DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 31-12-2025

NATIONAL NEWS

VoxelGrids Develops India's First Indigenous Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Scanner

VoxelGrids, a Zoho-backed Indian medical technology startup, has developed India's first indigenously built Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanner, providing a major boost to Make in India and the medical technology sector.

The development significantly reduces India's dependence on imported diagnostic equipment and strengthens the domestic healthcare infrastructure.

The project is the outcome of a 12-year research and development effort led by Arjun Arunachalam, Founder of VoxelGrids.

Until now, India relied largely on foreign manufacturers such as Siemens and GE Healthcare for MRI machines.

VoxelGrids has designed and built a 1.5-tesla MRI scanner, which has been deployed at the Chandrapur Cancer Care Foundation near Nagpur.

The MRI scanner is completely designed and manufactured in India.

It does not use liquid helium, unlike conventional MRI machines.

The scanner is around 40% cheaper to build compared to imported MRI systems.

The machine incorporates indigenous technological innovations, rather than being a replica of foreign designs.

The initiative will help lower the cost of MRI scans, improving access to affordable healthcare.

It strengthens Atmanirbhar Bharat in the medical devices sector.

The development encourages growth of the Indian medical technology startup ecosystem.

It improves the availability of advanced diagnostic facilities in tier-2 cities and rural regions.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is a non-invasive diagnostic technique that uses strong magnetic fields and radio waves.

Sudarsan Pattnaik Creates World Record Santa Claus Sculpture in Odisha

Renowned sand artist and Padma Shri awardee Sudarsan Pattnaik created a world record–breaking Santa Claus sculpture at Niladri Beach, Puri, Odisha.

The artwork celebrates the Christmas spirit and conveys a message of peace, harmony and global unity.

Titled “World’s Biggest Apple and Sand Installation of Santa Claus”, the sculpture was unveiled on 26 December 2025.

It has been officially recognised by the World Records Book of India.

Sudarsan Pattnaik shared visuals of the installation on social media, highlighting its unique festive theme.

The sculpture was made using 1.5 tonnes of apples along with sand.

It measures 60 feet in length, 45 feet in width and 22 feet in height.

The installation combines sand art with fruit-based elements, making it a one-of-a-kind artistic creation.

The artwork was designed to spread a message of peace and harmony across the world.

The installation attracted tourists and local visitors, boosting cultural tourism in Puri.

It promoted the Christmas spirit through creative public art.

The sculpture showcased India’s innovation and eco-friendly artistic talent on a global platform.

Sudarsan Pattnaik is an internationally acclaimed sand artist.

He is known for creating sculptures highlighting social issues, global events, climate change, humanitarian causes and environmental protection.

Niladri Beach, Puri, is widely known for sand art exhibitions and tourist attractions, especially during festive occasions like Christmas.

India to Introduce Its First Comprehensive National Anti-Terror Policy

India is set to introduce its first comprehensive National Anti-Terror Policy, aimed at strengthening the national security architecture.

The policy is in the final stages and will provide a unified framework for Central and State agencies to prevent, investigate and respond to terror-related incidents.

It reflects India’s evolving security challenges such as digital radicalisation, cross-border threats and the need for stronger inter-agency coordination.

A major focus of the policy is on emerging and non-traditional terror threats.

It addresses digital radicalisation, where extremist groups use social media and encrypted platforms to recruit and indoctrinate youth.

The policy also highlights the misuse of open borders, particularly along the India–Nepal border, for terrorist movement and logistics.

Special attention is given to foreign-funded conversion and radicalisation networks, which threaten internal security and social harmony.

To fine-tune the policy, a National Investigation Agency (NIA) conference will be held in New Delhi on 26–27 December.

The conference will bring together Central agencies and State anti-terror units to discuss operational and strategic aspects.

NIA Director General Sadanand Date and National Security Guard (NSG) Director General Brighu Srinivasan have already consulted State police chiefs on evolving terror trends.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

United States President Donald Trump Unveils Plan for New US Navy ‘Battleship’

United States (US) President Donald Trump announced plans for the US Navy to build a new large warship, described as a “battleship”, as part of a proposed “Golden Fleet.”

The proposed battleship is claimed to be larger than the Iowa-class battleships used by the US during World War II.

The warship is expected to be equipped with hypersonic missiles, rail guns, and high-powered lasers, though several of these advanced weapons systems are still under development.

The plan aims to revive US shipbuilding capacity, reduce cost overruns and construction delays, and counter China’s dominance, which accounts for about 53% of global shipbuilding, compared to roughly 0.1% by the US.

According to Trump, the US Navy may initially build two ships, with a long-term plan to expand the fleet to up to 25 vessels, although production timelines remain uncertain.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

IIT Patna Launches PARAM Rudra Supercomputer

PARAM Rudra supercomputer was launched at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Patna, Bihar, marking the first PARAM Rudra system in Bihar under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).

The launch was presided over by Amitesh Kumar Sinha, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for setting up PARAM Rudra was signed in May 2023 between IIT Patna and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under MeitY.

The supercomputer delivers 838 teraflops performance and is built using indigenously developed Rudra servers and software, supporting Atmanirbhar Bharat in High-Performance Computing (HPC).

PARAM Rudra at IIT Patna will support advanced research for around 60 faculty members and 400 students across 10 departments.

PARAM (PARAllel Machine) signifies “supreme” in Sanskrit, while Rudra refers to the Vedic name of Lord Shiva, symbolising power and strength.

The system uses Intel Xeon Central Processing Unit (CPUs) and NVIDIA A100 Graphics Processing Unit (GPUs), enabling high-end Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and simulation workloads.

It is equipped with large RAM, parallel Lustre storage, and high-speed InfiniBand interconnects, providing petaflop-scale computing capability (1015 Floating Point Operations Per Second, FLOPS).

Sharadchandra Pawar CoE in Artificial Intelligence Inaugurated in Baramati

Industrialist Gautam Adani inaugurated the Sharadchandra Pawar Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence in Baramati, Maharashtra.

The centre has been established under Vidya Pratishthan, a reputed educational institution governed by the Pawar family, and is fully funded by the Adani Group Chairman.

The initiative aims to strengthen India’s artificial intelligence ecosystem and higher education infrastructure through industry–academia collaboration.

The centre is located in Baramati, around 110 kilometres from Pune, and is envisioned as a hub for advanced learning, research, and innovation in emerging digital technologies.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by several prominent leaders, including Sharad Pawar, Supriya Sule (Member of Parliament from Baramati), Ajit Pawar, Sunetra Pawar, Rohit Pawar, and Yugendra Pawar, Treasurer of Vidya Pratishthan.

The centre reflects the growing role of corporate participation in educational development, supporting skill development aligned with Industry 4.0, enhancing student employability, and promoting research, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

BANKING

RBI Grants Non-Banking Financial Company Registration to Aryaman Finance (India) Limited

Aryaman Finance (India) Limited (AFIL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Aryaman Financial Services Limited (AFSL), received a Certificate of Registration (CoR) from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to commence operations as a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC).

The RBI grants NBFC registration under Section 45-IA of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, which governs regulation and supervision of NBFCs in India.

Post approval, AFIL will operate as a Type-II NBFC-ND-ICC (Non-Deposit Taking – Investment and Credit Company), meaning it is not allowed to accept public deposits.

As an NBFC-ND-ICC, AFIL will primarily undertake lending, investment, and allied financial services, while complying with RBI prudential norms and regulatory requirements.

Aryaman Financial Services Limited (AFSL) is a SEBI-registered Category-I Merchant Banker, highlighting its strong regulatory standing in the capital markets.

AFSL’s core business includes lead management and syndication of IPOs, FPOs, Rights Issues, Private Investment in Public Equity (PIPE), Venture Capital (VC) funding, and other fund-raising activities.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Executive Director of Bandhan Bank

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approved the re-appointment of Ratan Kumar Kesh as Executive Director (ED) of Bandhan Bank for a three-year term, effective March 31, 2026.

He will continue as Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Key Managerial Personnel (KMP) of Bandhan Bank, ensuring leadership continuity.

Ratan Kumar Kesh has nearly 30 years of cross-sector banking experience, overseeing operations, technology, digital transformation, risk management, and customer experience.

He has held senior leadership roles in leading banks such as Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, Yes Bank, and ICICI Bank.

He joined Bandhan Bank in March 2023 and led major IT and operations transformation, focusing on process improvement, automation, and customer service excellence.

In 2024, he served as Interim Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Bandhan Bank, strengthening his leadership credentials.

Barham Salih Appointed as New UNHCR Chief

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) approved Barham Salih as the next Head of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Barham Salih became the first UN Refugee Chief from the Middle East since the late 1970s, and his appointment was approved by consensus of all 193 UN member states.

He was recommended by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who highlighted Salih's background as a former refugee, crisis negotiator, and senior political leader.

Salih will succeed Filippo Grandi and will assume office on January 1, 2026, serving a five-year term as UNHCR chief.

He served as President of Iraq from 2018 to 2022, leading during the period following the Islamic State (IS) group's territorial defeat in Iraq.

SPORTS

Chairman of Badminton World Federation Athletes' Commission

Pusarla Venkata Sindhu (PV Sindhu), India's badminton icon, has been elected Chair of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) Athletes' Commission for the 2026–2029 term.

With this appointment, she becomes a member of the Badminton World Federation Council, ensuring direct athlete representation in global badminton governance.

The election marks a major milestone in Sindhu's leadership role beyond competitive badminton.

As Chair of the Athletes' Commission, PV Sindhu will represent the interests and concerns of badminton players worldwide.

She will contribute to policy formulation, governance decisions, and athlete-centric reforms within the BWF.

PV Sindhu has been associated with the BWF Athletes' Commission since 2017.

She has also served as a BWF Integrity Ambassador since 2020, strengthening her role in promoting ethical practices in badminton.

Debora Jille (Netherlands) has been appointed Deputy Chair of the Athletes' Commission.

Other commission members include An Se-young (Olympic Champion), Doha Hany (Egypt), and Jia Yifan (China).

In para-badminton, Chan Ho Yuen Daniel (Hong Kong China) has taken over as full-time Chair.

Indian para-badminton player Abu Hubaida is also a member of the commission.