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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 29-12-2025

NATIONAL NEWS

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Unveils 'Meri Yojana' Welfare Schemes Portal

Pushkar Singh Dhami, the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, launched the "Meri Yojana" Portal in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

Meri Yojana is an online platform (accessible at gov.in) designed to provide comprehensive information on welfare schemes offered by both the Central Government and State Governments.

The primary aim of the initiative is to increase public awareness of welfare schemes and ensure benefits reach eligible beneficiaries in a time-bound manner.

The portal seeks to reduce dependency on intermediaries, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability in welfare delivery.

Meri Yojana Portal strengthens service delivery effectiveness by making scheme-related information easy to understand and accessible in simple language.

The portal features a comprehensive database of welfare schemes, including scheme details, eligibility criteria, application procedures, and required documents.

Alongside the portal, three editions of the "Meri Yojana" handbook were launched to support offline access to information for those in remote areas.

The handbook editions include the General Edition, State Government Edition, and Central Government Edition.

SBI Life Introduces New Smart Samriddhi Life Insurance Savings Scheme

SBI Life Insurance has launched 'New Smart Samriddhi', an individual, non-linked, non-participating life insurance savings plan.

The New Smart Samriddhi plan offers a combination of guaranteed savings and life insurance cover, ensuring financial security for the policyholder's family.

The product provides guaranteed annual additions of 5.5% or 6% on cumulative premiums, depending on the premium amount chosen.

New Smart Samriddhi is designed to promote disciplined, goal-based savings, addressing the need

for balanced financial planning by enabling steady growth of savings along with assured financial protection.

Indian Railways Strengthens AI-Based Wildlife Protection System

Indian Railways has strengthened its Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based wildlife protection system along railway tracks to enhance wildlife conservation and railway safety.

The initiative aims to reduce train accidents involving elephants, lions, tigers, and other wildlife, especially in forest areas and wildlife corridors, by providing real-time alerts to train operators.

The system uses AI-enabled cameras and advanced sensor technologies to detect animal movement near railway tracks and generate alerts well in advance, enabling loco pilots to slow down or stop trains in time.

AI-based cameras can alert loco pilots nearly 500 metres in advance.

An Intrusion Detection System (IDS) integrated with a Distributed Acoustic System (DAS) captures ground vibrations and sounds, making it particularly effective in detecting elephants, whose movement produces distinctive vibrations.

Alerts are transmitted in real time to loco pilots, station masters, and control rooms for coordinated preventive action.

The system has already been implemented across 141 route kilometres on the Northeast Frontier Railway, a region highly prone to elephant–train collisions.

Based on its successful performance, additional tenders have been awarded to extend the system to 981 more route kilometres.

With this expansion, total coverage will increase to 1,122 route kilometres across sensitive wildlife zones in the country.

The strengthened AI-based system enhances operational safety of railways, protects endangered wildlife, and supports India’s environmental and conservation commitments.

By enabling timely, preventive action through real-time data, the initiative shifts the approach from reactive accident response to proactive risk prevention.

Haryana Declares Hansi as 23rd District

The Haryana government has officially declared Hansi as a new district, making it the 23rd district of the state, following the issuance of a formal government notification.

The decision aims to improve administrative efficiency, strengthen governance, and accelerate development activities in the region.

With the notification, Hansi has been granted full district status. The newly created district comprises two administrative subdivisions: Hansi and Narnaund.

This reorganisation is expected to reduce the administrative burden on Hisar district and provide

the Hansi region with independent district-level administration.

The notification was issued under the provisions of the Haryana Land Revenue Act, 1887 and the Registration Act, 1908.

As per statutory requirements, the order received formal approval from the Governor of Haryana, giving it legal validity.

The decision was taken under the leadership of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini.

Earlier, Hansi was part of the Hisar district. Due to increasing administrative and developmental requirements, the state government decided to reorganise Hisar district by carving out Hansi as a separate district.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India Set to Take Over Kimberley Process Chairmanship from January 1, 2026

India has been selected as Chair of the Kimberley Process (KP) from 1 January 2026, marking the third time the country will hold the chairmanship (previously in 2008 and 2019).

India will assume the role of KP Vice Chair from 25 December 2025, prior to taking over the Chair in 2026.

The Kimberley Process (KP) is a tripartite international initiative involving governments, the diamond industry, and civil society to prevent trade in conflict diamonds.

Conflict diamonds are rough diamonds used by rebel groups to finance conflicts against legitimate governments, as defined by UN Security Council resolutions.

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) was established under a UN resolution and came into effect on 1 January 2003.

KP currently has 60 participants (representing 85 countries), with the European Union counted as one participant, together accounting for over 99% of global rough diamond trade.

India’s selection reflects global trust in India’s commitment to integrity, transparency, and responsible international trade, as stated by Commerce and Industry Minister Shri Piyush Goyal.

As a major global hub for diamond manufacturing and trade (Surat alone polishes 90% of the world's diamonds), India’s leadership gains importance amid shifting geopolitics and emphasis on sustainable sourcing.

During its Chairmanship (2026), India will focus on strengthening governance and compliance, digital certification and traceability, data-driven transparency, and consumer trust in conflict-free diamonds.

As Vice Chair (2025) and Chair (2026), India will work with all KP participants and observers to

enhance rule-based compliance, credibility, and effectiveness of the Kimberley Process.

India Announces $450 Million Humanitarian and Reconstruction Package for Sri Lanka

India has announced a $450 million humanitarian and reconstruction assistance package for Sri Lanka following the large-scale devastation caused by Cyclone Ditwah.

The assistance was announced during high-level meetings in Colombo, reinforcing India's role as a first responder and trusted neighbour in the Indian Ocean Region.

The announcement was made during the visit of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, who travelled to Sri Lanka as a special envoy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Sri Lankan leadership described India's support as a strong symbol of deepening India–Sri Lanka relations.

Cyclone Ditwah caused extensive damage across Sri Lanka, affecting over 600 people, destroying hundreds of buildings, and displacing nearly 2 lakh people.

The cyclone severely damaged roads, railways, bridges, public utilities, and caused major losses to agriculture, health, and education infrastructure, creating urgent humanitarian needs and long-term reconstruction challenges.

During his two-day visit, Jaishankar met President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya, Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister, opposition leaders, and representatives of the Indian-origin Tamil community.

President Dissanayake termed India's assistance as "a new chapter in Indo–Sri Lanka relations."

The $450 million relief package includes a $100 million grant and $350 million in concessional credit lines, ensuring both immediate relief and long-term rebuilding.

The funds will be utilised for restoration of roads, railways and bridges, reconstruction of damaged houses, repair of health and education infrastructure, agricultural support to address food shortages, and strengthening disaster response and preparedness systems.

The assistance is being provided under Operation Sagar Bandhu, launched by India in response to Cyclone Ditwah.

BANKING

SEBI Clears NHAI-Sponsored Raajmarg Infra Investment Trust to Operate as Public InvIT

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has received Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) approval for its sponsored Raajmarg Infra Investment Trust (RIIT) to operate as a public Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT).

The approval strengthens NHAI's asset monetisation programme, aimed at unlocking value of National Highway assets and creating a long-term investment instrument for retail and domestic investors.

The Public InvIT (RIIT) seeks to broaden public participation in national highway infrastructure development and support sustainable infrastructure financing.

NHAI has incorporated Raajmarg Infra Investment Managers Pvt. Ltd. (RIIMPL) as the Investment Manager for RIIT.

RIIMPL is a collaborative venture with equity participation from major financial institutions including SBI, PNB, NaBFID, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, IDBI Bank, IndusInd Bank, Yes Bank, and Bajaj Finserv Ventures Ltd.

Shri NRVVMK Rajendra Kumar, Member (Finance), NHAI, will serve as Managing Director and CEO (Additional Charge) of RIIMPL.

An Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) is a SEBI-regulated trust that pools investor funds to own and operate income-generating infrastructure assets and distributes most of the cash flows to unit holders.

NPCI Launches Central Portal – upihelp.npci.org.in to Manage UPI Autopay Mandates

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has launched a centralized portal – npci.org.in to enable users to view, manage, and revoke all UPI Autopay standing instructions from a single platform.

The initiative aims to curb opaque recurring charges and prevent dark patterns used by some digital platforms that trigger automatic monthly debits with low user visibility.

NPCI has announced that UPI Autopay mandates will become portable, allowing users to transfer recurring mandates seamlessly from one UPI application to another.

All UPI ecosystem members, including banks and payment service providers, are required to implement these reforms by December 31, 2025, to enhance consumer protection and transparency.

According to NPCI data, UPI Autopay recurring transactions recorded 100% year-on-year growth, reflecting rapid adoption of recurring digital payments.

In November 2025, the top 10 banks together processed 926 million UPI Autopay transactions, a significant rise from 530.5 million transactions in November 2024.

State Bank of India (SBI) emerged as the largest processor of UPI Autopay transactions, handling 290 million recurring payments.

Airtel Payments Bank recorded the fastest growth, with UPI Autopay transactions increasing from 25.6 million to 89.7 million within a year.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Chair of BWF Athletes' Commission for 2026–29 Term

P. V. Sindhu has been elected Chair of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) Athletes' Commission for the 2026–2029 term, strengthening athlete representation in global badminton governance.

As Chair of the Athletes' Commission, the double Olympic medallist will also serve as a Member of the BWF Council, ensuring direct player representation in policy and decision-making at the international level.

P. V. Sindhu has been associated with the BWF Athletes' Commission since 2017 and has served as a BWF Integrity Ambassador since 2020, reflecting her long-standing administrative and sporting experience.

Debora Jille (Netherlands) has been appointed Deputy Chair of the BWF Athletes' Commission, alongside members from Korea, Egypt, and China, highlighting the global composition of the body.

In Para badminton, Chan Ho Yuen Daniel (Hong Kong China) has been elected Chair of the BWF Para Athletes' Commission, with Cathrine Rosengren (Denmark) serving as Deputy Chair.

Soraya Aghaei Haji Agha, the first female badminton player from Iran to compete in the Olympic Games (Tokyo 2020), has been appointed as one of five new members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Athletes' Commission.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

Vice President Releases Book 'Sanatan Sanskriti Ki Atal Drishti'

The Vice President of India, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan, released the book 'Sanatan Sanskriti Ki Atal Drishti' at the Vice President's Enclave, New Delhi.

The book has been authored by Shri Vasudev Devnani, Speaker of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly.

The Vice President congratulated the author and described the book as a timely and significant contribution, particularly as the nation commemorates the centenary birth anniversary of former Prime Minister and Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

While speaking on the occasion, the Vice President stated that Atal Bihari Vajpayee was not merely an individual but an institution in himself, whose life and leadership were deeply rooted in strong values, democratic principles, and an inclusive vision of nationalism.

He recalled the Pokhran Nuclear Tests of May 1998, conducted under Operation Shakti during Vajpayee's tenure as Prime Minister, noting that they demonstrated India's strategic autonomy, national confidence, and global standing.

The Vice President also highlighted Vajpayee's iconic slogan "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan", which reflected his holistic vision of national strength encompassing defence, agriculture, and science.

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