPCI International Payments Ltd. (NIPL) will work with the ECB on technical integration, risk management, settlement arrangements, and compliance harmonization including KYC, AML, and data protection norms.

RBI Imposes ₹4 Lakh Penalty on Odisha-Based Glowmore Finance for Regulatory Non-Compliance

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed a total penalty of ₹7 lakh on three co-operative banks and a non-banking financial company (NBFC) for non-compliance with regulatory directions.
- ★ The highest penalty of ₹4 lakh was levied on Glowmore Finance Pvt Ltd, an Odisha-based NBFC.
- ★ The non-compliance was noticed during RBI correspondence regarding the appointment of a Director in the company.
- ★ The action was taken under Section 58G(1)(b) read with Section 58B(5)(aa) of the RBI Act, 1934.
- ★ Glowmore Finance Private Limited (GFPL) is an NBFC based in Ganjam, Odisha, focusing on microcredit to promote financial inclusion.

SEBI Rolls Out New Threshold Criteria to Assess Materiality in Related Party Deals

- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) introduced a threshold-based framework to determine materiality of Related Party Transactions (RPTs) based on annual consolidated turnover of listed companies.
- ★ A Related Party Transaction refers to dealings with subsidiaries, promoters, directors, or significant influencing entities, which may pose conflict-of-interest risks.
- ★ The new norms aim to remove ambiguities, address practical challenges, and balance investor protection with ease of doing business under Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements (LODR) norms.
- ★ Turnover up to ₹20,000 crore: RPT is material if it exceeds 10% of annual consolidated turnover.
- ★ For companies with turnover ₹20,001–₹40,000 crore, the materiality threshold is ₹2,000 crore + 5% of turnover exceeding ₹20,000 crore.
- ★ For companies with turnover above ₹40,000 crore, the threshold is ₹3,000 crore + 2.5% of turnover exceeding ₹40,000 crore, with an upper ceiling of ₹5,000 crore to protect minority shareholders.
- ★ Earlier, under LODR, an RPT was material if it exceeded ₹1,000 crore or 10% of annual consolidated turnover, whichever was lower.
- ★ Stakeholders argued the ₹1,000 crore limit followed a one-size-fits-all approach, ignoring differences in operational scale and business models.
- ★ SEBI has relaxed disclosure requirements, allowing simplified information submission if the total RPT value does not exceed 1% of annual turnover or ₹10 crore, whichever was lower.
- ★ The simplified disclosures reduce compliance burden, particularly for mid-cap and small-cap companies.

- ★ Omnibus approvals granted in an AGM remain valid until the next AGM, while approvals in other general meetings are valid for one year from the date of approval.
- ★ The new framework promotes proportionality, flexibility, and risk-based compliance in handling RPTs.

Oman's Central Bank Launches Unified Currency Symbol for the Omani Rial

- ★ The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) launched a new unified symbol for the Omani Rial, marking a significant milestone in the Sultanate's financial system.
- ★ The initiative aims to strengthen the global presence, visibility, and credibility of the Omani Rial in international banking, commerce, and digital services.
- ★ CBO Governor Ahmed Ja'afar Al Musalmi highlighted that the new symbol enhances the Rial's identity and recognition worldwide.
- ★ The unified currency symbol ensures consistent representation across financial, commercial, and digital platforms.
- ★ The development aligns with Oman Vision 2040, promoting innovation, modernization, and global economic integration.

IDFC FIRST Bank Signs Memorandum of Understanding with FPSB India

- ★ IDFC FIRST Bank signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with FPSB India, the Indian subsidiary of Financial Planning Standards Board Limited., as an Approved Corporate Partner (ACP) to strengthen financial planning standards and upskill banking teams.
- ★ Rahul Singh, Country Head – Private Banking, IDFC FIRST Bank, and Chandrakant Sureka, Interim CEO, FPSB India, signed the MoU.
- ★ The partnership falls under FPSB India's ACP Programme aimed at promoting financial planning excellence and professional certification in Indian financial institutions.
- ★ The collaboration will upskill IDFC FIRST Bank's Wealth Management Regional Managers through specialized training and certification programs.
- ★ It will support hiring initiatives and create career pathways for Certified Financial Planner (CFP).
- ★ Both organisations will conduct joint strategic programs to strengthen the financial planning ecosystem and promote professional standards in wealth management.

DEFENCE

Pravaig Unveils 'VEER', India's First All-Electric Military Vehicle for Defence Use

- ★ India has taken a major step toward self-reliance in defence technology with the development of the Pravaig VEER EV, an all-electric military vehicle created by Pravaig Dynamics, a Bengaluru-based company.

- ★ The Pravaig VEER EV is designed for the Indian Armed Forces and combines stealth capabilities, high terrain mobility, and quick field-repair readiness, making it ideal for modern military operations.
- ★ It is engineered for stealth missions and performs effectively across deserts, mountains, and forests, showcasing its all-terrain capability.
- ★ The VEER EV recently won the iDEX (Innovation for Defence Excellence) Award, a recognition for groundbreaking indigenous defence innovation by the Government of India.
- ★ The vehicle's successful military trials confirm its readiness for real-world deployment, advancing the goals of Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) by reducing dependence on imported defence equipment.
- ★ The VEER EV operates silently with low noise and heat output, enabling covert and undetectable missions in hostile environments.
- ★ Its quick field-repair capability allows soldiers to maintain mission continuity even during complex operations.
- ★ The vehicle is fully indigenously developed, reflecting a significant role of private firms in military research and development, and supporting the Make in India mission.
- ★ The VEER EV enhances tactical superiority by providing a stealthy, fast-deploying electric platform suitable for asymmetric warfare, where speed and surprise are critical.

Indian Navy to Lead Tri-Services Exercise “Trishul” with Indian Army and Air Force

- ★ Tri-Services Exercise (TSE-2025) “Trishul” is being conducted by the Indian Navy as the lead service, jointly with the Indian Army and Indian Air Force, commencing in early November 2025.
- ★ The exercise is organised by Headquarters Western Naval Command, in close co-ordination with all three Services, featuring large-scale operations across the creek and desert sectors of Rajasthan and Gujarat and comprehensive maritime operations in the North Arabian Sea.
- ★ It covers the Gujarat coast and northern Arabian Sea, with participation from Army Southern Command, Western Naval Command, and South Western Air Command as principal formations. Other agencies like the Indian Coast Guard, Border Security Force (BSF), and central agencies are also participating to strengthen inter-agency co-ordination.
- ★ The main objective is the validation and synchronisation of operational procedures across the Services to enable joint effect-based operations in a multi-domain environment.
- ★ The exercise focuses on enhancing interoperability, integrating networks, and advancing jointness in operations across land, sea, air, cyber, and space domains.
- ★ It includes large-scale deployment of Indian Navy warships, Indian Air Force fighter and support aircraft, and amphibious operations involving the Indian Army and Navy, including INS Jalashwa and Landing Craft Utility (LCU) vessels.
- ★ The exercise will validate joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), Electronic Warfare (EW), and Cyber Warfare plans, along with Indian Navy carrier operations conducted jointly with IAF shore-based assets.

Indian Army Successfully Conducts Drone and Counter-Drone Exercise 'Vayu Samanvay-II'

- ★ Indian Army successfully conducted a large-scale Drone and Counter-Drone Exercise 'VAYU SAMANVAY-II' from 28–29 October 2025 in the Desert Sector under the aegis of Southern Command.
- ★ The exercise aimed to validate the Indian Army's preparedness for next-generation warfare by integrating aerial and ground assets through multi-domain command and control centres in a realistic electronic warfare environment.
- ★ The two-day drill focused on developing and testing doctrinal precepts for Drone and Counter-Drone operations, strengthening the Army's ability to tackle emerging aerial threats.
- ★ Conducted in desert terrain and challenging weather, the exercise tested the operational performance of indigenous drone technologies.
- ★ 'VAYU SAMANVAY-II' highlighted joint interoperability between various arms of the Indian Army, promoting co-ordination for technology-enabled operations in frontier regions.
- ★ Lessons from the exercise will aid in capability development, modernization, and innovation within the Army's operational framework.
- ★ The Indian Army reaffirmed its commitment to becoming a technology-driven, agile, and future-ready force capable of operating effectively in a multi-domain battlespace.

India and Israel Sign MoU to Strengthen Defence Co-operation

- ★ India and Israel signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) during the 17th meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Defence Co-operation held in Tel Aviv, marking a major step toward expanding their strategic defence partnership.
- ★ The MoU aims to provide a unified vision and policy framework for advancing bilateral defence co-operation in a structured and long-term manner.
- ★ The meeting was co-chaired by Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh (India) and Major General Amir Baram, Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Defence.
- ★ The agreement focuses on key areas such as co-development and co-production of defence equipment, exchange of advanced technologies, and mutual support in developing operational capabilities.
- ★ Both nations reiterated their commitment to joint strategies for combating terrorism and discussed mechanisms for deeper collaboration in defence technology, research, and innovation.
- ★ On the sidelines, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh met Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz, briefing him on the key takeaways of the JWG discussions.
- ★ The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening their strategic and defence relationship, which has seen continuous progress over the past two decades.
- ★ The renewed co-operation aligns with India's vision of self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat) in defence manufacturing and technological modernisation, while reinforcing India-Israel ties in counter-terrorism and security collaboration.

INS Ikshak, Third SVL-Class Ship, Commissioned into Indian Navy at Kochi

- ★ INS Ikshak, the third ship of the Survey Vessel (Large) [SVL] class, was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 6 November 2025 at the Naval Base, Kochi.
- ★ The commissioning ceremony was presided over by Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff.
- ★ Constructed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, Ikshak has a displacement of about 3,400 tonnes and measures 110 metres in length.
- ★ Ikshak has dual-role capability such as a survey vessel and for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) or hospital operations.
- ★ It is the first SVL with dedicated women's accommodation, reflecting the Navy's focus on inclusivity and modernisation.
- ★ Ikshak is the 102nd ship managed by the Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau and the first vessel of its class to be based at the Southern Naval Command.

Indian Naval Ship Sahyadri Joins Multilateral Exercise Malabar-2025 at Guam

- ★ Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sahyadri is at Guam in the Northern Pacific to participate in the multilateral Exercise Malabar-2025.
- ★ The participation of INS Sahyadri in Exercise Malabar-2025 reaffirms India's enduring partnership, commitment to strengthening co-ordination, enhancing interoperability, and safeguarding regional security.
- ★ INS Sahyadri is an indigenously designed and constructed Guided Missile Stealth Frigate, representing the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' vision.
- ★ The ship has taken part in several bilateral and multilateral exercises and operational deployments.
- ★ The Harbour Phase of Exercise Malabar-2025 includes operational planning, communication protocol alignment, familiarisation visits, and sports fixtures among participating nations.
- ★ After the Harbour Phase, all units will move to the Sea Phase, involving naval drills such as joint fleet operations, anti-submarine warfare, gunnery serials, and flying operations.

Thiruvananthapuram to Host Navy Day 2025

- ★ Navy Day 2025 will be celebrated on 4th December at Shangumugham Beach, Thiruvananthapuram, featuring a spectacular Operational Demonstration.
- ★ The celebration is part of the Navy's initiative to organise events beyond major naval stations, with previous editions held at Puri and Sindhudurg.
- ★ The event will showcase indigenously built naval platforms, reflecting India's self-reliance in defence manufacturing under the 'Make in India'
- ★ Navy Day commemorates the Navy's crucial role in the 1971 Indo-Pak War, particularly the successful Operation Trident on Karachi harbour.

6th Edition of India-Vietnam Army Exercise VINBAX Commences in Hanoi

- ★ The 6th edition of India-Vietnam Army Exercise VINBAX began in Hanoi, Vietnam, aimed at strengthening defence co-operation and enhancing interoperability between the two nations.
- ★ The exercise was presided over by Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh and Vietnam's Deputy Chief of General Staff Senior Lieutenant General Phung Si Tan.
- ★ Exercise VINBAX is a bilateral military exercise between India and Vietnam designed to enhance interoperability and share best practices in UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO).
- ★ The key objectives of the 6th edition include improving co-ordination during joint operations, sharing peacekeeping skills, and strengthening strategic military ties.
- ★ The exercise features joint training modules, formal ceremonies, and flag hoisting events to promote mutual trust and co-operation.
- ★ It reinforces India's strategic engagement with Southeast Asia and showcases India's commitment to regional security, defence diplomacy, and UN peacekeeping efforts.

11th Edition of Joint Military Exercise Mitra Shakti-2025

- ★ Exercise Mitra Shakti-2025, the 11th edition of the India-Sri Lanka joint military exercise, began on 10 November 2025 at the Foreign Training Node in Belagavi, Karnataka, and will continue till 23 November 2025.
- ★ The exercise aims to enhance interoperability in counter-terrorist operations and strengthen bilateral defence co-operation under Chapter VII of the United Nations mandate.
- ★ The Indian contingent includes 170 personnel mainly from the Rajput Regiment, while the Sri Lankan contingent comprises 135 personnel from the Gajaba Regiment.
- ★ Additional participants include 20 Indian Air Force personnel and 10 Sri Lankan Air Force personnel supporting the joint training.
- ★ The drill focuses on sub-conventional operations, including search-and-destroy missions, heliborne operations, counter-terrorist raids, and combat reflex shooting.
- ★ Training modules also include Army Martial Arts Routine (AMAR) and yoga sessions, promoting physical endurance and mental discipline.
- ★ Modern warfare components such as drones, Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (C-UAS), and helicopters are integrated for realistic battlefield scenarios.
- ★ The exercise features joint drills on securing helipads and casualty evacuation under operational conditions.
- ★ The 10th edition of India- Sri Lanka Joint Military Exercise MITRA SHAKTI commenced at Army Training School, Maduru Oya, Sri Lanka scheduled to be conducted from 12th to 25th August 2024.

Indian Navy Unveils Crest of INS Mahe

- ★ The Indian Navy unveiled the crest of INS Mahe, the first ship of the indigenously designed Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC).

- ★ The crest was released ahead of the ship's commissioning in Mumbai, marking a major milestone in its design-to-induction journey.
- ★ INS Mahe is named after the coastal town of Mahe on India's western seaboard, reflecting India's maritime heritage.
- ★ The crest features an 'Urumi' (flexible sword) from Kalarippayattu, symbolising agility, precision, and lethal grace in naval operations.
- ★ The waves in the crest represent India's vast maritime domain and the Navy's readiness to safeguard it.
- ★ The ship's motto "Silent Hunters" signifies stealth, vigilance, and anti-submarine warfare capabilities.
- ★ The crest highlights the fusion of India's cultural heritage, technological advancement, and the Navy's focus on indigenisation and Aatmanirbharta.

AJEYA WARRIOR-25, the 8th India–UK Joint Military Exercise

- ★ The eighth edition of the India–UK Joint Military Exercise AJEYA WARRIOR-25 began on 17 November 2025 at the Foreign Training Node, Mahajan Field Firing Ranges, Rajasthan.
- ★ The bilateral exercise is scheduled from 17–30 November 2025 and involves 240 personnel, with equal representation from the Indian Army and the British Army.
- ★ The Indian Army is represented by troops of the Sikh Regiment, known for high professionalism and operational experience.
- ★ The exercise is conducted under a United Nations mandate and focuses on counter-terrorism operations in a semi-urban environment.
- ★ Training activities include joint mission planning at Brigade level, integrated tactical drills, simulation-based scenarios, and company-level field exercises replicating real-life counter-terror contingencies.
- ★ The exercise aims to enhance interoperability, share best practices, improve tactical proficiency, and develop co-ordinated responses to complex security situations.
- ★ AJEYA WARRIOR, held biennially since 2011, is a flagship defence engagement between India and the UK, strengthening military co-operation, peacekeeping collaboration, and commitment to regional and global security.
- ★ The 2025 edition reinforces shared values of professionalism, co-operation, and stability, while boosting capabilities for UN peacekeeping, semi-urban warfare, and joint counter-terror operations.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to Participate in 12th ADMM-Plus Summit in Kuala Lumpur

- ★ Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh attended the 12th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 1 November 2025.
- ★ He will speak on 'Reflection on 15 years of ADMM-Plus and Charting the Way Forward', highlighting future defence co-operation priorities.

- ★ The 2nd ASEAN-India Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting will be held on 31 October 2025, chaired by Malaysia, with participation from all ASEAN member states.
- ★ The meeting aims to strengthen ASEAN-India defence and security co-operation and advance India's Act East Policy.
- ★ ADMM is ASEAN's highest defence consultative mechanism, and ADMM-Plus brings together 10 ASEAN countries + 8 Dialogue Partners (India, US, China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Australia & New Zealand).
- ★ India became an ASEAN Dialogue Partner in 1992, and the first ADMM-Plus was held on 12 October 2010 in Hanoi, Vietnam.
- ★ Since 2017, ADMM-Plus has been held annually to deepen regional defence co-operation.
- ★ India is co-chair of the Experts Working Group (EWG) on Counter-Terrorism with Malaysia for 2024–2027.
- ★ The 2nd ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME) is scheduled for 2026, boosting maritime security co-operation.

Indian Air Force's Tejas Fighter Jet Crashes at Dubai Airshow, Pilot Killed

- ★ The Indian Air Force's Tejas fighter jet crashed during a high-profile aerobatic display at the Dubai Airshow, resulting in the death of the pilot.
- ★ The crash occurred while performing a complex aerial manoeuvre intended to showcase the jet's agility and combat-readiness.
- ★ Eyewitnesses reported the aircraft suddenly losing stability and nosediving, producing a large plume of black smoke at the crash site.
- ★ Experts indicated the crash may have resulted from errors during a barrel roll manoeuvre, which requires precise speed, angle, and altitude management.
- ★ Possible failure points include loss of lift, engine power fluctuation under high-G stress, altitude miscalculation, and control surface response issues.
- ★ Tejas is considered one of India's safest indigenous fighter jets, with thousands of flying hours and minimal incidents prior to this accident.
- ★ The Indian Air Force (IAF) confirmed the pilot's death and set up a formal investigation board to review flight recorders, eyewitness videos, and technical data.

India's First Mahe-Class ASW Shallow Water Craft, Inducted into Western Naval Command

- ★ INS Mahe was commissioned on 24 November 2025 at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai, marking the induction of the first Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC).
- ★ The ceremony was presided over by General Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of the Army Staff, and hosted by Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan of Western Naval Command.
- ★ INS Mahe is designed and built by Cochin Shipyard Ltd., Kochi, and is the lead ship of eight vessels in its class.

- ★ The ship is named after the historic coastal town Mahe on the Malabar Coast, symbolizing rich maritime heritage.
- ★ INS Mahe features over 80% indigenous content, reinforcing India's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat in naval capability.
- ★ The ship's crest shows the Urumi sword and blue waves, symbolizing agility, strength, and maritime prowess, while the mascot is the Cheetah, representing speed and precision.
- ★ It is equipped with advanced weapons, sensors, and communication systems enabling detection, tracking, and neutralization of submarine threats in shallow coastal waters.
- ★ The ship strengthens the Indian Navy's Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) capabilities, particularly in littoral zones.
- ★ The project involves major Indian defence firms including BEL, L&T Defence, Mahindra Defence Systems, and NPOL, along with over 20 MSMEs, showcasing India's expanding defence ecosystem.
- ★ Mahe-class vessels will serve as the first line of coastal defence, integrating with larger naval assets to maintain continuous maritime vigilance.

Bharat Electronics Limited and Safran Sign Joint Venture Agreement

- ★ Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Safran Electronics and Defence (SED), France signed a Joint Venture Co-operation Agreement (JVCA) for producing HAMMER precision-guided air-to-ground weapons in India.
- ★ The agreement supports Make-in-India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat, aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision.
- ★ The JVCA was signed on 24 November 2025 in New Delhi in the presence of Defence Production Secretary Sanjeev Kumar and Safran CEO Olivier Andries.
- ★ The JV formalises the intent of the MoU signed on 11 February 2025 during Aero India.
- ★ The Joint Venture Company (JVC) will be a 50:50 partnership between BEL and SED.
- ★ The JVC will localise manufacturing, supply, and maintenance of HAMMER weapons for the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Indian Navy.
- ★ Indigenisation level will progressively increase to 60%, with major subassemblies, electronics, and mechanical components produced in India.
- ★ Production transfer will occur in phases, with BEL leading final assembly, testing, and quality assurance.
- ★ HAMMER is a combat-proven precision weapon system, adaptable for platforms like Rafale and LCA Tejas.
- ★ The pact strengthens India's defence industrial base and leverages SED's expertise in smart precision weapon manufacturing.

13th Joint Military Co-operation Committee meeting between India and Oman

- ★ 13th Joint Military Co-operation Committee meeting between India and Oman was held in New Delhi on 24 November 2025.

- ★ The meeting was co-chaired by Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh and Oman's Secretary General of Defence, Dr. Mohammed Bin Naseer Bin Ali Al Zaabi.
- ★ Both sides reviewed defence co-operation and discussed ways to strengthen bilateral engagements across multiple domains.
- ★ Officials exchanged views on regional and international security, with emphasis on the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- ★ Both nations reaffirmed commitment to deepening defence industrial co-operation, including joint development, technology sharing, and production partnerships.
- ★ Focus areas included strengthening defence supply chains, enhancing interoperability, and promoting innovation in emerging defence technologies.
- ★ Discussions aimed at building long-term frameworks for co-development of advanced platforms and supporting indigenous manufacturing.
- ★ India and Oman share strategic ties including political, defence, energy and economic co-operation, with shared interests in maritime security, counter-terrorism, and regional stability.

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited Signs USD 1 Billion Deal with GE

- ★ Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) signed a USD 1 billion (approx. 8,800 crore) agreement with General Electric (GE), United States of America (USA), for 113 F404-GE-IN20 (General Electric F404 Turbofan Engine, Indian Variant 20) jet engines to power 97 LCA Tejas Mk-1A aircraft for the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- ★ The agreement covers engines for 68 single-seater and 29 twin-seater Tejas Mk-1A variants, with deliveries scheduled between 2027–2032 as per HAL's production plan.
- ★ With this deal, total Tejas Mk-1A programme orders rise to 180 aircraft, including the earlier 2021 order for 83 jets.
- ★ LCA Tejas Mk-1A, developed by Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) under DRDO and manufactured by HAL, features Uttam AESA Radar, Electronic Warfare (EW) suite, and advanced mission control systems.
- ★ The Tejas Mk-1A has over 64% indigenous content, supporting India's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative, and is capable of air defence, maritime reconnaissance, and strike missions.

SUMMITS & CONFERENCES

India Hosts First BIMSTEC-India Marine Research Network Conference

- ★ The first biennial BIMSTEC-India Marine Research Network (BIMReN) Conference was held in Kochi from November 4–6, 2025, reinforcing India's Blue Economy co-operation in the Bay of Bengal region.
- ★ BIMReN, launched in 2024 by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, promotes institutional collaborations through twinning research grants and split-site PhD fellowships between Indian and BIMSTEC research institutions.

- ★ The initiative was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Colombo BIMSTEC Summit in 2022, aimed at strengthening collective marine science research and aligning with India's Neighbourhood First, Act East, Indo-Pacific, and MAHASAGAR strategies.
- ★ In its pilot phase, BIMReN connected 25 institutions and over 50 researchers across BIMSTEC member countries, advancing regional co-operation in marine research and the sustainable blue economy.
- ★ Discussions focused on marine challenges, ecosystem health, scientific innovation, resource management, and policy harmonization across the Bay of Bengal region.
- ★ The launch of BIMReN underscores India's long-term commitment to sustainable fisheries management, supporting the Bay of Bengal, which contributes 6% of global fish catch and hosts over one-third of the world's fishing fleet.

RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

Reserve Bank of India Releases Quarterly House Price Index

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) releases the House Price Index (HPI) quarterly, based on transaction-level data from property registration authorities.
- ★ The latest HPI for Q1:2025-26 has been released with a new base year 2022-23, covering 18 major cities across India.
- ★ Eight new cities — Hyderabad, Thiruvananthapuram, Pune, Ghaziabad, Thane, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Chandigarh, and Nagpur — have been added to the earlier 10-city series.
- ★ The All-India HPI recorded a year-on-year increase of 3.6% in Q1:2025-26, compared to 7.6% in the same quarter last year.
- ★ Nagpur, Chandigarh, Chennai, and Kochi registered the highest increases in house prices among the 18 cities.

Moody's Projects India's Growth at 6.5% Through 2027 in 'Global Macro 2026' Report

- ★ Moody's Ratings released its report "Global Macro 2026", projecting India's GDP growth at around 6.5% through 2027.
- ★ India's GDP is estimated to grow 7% in 2025 and 6.4% in 2026, indicating sustained economic strength.
- ★ The report projects global GDP growth at 2.5%–2.6% in 2026–27, down from 2.6% in 2025 and 2.9% in 2024.
- ★ Advanced economies are expected to grow at 1.5%, while emerging markets led by India are projected to expand by nearly 4% by 2027.
- ★ Moody's described the global outlook as "stable but mixed" due to policy differences, geopolitical tensions, and changes in global trade.
- ★ India's growth will be supported by strong infrastructure investment, robust consumer demand, and export diversification, despite cautious private sector capital spending.

- ★ India's inflation rate is projected at 3.5% in 2026 and 4% in 2027.
- ★ India's economy remained resilient despite global headwinds and 50% U.S. tariffs on select products; exports grew 6.75% in September 2025, though shipments to the U.S. dropped 11.9%.

Ind-Ra Projects India's Q2 FY26 Gross Domestic Product Growth at 7.2%

- ★ India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra), a Fitch Group subsidiary, projected India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth at 7.2% for Q2 FY26, driven by robust private consumption and a resilient services sector.
- ★ The 7.2% GDP projection is higher than 5.6% in Q2 FY25, but lower than 7.8% in Q1 FY26, which was the fastest growth in five quarters.
- ★ Nominal GDP growth may have slipped below 8% YoY in Q2 FY26, likely impacting government tax collections.
- ★ Private consumption is estimated to have grown 8% in Q2 FY26, compared to 7% in Q1 FY26 and 6.4% in Q2 FY25, due to income tax cuts (Union Budget FY26), record low inflation, and stable rural wage growth.
- ★ Investment demand increased 7.5% YoY in Q2 FY26, supported by stable government capital expenditure (Capex) amid global uncertainty.

SBI Research Projects India's Q2 FY26 GDP Growth At 7.5%

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI) Economic Research Department (ERD) released SBI Research Ecowarp report projecting India's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth for Q2 FY26 at 7.5%, higher than the RBI estimate of 7% for the same quarter.
- ★ Based on the model, real GDP growth is expected to range between 7.5%–8.0%, with GVA projected at 8.0%.
- ★ GST collections for November 2025 are projected at ₹1.49 lakh crore, and total collections are expected to cross ₹2 lakh crore including IGST and Compensation Cess.
- ★ Headline CPI inflation dropped to 0.25% in October 2025, while core inflation (excluding gold) stood at 2.6%.
- ★ Kerala recorded the highest inflation at 8.56%, followed by Jammu & Kashmir at 2.95% and Karnataka at 2.34%, while 12 out of 22 states showed negative inflation.

India Slips to 23rd Rank in Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2026

- ★ India has slipped 13 places from its previous ranking to 23rd position in the latest Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2026, mainly due to the absence of any national deadline to exit coal usage.
- ★ The report noted that no country is doing enough to prevent dangerous climate change, leaving the top three global positions vacant.
- ★ The CCPI 2026 is jointly published by Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute, and Climate Action Network at the United Nations (UN) COP30 Climate Summit in Belém, Brazil.

- ★ It is an annual independent monitoring tool assessing climate mitigation performance of 63 countries and the European Union, which together account for over 90% of global Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.
- ★ India stands at 23rd position with a score of 61.31, slipping from last year's rank and moving from a 'high performer' to a 'medium performer' category.
- ★ The report labelled India among the biggest global producers of oil, gas, and coal.
- ★ The CCPI highlighted that global climate action demands a time-bound coal phase-down, eventually leading to a coal phase-out, along with redirecting fossil subsidies toward decentralised community-owned renewable energy systems.
- ★ Rankings for CCPI 2026:
 - 4th: Denmark – 80.52
 - 5th: United Kingdom (UK) – 70.8
 - 6th: Morocco – 70.75
 - Bottom: Saudi Arabia – 11.9
 - 66th: Iran – 14.33
 - 65th: United States of America (USA) – 21.84

India's Foreign Exchange Reserves Decline by \$2.7 Billion to \$687.73 Billion

- ★ According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's foreign exchange reserves declined by \$2.70 billion to \$687.03 billion for the week ended November 7, 2025.
- ★ The decline was due to a stronger US dollar and valuation changes, extending the fall after a \$5.62 billion drop in the previous week.
- ★ Despite the fall, India continues to hold one of the largest FX reserves globally, providing strong protection against global volatility and geopolitical risks.
- ★ Foreign Currency Assets (FCA), the major component of reserves, fell by \$2.45 billion to \$562.14 billion, impacted by movements in non-dollar currencies like euro, pound, and yen.
- ★ Gold reserves decreased by \$195 million to \$101.53 billion due to fluctuations in international gold prices.
- ★ Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) fell by \$51 million to \$18.59 billion, as per RBI updates.
- ★ India's reserve position with the IMF remained unchanged at \$4.77 billion, according to the RBI.
- ★ In the week ended November 14, 2025, India's forex reserves rose sharply by \$5.54 billion to a historic high of \$692.57 billion, reversing the previous decline.

Moody's Forecasts India's Gross Domestic Product To Grow At 7% In 2025

- ★ Moody's projected India's real Gross domestic product (GDP) growth at 7% in 2025, making India one of the fastest-growing major economies
- ★ Growth is forecast to moderate to 6.4% in 2026 due to global and domestic economic factors.

- ★ Growth momentum is supported by robust domestic consumption, driven by rising incomes, expanding middle class, and urban demand across sectors such as retail, housing, services, and transport.
- ★ Government-led capital expenditure in roads, railways, and urban transport is pushing economic growth, along with private investment in logistics, digital infrastructure, and energy.
- ★ India is achieving export diversification with rising growth in electronics, pharmaceuticals, and services, reducing dependence on limited traditional markets and improving economic resilience.
- ★ The softening to 6.4% in 2026 is seen as a natural economic transition from recovery-driven growth to investment-led growth.

S&P Forecasts India's GDP To Expand 6.5% In FY26 And 6.7% In FY27

- ★ S&P Global Ratings retained India's GDP forecast at 6.5% for FY26, as per its report titled "Economic Outlook Asia-Pacific Q1 2026: Signs of Relief" released in November 2025.
- ★ S&P projected India's GDP growth at 6.7% in FY27, showing continued strong economic momentum.
- ★ India's real GDP grew 7.8% in Q1 FY26 (April–June 2025), recording the fastest expansion in five quarters.
- ★ S&P revised its Asia-Pacific GDP outlook to 4.2% for FY26, driven by lower trade tariff uncertainties, strong tech exports, and stable regional demand.
- ★ The growth forecast is supported by strong domestic demand, favourable monsoon, GST reforms, and major infrastructure push by the government.
- ★ The Indian rupee weakened due to capital outflows and uncertainty caused by higher U.S. tariffs and the absence of a trade agreement.
- ★ S&P revised India's inflation projection to 2.5% for FY26, down from 3.2%, due to a sharp fall in food inflation.
- ★ Inflation for FY27 is expected to normalize to around 5%, as food price pressures stabilize.

Ind-Ra Revises India's FY26 GDP Growth Forecast Upward to 7% from 6.3%

- ★ India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) raised India's FY26 GDP growth projection to 7%, up from 6.3% projected in July 2025.
- ★ The upward revision was due to high GDP growth in Q1 FY26 (April–June) at 8%, the fastest pace in five quarters.
- ★ RBI has projected FY26 GDP growth at 6.8%, higher than 6.5% in FY25.
- ★ Official Q2 FY26 GDP data (July–September) is scheduled for release on 28 November 2025.
- ★ Major headwinds include the US unilateral tariff hikes, which affected India significantly since August 2025.
- ★ Tailwinds supporting growth are faster-than-expected disinflation, boosting real rural wages, and GST rationalisation improving consumer sentiment.
- ★ The sharp upward revision is driven by strong Q1 GDP growth and lower-than-expected impact of US tariffs on global trade.

- ★ FY26 growth risks are evenly balanced; growth could exceed 7% if there is a faster Indo-US trade deal or favourable weather conditions.
- ★ Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) is expected to grow 7.4% YoY in FY26, up from 7.2% in FY25.
- ★ Indian exports to the US fell 11.9% in September and 8.9% in October 2025 YoY, despite averaging USD 7.4 billion/month between April–October 2025.
- ★ Ind-Ra noted that bilateral trade deals and diversification of export markets are essential for reviving Indian exports.

AWARDS & PRIZES

Padma Shri Sanjeev Kapoor Honoured as One of the 2025 Top Agri-Food Pioneers

- ★ Renowned chef and Padma Shri awardee Sanjeev Kapoor has been recognised by the World Food Prize Foundation (WFPF) as one of its 2025 Top Agri-Food Pioneers (TAP) for his outstanding contributions to nutrition, sustainable agriculture, and food system innovation.
- ★ The honour acknowledges his efforts in combining culinary expertise with nutrition advocacy and agricultural sourcing to promote healthier and more sustainable food systems.
- ★ As highlighted by WFPF, Kapoor has helped deliver over 2.5 million nutrient-rich meals to schoolchildren and promoted the cultivation and use of bio-fortified crops such as iron-rich pearl millet and zinc-rich wheat.
- ★ He was recognised for leading impactful initiatives like 'Nutri Pathshala', which links schools, farmers, and nutrition programmes to strengthen India's nutrition and agri-ecosystem.

South Korea's Highest Civilian Honour – The Grand Order of Mugunghwa

- ★ Former U.S. President Donald Trump was conferred with South Korea's highest national honour, the Grand Order of Mugunghwa, during his official visit to Seoul.
- ★ The ceremony took place ahead of the upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Summit, marking an important moment in Asia-Pacific diplomacy.
- ★ The Grand Order of Mugunghwa is the highest civilian award of South Korea, usually conferred on heads of state and royalty for their significant contributions to the nation's development and global relations.
- ★ Trump became the first U.S. President to receive this distinction, with the South Korean Government recognising his role as a "peacemaker", especially for his diplomatic engagements with North Korea during his presidency.
- ★ Along with the honour, Trump was presented with a replica of the Cheonmachong crown, a golden artefact from the Silla Kingdom, symbolising unity, stability, and peace.
- ★ Trump's earlier interactions with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un included historic summits, the first-ever between a sitting U.S. President and a North Korean leader, which helped reduce regional tensions despite talks later stalling.

- ★ During his 2025 visit, Trump reiterated his willingness to resume dialogue with Pyongyang, though there has been no official response from North Korea.
- ★ The recognition also reflects South Korea's intent to strengthen diplomatic ties with the United States while honouring contributions toward peace and regional stability.

Karnataka's Rajyotsava Award 2025

- ★ Renowned archaeologist Professor Ravindra Korisettar from Dharwad, Karnataka, has been honoured with the Rajyotsava Award 2025, one of the highest civilian honours of the state, for his outstanding contributions to archaeology, research, and education.
- ★ He currently serves as a University Grants Commission (UGC) Emeritus Fellow in the Department of History and Archaeology at Karnatak University, Dharwad, with over four decades of academic and research experience.
- ★ His scholarly work has been featured in top international journals such as Science (2007) and the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (United States), highlighting his global academic impact.
- ★ Born in 1951, Prof. Korisettar pursued Archaeology and Quaternary Studies at Poona University and received advanced training from the International Union for Quaternary Research (INQUA) in Beijing, China.

Sahitya Akademi Releases Hindi Translation of Lithuanian Novel "The Last Day" as "Antim Din"

- ★ Sahitya Akademi, under the Ministry of Culture, released the Hindi translation of the acclaimed Lithuanian novel "The Last Day", titled "Antim Din", at Rabindra Bhawan, New Delhi, in collaboration with the Embassy of Lithuania.
- ★ The 250-page novel, originally written by Lithuanian-Ukrainian author Jaroslavas Melnikas, has been translated into Hindi by Dr. Poonam Tiwari to make the work accessible to Indian readers.
- ★ The release marks a major milestone in Indo-Lithuanian cultural and literary relations, strengthening mutual understanding through global literature.
- ★ Jaroslavas Melnikas, known for his existential and philosophical writings, explores themes of human identity, change, and cultural transformation in the novel, prompting deep reflection on life and society.
- ★ This Hindi translation represents the first-ever translation of a Lithuanian fiction work into Hindi, marking a significant achievement for both nations in cross-cultural literary collaboration.
- ★ The launch event was attended by literary figures, diplomats, and scholars. Sahitya Akademi President Madhav Kaushik described it as a historic occasion for Hindi literature, emphasizing the Akademi's goal to bring world literature closer to Indian readers by overcoming linguistic barriers.
- ★ The event underscored the growing cultural partnership between India and Lithuania, highlighting how literature serves as a bridge between nations and fosters creative and intellectual exchange.

- ★ Through this initiative, the Sahitya Akademi continues to promote global literary harmony, encouraging translations of international works into Indian languages to inspire readers to explore diverse cultures, perspectives, and shared human experiences.

Honorary Doctor of Laws by Karnataka State Law University (KSLU)

- ★ S. Abdul Nazeer, Governor of Andhra Pradesh, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws (LL.D.) by the Karnataka State Law University (KSLU) during its 7th convocation ceremony held at the Farmers' Knowledge Centre, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad.
- ★ The event was presided over by Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, Chancellor of KSLU, who presented the degree and praised Nazeer's outstanding contributions to law, justice, and governance.
- ★ H.K. Patil, Karnataka's Minister for Law, Justice, Parliamentary Affairs and Legislation and Pro-Chancellor of KSLU, was also present, along with several legal, academic, and political dignitaries.
- ★ In his acceptance speech, Governor Nazeer expressed gratitude to KSLU and reaffirmed his commitment to constitutional values, judicial ethics, and legal education.
- ★ The Doctor of Laws (LL.D.) is one of the highest academic honours conferred by a law university, awarded to individuals with exceptional contributions to the judiciary and public governance.
- ★ This recognition by KSLU celebrates judicial excellence and statesmanship, strengthens the link between academia and public leadership, and serves as an inspiration for future legal professionals.

World Leader for Peace and Security Award 2025

- ★ Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, founder of the Art of Living Foundation, has been awarded the World Leader for Peace and Security Award 2025 by the Boston Global Forum (BGF) and the AI World Society (AIWS).
- ★ The honour places him among global leaders such as French President Emmanuel Macron, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.
- ★ The award recognises Gurudev's transformative contributions to global peace, humanitarian leadership, and his integration of spirituality with governance, diplomacy, and social reform.
- ★ The award was presented on November 3, 2025, by Nguyen Anh Tuan, Co-founder and CEO of BGF, who hailed Gurudev as a "spiritual luminary" bridging Eastern wisdom with Western innovation.
- ★ The Art of Living Foundation, established in 1981, has become a leading global NGO focused on mental health, stress relief, and humanitarian service.
- ★ Through his foundation's work, Gurudev has turned peace into a lived reality, influencing both grassroots communities and global institutions.

Manohar Parrikar Yuva Scientist Award 2025

- ★ Dr. Sai Gautam Gopalakrishnan, Associate Professor of Materials Engineering at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, has been awarded the Manohar Parrikar Yuva Scientist Award 2025 for his outstanding contributions to computational materials science.

- ★ The Manohar Parrikar Yuva Scientist Award was instituted by the Government of Goa in honour of Manohar Parrikar, former Defence Minister of India and Chief Minister of Goa.
- ★ The award recognises young Indian scientists making exceptional contributions in science and technology, particularly in emerging and high-impact fields.
- ★ The honour carries a citation and a cash prize of ₹5 lakh, making it one of the highest-value national science and technology awards.
- ★ The award will be presented during the Manohar Parrikar Vigyan Mahotsav to be held in December 2025.
- ★ The selection process involved 50 applications from premier research institutions across India, evaluated by a committee chaired by eminent nuclear scientist Dr. Anil Kakodkar.
- ★ After rigorous evaluation, 10 candidates were shortlisted for final interviews based on research excellence, innovation potential, and practical impact on technology and industry.
- ★ Gopalakrishnan's research focuses on computational materials science, particularly on atomic-level simulations used to design advanced materials for applications in energy storage, transport, manufacturing, aerospace, electronics, and renewable energy.
- ★ His innovations include the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in materials design and the accelerated discovery of new alloys and compounds, contributing significantly to sustainable and industrial technologies.

2025 Booker Prize

- ★ Hungarian-British author David Szalay won the 2025 Booker Prize for his sixth novel 'Flesh' at a ceremony held at Old Billingsgate, London.
- ★ He received the £50,000 prize and the Booker Trophy from last year's winner Samantha Harvey.
- ★ The judges hailed 'Flesh' as "a hypnotically tense and compelling novel that becomes an astonishingly moving portrait of a man's life".
- ★ With this victory, Szalay became the first author of Hungarian heritage to win the Booker Prize.
- ★ The Booker Prize 2025 judging panel was chaired by Irish novelist Roddy Doyle.
- ★ David Szalay was born in Canada, raised in London (UK), and currently resides in Vienna, Austria.
- ★ His previous works include 'London and the South-East' (winner of the Betty Trask Award and Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize) and 'All That Man Is' (shortlisted for the 2016 Booker Prize and winner of the Gordon Burn Prize).
- ★ He was featured in Granta's "Best of Young British Novelists" (2013).
- ★ 'Flesh' follows István, a 15-year-old Hungarian boy whose unsettling relationship with an older, married neighbor shapes his life journey from military life to London's elite society.
- ★ The novel explores themes of desire, loneliness, identity, power, and moral decay, written in minimalist and precise prose reflecting psychological realism.

Palak Muchhal Enters Guinness and Limca Book of Records for Humanitarian Work

- ★ Playback singer Palak Muchhal, known for songs like “Kaun Tujhe” and “Meri Aashiqui”, has been honoured by the Guinness Book of World Records (2025) and the Limca Book of Records for her exceptional humanitarian work.
- ★ She has funded over 3,800 heart surgeries for underprivileged children across India.
- ★ Her journey began in childhood when a train journey inspired her to help children in need of medical aid, leading to the creation of the Palash Charitable Foundation.
- ★ The foundation utilizes her stage show earnings and personal donations to fund life-saving heart surgeries for economically disadvantaged children.
- ★ Achievements include:
 - Over 3,800 successful heart surgeries supported.
 - Guinness World Record (2025) and Limca Book of Records recognition.
 - National praise for combining celebrity influence with social responsibility.
- ★ Her unique model of charity ensures that 100% of her stage show income goes toward funding surgeries and humanitarian causes.
- ★ She has also contributed ₹10 lakh for various causes, supported families of Kargil martyrs and Gujarat earthquake victims, and raised awareness for pediatric heart care through music and events.

56th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) to Be Held in Goa

- ★ The 56th edition of IFFI will be held in Goa from 20–28 November 2025.
- ★ It continues as South Asia’s only FIAPF-accredited competitive film festival since 1952, featuring 240 films from 81 countries.
- ★ Japan is the Country of Focus, screening six contemporary Japanese films; Spain is the Partner Country; Australia is the Spotlight Country, introducing curated packages, cultural programmes, and institutional collaborations.
- ★ IFFI, established in 1952, started in Mumbai and later travelled to Madras (Chennai), Delhi, and Calcutta (Kolkata).
- ★ It embodies the ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and early editions showcased 40 feature films and 100 short films reinforcing themes of unity and peaceful coexistence.
- ★ IFFIESTA will debut from 21–24 November, featuring four days of music, dance, theatre, and cultural performances, blending classical and contemporary arts to create a multi-sensory festival experience.

Oscar Piastrri Wins Don Award 2025

- ★ Australian Formula One driver Oscar Piastrri has been honoured with the Don Award 2025, Australia’s highest sporting honour, presented by the Sport Australia Hall of Fame.
- ★ The announcement was made ahead of the Las Vegas Grand Prix, recognising his outstanding performances in the 2025 F1 season and his status as a national inspiration.

- ★ Piastri's breakthrough season includes Grand Prix victories in China, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Miami, Spain, Belgium, and the Netherlands, along with multiple podiums, pole positions, and consistent points finishes, establishing him as a strong contender for the 2025 F1 Drivers' Championship.
- ★ His performances place him among Australia's top motorsport names, reviving comparisons with Mark Webber and Daniel Ricciardo.
- ★ The Don Award, named after Sir Donald Bradman, honours athletes whose achievements and character inspired the nation in the past year.
- ★ Piastri described the recognition as "a deeply humbling honour", expressing pride in representing Australia on the global Formula One stage.
- ★ The award reflects Piastri's growing influence in international motorsport. With seven Grand Prix wins and a rising global fan base, he is inspiring the next generation of Australian motorsport talent.
- ★ Officials from the Sport Australia Hall of Fame praised his professionalism, humility, and consistent excellence, noting that his achievements embody both individual success and national pride.

Tom Cruise Receives Honorary Academy Award at 2025 Governors Awards

- ★ Tom Cruise, aged 63, was honoured with an honorary Academy Award at the 2025 Governors Awards held at the Ray Dolby Ballroom, Los Angeles.
- ★ This is Cruise's first-ever Oscar, recognising over four decades of contribution to acting, producing, and promoting the theatrical moviegoing experience.
- ★ He received a two-minute standing ovation, reflecting his global influence.
- ★ A career montage preceded the award, featuring iconic works such as Taps (1981), Born on the Fourth of July (1989), Jerry Maguire (1996), Magnolia (1999), Top Gun: Maverick (2022), and Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning (2025).
- ★ The award holds major significance as the Governors Awards are not televised, aligning with Cruise's long-held stance in favour of theatrical releases over streaming.
- ★ Cruise has been nominated four times previously, and this honour signals renewed Academy recognition as he continues exploring diverse roles.
- ★ The honour was presented by Director Alejandro González Iñárritu, who is collaborating with Cruise on a 2026 film in London.

Confederation of Indian Industry Quality Ratna Award 2025

- ★ Venu Srinivasan, Chairman Emeritus of TVS Motor Company, has been awarded the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Quality Ratna Award 2025 at the 33rd CII Excellence Summit held in Kolkata, attended by over 1,000 quality experts and industry leaders.
- ★ The award recognises his leadership in transforming Indian manufacturing quality standards to match global benchmarks, reinforcing his legacy as one of India's most influential industrial leaders.

- ★ The CII Excellence Summit 2025, organised by the CII Institute of Quality, focused on raising India's global manufacturing share from 3% to 25% and generating 100 million new jobs, aiming to position India among the top three global manufacturing hubs through quality leadership and innovation.
- ★ Venu Srinivasan's honour reflects the importance of visionary leadership in advancing India's manufacturing ambitions and strengthening national competitiveness.
- ★ Srinivasan pioneered Total Quality Management (TQM) practices at TVS Motor Company, making it one of the earliest Indian firms to adopt global-quality systems.
- ★ Under his leadership, TVS Motor became the first two-wheeler company outside Japan to win the Deming Prize in 2002, setting new quality standards for Indian industry.
- ★ His customer-centric leadership emphasised that designs must be driven by customer needs and that employee trust is essential for long-term organisational success.
- ★ His philosophy integrates value creation, employee engagement, and customer satisfaction.
- ★ Srinivasan highlighted at the summit that modern product design is guided by technology and social aspirations, stressing the need to understand customer needs deeply and serve them for a lifetime.
- ★ The CII Quality Ratna Award is one of India's highest recognitions in industrial excellence, honouring individuals who demonstrate sustained leadership in quality, operational excellence, and influence on national industrial culture and policy.

France's Chevalier Award

- ★ Veteran Indian Art Director Thota Tharani has been honoured with the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters), a prestigious French civilian award.
- ★ The award was conferred at Alliance Française, Chennai, by the French Ambassador to India, coinciding with the inauguration of his art exhibition.
- ★ This recognition places him among distinguished Indian cultural icons such as Kamal Haasan, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Sivaji Ganesan, and Kalki Koechlin, who previously received the French honour.
- ★ Thota Tharani's career spans over four decades, during which he transformed art direction and production design in Indian cinema by creating visually rich, culturally rooted, and historically accurate environments.
- ★ His notable films include Nayakan, Thalapathi, Indian, Sagara Sangamam, Sivaji, Dasavatham, Ponniyin Selvan I & II, Kuberaa, and Hari Hara Veera Mallu, reflecting his impact across Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi cinema.
- ★ He studied at the Government Fine Arts College, Chennai, and the Royal College of Art, London, and began his film journey with Soddokadidhi Soddokadidhi (1978) in Telugu, followed by his Tamil debut Raja Paarvai (1981).
- ★ The Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres is among France's highest civilian honours, awarded to individuals who significantly contribute to arts and literature globally.
- ★ Thota Tharani was selected for his contribution to cinema and visual arts, especially his work in cultural preservation, architectural accuracy, and artistic innovation, which has enriched visual storytelling in Indian cinema.

Fátima Bosch of Mexico Wins Miss Universe 2025

- ★ The 74th Miss Universe pageant was held in Thailand, showcasing global culture and talent, where Fátima Bosch of Mexico won the Miss Universe 2025
- ★ She was crowned by Victoria Kjær Theilvig of Denmark, the outgoing Miss Universe 2024.
- ★ Bosch stood out for her advocacy work, strong communication, and confident performances across all rounds.
- ★ Praveenar Singh from Thailand, recognized for her powerful Q and A performance, cultural advocacy, and strong stage presence.
- ★ India's Manika Vishwakarma reached the Top 12, gaining global attention for her advocacies focused on inclusive education, mental wellness, and promotion of artistic expression.
- ★ The judging panel included eight judges, notably Saina Nehwal from India, marking her international pageantry judging debut.
- ★ Since 1952, the Miss Universe Organisation has promoted values of leadership, education, diversity, social impact, and personal development.
- ★ The next edition, Miss Universe 2026, will be hosted by Puerto Rico, marking the prestigious 75th (silver jubilee) edition of the pageant.

Velamala Simmanna Selected for Lok Nayak Foundation Literary Award 2025

- ★ Velamala Simmanna, noted Telugu writer and Former Head of the Department of Telugu, Andhra University, has been selected for the Lok Nayak Foundation (LNF) Literary Award 2025.
- ★ He will receive a cash prize of ₹2 lakh at the award ceremony scheduled on January 18, 2026, in Visakhapatnam.
- ★ The announcement was made by LNF Chairman Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad.
- ★ The ceremony is held annually on January 18, marking the death anniversaries of Harivansh Rai Bachchan and Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao (N.T. Rama Rao).
- ★ LNF also announced Life-Time Achievement Awards (₹1 lakh each) for:
 - Nori Dattatreyaudu – oncologist and Health Advisor to the Government of Andhra Pradesh.
 - Thotakura Prasad – promoter of Telugu culture in Dallas.
 - Vemulapalli Raghavendra Choudhary – doctor serving in Detroit for over 40 years.
 - Aarien Uday Areti – Deputy Mayor, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.
- ★ Distinguished guests at the event include Deputy Speaker Raghu Ramakrishna Raju, Justice B. Devanand, actor Tanikella Bharani, and MLA Ganta Srinivasa Rao.
- ★ Velamala Simmanna, with 100+ published works, has made significant contributions to literary criticism, language studies, cultural essays, and creative writing.
- ★ His work has strengthened the role of Telugu literature in shaping cultural identity and supporting literary growth across communities, including the diaspora.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

President of Seychelles

- ★ Dr. Patrick Herminie, leader of the United Seychelles (US) Party, was sworn in as the 6th President of the Republic of Seychelles after winning the presidential election held on October 12, 2025.
- ★ The swearing-in ceremony took place at Unity Stadium in Victoria, the capital of Seychelles.
- ★ He succeeded President Wavel Ramkalawan of the Linyon Demokratik Seselwa (LDS) Party.
- ★ In the October 12, 2025 Presidential Election, Herminie secured 52.7% of the valid votes, defeating Wavel Ramkalawan, who received 47.3% votes.
- ★ His victory marks the return of the US Party to power after a five-year break since losing the 2020 elections.
- ★ Patrick Herminie has held several key government positions, including Director General (DG) of Disease Prevention and Control (1996), DG of Primary Health Care (1998), and Secretary of State for Drug Abuse Prevention and Rehabilitation (2016–2020).
- ★ He was the President of the US Party (1998–2010) and was re-elected in 2021 to lead it into the 2025 elections.
- ★ He received the Chevening Award (1993) from the United Kingdom (UK) Government for his contribution to medicine.

Chief Justice of India

- ★ President Droupadi Murmu appointed Justice Surya Kant as the 53rd Chief Justice of India (CJI), effective 24 November 2025, following the recommendation of outgoing CJI Justice BR Gavai, whose tenure ends on 23 November 2025.
- ★ The appointment was officially announced by Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, who extended congratulations via social media.
- ★ Justice Surya Kant is a sitting judge of the Supreme Court of India, recognised for his work in constitutional law, human rights, and social justice.
- ★ He previously served as the Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court and as a judge at the Punjab and Haryana High Court.
- ★ The appointment follows the collegium convention, under which the senior-most judge is recommended as the next Chief Justice of India.

Financial Advisor of Defence Services

- ★ Shri Raj Kumar Arora, a 1990-batch Officer of the Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS), assumed charge as Financial Advisor (Defence Services) [FADS] on November 1, 2025.
- ★ He has extensive experience in defence acquisition, financial policy, accounting, audit, budgeting, and personnel management.
- ★ Before this appointment, he served as the Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA).

- ★ He has also held key posts including Additional Secretary, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC); Finance Manager (Air) in the Acquisition Wing, Ministry of Defence; and Director, Ministry of Finance.
- ★ Shri Arora also served as Member (Finance) in the erstwhile Ordnance Factory Board and as Integrated Financial Advisor in various Commands and field offices of the Defence Accounts Department.

Dr. Deepak Mittal Assumes Charge as India's Ambassador-Designate to the United Arab Emirates

- ★ Dr. Deepak Mittal has assumed charge as Ambassador-Designate of India to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on October 30, 2025.
- ★ He is a 1998-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Officer with over two decades of diplomatic experience across key global postings.
- ★ Mittal has served in Indian missions in Egypt, Israel, and Bangladesh, and was also the Consul General of India in Ho Chi Minh City.
- ★ He previously served as India's Ambassador to Qatar, where he played a key role in strengthening bilateral relations.
- ★ At the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), he has held important positions, including head of the Consular Affairs Division and desk in charge of India's relations with Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran.
- ★ Mittal has also served in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) twice — first as Director and later as Additional Secretary, contributing to India's foreign policy and strategic affairs.

Vishvajit Sahay Assumes Charge as Controller General of Defence Accounts

- ★ Shri Vishvajit Sahay, a 1990-batch Officer of the Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS), assumed charge as the Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) on November 01, 2025.
- ★ He brings over three decades of experience in defence finance and public administration.
- ★ He has served as Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser in the Department of Science and Technology.
- ★ He also held the position of Joint Secretary in the Department of Heavy Industry.
- ★ He worked as Finance Manager (Acquisition Wing) in the Ministry of Defence.
- ★ Within the Defence Accounts Department, he has served as Principal Controller of Defence Accounts (Pensions), Prayagraj, Joint CGDA, and Special CGDA.
- ★ He has represented India at international training forums including Cambridge University, UK, and the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies, Germany.

Chairman of IUCN Species Survival Commission

- ★ Vivek Menon, founder of the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), has been elected as the new Chair of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

- ★ He is the first Asian ever to hold this prestigious global conservation position.
- ★ The announcement was made during the IUCN World Congress held in Abu Dhabi, UAE.
- ★ The Species Survival Commission (SSC) is one of IUCN's six expert commissions, responsible for advising on biodiversity and species conservation.
- ★ The SSC and its specialist groups maintain the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the world's most authoritative inventory on the extinction risk of species.

Director General of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

- ★ Shri Sanjay Garg, a 1994-batch IAS Officer from the Kerala cadre, has assumed charge as Director General (DG) of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), effective 1 November 2025.
- ★ He brings over three decades of administrative experience in strategic planning, policy formulation, and implementation across sectors such as agriculture, defence industry, industrial promotion, finance, and social welfare.
- ★ Prior to joining BIS, Shri Garg served as Additional Secretary, DARE, and Secretary, ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research), where he led the digital transformation in research management and expanded the Kisan Sarathi portal, connecting farmers directly with agricultural scientists.
- ★ He also has experience in managing World Bank projects, promoting and deregulating the defence industry sector, and advancing the leather industry.
- ★ As DG of BIS, Shri Garg will also serve as the President of India's National Committee in the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), strengthening India's role in global standardization efforts.

HDFC Bank Approves Reappointment of Kaizad Bharucha as Deputy Managing Director for Three Years

- ★ HDFC Bank's Board has approved the re-appointment of Kaizad Bharucha as the Deputy Managing Director (DMD) for a three-year term, subject to approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the bank's shareholders.
- ★ The re-appointment was based on the recommendation of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee, as stated in the bank's exchange filing.
- ★ Kaizad Bharucha joined HDFC Bank in October 1995, became a Board Member in 2014, and is the longest-serving Executive Board Member of the bank.
- ★ He was first appointed as Deputy MD in April 2023, after nearly three decades of service with the bank.
- ★ Before joining HDFC Bank, Bharucha worked with SBI Commercial and International Bank.

40th Chief of Materiel, Indian Navy

- ★ Vice Admiral B Sivakumar, AVSM, VSM has assumed charge as the 40th Chief of Materiel of the Indian Navy on 01 November 2025.

- ★ He succeeds Vice Admiral Kiran Deshmukh, AVSM, VSM, who completed over 39 years of service and played a key role in ensuring the technical readiness of Indian Naval platforms, including during Operation Sindoor.
- ★ He is an alumnus of the 70th Course, NDA, and was commissioned as an Electrical Officer on 01 July 1987.
- ★ During his 38 years of service, he has held key appointments in Naval Headquarters, HQ ATVP, Naval Dockyards, and Command Headquarters.
- ★ He has served onboard frontline warships – INS Ranjit, INS Kirpan, and INS Akshay, and commanded INS Valsura, the Navy's premier Electrical Training Base.
- ★ Vice Admiral Sivakumar has led both key Electrical Directorates – Weapons Equipment and Electrical Engineering – at Naval Headquarters, a rare distinction.
- ★ As a Flag Officer, he has served as Additional Director General (Tech), Project Seabird, Chief Staff Officer (Tech) at HQWNC, and Admiral Superintendent of Naval Dockyard, Mumbai.

Managing Director and CEO of SBICAP Securities

- ★ SBICAP Securities Limited. has appointed Bhuvaneshwari A. as its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), effective November 1, 2025, as announced by the State Bank of India (SBI) group company.
- ★ She brings over 30 years of banking experience, having joined SBI as a Probationary Officer in 1994.
- ★ Before this role, she served as Chief General Manager of SBI's Thiruvananthapuram Circle, managing operations across 1,200+ branches and driving growth in retail credit, deposits, and market share.
- ★ In her new role, she aims to transform SBICAP Securities into a digitally driven, customer-focused investment services firm, with emphasis on strengthening technology platforms, expanding product offerings, and improving research accessibility for investors.
- ★ SBICAP Securities Limited is a leading full-service stockbroker in India, offering investment solutions such as equity trading, derivatives, and mutual funds.

IUCN Regional Council Representative for West and South Asia

- ★ Roshani Adhikari Pathak, former Chairperson of the Nepal Forum of Environment Journalists (NEFEJ), has been elected as the Regional Council Member for West and South Asia of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for the 2026–2029 term.
- ★ The IUCN Regional Councillors from South and East Asia include Lima Rosalind (India), Atsuhiko Yoshinaka (Japan), Yinfeng Gua (China), and Amran Hamzah (Malaysia).
- ★ The elections were conducted during the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025 held in Abu Dhabi from October 9 to 15.
- ★ Rajan Khalifa Al Mubarak of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was re-elected as IUCN President for the 2026–2029 term.
- ★ The IUCN World Conservation Congress serves as a global platform to elect leaders and representatives responsible for guiding international conservation efforts.

Sergio Gor Sworn In as U.S. Ambassador to India

- ★ Sergio Gor was officially sworn in as the United States Ambassador to India on November 11, 2025, marking a new chapter in Indo-US strategic relations.
- ★ The swearing-in ceremony took place at the Oval Office, White House.
- ★ Sergio Gor (38 years old) previously served as Director of Presidential Personnel in the Trump administration, where he handled key White House staffing and executive co-ordination functions.
- ★ He was nominated in August 2025 and confirmed by the US Senate in October 2025, reflecting bipartisan support for his appointment.
- ★ Ambassador Gor's priorities include strengthening Indo-Pacific regional stability, countering China's influence, and enhancing defence and intelligence co-operation.
- ★ Gor will soon assume charge in New Delhi, where he will engage with Indian Government officials, industry leaders, and civil society to strengthen defence, digital, energy, and space collaboration.

UN Tourism's First Female Secretary-General

- ★ Shaikha Nasser Al Nowais has been appointed as the first-ever woman to lead UN Tourism, marking a historic milestone in the organisation's 50-year history since its founding in 1975.
- ★ Her appointment was confirmed during the 123rd UN Tourism Executive Council session in Segovia, Spain, and will be formally ratified by the UN General Assembly.
- ★ She will assume office in January 2026 for a four-year term (2026–2029) as the Secretary-General of UN Tourism, a United Nations specialised agency promoting responsible, sustainable, and accessible tourism.
- ★ She brings over 16 years of experience in tourism and business, having served as Corporate Vice President at Rotana Hotels, Chair of the Abu Dhabi Chamber's Tourism Working Group, and Board Member of the Abu Dhabi Businesswomen Council.
- ★ Her vision for UN Tourism focuses on five key pillars — Responsible Tourism, Digital Innovation, Sustainable Financing, Youth & Women Empowerment, and Transparent Governance.

NITI Aayog's Tax Policy Chair Pushpinder S. Puniha Joins Blue Ocean Corporation's Advisory Board

- ★ Pushpinder S. Puniha, Chairperson of the Consultative Group on Tax Policy at NITI Aayog, joined the Advisory Board of UK-based Blue Ocean Corporation, a global leader in supply chain consulting and training.
- ★ The appointment supports Blue Ocean's plan to expand in India and align with national priorities in tax reforms, supply chain modernization, and skill development.
- ★ He is a public-policy expert with 30+ years of experience in fiscal management, governance, and tax policy.
- ★ He co-edited the book "Reimagining Institutions: Collaborative Pathways to Social Development in India", focusing on innovative governance and institutional reform.

- ★ His key roles include National Head of the Faceless Assessment Scheme, Head of the Income Tax Investigation Vertical for Mumbai and North-West India, and Fellow at the Bharti Institute of Public Policy, ISB Hyderabad.

UNICEF Appoints Keerthy Suresh as Celebrity Advocate for Child Rights and Gender Equality

- ★ The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) India appointed National Award-winning actress Keerthy Suresh as its Celebrity Advocate to promote awareness on children's rights, mental health, education, and gender equality.
- ★ As Celebrity Advocate, Keerthy Suresh will use her influence to create awareness on the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents, gender equality, empowerment of girls, quality and inclusive education, and child protection and rights.
- ★ Keerthy Suresh began her acting career as a child artist in the Malayalam film Geetanjali (2013).
- ★ She later appeared as a lead actress in Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam.
- ★ In 2018, she received the National Film Award for the Telugu biopic "Mahanati", based on the life of legendary actress Savitri.

MD and CEO of Karnataka Bank

- ★ Karnataka Bank appointed Raghavendra Srinivas Bhat as Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for one year starting 16 November 2025, following RBI approval on 14 November 2025.
- ★ Prior to this, Bhat served as Additional Director (MD & CEO) for three months from 16 July 2025, after the sudden resignations of the previous top executives.
- ★ The RBI granted a one-month extension for his tenure starting 16 October 2025 before approving the full one-year term.
- ★ The leadership appointments followed the resignations of former MD and CEO Srikrishan Hari Hara Sarma and former ED Sekhar Rao in June 2025, which created leadership gaps in the bank.

Justice Surya Kant Takes Charge as India's 53rd Chief Justice

- ★ Justice Surya Kant officially assumed office as the 53rd Chief Justice of India (CJI) on November 24, 2025, after being administered the oath by President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- ★ Justice Surya Kant took the oath in Hindi, making it a notable ceremonial highlight.
- ★ His tenure as CJI will last until February 9, 2027, giving him nearly 15 months in office.
- ★ As CJI, his priorities include reducing case pendency, reviving Constitution Benches, promoting ADR and mediation, and enhancing technological and AI-based judicial systems.
- ★ He became the youngest Advocate General of Haryana in 2000, showing early recognition in his career.
- ★ He served as the Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court in 2018, before elevation to the Supreme Court on May 24, 2019.

- ★ As a Supreme Court Judge, Justice Kant was part of landmark rulings, including abrogation of Article 370, Pegasus spyware case, and presidential reference on powers of Governors and President over state bills.
- ★ Justice Kant directed disclosure of 65 lakh excluded voters in Bihar, stressing transparency in electoral processes.

Part-Time Chairperson of Jana Small Finance Bank

- ★ Chitra Talwar was appointed as the Part-Time Chairperson of Jana Small Finance Bank (Jana SFB), effective from 8 February 2026.
- ★ She will replace R. Ramaseshan, who completed his maximum tenure of eight years on 7 February 2026.
- ★ Chitra Talwar has over 30 years of experience in leading consumer companies like Britannia and PepsiCo.
- ★ She has strong expertise in sales, marketing, strategy, and general management, with experience in leading global teams for high-impact business practices.
- ★ She has been associated with Jana SFB as an Independent Director since January 2020.

President of Tanzania

- ★ Samia Suluhu Hassan was sworn in for her second term as President of Tanzania at a ceremony in Dodoma, Tanzania.
- ★ She is Tanzania's 6th President and the first woman to hold the nation's top office.
- ★ The Tanzanian General Election was held on 29 October 2025 to elect the President, National Assembly, and Local Councils.
- ★ Samia Suluhu Hassan, representing the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party, won with 97.66% votes, securing a landslide victory.
- ★ Major opposition parties, including CHADEMA, were barred from contesting, raising concerns about electoral fairness.
- ★ She began her political career after development sector work and rose within CCM, gaining recognition for leadership and governance.
- ★ In 2015, she became Tanzania's first female Vice President under President John Magufuli.

Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority

- ★ Justice Vikram Nath, senior-most judge of the Supreme Court, has been nominated as the Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).
- ★ He succeeds Justice Surya Kant, who has been sworn in as the 53rd Chief Justice of India.
- ★ NALSA, constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, provides free legal services to weaker sections of society.
- ★ As per the Act, the CJI is the Patron-in-Chief of NALSA, and the President appoints a Supreme Court judge (serving or retired) as Executive Chairman.

- ★ The nomination was made by President Droupadi Murmu under the provisions of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.
- ★ Justice Vikram Nath has been serving on the Supreme Court Bench since 2021 and formerly served as Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court.
- ★ He will guide NALSA's mission of providing free and competent legal aid nationwide.
- ★ Justice J.K. Maheshwari has been nominated as Chairman of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee (SCLSC) by CJI Surya Kant.
- ★ Justice Maheshwari has been a Supreme Court judge since 2021, and previously served as Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court.
- ★ SCLSC extends legal aid to underprivileged litigants in the Supreme Court, ensuring access to justice under the Legal Services Authorities Act.

Chairman of National Company Law Appellate Tribunal

- ★ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) headed by Prime Minister (PM(Narendra Modi approved the re-appointment of Justice Ashok Bhushan as Chairman of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT).
- ★ As per the order of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (MoPP&P), he will continue in office till 4 July 2026, when he attains the age of 70 years.
- ★ Justice Ashok Bhushan became a permanent Judge of the Allahabad High Court in April 2001, served as Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court in 2015, and was elevated to the Supreme Court of India in May 2016, serving till July 2021.
- ★ He was appointed Chairman of the Ravi Beas River Tribunal in July 2020.
- ★ He was initially appointed NCLAT Chairperson on 8 November 2021, succeeding Justice Bansi Lal Bhat, who was serving in an acting capacity.
- ★ The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) is a tribunal formed by the Central Government of India.

SPORTS

International Master in Chess

- ★ In a remarkable achievement for Punjab, Namitbir Singh Walia from Jalandhar has earned the prestigious title of International Master (IM) in chess, becoming Punjab's second-ever IM after Dushyant Sharma.
- ★ He secured his final IM norm at the 3rd Annemasse International Masters Tournament in France, where he finished fourth overall, marking a proud milestone for Punjab's chess community.
- ★ Namitbir's training began under Kanwarjit Singh, his first coach, before advancing to work with international mentors such as Alexander (Ukraine) and Swayam Mishra (Assam).

- ★ His major achievements include:
 - Winner of the 65th Odisha Senior State FIDE Rating Open Chess Championship 2025
 - Attained a peak FIDE classical rating of approximately 2408
 - Consistent participation in national and international chess tournaments
- ★ Punjab's chess legacy continues to grow, with both Namitbir Singh Walia and Dushyant Sharma from Jalandhar establishing the city as a hub of emerging chess talent in the state.

India's 90th Chess Grandmaster

- ★ 16-year-old Ilamparthi AR from Chennai, Tamil Nadu, has become India's 90th Grandmaster (GM) after securing his final GM norm at the Bijeljina Open held in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- ★ Born in 2009, Ilamparthi is a student of Velammal School, an institution renowned for nurturing top chess talents such as D. Gukesh and R. Praggnanandhaa.
- ★ He trains under Grandmaster Shyam Sundar M, who has played a key role in shaping his career.
 - First GM norm at the Ha Noi Tournament (Vietnam, December 2023).
 - Second GM norm at the Singapore International Open (2024).
 - Crossed 2500 Elo rating during the Rilton Cup (2024–25).
 - Final GM norm at the Bijeljina Open (Bosnia), completing the requirements for the Grandmaster title, the highest title in chess.
- ★ His success showcases Tamil Nadu's strong chess ecosystem, supported by dedicated schools, academies, and mentorship programs that continue to produce world-class players.
- ★ In 2022, Dutch Grandmaster Anish Giri donated his Death Match prize money to support Ilamparthi's training, recognising his early potential and talent.
- ★ With Ilamparthi's achievement, Tamil Nadu reaffirms its position as the chess powerhouse of India, having produced multiple GMs and international champions who have elevated India's status in the global chess arena.

Jannik Sinner Reclaims ATP World No. 1 After Paris Masters 2025 Triumph

- ★ Italy's Jannik Sinner reclaimed the ATP World No. 1 ranking after defeating Felix Auger-Aliassime (Canada) in the 2025 Paris Masters final on November 2, 2025, with a scoreline of 6-4, 7-6 (4).
- ★ The victory dethroned Carlos Alcaraz, marking Sinner's return to the top of men's tennis and highlighting his dominance in the ongoing indoor season.
- ★ The Paris Masters, an ATP 1000 event, was Sinner's first title at the tournament and extended his indoor winning streak to 26 matches.
- ★ The win came just a week after his Vienna Open triumph, showcasing remarkable consistency ahead of the ATP Finals.
- ★ The win at Paris Masters capped off a breakthrough year for Sinner, reinforcing his position among the sport's elite.
- ★ His consistency and adaptability across tournaments have made him a serious contender for the ATP Finals and the 2026 season.

- ★ Sinner's ascent marks a new era in men's tennis, following the dominance of legends like Djokovic, Nadal, Federer, and the recent reign of Alcaraz.

FIFA Announces Launch of FIFA Peace Prize – “Football Unites the World”

- ★ FIFA President Gianni Infantino has announced the launch of the FIFA Peace Prize, which will be awarded for the first time at the 2026 FIFA World Cup draw in Washington DC on 5 December 2025.
- ★ Officially titled the “FIFA Peace Prize – Football Unites the World”, this annual award will honour individuals who have made extraordinary efforts to promote peace and unity through football.
- ★ The initiative aligns with FIFA's broader campaign to project football as a medium of social good, even amid ongoing scrutiny over its political associations.
- ★ The announcement follows global discussions on peace recognition, coming shortly after the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Maria Corina Machado.
- ★ The inaugural FIFA Peace Prize will be presented at an event expected to be attended by former U.S. President Donald Trump, strengthening speculation about the Trump-Infantino alliance.
- ★ The official mission of the FIFA Peace Prize is to “carry a message of peace on behalf of all football-loving people”.

Raahul VS Becomes India's 91st Grandmaster

- ★ Raahul VS has officially become India's 91st Grandmaster (GM) after clinching the title at the 6th ASEAN Individual Championship 2025.
- ★ He secured the final GM norm with a round to spare, reflecting his dominance and composure in international competition.
- ★ Raahul had earned his International Master (IM) title in November 2021, after achieving five IM norms and crossing the 2400 live rating mark.
- ★ His commanding performance at the ASEAN event proved his readiness for the highest honour in chess.
- ★ This achievement adds to India's rapidly growing list of Grandmasters, reinforcing the country's strong presence in world chess.
- ★ The Grandmaster (GM) title, awarded by FIDE (International Chess Federation), is the highest title in chess, ranked above International Master (IM), FIDE Master (FM), and Candidate Master (CM).
- ★ To achieve the GM title, a player must secure three GM norms in international tournaments and cross the 2500 Elo rating at least once in their career.
- ★ The title signifies the pinnacle of individual chess achievement, representing exceptional skill, tactical mastery, and mental endurance.

International Tennis Hall of Fame – Class of 2026

- ★ Roger Federer, one of the most iconic tennis players in history, has been elected to the International Tennis Hall of Fame (Class of 2026).

- ★ The announcement was made on 19 November 2025, and the formal induction will take place in Newport, Rhode Island, from August 27–29, 2026.
- ★ Federer's legendary career includes: 20 Grand Slam singles titles (8 Wimbledon, 6 Australian Open, 5 US Open, 1 French Open), 103 ATP Tour titles (2nd most in Open Era), 310 weeks as World No. 1, including 237 consecutive weeks and Davis Cup Winner – 2014 and Retired in 2022 after his final match at the Laver Cup.
- ★ Olympic achievement includes Gold medal in doubles (2008 Beijing Olympics) and Silver medal in singles (2012 London Olympics).
- ★ Federer was elected in his first year of eligibility, reflecting his global influence and respect within the tennis community.
- ★ The International Tennis Hall of Fame honours individuals who have made a lasting impact on the sport.
- ★ Federer reacted by calling the honour “deeply humbling”, receiving the news while at Swiss Tennis, where his journey began.
- ★ The Class of 2026 also includes Mary Carillo (Contributor Category), honoured for her long-standing contributions as a tennis broadcaster and former player.

Max Verstappen Wins 2025 Las Vegas Grand Prix

- ★ Max Verstappen clinched the 2025 Las Vegas Grand Prix, strengthening his title challenge with only 2 races left in the season.
- ★ Starting P2, he overtook Lando Norris after the McLaren driver made an early mistake at Turn 1, allowing Verstappen to take the lead and dominate the race.
- ★ The Red Bull driver finished nearly 20 seconds ahead of Norris, securing his 8th consecutive podium and second Las Vegas GP win (after 2023).
- ★ **Podium:**
 - 1st – Max Verstappen (Red Bull Racing)
 - 2nd – Lando Norris (McLaren)
 - 3rd – George Russell (Mercedes)
- ★ Oscar Piastri finished 4th, gaining a position after Kimi Antonelli received a penalty that pushed him from P4 to P5.
- ★ Lewis Hamilton delivered a strong recovery drive, climbing from P19 to P10, earning 1 point for Ferrari.

5th Khelo India University Games Inaugurated in Jaipur, Rajasthan

- ★ The 5th Khelo India University Games (KIUG) were inaugurated at Sawai Mansingh Stadium, Jaipur, showcasing a grand blend of India's youth sporting talent and Rajasthan's cultural heritage.
- ★ The ceremony was led by Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma and Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya, who lit the ceremonial lamp to formally commence the Games.

- ★ The event also featured a drone show and cultural performances highlighting the traditions of Rajasthan.
- ★ The Games will be held from 24 November to 5 December 2025, with Rajasthan hosting the event across Jaipur, Ajmer, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Kota, and Bharatpur. Around 7,000 participants, including nearly 5,000 athletes from more than 230 universities, are competing in 23 sporting disciplines, while Kho-Kho is being showcased as a demonstration sport.
- ★ Jaipur will function as the main hub, hosting major events such as athletics, shooting, archery, badminton, and hockey, while other cities will conduct additional competitions, turning the entire state into a vibrant sporting arena.
- ★ Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya highlighted that the Khelo India initiative is central to India's long-term vision of emerging as a global sports powerhouse, noting that athletes discovered through earlier editions have gone on to represent India at prestigious international events.
- ★ Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma encouraged young athletes to maintain consistency and dedication, emphasising their ability to bring honour to the nation through sports.
- ★ Launched in 2020, the Khelo India University Games aim to strengthen university-level sports infrastructure and expand participation.
- ★ The 2025 edition marks Rajasthan's first time hosting the Games, symbolising a major step in decentralising sports opportunities and broadening access to high-quality competitive platforms across India.

Italy wins its 4th Davis Cup Title

- ★ Italy clinched its fourth Davis Cup title by defeating Spain 2–0 in the final, marking a historic hat-trick of championships with consecutive wins in 2023, 2024, and 2025.
- ★ This makes Italy only the second nation after the United States to secure three consecutive Davis Cup titles, solidifying its status as a major force in world tennis.
- ★ In the final, Matteo Berrettini dominated the opening singles match with a 6-3, 6-4 win over Pablo Carreno Busta, giving Italy an early lead.
- ★ Flavio Cobolli completed the triumph by staging a remarkable comeback to defeat Jaume Munar 1-6, 7-6(5), 7-5, sealing the tie and making the doubles match unnecessary.
- ★ With this victory, Italy now holds four Davis Cup titles (1976, 2023, 2024, 2025), reflecting the team's depth, balance, and consistent dominance throughout the tournament.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

Sahitya Akademi Releases Hindi Translation of Lithuanian Novel “The Last Day” as “Antim Din”

- ★ Sahitya Akademi, under the Ministry of Culture, released the Hindi translation of the internationally acclaimed Lithuanian novel “The Last Day”, titled “Antim Din”, at Rabindra Bhawan, New Delhi, in collaboration with the Embassy of Lithuania.

- ★ The 250-page novel, originally written by Lithuanian-Ukrainian author Jaroslavas Melnikas, has been translated into Hindi by Dr. Poonam Tiwari to make it accessible to a wider Indian readership.
- ★ The novel delves into existential and philosophical themes such as human identity, change, and cultural transformation, encouraging deep reflection on society and life.
- ★ This marks the first-ever translation of a Lithuanian fiction work into Hindi, signifying a major step in literary and cultural co-operation between India and Lithuania.
- ★ Sahitya Akademi President Madhav Kaushik termed the event a historic milestone for Hindi literature and highlighted the Akademi's mission to bridge linguistic and cultural boundaries by bringing global literature to Indian readers.
- ★ The book launch event was attended by literary figures, diplomats, and scholars, underscoring the role of literature in fostering cross-cultural understanding.
- ★ The initiative promotes global literary harmony, demonstrating how literature acts as a bridge between nations, encouraging readers to appreciate diverse cultures and shared human experiences.
- ★ Through such translations, the Sahitya Akademi continues to promote world literature in Indian languages, strengthening India's cultural diplomacy and literary outreach.

IMPORTANT DAYS

National Unity Day

- ★ National Unity Day 2025 is observed on the 31st of October.
- ★ National Unity Day is celebrated on behalf of the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
- ★ On that day various events will be conducted across the country and military shows will be organised for the tribute to Sardar Vallabhai Patel.
- ★ The National Unity Day was first started in the year 2014 by our Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi to honour the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on 31st October 1875.
- ★ He made a huge contribution to bringing all the scattered states into one nation after independence. He was also the first deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister of India.
- ★ The credit for bringing this National Unity Day goes to our Honourable Prime Minister of India. National Unity Day is also called Rashtriya Ekta Diwas Day.
- ★ The same day the Statue of Unity was opened in 2018 by our Prime Minister in remembrance of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
- ★ It was the highest statue in the world. Shanghai Co-operation Organisation announced the Statue of Unity as the eighth World Wonder.

National Cancer Awareness Day 2025

- ★ National Cancer Awareness Day 2025 is observed on the 7th of November 2025.

- ★ National Cancer Awareness Day 2025 is celebrated on 7th November after the birth anniversary of Nobel Prize winner Scientist Marie Curie who discovered Polonium and radium and her remarkable service for cancer treatment.
- ★ The National Cancer Awareness Day celebration was first announced by Dr. Harsh Vardhan, the Indian Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare in September 2014.
- ★ A committee was formed in September 2014 and decided National Cancer Awareness Day will be celebrated on 7th November every year.
- ★ National Cancer Awareness Day is celebrated every year to create awareness about the early detection of cancer and prevention methods. 90 percent of the cancer is curable if it is detected earlier. So early detection is very important.
- ★ Harsha launched a state-level cancer control process that encourages early detection and research to find a cancer cure.
- ★ In 1975 National Cancer Control Programme was started to arrange treatment facilities for cancer.

Infant Protection Day 2025

- ★ Infant Protection Day 2025 is observed on the 7th of November 2025.
- ★ Infant Protection Day 2025 focuses mainly on reducing Infant Mortality rates and Child Mortality Rates.
- ★ The theme for Infant Protection Day 2025 is “Protecting, promoting, and developing infants”.
- ★ Infant protection is a very important task. The first three months are the crucial period for Infants. It develops certain skills like Hearing, Communication, and Vision.
- ★ So it is important to protect them from Air-borne Infections. Continuous Mother feeding and a healthy environment are essential for their Immune System Development which protects them from Infectious diseases. Infants should be vaccinated as per the Vaccination Chart to prevent them from deadly infectious diseases.
- ★ In 1990 nearly 5 million infants died due to a lack of awareness of protecting Infants.
- ★ So in the early 1900s, many Countries decided that steps should be taken for better child health care and to reduce the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR).

World Radiography Day 2025

- ★ World Radiography Day 2025 is observed on the 8th of November 2025.
- ★ World Radiography Day 2025 is celebrated every year for one of the great discoveries of a new Electromagnetic wave called X-ray.
- ★ World Radiography Day 2025 Theme is “Radiographers: Seeing the Unseen”.
- ★ X-Ray was discovered in 1895 by Wilhelm Roentgen. In his laboratory, he accidentally discovered a new Electromagnetic wave that is transparent through flesh but won't transfer through metals and bones.
- ★ It is a great invention that is used in the medical field. He later named this unknown Electromagnetic wave an X-ray.

- ★ In detail, Wilhelm Roentgen was working with a Cathode Ray tube in his laboratory. He found a fluorescent glow of crystals from the tube near his table which contains a bulb with positive and negative electrodes.
- ★ Roentgen applied high voltage to the electrodes and evacuated the air in the tube. He shielded the tube with black paper.
- ★ From this application, he saw a new green fluorescent light in the nearby material from the cathode tube.
- ★ From this, he concluded that the tube emits a new type of phosphorescent material light which is capable of passing through paper and causing shadow in the Solid object.
- ★ He named it X-Ray which is capable of passing through flesh and creating shadows of solid objects like bones. Since the discovery of X-rays happened on November 8th, this day is celebrated as World Radiography Day every year.

World Science Day for Peace and Development 2025

- ★ World Science Day for Peace and Development 2025 is observed on the 10th of November 2025.
- ★ The theme of the UNESCO celebration of the World Science Day for Peace and Development 2025 is: Trust, transformation, and tomorrow: The science we need for 2050.
- ★ The beneficial contributions that science has made to society are celebrated on World Science Day for Peace and Development. Understanding the place of science and technology in society is the primary goal of this day of celebration.
- ★ The first World Conference on Science was held in 1999 and was co-ordinated by UNESCO and the International Council for Science.
- ★ The gathering was held in Hungary, where various delegations concurred on the importance of educating the public about science. It was agreed upon by everybody that science should have a special day or week.

National Education Day

- ★ National Education Day 2025 is observed on 11th November 2025 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, India's first Education Minister.
- ★ Maulana Azad was a senior leader of the Indian National Congress, a freedom fighter, and a key figure in shaping India's modern education system after independence.
- ★ The observance of National Education Day was initiated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (now Ministry of Education) in 2008.
- ★ The first National Education Day was celebrated on 11th November 2008 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, and was inaugurated by then President Pratibha Patil.
- ★ Maulana Abul Kalam Azad served as Education Minister for over ten years, during which he played a pivotal role in laying the foundation for India's higher education framework.
- ★ He was instrumental in the establishment of key education bodies like the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

- ★ The day is celebrated every year to honour his remarkable contribution to the development of education, scientific advancement, and cultural institutions in India.

World Usability Day

- ★ World Usability Day is observed annually on the second Thursday of November, and in 2025, it falls on 13th November.
- ★ The day focuses on promoting user-friendly design, accessibility, and improved user experience (UX) across digital and physical products.
- ★ The concept of user experience traces back to ancient Greek civilization, where the principle of ergonomics was applied in designing instruments and workspaces as early as the 5th century BC.
- ★ The observance was established in November 2005 by the User Experience Professionals Association (UXPA), which was originally founded in 1991 with about 50 members.
- ★ Over time, the association has expanded to a global network of over 2400 professionals, promoting usability through international conferences, the “Journal of Usability Studies (JUS)”, and the User Experience Magazine, with 59 local chapters in 30 countries.

World Kindness Day

- ★ World Kindness Day 2025 was observed on 13th November to promote compassion, empathy, and goodwill among individuals and communities across the globe.
- ★ The observance gained deeper meaning after the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlighted how acts of kindness by doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers played a vital role in saving lives beyond medical treatment.
- ★ The day is celebrated by around 27 countries, including India, Brazil, Australia, Canada, Japan, and Italy, although it is not yet officially recognized by the United Nations (UN).
- ★ World Kindness Day was first celebrated in 1998 during the Tokyo Conference, marking the beginning of a global effort to foster kindness and peace.
- ★ The World Kindness Movement was launched to unite small organizations around the world in celebrating the day, eventually growing into a global movement that promotes kindness as a means to reduce conflicts between nations and encourage mutual respect and harmony.

World Diabetes Day

- ★ World Diabetes Day 2025 is observed on 14th November every year to raise awareness about diabetes prevention, management, and care.
- ★ The day also marks the birth anniversary of Sir Frederick G. Banting, one of the co-discoverers of insulin.
- ★ The observance aims to highlight both the challenges and solutions in scaling up access to diabetes medicines and healthcare, as emphasized by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2025.
- ★ World Diabetes Day was established in 1991 by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) with support from WHO, in response to the rising health and economic burden of diabetes.

- ★ It became an official United Nations Day in 2006.
- ★ Diabetes occurs due to the insufficient secretion of insulin by the pancreas, leading to high blood glucose (sugar) levels in the body.
- ★ The discovery of insulin in 1921 was made by Sir Frederick G. Banting, Charles H. Best, and J.J.R. Macleod at the University of Toronto, and it was later purified by James B. Collip.
- ★ This breakthrough is considered one of the greatest discoveries in medical science, as insulin injections remain the primary treatment for people with high blood glucose levels.

Children's Day

- ★ Children's Day in India 2025 is celebrated on 14th November, marking the birth anniversary of India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.
- ★ The theme for 2025 is "For Every Child, Every Right", emphasizing the importance of ensuring every child's rights, welfare, and education.
- ★ Jawaharlal Nehru, fondly known as "Chacha Nehru", was deeply loved by children and believed that children are the real strength and future of a nation.
- ★ He was born on 14th November 1889 to a Kashmiri Brahmin family. His father was Motilal Nehru, and he was the eldest among four siblings.
- ★ His sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, later became the first woman President of the United Nations General Assembly.
- ★ After Nehru's death in 1964, the Indian Parliament passed a resolution declaring 14th November as Children's Day to honor his affection and dedication toward children.
- ★ The day is observed across India with cultural programs, educational activities, and awareness campaigns focusing on children's rights, education, and well-being.

World Toilet Day

- ★ World Toilet Day 2025 is observed on 19 November to raise awareness and inspire action towards tackling the global sanitation crisis and achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation for All by 2030.
- ★ The day was founded by Jack Sim, a Singaporean philanthropist, who established the World Toilet Organization on 19 November 2001 and declared the date as World Toilet Day.
- ★ The observance aims to highlight the importance of complete sanitation systems, not just toilets – covering wastewater treatment, stormwater management, and handwashing.
- ★ SDG 6 emphasizes that waste must be safely processed, and global efforts to address sanitation challenges were further strengthened in 2010.
- ★ In 2013, the Government of Singapore and the World Toilet Organization initiated Singapore's first UN resolution titled "Sanitation for All", aimed at ending the world sanitation crisis by 2025.
- ★ Following this, World Toilet Day became an official UN observance, with the resolution being adopted by 122 countries at the 67th UN General Assembly session in New York.

Universal Children's Day

- ★ Universal Children's Day 2025 is observed on 20 November 2025.
- ★ It is celebrated to create awareness of the problems children face across the globe, improve the welfare of all children, and promote education, health, proper care, and nourishment for children.
- ★ Children's Day was first officially declared a national holiday by the Republic of Turkey in 1920 on 23 April.
- ★ It has been celebrated nationally since 1920 by the Turkish Government as a dedicated day for children.
- ★ An official confirmation for the observance was considered necessary, and the declaration was formally made nationally in 1929 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and President of the Republic of Turkey.
- ★ Universal Children's Day was established by the United Nations in 1954.
- ★ On 20 November 1959, the United Nations General Assembly adopted an extended Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which was first acquired in 1924 by the League of Nations and later adopted by the United Nations as its official statement of children's rights.

National Philosophy Day

- ★ National Philosophy Day, also known globally as World Philosophy Day, is observed every year on the third Thursday of November; in 2025, it falls on 20 November.
- ★ The day promotes the pursuit of wisdom, critical thinking, dialogue, and open-minded discussion to address modern social and global challenges.
- ★ It highlights philosophy's role in fostering tolerance, intellectual curiosity, and respect for diverse viewpoints in an interconnected world.
- ★ It was officially recognized by the UNESCO General Conference in 2005, designating the third Thursday of November as World Philosophy Day.
- ★ The first official celebration took place at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris and later expanded globally through events in schools, universities, cultural institutions, and public forums.

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

- ★ The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women is observed annually on 25 November to raise global awareness about violence faced by women, including rape, domestic abuse, and other forms of gender-based violence.
- ★ The day also aims to highlight the true scale and reality of violence that often remains hidden or under-reported.
- ★ The date commemorates the assassination of the Mirabal sisters of the Dominican Republic on 25 November 1960, who were murdered under the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo for opposing his regime.
- ★ As per United Nations data, 19% of women aged 15–49 have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner, with many cases resulting in death.

- ★ In December 1999, the UN General Assembly officially designated 25 November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, calling for global action to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls.

Constitution Day 2025

- ★ Constitution Day 2025, also known as Law Day, is observed on 26 November to mark the day the Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution of India on 26 November 1949.
- ★ The year 2025 also commemorates the 132nd birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee and the Chief Architect of the Indian Constitution.
- ★ The Constitution came into force on 26 January 1950, laying the foundation for India's democratic governance.
- ★ The observance aims to increase public awareness about the Constitution and highlight the contributions of Dr. Ambedkar, who is widely regarded as the Father of the Indian Constitution.
- ★ The Constitution of India was drafted by the members of the Constituent Assembly, shaping the nation's legal and administrative framework.

OBITUARY NEWS

Hinduja Group Chairman and Business Icon Gopichand Hinduja

- ★ Gopichand Hinduja, Chairman of the Hinduja Group, passed away at the age of 85, marking the end of an era in global business leadership.
- ★ He was one of India's most respected businessmen and a key figure in strengthening India-UK business ties through enterprise and community service.
- ★ Born in 1940 in India, he was part of the illustrious Hinduja family, founders of one of the world's largest diversified business empires.
- ★ He led the Hinduja Group, a global conglomerate with interests in automotive, banking and finance, energy, IT and media, infrastructure, and real estate.
- ★ He served as Chairman of Hinduja Automotive Ltd. and later became Chairman of the Hinduja Group in 2023 after his brother Srichand Hinduja's
- ★ He was ranked as the richest individual in the United Kingdom for seven consecutive years by The Sunday Times Rich List.
- ★ Under his leadership, the Hinduja Group expanded operations across more than 38 countries.
- ★ He was widely recognized for his philanthropy, community building, and cross-cultural collaboration.

Padma Shri Environmentalist Saalumarada Thimmakka

- ★ Padma Shri awardee Saalumarada Thimmakka, renowned as the "Tree Woman of India", passed away at the age of 114 in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

- ★ She was born on June 30, 1911, in Gubbi Taluk, Tumakuru district, Karnataka.
- ★ She earned the titles “Vriksha Mata” and “Mother of Trees” for her lifelong dedication to tree conservation.
- ★ She received the title ‘Saalumara’, meaning “row of trees”, after planting 385 banyan trees along a 5 km stretch between Hulikal and Kudur in Ramanagara district, Karnataka.
- ★ Along with her husband, she planted and nurtured over 8,000 trees along highways in Karnataka.
- ★ She received 12 major awards, including the National Citizen’s Award (1995), Indira Priyadarshini Vrikshamitra Award (1997), Karnataka Kalpavalli Award (2000), Godfrey Phillips Bravery Award (2006), and Nadoja Award (2010).
- ★ A U.S.-based environmental organisation named Thimmakka’s Resources for Environmental Education (TREE) was established in her honour, reflecting global recognition of her work.
- ★ She received the Padma Shri in 2019 for her contributions in the field of Social Work.

Coromandel International Chairman Emeritus Arunachalam Vellayan

- ★ Arunachalam Vellayan, Chairman Emeritus of Coromandel International Limited, passed away at age 72 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- ★ He was born on 9 January 1953 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- ★ He served for several decades in the Murugappa Group, providing strategic leadership across diversified businesses.
- ★ He chaired Coromandel International Limited and EID Parry (India) Limited, contributing significantly to their growth.
- ★ He served as Chairman of the Board of Governors of IIM Kozhikode (Kerala).
- ★ He was a board member of Kanoria Chemicals & Industries Limited, EXIM Bank, and Indian Overseas Bank (IOB).
- ★ He held key industry leadership positions in SICC, FAI, ISMA, and AICMA.
- ★ He launched company-owned retail stores under the brand ‘My Gromor’.
- ★ He received the Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) from Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) and Aston University, UK.

