DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 21-01-2026

NATIONAL NEWS

Andhra Pradesh to Host World's Largest Green Ammonia Project at Kakinada

Andhra Pradesh will host the world's largest green ammonia project at Kakinada, being developed by AM Green, with a total investment of USD 10 billion.

The project aims to achieve a final production capacity of 1.5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) by 2030, supporting India's first green ammonia exports.

The facility is being developed through the conversion of an existing ammonia-urea complex at Kakinada, enabling faster scaling and cost efficiency.

Phased commissioning plan includes 0.5 MTPA by 2027, 1.0 MTPA by 2028, and full capacity by 2030, making it the largest green ammonia project globally.

The project will be powered entirely by renewable energy, supported by around 7.5 GW of solar and wind capacity, nearly 1,950 MW of electrolyser capacity, and close to 2 GW of round-the-clock renewable power.

The project will enable India's first green ammonia exports, with planned offtake to Germany, Japan and Singapore.

The project is expected to generate up to 8,000 jobs during construction, along with significant long-term employment during operations and indirect jobs in renewable energy, logistics, ports and ancillary industries.

Green ammonia is produced using renewable electricity and green hydrogen, eliminating carbon emissions from conventional production and supporting decarbonisation of fertilisers, shipping and power sectors.

The project aligns with India's National Green Hydrogen Mission, helps reduce import dependence in fertilisers, and strengthens India's climate commitments and energy security.

A Decade of Startup India Movement Completed on National Startup Day

Prime Minister Narendra Modi marked the completion of 10 years of the Startup India Movement on National Startup Day (16 January).

Startup India Movement was launched on 16 January 2016 with the objective of promoting innovation, nurturing entrepreneurs and building a strong startup ecosystem in India.

The initiative focuses on ease of doing business, regulatory simplification, funding support, mentorship and innovation-driven growth.

Over the past decade, Startup India has evolved into a nationwide ecosystem connecting government, investors, incubators, academic institutions, mentors and young innovators.

Since its launch, over 2 lakh startups have been officially recognised under the Startup India initiative.

Recognised startups operate across sectors such as fintech, health-tech, ed-tech, agritech, clean energy, space and defence.

Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 to Be Held in New Delhi from March 19–22

Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 will be held from 19–22 March 2026 at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi.

The summit was announced by Union Power Minister Manohar Lal.

It is a global conference-cum-exhibition focused on the power and electricity sector.

The event aims to showcase India’s leadership in the global clean energy transition and its journey from energy scarcity to energy abundance.

The summit will address challenges across power generation, transmission, distribution, storage and smart consumption.

It will bring together stakeholders from government, industry, academia and civil society on a common platform.

The theme of the summit is “Electrifying Growth. Empowering Sustainability. Connecting Globally.”

Key focus areas include clean energy deployment, energy efficiency, grid resilience, battery storage, energy transition technologies and global partnerships.

A Buyer–Seller Meet will be organised to promote investment, partnerships and cross-border collaboration.

The summit aims to mobilise investments, foster global cooperation, and accelerate the deployment of clean and sustainable electricity solutions worldwide.

Madhya Pradesh Signs MoU with Digital India BHASHINI

The Government of Madhya Pradesh has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Digital India BHASHINI Division to integrate multilingual and AI-powered language technologies across state government digital platforms.

The objective is to promote inclusive, citizen-centric and voice-first digital governance, ensuring improved last-mile delivery of public services in Indian languages.

The MoU was signed at the Madhya Pradesh Regional AI Impact Conference 2026, held in Bhopal.

The conference was organised by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of Madhya Pradesh, in collaboration with the IndiaAI Mission.

It brought together policymakers, startups, industry leaders, academia and central agencies to deliberate on responsible and inclusive adoption of artificial intelligence in governance.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, while inaugurating the conference, outlined the state's vision of citizen-centric AI governance.

He announced that Madhya Pradesh will soon introduce a State Artificial Intelligence Policy in mission mode, indicating a structured and long-term roadmap for AI adoption.

Under the MoU, BHASHINI's language technologies and translation APIs will be integrated into state digital platforms.

The partnership also promotes voice-first AI solutions, which are particularly beneficial for rural populations, elderly citizens and people with limited digital literacy.

India's First NAMO Book Fest Launched in New Delhi

India witnessed a new literary initiative with the launch of the first-ever NAMO Book Fest in New Delhi.

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh released two books at the event, marking the debut of a national-level literary festival focused on ideas and leadership.

At the inaugural NAMO Book Fest, the books 'Gen V Bano' and 'Mahatma' were released.

The books focus on inspiration, leadership, vision, values, and ethical living in contemporary India.

The releases highlighted the role of literature in shaping national character and a forward-looking mindset among youth.

The NAMO Book Fest is being organised as a two-day event.

It features a curated exhibition of books centred on the life, ideas, and leadership of Narendra Modi.

The festival provides a platform for authors, intellectuals, thinkers, and young readers to engage in dialogue and exchange ideas.

The initiative aims to promote reading culture, intellectual engagement, and discussion on governance, nation-building, and innovation.

It reflects growing recognition of the importance of books and ideas in shaping public discourse.

The festival seeks to connect governance, culture, and youth participation within India's intellectual ecosystem.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

World’s First Global Ice Vault Launched in Antarctica

Scientists have inaugurated the world’s first global ice vault in Antarctica to preserve mountain ice core samples threatened by rapid glacier melting due to global warming.

The initiative is led by the Ice Memory Foundation, a consortium of European research institutions, aimed at safeguarding ice cores as long-term climate archives for future generations.

The first ice core samples were extracted from Mont Blanc (France) and Grand Combin (Switzerland).

These ice cores are being stored at Concordia Station, Antarctica, maintained at a constant temperature of around –52°C, ensuring long-term preservation.

The Ice Memory Project was launched in 2015 and plans to collect and store ice cores from around 10 glaciers worldwide, with more glaciers to be added in the coming years.

The global ice vault is inspired by the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, serving as a global scientific resource amid accelerating glacier disappearance.

Since 2000, glaciers have witnessed an estimated 39% regional loss and 5% global loss, highlighting the urgency of climate preservation

Galgotias University Inaugurates IIT Mandi Catalyst Satellite Centre in Greater Noida

Galgotias University, ranked among the world’s leading universities by QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) and Times Higher Education (THE), inaugurated the IIT Mandi Catalyst Satellite Centre at its campus in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh (UP).

The inauguration marks a major milestone in strengthening innovation-driven learning, entrepreneurship, and India’s startup ecosystem.

The centre has been established in collaboration with IIT Mandi, Himachal Pradesh (HP).

The primary aim of the centre is to support early-stage startups, promote deep-tech innovation, and bridge the gap between research and real-world applications.

The IIT Mandi Catalyst Satellite Centre will function as an innovation and incubation hub, supporting startups, student entrepreneurs, and joint programmes.

The hub will provide mentorship, investor access, market linkages, and support for technology commercialisation and acceleration.

During the event, Galgotias University signed two strategic Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to strengthen academic and research collaboration.

The MoUs were signed with National Institute of Technology (NIT), Jamshedpur (Jharkhand) and Jharkhand University of Technology (JUT), Ranchi.

These partnerships aim to enable joint research initiatives, faculty and student exchange programmes, co-creation of deep-tech startups, access to advanced laboratories, and shared incubation and acceleration programmes.

BANKING

Canara Bank Joins Hands with NBSL to Offer UPI Services through Canara ai1Pe App

Canara Bank has partnered with NPCI BHIM Services Limited (NBSL) to integrate bank plug-ins for providing UPI services on its Canara ai1Pe banking app.

Through this partnership, Canara Bank can host the latest UPI features and upgrades developed for the BHIM app directly within its own application.

Canara Bank is the first bank in India to adopt this NBSL plug-in-based UPI delivery model.

The system allows white-labelling of BHIM's technology stack, enabling banks to offer UPI services while focusing on core banking operations.

The model was demonstrated through BHIM Vishwas, a proof-of-concept launched in 2025.

NBSL is a wholly-owned subsidiary of NPCI, formed in June 2024, and manages BHIM, which was originally launched in 2016 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The integration supports improved security, operational resilience, and scalability, while helping the bank reduce cost and resources for developing and maintaining an independent UPI interface.

The white-label approach allows banks to leverage the BHIM technology stack while continuing to focus on core banking features.

The initiative reflects the growing trend of plug-in based digital payments solutions in India's UPI ecosystem.

Piramal Finance Raises USD 350 Million in Multilateral Funding from IFC and ADB

Piramal Finance Limited (PFL) secured USD 350 million multilateral funding, marking its first borrowing from Development Finance Institutions (DFIs).

The funding includes USD 200 million from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and USD 150 million from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under the Sustainable Finance Framework (SFF).

The facilities have a five-year maturity, with funds to be drawn in tranches between January 2026 and March 2026.

PFL is in advanced discussions to raise an additional USD 150 million from DFIs, targeting USD 500

million total multilateral funding in FY26.

The multilateral funding reflects strong confidence in PFL's governance standards, risk management practices, and technology-led lending platform.

The funds will be deployed to expand affordable housing finance, scale MSME credit, and increase lending to women borrowers and women-led enterprises.

Lending focus areas include Tier-2, Tier-3, semi-urban, and rural markets, supporting inclusive growth.

The borrowing helps diversify PFL's funding sources and reduce dependence on domestic capital markets, strengthening its long-term funding profile.

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