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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 16-12-2025

NATIONAL NEWS

Maharashtra Launches MahaCrimeOS AI Platform for Cybercrime Policing

The Government of Maharashtra has partnered with Microsoft to launch MahaCrimeOS Artificial Intelligence, an advanced platform aimed at modernising and accelerating cybercrime investigations across the state.

The platform was unveiled by Satya Nadella, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Microsoft, during the Microsoft Artificial Intelligence Tour held in Mumbai.

MahaCrimeOS Artificial Intelligence has been developed by CyberEye, in collaboration with Maharashtra's Advanced Research and Vigilance for Enhanced Law-enforcement (MARVEL), the state's Special Purpose Vehicle for Artificial Intelligence governance, and the Microsoft India Development Center.

The platform is an Artificial Intelligence– and Microsoft Azure–powered digital investigation system designed to streamline, standardise, and speed up cybercrime case management.

It is currently deployed in 23 police stations in Nagpur, where it has shown an 80 percent reduction in investigation turnaround time and nearly 100 percent digital registration of cybercrime cases, with standardised Artificial Intelligence–driven workflows.

The platform complies with strict security, data protection, and governance standards, as ensured by the Microsoft India Development Center.

The initiative is expected to strengthen cybercrime response, improve investigation speed and accuracy, enhance transparency, and set a national benchmark for the use of Artificial Intelligence in policing and governance.

Union Cabinet Renames MGNREGS as Poojya Bapu Grameen Rozgar Yojana

The Union Cabinet approved a major update to India's largest rural employment programme.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme will now be renamed as Poojya Bapu Grameen Rozgar Yojana.

The guaranteed employment days have been increased from 100 days to 125 days per rural household in a financial year.

This decision aims to strengthen rural livelihoods and improve income stability for millions of rural households dependent on the scheme.

The Cabinet approved an amendment to the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, to enable the renaming and enhancement of workdays.

Formal notification is awaited to operationalise the changes.

The scheme was originally enacted on 25 August 2005 as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, providing a legal guarantee of 100 days of wage employment to adult members of rural households.

The primary objectives of the Act include enhancing rural purchasing power, providing livelihood security, reducing rural distress and poverty, and creating durable community assets.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Pakistan's Ancient Boreendo Added to UNESCO's Urgent Intangible Cultural Heritage List

Pakistan's Boreendo (also called Bhorindo/Bareendo) was inscribed on United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO's) List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding during the 20th Session of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee, held at Red Fort, New Delhi.

Boreendo is a spherical terracotta vessel-flute from Sindh (Pakistan), believed to be over 5,000 years old, with roots in the Indus Valley Civilization (sites such as Mohenjo-Daro).

The instrument has cultural parallels in Kutch, Gujarat, highlighting shared Indus Valley heritage across regions.

It is regarded as the oldest surviving musical instrument of southern Sindh, traditionally used in Sufi devotional gatherings, village ceremonies, and winter festivals.

The inscription was granted due to the severe risk of extinction, as only two practitioners retain complete knowledge: Ustaad Faqeer Zulfiqar (musician) and Allah Jurio (master potter).

UNESCO classified Boreendo as an "ancient dying folk musical instrument", including its melodies, knowledge, and craftsmanship skills.

BANKING

RBI Relaxes Norms for Opening and Operating Cash Credit, Current and Overdraft Accounts

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has eased norms for opening and maintaining Cash Credit (CC), Current Accounts, and Overdraft (OD) facilities, incorporating stakeholder feedback on the draft circular issued in October.

Banks are now allowed to offer Cash Credit (CC) accounts without restrictions, based purely on customer requirements.

For customers with aggregate banking exposure below ₹10 crore, any bank may freely open or maintain Current or Overdraft (OD) accounts.

For borrowers with banking exposure above ₹10 crore, only banks holding at least 10% of the borrower's total exposure are permitted to open or maintain Current or OD accounts.

If no bank or only one bank meets the 10% exposure threshold, the top two lenders by exposure may maintain Current/OD accounts, modifying the earlier rule that limited such accounts to two banks regardless of exposure share.

Funds received in collection accounts must be transferred within two working days to the borrower's designated CC, Current, or OD account.

Any Overdraft (OD) disbursement from a collection account must be routed only through the designated account.

Banks are required to monitor all transaction accounts regularly, and at least once every six months, to ensure compliance with the revised RBI guidelines.

The revised norms will come into effect from April 1, 2026, though banks may choose to implement them earlier in full.

Central Board of Direct Taxes Launches Data-Driven NUDGE Campaign

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has taken action against intermediaries involved in filing Income Tax Returns (ITRs) with bogus deductions and exemptions under the Income Tax Act, 1961.

Investigations revealed a nationwide network of agents filing returns with incorrect claims on a commission basis.

Large-scale bogus deduction claims were made through donations to Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs) and Charitable Institutions, resulting in tax evasion and fraudulent refunds.

Many RUPPs were found to be non-filers, non-operational at registered addresses, and not engaged in political activity, acting as conduits for hawala transactions, cross-border remittances, and fake donation receipts.

CBDT searches against RUPPs and trusts uncovered incriminating evidence of bogus individual donations and fake Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) claims by companies.

The CBDT has strengthened its data-driven and analytics-based risk assessment to detect suspicious deduction patterns at an early stage.

A key risk pattern was identified in claims under Section 80G (donations to charitable institutions) and Section 80GGC (donations to political parties) of the Income Tax Act, 1961.

Data analytics showed taxpayers claiming deductions to suspicious or unverifiable entities without adequate supporting information.

A large number of taxpayers have already revised their ITRs for AY 2025-26 and filed updated returns for previous assessment years.

As a taxpayer-friendly measure, CBDT launched a targeted NUDGE campaign, allowing taxpayers to voluntarily correct or withdraw incorrect claims.

SMS and Email advisories are being sent from 12 December 2025 to identified taxpayers on their registered mobile numbers and email IDs.

Sberbank Introduce First-India Mutual Fund Offering Russian Investors Access To Nifty50 Equities

Sberbank and JSC First Asset Management have launched a new mutual fund, First-India, providing Russian retail investors exposure to India's equity market via the Nifty50 Index.

The fund was unveiled during Sberbank CEO Herman Gref's visit to India, at an event hosted by the National Stock Exchange (NSE).

The product offers a direct route for Russian investors to participate in the growth of India's largest and most liquid companies.

The Nifty50 Index, launched in 1996, comprises 50 major stocks across 15 sectors and is among the world's most widely tracked indices, with 45+ passive funds in India and 22 overseas funds linked to it.

RBI Grants In-Principle Approval to JPMorgan for New Pune Branch

JPMorgan Chase & Co. has received in-principle approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to open a new branch in Pune, marking its first branch expansion in India in nearly a decade.

The Pune branch will be JPMorgan's fourth branch in India and will primarily cater to corporate clients.

The new branch will provide a full range of banking services, including transaction banking and term lending.

JPMorgan last received approval to open branches in India in 2016, when it was permitted to set up three branches.

JPMorgan Chase & Co. is an American multinational banking and financial services institution.

The bank is headquartered in New York City and incorporated in Delaware, USA.

As of 2025, JPMorgan Chase & Co. is the largest bank in the United States and the world's largest bank by market capitalisation.

AWARDS & PRIZES

TIME Magazine Names "Architects of Artificial Intelligence" as Person of the Year 2025

TIME Magazine has declared the "Architects of Artificial Intelligence" as its Person of the Year 2025, recognising the individuals who designed, built, and accelerated Artificial Intelligence into the centre of global life.

TIME described 2025 as the year when the full potential of Artificial Intelligence became visible, transforming industries, economies, politics, governance, creativity, and daily life worldwide.

Instead of honouring technology itself, TIME recognised the people behind Artificial Intelligence, whose innovations reshaped global power structures and societal functioning.

Editor-in-Chief Sam Jacobs stated that TIME has historically honoured groups or concepts when a single individual could not represent the scale of impact, as seen earlier with the Personal Computer (1982) and Endangered Earth (1988).

Artificial Intelligence in 2025 crossed a tipping point, shifting from a niche innovation to a mainstream force adopted across healthcare, education, governance, media, defence, and global policymaking.

TIME highlighted that Artificial Intelligence systems became widely accessible to consumers, governments began adopting and regulating Artificial Intelligence, and global politics increasingly reflected the influence of Artificial Intelligence leaders.

TIME's Person of the Year tradition, started in 1927, honours the person, group, or concept that most influenced global affairs during the year; recent recipients include Taylor Swift (2023) and Donald Trump (2024).

SPORTS

FIH Men's Junior Hockey World Cup 2025

The 14th edition of the Fédération Internationale de Hockey Men's Junior Hockey World Cup 2025 concluded in Chennai and Madurai, Tamil Nadu.

The tournament was held from 28 November to 10 December 2025 at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Hockey Stadium, Chennai, and the Madurai International Hockey Stadium.

Germany emerged as the champion, winning its eighth Men's Junior Hockey World Cup title, the most by any nation.

In the final match, Germany defeated Spain 3–2 in a shoot-out after the match ended in a 1–1 draw at full time.

With this victory, Germany further consolidated its dominance in junior men's hockey at the global level.

India won the bronze medal, defeating Argentina 4–2 after staging a remarkable comeback.

India was trailing 0–2, but scored four goals in the final quarter within 10 minutes to clinch third place.

Indian goal scorers in the bronze medal match were Ankit Pal (49th minute), Manmeet Singh (52nd minute), Sharda Nand Tiwari (57th minute), and Anmol Ekka (58th minute).

This bronze medal highlighted the depth and potential of India's young hockey talent.

India's previous gold medals in the Men's Junior Hockey World Cup were won in 2001 and 2016.

The final standings of the 2025 tournament were Germany (Gold), Spain (Silver), and India (Bronze).

IMPORTANT DAYS

National Energy Conservation Day

National Energy Conservation Day 2025 is observed on 14 December 2025 across India.

The day is observed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, which functions u00nder the Union Ministry of Power, Government of India.

The objective of the observance is to promote cost-efficient energy production, resource conservation, and efficient use of energy among citizens and industries.

The National Energy Conservation Day 2025 celebrations are held for one week, from 8 December to 14 December 2025.

National Energy Conservation Day was first observed on 14 December 1991 by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency under the Union Ministry of Power.

The Bureau of Energy Efficiency plays a key role in developing and implementing strategies and policies to reduce excessive consumption of energy in the country.

The Bureau of Energy Efficiency also executed the Energy Conservation Act, 2001, which provides a legal framework for promoting energy efficiency in India.

The main objective of National Energy Conservation Day is to reduce energy consumption and encourage efficient and responsible use of energy across all sectors.

The observance highlights the importance of sustainable development, energy security, and long-term environmental protection.