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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 18-12-2025

NATIONAL NEWS

MP to Develop Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve as Cheetah Sanctuary

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced that Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve will be developed into a cheetah sanctuary before the next monsoon session.

Located at Nauradehi in Sagar district, it will become the third cheetah habitat in Madhya Pradesh, after Kuno National Park and Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary.

India successfully reintroduced cheetahs after their extinction in the 1950s, becoming the only country globally to do so.

First cheetah habitat: Kuno National Park, Sheopur (September 2022) – currently 28 cheetahs.

Second cheetah habitat: Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary, Mandsaur (April 2025) – currently 2 cheetahs.

Next phase: Eight cheetahs expected from Botswana in January 2026.

Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve has been approved by the Madhya Pradesh State Cabinet for cheetah habitat development.

The reserve will expand the cheetah range and population, complementing existing habitats in the state.

The move will strengthen biodiversity conservation, support ecosystem balance, and enhance wildlife management capacity.

Development of the sanctuary is expected to promote eco-tourism and conservation awareness.

The initiative further highlights India's leadership in global big cat conservation through international cooperation, particularly with African nations, for expertise in cheetah management and long-term conservation planning.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UNEP Hosts 7th United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi

The 7th United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) was held from 08–12 December 2025 at the UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.

UNEA is the world's highest decision-making body on environmental matters, under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The theme of UNEA-7 was "Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet".

UNEA-7 was chaired by Abdullah bin Ali Al-Amri, President of the Environment Authority of Oman.

Over 6,000 delegates from 186 countries, including governments, international organisations, civil society and the private sector, participated.

Union Minister of State Kirti Vardhan Singh, MoEFCC, represented India at UNEA-7.

On 10 December 2025, the 2nd Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) Day was observed, focusing on global and regional environmental agreements.

The 21st Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF) was held prior to UNEA-7 to facilitate stakeholder discussions on key agenda issues.

GEO-7, compiled by 287 scientists from 82 countries, highlighted severe impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, desertification, and pollution.

The report estimated global macroeconomic benefits of USD 20 trillion annually by 2070, rising to USD 100 trillion per year thereafter, through systemic transformations.

Achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 requires annual investments of about USD 8 trillion until 2050, as per GEO-7.

BANKING

ADB Sanctions Multi-Sector Loans To Boost Chennai Metro Expansion

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved three loans worth USD 448 million to support urban infrastructure, public healthcare, and women-focused financial inclusion in India.

ADB sanctioned USD 240 million as a second tranche under a USD 780 million facility approved in 2022 for Chennai Metro Rail Phase 2 in Tamil Nadu.

Chennai Metro Phase 2 spans a total network of 118.9 km across three corridors.

The project provides 18 new universally accessible and disaster-resilient stations with upgraded multimodal interchanges.

Construction under the current tranche is targeted for completion by mid-2028.

ADB approved a USD 108 million results-based loan to strengthen the public healthcare system in Mizoram.

The programme supports universal health coverage through the Mizoram Universal Health Care Scheme (MUHCS).

MUHCS provides cashless health coverage up to ₹5 lakh per family per year.

The healthcare programme targets 38 million residents, focusing on women, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities.

The scheme integrates Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) and state health schemes into a single platform.

The integration links primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare services.

Priority areas include non-communicable diseases, disaster-resilient health infrastructure, and institutional strengthening.

Mizoram is the first Indian state to undertake an ADB-supported comprehensive health system reform.

ADB approved a USD 100 million loan to Five-Star Business Finance Limited, based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

The programme aims to expand Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) credit access for women entrepreneurs from lower-income groups.

RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

India’s Leading Fruit and Fish Producer with Robust Economic Growth: RBI Report

According to a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) report, Andhra Pradesh has emerged as a top-performing state across agriculture, fisheries, and socio-economic indicators.

During FY 2024–25, the state ranked first in fruit production with over 19 million tonnes.

Andhra Pradesh also led in fish production, recording nearly 1 million tonnes.

The state recorded steady economic growth, with GSDP estimated at nearly ₹16 lakh crore at current prices in 2024–25.

The per capita GSDP of the state stood at over ₹2.5 lakh, reflecting rising income levels.

Average life expectancy in Andhra Pradesh was 70 years (on par with the national average), with female life expectancy at 73 years and male life expectancy at 68 years.

In terms of power availability, the state ranked 14th nationally, with per capita availability of nearly 1,500 units.

Progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) placed Andhra Pradesh at 10th position nationally with a score of 74.

AWARDS & PRIZES

DV Kapur Foundation Energy Innovation Awards 2025

India’s first DV Kapur Foundation Energy Innovation Awards were presented at the SCOPE Complex, New Delhi, recognising technological innovations supporting clean energy transition, efficiency, and indigenous research.

The awards were organised by the D V Kapur Foundation, which focuses on promoting research, development, and indigenous technological solutions in the energy sector.

The initiative aims to encourage innovators, especially young researchers, to address India’s evolving energy challenges and future sustainability needs.

Prof Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, felicitated the awardees.

Category 1 – Young Innovators (under 38 years)

Winner: Dr Achu Chandran, Principal Scientist, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research – National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (CSIR-NIIST)

Innovation: Nano Electricity Generator

Prize: Citation, trophy, and ₹1 lakh

Category 2 – Individuals/Organizations for Technological Innovation

Winner: NTPC’s Research and Development wing – NETRA

Innovation: Green Use of Coal Technologies

Prize: Citation, trophy, and ₹10 lakh

Recipient: Shri Shaswattam, Executive Director (NETRA), along with his team

The awards highlight the importance of innovation in meeting India’s rising energy demand while ensuring long-term sustainability.

They recognise the role of scientists and research and development organisations in driving clean, efficient, and sustainable energy solutions for India’s future.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Raj Kumar Goyal Sworn in as Chief Information Commissioner

Raj Kumar Goyal, a 1990-batch IAS officer (AGMUT cadre), was sworn in as the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) by President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

His appointment was recommended by a three-member selection panel headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with Home Minister Amit Shah and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi.

The post of CIC had been vacant since 13 September 2025, following the completion of Heeralal Samariya's

The panel also recommended eight new Information Commissioners—Surendra Singh Meena, Ashutosh Chaturvedi, Swagat Das, Sudha Rani Relengi, P.R. Ramesh, Khushwant Singh Sethi, Jaya Varma Sinha, and Sanjeev Kumar Jindal—restoring the Central Information Commission to full strength for the first time in nine years.

Raj Kumar Goyal, after taking oath, administered the oath of office to the eight new Information Commissioners in the presence of incumbent Anandi Ramalingam and Vinod Kumar Tiwari.

The Central Information Commission (CIC), constituted under the Right to Information Act, 2005, can have a Chief Information Commissioner and up to 10 Information Commissioners. Its jurisdiction extends over all Central public authorities.

11th Director General of National Council of Applied Economic Research

The National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) has appointed Suresh Goyal as its 11th Director General, effective January 5, 2026.

Suresh Goyal will succeed Poonam Gupta, who served as Director General of NCAER from July 2021 to April 2025.

Prior to this role, Goyal served as Managing Director and CEO of the National Highway Infra Trust (NHIT), supporting the National Monetisation Pipeline of the Government of India.

Goyal has extensive experience in the private sector, having served as Senior MD and Head of India and Southeast Asia at Macquarie Infrastructure and Real Assets, based in Singapore.

NCAER, established in 1956 in New Delhi, is India's oldest and largest independent economic policy research think tank.

NCAER collaborates with over 12 central government ministries, 3 state governments, and 13 other organisations.

SPORTS

MRF Tyres Wins 2025 FIA European Rally Championship Teams Title

MRF Tyres clinched the 2025 FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) Teams Title, marking a major boost to India's presence in global motorsport technology.

The award was presented at the FIA Awards Gala, the annual season-closing ceremony organised by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA).

This is MRF Tyres' third ERC Teams Championship title, after earlier victories in 2022 and 2023, with the latest win coming in 2025.

The ERC Teams Title is awarded based on consistent performance across multiple rally events held in diverse and challenging European terrains, where tyre grip, durability, and adaptability are critical.

The trophy was handed over by Manuel Avino, Vice President, FIA Europe, to Arun Mammen, Vice Chairman and Managing Director of MRF Ltd, at the FIA Awards Gala.

The victory highlights MRF's research-driven approach, high-quality manufacturing, and ability to meet extreme motorsport performance standards.

MRF's repeated success positions it among the few Indian companies to consistently compete and win in elite global motorsport championships, traditionally dominated by European and Japanese firms.

The achievement strengthens India's visibility in high-performance automotive engineering and enhances MRF's global brand recognition and export potential.

MRF has a long-standing association with motorsports, backed by sustained investment in research and development, testing facilities, and international racing partnerships.

The ERC success underlines the importance of long-term vision, innovation-led growth, and consistent investment in niche but high-impact sectors like motorsport technology.

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