



RAMAN ACADEMY
"inspiring excellence"

FEBRUARY 2025

CURRENT AFFAIRS ENGLISH



- Topic wise current affairs
- 150 practice questions
- Detailed analysis of important events

BY RAMAN ACADEMY

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SECTION 1

TOPIC WISE CURRENT AFFAIRS



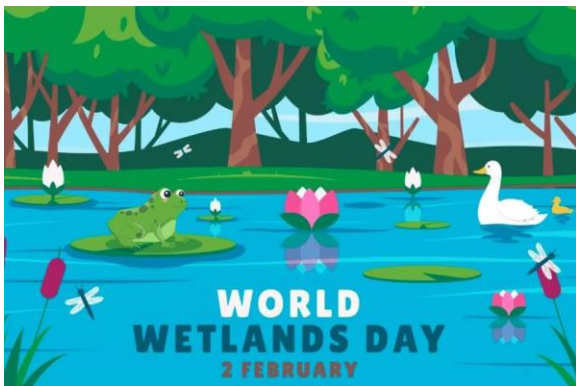
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1: Important Days



Indian Coast Guard Day : 01 February :-

The Indian Coast Guard Day, also known as ICG Day, is observed annually on February 1st. It is critical to recognize the Indian Coast Guard's commitments to the country's maritime safety. The historical context of ICG Day dates back to February 1, 1977, when the interim Indian Coast Guard was established to combat ocean-borne cargo smuggling. On August 18, 1978, the Indian Parliament declared ICG Day to be observed on February 1 each year. The Indian Coast Guard has been instrumental in both apprehending miscreants and saving thousands of lives since its inception.



World Wetlands Day : 02 February :-

World Wetlands Day, observed annually on February 2, aims to promote global awareness about the critical significance of wetlands for people and the environment. On February 2, 1971, the Convention on Wetlands was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar. Nearly 90% of the world's wetlands have been damaged since the 1700s, and we are losing them three times

faster than forests. It is critical that we promote national and worldwide awareness about wetlands in order to slow their rapid decline and stimulate conservation and restoration efforts. The theme for World Wetlands Day 2025 is 'Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future'.



World Rheumatic Arthritis Day : 02 February :-

Every year on February 2, World Rheumatic Arthritis Day is observed to call attention to the difficulties of rheumatoid arthritis, an inflammatory disease that affects joints. This is an autoimmune disease in which the body attacks and damages the lining of the joints, mistaking it for foreign material. The history of World Rheumatic Arthritis Awareness Day dates back to 2011, when a group of patients founded the Rheumatoid Patient Foundation. It was in 2013 when the Rheumatoid Appreciation Day was first observed.



World Cancer Day : 04 February:-

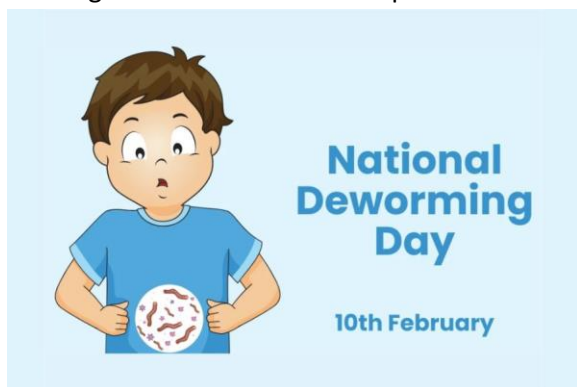
World Cancer Day has been marked yearly on February 4th. This worldwide campaign attempts to increase

awareness of cancer prevention, detection, and treatment. World Cancer Day began in 2000 at the first World Summit Against Cancer, which was held in Paris. At this Summit, prominent world leaders from government agencies and cancer organizations signed the Paris Against Cancer Charter. The theme for World Cancer Day 2025-2027 is 'United by Unique.' This theme highlights the importance of personalized care and treatments to cater to each individual's unique needs.



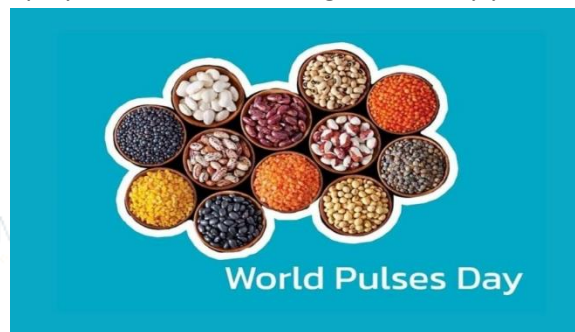
International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation : 06 February :-

The International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), commemorated each year on February 6th, is a significant day for the global society. It provides an opportunity to strengthen ties and take coordinated action to reinforce our pledges to ending this cruel practice, which continues to affect the lives of millions of women and girls. In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly declared February 6 as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation. This year, with the theme 'Stepping up the Pace', there is a focus on strengthening alliances and building movements to end this practice.



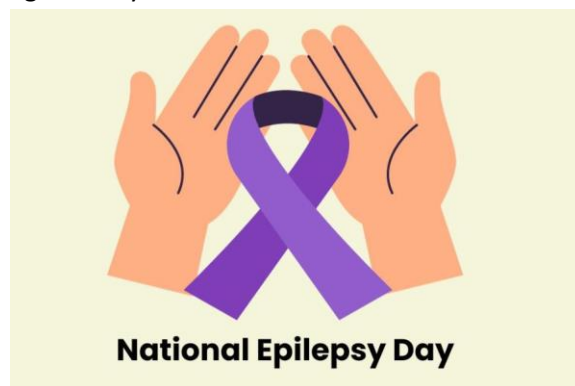
National Deworming Day (India) : 10 February :-

Every year on February 10, India observes National Deworming Day, which aims to deworm all children aged 1 to 19. The day, which is regarded as the world's largest deworming effort, was inaugurated in India in 2015 with the goal of reaching almost 240 million children who are at risk of contracting soil-transmitted helminths in India. Worm infections in children can limit food intake, resulting in anemia, malnutrition, and decreased mental and physical development. While the first round is conducted on February 10, it is followed up by second round on August 10 every year.



World Pulses Day : 10 February :-

World Pulses Day is a global event held on February 10 to highlight the importance of pulses as a global food source. The day celebrates pulses' critical role in accomplishing a comprehensive, far-reaching, and people-centered set of universal and revolutionary objectives. The oldest evidence of pulses dates back more than 11,000 years to the Fertile Crescent, a region in the Middle East that was home to some of the earliest human civilizations. The theme for this year's World Pulses Day is: "Pulses: Bringing diversity to agrifood systems".



International Epilepsy Day 2025 : 10 February :-

Every year on the second Monday of February, International Epilepsy Day is commemorated and this year it will be celebrated on 10 February. Epilepsy is derived from the Greek word for 'to be seized, to be overwhelmed by surprise'. Epilepsy means having repeated seizures. It is claimed that if the brain is subjected to a powerful enough stimuli, anyone can suffer a seizure. The day was organised by the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) and the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE). It started in 2015.



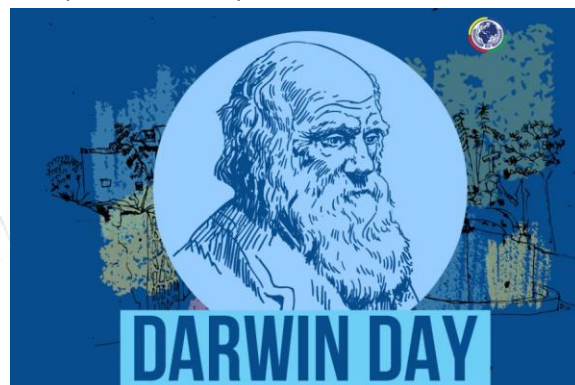
International Day of Women and Girls in Science : 11 February :-

Every year on February 11, the International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed. The United Nations recognizes this day to encourage women's full and equal engagement in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The United Nations General Assembly established the day in 2015 with the goal of honoring all women and girls who have contributed to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. This year marks the 10th International Day of Women and Girls in Science, with a theme of 'Unpacking STEM careers: Her Voice in Science'.



National Productivity Day (India) : 12 February :-

Every year on February 12, India marks National Productivity Day, which commemorates the establishment of the National Productivity Council (NPC). National Productivity Council (NPC) was created on February 12, 1958. The objective of the NPC is to raise awareness about ways to increase the country's production. The day is recognized as part of National Productivity Week, which runs from February 12 to 18. The theme for National Productivity Day 2025 is "From Ideas to Impact: Protecting Intellectual Property for Competitive Startups".



Darwin Day : 12 February :-

Charles Darwin, an English naturalist whose scientific theory of natural selection laid the groundwork for modern evolutionary studies, is regarded as the father of evolution. And, despite numerous subsequent conflicts, his evolutionary theory provided the most rational explanation for the origin of new species at the time. As a result, Darwin Day is not only a festival to remember the doyen of science's birthday on February 12, 1809, but also a day to recognize his contributions to science and draw inspiration to encourage scientific progress in general.



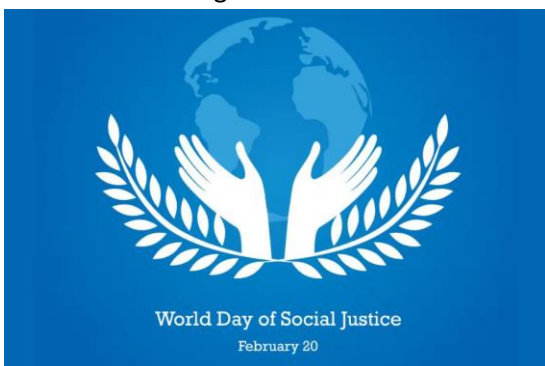
Sarojini Naidu Birth Anniversary : 13 February :-

The nation celebrates Sarojini Naidu's birth anniversary on February 13 every year. Sarojini Naidu was born 146 years ago this year. She was a poet and political activist. Her poetry gained her the nickname 'Nightingale of India'. Born in Hyderabad on February 13, 1879, she was regarded as one of the most popular women of the twentieth century. She was a student of Mahatma Gandhi and played a key role in the Indian National Movement, which campaigned for independence. Gopal Krishna Gokhale was among the many well-known Indian politicians who admired Sarojini Naidu's poetry.



World Radio Day : 13 February :-

World Radio Day is observed yearly on February 13. Guglielmo Marconi is widely thought to have made the first radio transmission in 1895, and radio broadcasting of music and discussion aimed at a larger audience began, albeit experimentally, around 1905-1906. The radio first appeared commercially in the early 1920s. Radio stations came into existence almost three decades later and the radio and broadcasting system became a common commodity around the world by the 1950s. The theme of World Radio Day 2025 is "Radio and Climate Change".



World Day of Social Justice : 20 February :-

The World Day of Social Justice is observed every year on February 20. It is a day designated by the United Nations to promote efforts to achieve civil rights for all. This recognition serves as a reminder of the critical need to address issues like as prejudice, poverty, inequality, and social exclusion, which continue to exist in countries around the world. The United Nations General Assembly declared the World Day of Social Justice in 2007. The theme for 2025 is "Strengthening a Just Transition for a Sustainable Future".



World Anthropology Day 2025 : 20 February :-

World Anthropology Day is commemorated annually on the third Thursday in February. And this year it will be held on February 20. The day is set aside to commemorate the unexplored area and educate the general population about anthropology. Anthropology refers to the scientific study of humans. It looks at the origins and development of human societies and cultures. World Anthropology Day was established in 2015 by the American Anthropological Association (A.A.A.). Initially observed as National Anthropology Day, the day was later renamed in 2016 as World Anthropology Day.



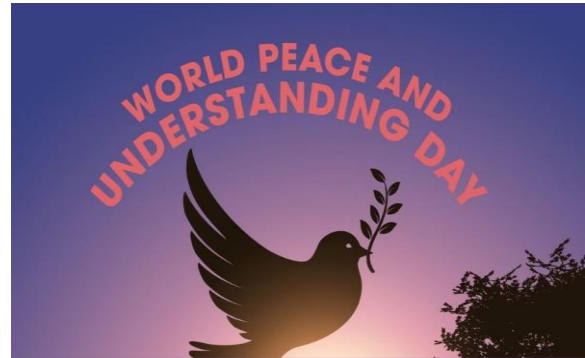
International Mother Language Day : 21 February :-

Every year on February 21, we commemorate International Mother Language Day. On February 21, 1952, four students were slain when they began the effort to make Bengali the national language of Bangladesh. In November 1999, the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared International Mother Language Day, which was later recognized by the UN General Assembly. The theme for this year is: "Silver Jubilee Celebration of International Mother Language Day."

**World Thinking Day : 22 February :-**

Every year on February 22, World Thinking Day celebrates friendship, sisterhood, and women's empowerment all throughout the world. The day serves as a reminder of our common obligation to build a better world in which every girl has an equal chance to succeed. The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) and the Boy Scouts International

Federation (BSIF) have recognized World Thinking Day as an opportunity to reflect on the significance of the scouting movement and explore its global influence. "Our Story" is the theme for World Thinking Day in 2025.

**World Peace and Understanding Day : 23 February :-**

World Peace and Understanding Day, marked annually on February 23rd, promotes global harmony, unity, and mutual respect across nations and cultures. This Day commemorates the birth of Rotary International while also serving as a global call to action. The first Rotary Clubs in America were established in 1910, with headquarters mostly in San Francisco, Seattle, Oakland, and Los Angeles. The club soon spread to the world and became one of the important organisations – hence, the name of the organisation was changed to Rotary International.

2: Agreements

**PTC Industries inks aerospace MoU with Odisha govt :-**

PTC Industries said in a press release on the exchanges that it has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Odisha to build and finance in an Aerospace-Grade Titanium Sponge Manufacturing Facility. Sachin Agarwal, Chairman & Managing Director of PTC Industries in a statement said, "This MoU signifies an important step towards strengthening India's Titanium industry. With Odisha's support and our technological expertise, we aim to build a fully integrated Titanium manufacturing

ecosystem that can cater to the evolving needs of global aerospace and defence industries.”



Avaada and Casale Collaborate on 1,500 TPD Green Ammonia Plant in Odisha :-

Avaada Group recently unveiled its partnership with Casale to build a 1,500-tonne-per-day (TPD) green ammonia factory in Gopalpur, Odisha. The plant will be totally powered by renewable energy, with Casale's ammonia production technology providing a carbon-free process. Casale will supply the Green Ammonia Process License, Basic Engineering Package, Proprietary Equipment, and a Detailed Engineering Review. The project aligns with India's Net Zero commitments and aims to establish a benchmark for sustainable industrial development.



IICA and CMAI collaborated to Enhance Capacity for Decarbonisation :-

According to an official announcement, the Carbon Market Association of India (CMAI) and the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) have inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to advance decarbonization initiatives in India and enhance carbon markets. According to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs,

the partnership would seek to develop significant learning opportunities that can hasten India's shift to a low-carbon economy by fusing the IICA's institutional strength with the CMAI's industrial experience.



BCCI, ICC Team Up for Organ Donation Awareness :-

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the International Cricket Council (ICC) have announced that an organ donation drive will be launched during India's third ODI against England in Ahmedabad on Wednesday, February 12. ICC Chairman Jay Shah confirmed the development on X, and the BCCI distributed a video to Indian players encouraging everyone to join the campaign. Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, Arshdeep Singh, Axar Patel, Hardik Pandya, Rishabh Pant and Varun Chakravarthy were among some of the Indian players who appealed to everyone who could, to pledge their organs and play the 'winning shot of life' for many.



Tata Elxsi & Garuda Aerospace to Boost India's UAV Sector :-

Tata Elxsi, a design and technology services provider, has teamed with drone manufacturer Garuda Aerospace to establish a design, engineering, and

certification center to create indigenous drone technologies. Tata Elxsi stated that the technology to be developed at the proposed centre, for which the two companies have agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding at the ongoing defence and aerospace show, Aero India 2025, in Bengaluru, will specifically have Indian defence applications, as well as agriculture and smart cities, to support the 'Make in India' initiative.



Cochin Shipyard signs MoU with Maersk :-

A.P. Moller - Maersk (Maersk) and Cochin Shipyard Ltd. (CSL) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore collaborative potential in ship repair, maintenance, and construction in India. According to Maersk, this relationship corresponds with the Government of India's Vision 2047 marine aspirations and recent Union Budget 2025-26 announcements to position India among the top five global maritime centers. The collaboration comes at a time when the global shipping industry is expected to face capacity constraints in ship repair yards around the world.



IIM Nagpur Signs MoU with Skyline University College, Sharjah :-

The Indian Institute of Management Nagpur (IIM-N) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Skyline University College (SUC) in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. SUC is a popular Middle Eastern institution that values diversity and cultural integration in the pursuit of a knowledge-based society. The MoU between IIM Nagpur and SUC is a new chapter of educational exchange which will begin an eco-system that fosters innovation and research, academic excellence, and industrial expertise for both students and faculty.



India, Malaysia Extend Military Ties :-

India and Malaysia have agreed to strengthen cooperation in maritime security, defense manufacturing, multilateral engagements, and new sectors such as cybersecurity and artificial intelligence (AI). The 13th meeting of the Malaysia-India defence cooperation committee in Kuala Lumpur, jointly headed by defence secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh and his counterpart Lokman Hakim Bin Ali, covered a wide range of topics, including 'effective and practical initiatives' to expand bilateral defence engagements, regional and global issues.



India and Argentina Ink MoU for Lithium Exploration :-

India and Argentina have inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen collaboration in lithium exploration and mining, according to a statement from the Mines Ministry. The agreement was signed by Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy and Governor of Catamarca, Argentina, Raúl Alejandro Jalil in New Delhi. The agreement seeks to facilitate collaboration in the exploration and development of lithium and other key minerals. Argentina holds significant reserves of lithium, a key component in electric vehicle batteries and renewable energy storage systems.



India and Nepal Strengthen Scientific Ties with New Agreement :-

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) of India and the Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL) in New Delhi, marking a

significant milestone in India-Nepal Science and Technology (S&T) cooperation. The agreement, signed and exchanged by Dr. N. Kalaiselvi, Director General, CSIR, and Secretary, DSIR, and Prof. Dr. Dilip Subba, Vice-Chancellor, NAST, establishes a broad framework to promote bilateral scientific and technological collaboration.



Bisleri & ASI Join Hands to Restore Heritage Water Bodies :-

Bisleri International Pvt. Ltd. has formed a strategic cooperation with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) through the 'Adopt a Heritage 2.0 Programme'. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was formally executed by Zulfeqar Ali, Director of ASI, Ministry of Culture, and Angelo George, CEO of Bisleri International. The partnership will be taken under Archaeological Survey of India's 'Adopt a Heritage 2.0 Programme' and Bisleri's CSR initiative 'Nayi Umeed' and start with adoption of four historic water bodies.

3: Appointments



Rajesh Nirwan Appointed as Director General of Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) :-

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) authorized the Ministry of Civil Aviation's recommendation to nominate Rajesh Nirwan (IPS) as Director General of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS). Rajesh Nirwan, an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the 1992 Rajasthan cadre, offers vast experience and competence to his current position.

Nirwan's appointment will be effective from the date of assumption of charge and will continue until further orders.



Gopal Vittal Appointed Acting Chair of GSMA Board :-

The GSMA board has named Gopal Vittal, vice chairman and managing director of Bharti Airtel, as its acting chair. José Maria Álvarez-Pallete, the Chairman and CEO of Telefónica, resigned from his job, rendering him unable to continue serving as the GSMA Chair. Until a new chair is chosen, Vittal, who was just re-elected as the GSMA board's deputy chair, will serve in the interim. He has been an active member of the board and previously served in a key capacity during the 2019-2020 term.



K Balasubramanian Appointed as New Citibank India Head :-

Citi, a worldwide banking giant, has announced the hiring of K Balasubramanian as its India chief. Balasubramanian's appointment as India subcontinent sub-cluster and banking chief is dependent on regulatory approval from the Reserve Bank of India, according to an official announcement, and he will report to Asia South's head, Amol Gupte. The

appointment has been necessitated because incumbent Ashu Khullar has been appointed as the co-head of Global Asset Managers (GAM). Khullar will be part of the investment banking global operating committee.



Canara Bank Names Dr. Madhavankutty G as Chief Economist :-

Canara Bank has appointed Dr. Madhavankutty G as its chief economist. Dr. Madhavankutty's new function will involve offering strategic advice and feedback to top management on domestic and global economic and financial sector developments. Before joining Canara Bank, he worked as a senior economist at Bank of India, Aditya Birla Group, and the Times Group. He brings with him over two decades of extensive experience in economic research, spanning the banking sector, large conglomerates, and academia.



Gyanesh Kumar Appointed as India's New Chief Election Commissioner :-

President Droupadi Murmu has appointed Gyanesh Kumar as the next Chief Election Commissioner. Gyanesh Kumar succeeds Rajiv Kumar, who left office after reaching the age of 65. He became the first CEC appointed under the new election commissioner

appointment law. Gyanesh Kumar's name was decided at a meeting of the selection committee chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and Lok Sabha opposition leader Rahul Gandhi. The committee met at the Prime Minister's Office in South Block.



Standard Chartered Appoints P.D. Singh as India CEO :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of Prabdev (PD) Singh, a corporate banking veteran and former JP Morgan India CEO, as CEO of Standard Chartered (StanC) in India and South Asia, according to persons familiar with the situation. Singh will begin his three-year tenure on April 1, succeeding Zarin Daruwala, who retired from the bank at the end of March. Singh had stepped down as CEO of JP Morgan in India, in June last year before the end of his term. He had received regulatory approval in January 2023 for a three-year term.



Rekha Gupta Sworn in as Delhi's New Chief Minister :-

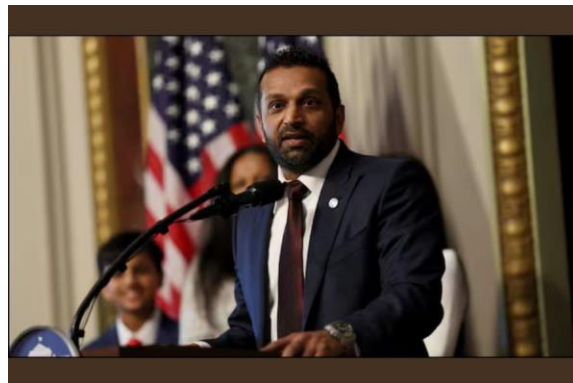
Rekha Gupta, a first-time MLA, took oath as Delhi's Chief Minister in front of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other NDA Chief Ministers at the renowned Ram Lila Maidan in a mega show of unity. Aside from Gupta, six

other MLAs, including Parvesh Verma, Manjinder Singh Sirsa, and Kapil Mishra, took oaths as cabinet ministers. In the February 5 Assembly elections, she defeated AAP candidate Bandana Kumari by more over 29,000 votes for the Shalimar Bagh seat. Notably, Ms Gupta contested the Shalimar Bagh seat in both the 2015 and 2020 Delhi elections but was defeated by AAP's Bandana Kumari in both years.



Vivek Joshi Assumes Charge as Election Commissioner :-

Vivek Joshi, a mechanical engineer from IIT-Roorkee and former Haryana chief secretary, was appointed election commissioner. Joshi, 58, is one of the poll panel's youngest members. According to the legislation governing the appointment of CECs and ECs, the chief election commissioner and other election commissioners will serve for six years from the date they take office or until they reach the age of 65, "whichever is earlier". Joshi is a 1989 batch officer of the Indian Administrative Service of the Haryana cadre.



Kash Patel Sworn in as the Ninth Director of the FBI :-

Indian-origin Kash Patel had been sworn in as the FBI's ninth director. He was officially sworn in by US Attorney

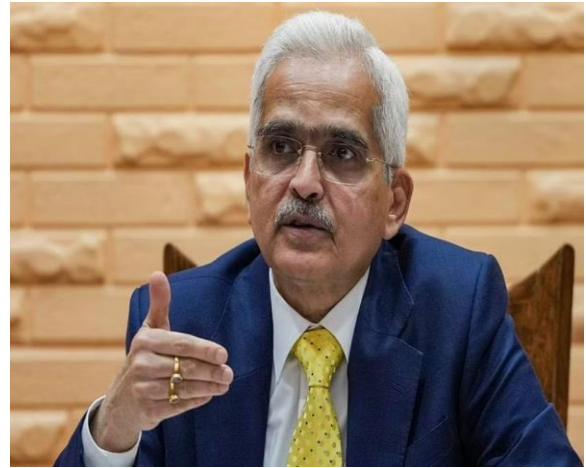
General Pam Bondi in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building after being confirmed by the US Senate as FBI director. He succeeds Christopher Wray. However, the Democrats did not seem very happy with Patel's appointment, sounding alarms that they fear he will work as a Trump loyalist and abuse the FBI's powers to go after the adversaries of the president.



Sabyasachi Kar Named Director of Institute of Economic Growth :-

Professor Sabyasachi Kar has been named the next Director of the Institute of Economic Growth (IEG), New Delhi. He replaces Professor Chetan Ghatge. Kar, an economist, is currently the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Chair Professor at IEG and a member of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's (Mospi) Committee on Regional Accounts. He has previously held academic roles, including co-editor of the Journal

of South Asian Development and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Manchester.



Shaktikanta Das Appointed Principal Secretary-2 to PM Modi :-

Shaktikanta Das, the former governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), has been named Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Principal Secretary-2'. Shaktikanta Das, the RBI's governor for six years, stepped down in December last year. Sanjay Malhotra took over as the 26th governor of the central bank. A 1980-batch Tamil Nadu cadre IAS officer, Das, holds a master's degree in history from Delhi's St Stephen's College and a postgraduate degree in public administration from the University of Birmingham.

4: Awards



IBA honours Karnataka Bank with six awards for banking technology excellence :-

Karnataka Bank recently received prizes in six categories at the '20th Annual Banking Technology Conference, Expo & Citations, 2024' hosted by the Indian Banks' Association. A media announcement quoted Srikrishnan H, the bank's Managing Director and CEO, as saying: "It is yet another moment of pride for the bank as we consistently find ourselves in the league of leading financial institutions pioneering new-age banking technology. This recognition is a testimony to the combined in-house capabilities of the bank's technology centre, Digital Centre of Excellence (DCoE) and Analytical Centre of Excellence (ACoE) in Bengaluru."



Former ISRO Chairman Somanath chosen for Malliyoor Award :-

Former ISRO Chairman S Somanath has been chosen for the Malliyoor Shankar Smriti Award, which was established in remembrance of the late Malliyoor Sankaran Namboothiri, a renowned Sanskrit scholar and Bhagavatham exponent. According to the release, the accolade includes a Rs one lakh purse, citation, and plaque. Former President of India and rocket scientist A P J Abdul Kalam was the first winner of the award, which was established in 2012. Distinguished persons who make remarkable contributions in the fields of arts, literature, science and spirituality are chosen for the honour, it said.



Chandrika Tandon's 'Triveni' Wins Grammy for Best New Age Album :-

Chandrika Tandon, an Indian-American performer and entrepreneur, won a Grammy for her album Triveni in

the Best New Age, Ambient, or Chant Album category. The Recording Academy's 67th annual musical awards ceremony took place at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles. Chandrika, also a global business leader and the older sister of former CEO of PepsiCo Indra Nooyi, won the award along with her collaborators, South African flautist Wouter Kellerman and Japanese cellist Eru Matsumoto.



Travis Head Clinches Maiden Allan Border Medal at 2025 Australian Cricket Awards :-

Travis Head won his first Allan Border medal at the 2025 Australian Cricket Awards. Head received 208 votes in total, 50 higher than Josh Hazlewood and 61 more than Pat Cummins. Head had a strong year, performing well in all three formats. In total, he scored 1427 runs across forms, including four centuries. He also defeated wicketkeeper Alex Carey to win the Men's ODI Player of the Year title. Hazlewood won the Shane Warne Test player of the year award whereas Adam Zampa was named the Men's T20I player of the year.



First Black Mrs World: Mrs South Africa Makes History

:

In the 40-year history of the competition, Tshego Gaelae of South Africa became the first black woman to earn the title of Mrs. World 2025. The 33-year-old Soweto model defeated competitors from Thailand and Sri Lanka to win the title in Las Vegas. Gaelae took to Instagram after her win to dedicate her achievement to South Africa and Africa, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to represent her country on a worldwide scale. This victory follows in the footsteps of Candice Abrahams, who became the first South African to claim the global crown in 2016.



Varsha Bharath's Bad Girl Wins NETPAC Award at IFFR :-

The upcoming Tamil film Bad Girl, directed by Varsha Bharath, has received the renowned NETPAC Award (Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema) at the IFFR 2025, a landmark win for Tamil cinema. The last Tamil film to earn this award was Arun Karthick's Nasir in 2019. Notable previous Indian winners include Mani Kaul's Naukar ki Kameez (1999) and Adoor Gopalakrishnan's Vidheyan (1995). This victory is a proud moment for debut director Varsha and the entire Bad Girl team, cementing their place on the global cinematic stage.



Indian Students Win Bronze at Global M-Gov Awards 2025 :-

At the World Government Summit (WGS) in Dubai, three Indian computer science students from New Delhi received the Bronze Award for the Global Best M-Gov Award 2025. Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President of the United Arab Emirates, gave the award, along with a \$10,000 cash prize, on the summit's opening day. The winning team comprised Sagar Teotia (team lead), Abhinav Mishra, and Anushka Singh, all fourth-semester computer science students from the Maharaja Agrasen Institute of Technology, Delhi.



Jomel Warrican, Beth Mooney bag ICC Players of the Month for January :-

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has named West Indies spinner Jomel Warrican and Australia batter Beth Mooney as the Men's and Women's Players of the Month for January 2025, respectively. Warrican's left-arm spin propelled the Caribbean squad to their first Test victory in Pakistan since 1990. Mooney, on the other hand, was in top form as Australia easily defeated England in the Ashes. Warrican becomes the first West Indian to win the award since his compatriot spinner Gudakesh Motie achieved the feat back in May 2024.



NTPC Ltd. Honoured with Forward Faster Sustainability Award 2025 for Water Resilience :-

The largest integrated power company in India, NTPC Ltd., has been recognized with the Forward Faster Sustainability Award 2025 in the Water Resilience category. The UN Global Compact Network India (UN GCNI) hosted a ceremony in Chennai where the award was given out. The Forward Faster Sustainability Awards celebrate organizations in India that have made significant strides in advancing sustainability and corporate responsibility, aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Manu Bhaker Named BBC Indian Sportswoman Of The Year 2024 :-**

Manu Bhaker, an Indian shooter, was named the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year following an excellent performance at the Paris Olympics 2024, where she won two bronze medals. The 22-year-old's outstanding

performances cemented her place among the country's top athletes. She became the first Indian shooter to win several medals at the same Olympics. The other contenders for the honour were golfer Aditi Ashok, para-shooter Avani Lekhara, India women's cricket vice-captain Smriti Mandhana, and wrestler Vinesh Phogat.

**Sunil Mittal Receives Honorary Knighthood from UK :-**

Sunil Bharti Mittal, founder and chairman of Bharti Enterprises, received the Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE) medal during a special reception ceremony conducted at the British High Commissioner's house in New Delhi. This distinction comes after His Majesty The King generously bestowed the Honorary Knighthood on Mittal in 2024 for his considerable achievements to UK-India economic relations, according to the British High Commission in New Delhi.

5: Banking

**NPCI Implements Stricter UPI Rules from Feb 1, 2025:-**

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has declared that UPI transactions with unusual characters in the transaction ID will be denied from February 1, 2025. This order attempts to regulate compliance with UPI technical specifications, which were implemented in March 2024. In March 2024, the NPCI issued a circular (OC 193) requiring all UPI participants to generate transaction IDs using only alphanumeric characters. This was introduced to align with technical standards and ensure uniformity in transaction processing.



CRED launches Beta version of e-Rupee Wallet :-

Cred, a financial platform, has become the first non-bank organization to successfully launch the e-Rupee wallet. This move is part of the RBI's Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) strategy, which aims to transform digital transactions in India. The Cred e-Rupee wallet, developed in collaboration with Yes Bank, enables users to send and receive money via a UPI-enabled interface. This beta version is currently available to a select group of members who have completed the video Know Your Customer (KYC) process.



FDI in insurance raised to 100% from 74%: FM Nirmala Sitharaman :-

In her Budget address for 2025, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed increasing the foreign direct investment (FDI) restriction in the insurance sector from 74% to 100%, which is likely to attract more firms and encourage innovation. With global insurance companies being able to fully invest, new and innovative solutions tailored to Indian consumers' different demands are expected to be introduced. As competition intensifies, the sector is expected to become more transparent, with faster claims processing and stronger consumer trust.



SEBI Proposes Secure UPI Payment Mechanism for Market Intermediaries :-

Sebi, the market regulator, is planning to introduce a new system to ensure secure and efficient payments in the securities market via the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in order to distinguish legitimate financial intermediaries from fraudulent ones. Under the proposed approach, the regulator proposes generating a unique UPI address for registered market intermediaries, making it easier for investors to certify that they are only paying registered businesses. Since 2019, Sebi has enabled UPI as a mode of payment in the market.



NPCI Proposes Hike in ATM Interchange Fees :-

According to reports, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is considering hiking prices for transactions over the free limit of five, as well as the fees banks pay each other for ATM usage. According to those familiar with the matter, this rise will result in customers paying more when withdrawing cash from ATMs. The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has recommended increasing the maximum cost for clients who exceed their five free transactions from Rs 21 to Rs 22. NPCI is also looking to hike several other fees.



South Indian Bank Unveils Startup Current Accounts for Entrepreneurs :-

South Indian Bank (SIB) has launched two specialized current account products to help India's startup ecosystem develop. The SIB Business Startup Current Account has been developed for sole proprietorships and partnerships, providing fundamental banking services to help fledgling firms build a solid foundation. The SIB Corporate Startup Current Account, on the other hand, caters to private limited companies, public limited companies, one-person companies, and limited liability partnerships, addressing the more complex financial needs of larger business entities.



RBI Launches 'Bank.in' & 'Fin.in' for Secure Digital Banking :-

The Reserve Bank of India has declared that Indian banks will obtain an exclusive internet domain 'bank.in', while non-bank financial institutions will receive 'fin.in' to address cyber security concerns. During the final bi-monthly monetary policy announcement of the fiscal year, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra stated that 'bank.in' registrations would commence in April 2025, followed by the introduction of 'fin.in'. The Institute for

Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT) has been designated as the exclusive registrar.



RBI allows small finance banks to offer credit lines via UPI :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has expanded the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) by allowing Small Finance Banks (SFBs) to provide pre-approved credit lines for UPI transactions. This change allows more consumers to easily get short-term borrowing. Previously, UPI transactions were confined to savings accounts, overdrafts, prepaid wallets, and credit cards. With this update, individuals can also link pre-approved credit lines as a payment source. This means users can make UPI payments directly from a credit line, just as they do with their bank accounts.



RBI Clears Kotak Mahindra Bank's Digital Onboarding Ban :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has relaxed the limits it imposed on Kotak Mahindra Bank (KMB) Ltd's ability to onboard new clients through its online and mobile banking services and issue new credit cards. Resuming digital customer onboarding may help with savings account acquisition and product cross-selling. The central bank had placed the restrictions on KMB on

April 24, 2024, following which the private lender implemented corrective measures and submitted compliance reports to the RBI.



RBI to Issue ₹50 Banknotes with Governor Sanjay Malhotra's Signature:-

The Reserve Bank of India announced that it will shortly print Rs 50 banknotes with Governor Sanjay Malhotra's signature. Malhotra took office in December 2024, succeeding Shaktikanta Das, who stepped down after serving an extended tenure. "The design of these notes is similar in all respects to Rs 50 banknotes in Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series," the RBI said in a statement. All banknotes in the denomination of Rs 50 issued by the Reserve Bank in the past will continue to be legal tender.



IRDAI Introduces Bima-ASBA for UPI-Based Insurance Payments :-

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has enabled policyholders to set aside funds for premiums using a new payment mechanism known as Bima-ASBA (Applications Supported by Blocked Amount) via the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). The program, which strives at simplifying the

payment procedure for life and health insurance policies, allows policyholders to block cash in their bank accounts for premium payments, assuring smooth transactions without rapid debits, according to an IRDAI circular.



Bank credit growth to NBFCs slows to four-year low in 2024 :-

Bank lending to non-banking financial businesses (NBFCs) expanded at the slowest rate in four years, expanding 6.7% in 2024 to Rs 16.22 lakh crore as of December, as compared to a 15% increase in 2023. The severe slowdown was caused by rising funding costs after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) increased the risk weights on such loans. According to RBI data, banks' lending to NBFCs plummeted to Rs 1 lakh crore in 2024, down from nearly Rs 2 lakh crore the year before. Concerned over increased dependency of NBFCs on bank borrowings, the RBI in November 2023 increased the risk weight for bank credit to NBFCs by 25 basis points to 125%.



Bajaj Allianz Life Launches Bima-ASBA, a First in India :-

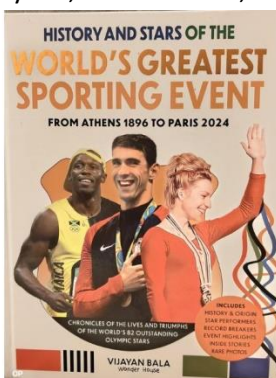
Bajaj Allianz Life recently declared that it will launch the Bima-Application Supported by Blocked Amount (Bima-ASBA) program. Bima-ASBA is a project launched by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) to simplify premium payments and improve policyholder satisfaction. The Bima-ASBA tool

enables policyholders to authorize the blockage of a certain premium amount (up to Rs 2 lakh) in their bank account via UPI's One-Time Mandate (OTM). This amount remains in the policyholder's account, earning interest, until the insurer completes the underwriting process and accepts the policy proposal.

6: Books and Author

**Kailash Kher launches debut book 'Teri Deewani - Shabdon Ke Paar' :-**

At the Jaipur Literature Festival, legendary singer Kailash Kher launched his debut book, 'Teri Deewani - Shabdon Ke Paar'. Kailash Kher appeared at the launch ceremony, along with Sanjoy K Roy and Vaishali Mathur. In his book, the famed singer discusses his early challenges, his path in the music industry, and his motivation for his most beloved songs. Through personal anecdotes and experiences, he goes into the stories that shaped both his life and music. It uncovers the untold stories behind 50 of his most iconic songs, including Saiyaan, Teri Deewani, and Allah Ke Bande.

**Vijayan Bala's new book launched at New Delhi World Book Fair :-**

Following up on his well-received book on India's Olympic medal winners, Vijayan Bala has released a sequel, this time detailing Olympic history and stars from around the world. "History and Stars of the World's Greatest Sporting Event: From Athens 1896 to Paris 2024" examines the lives and accomplishments of 82 of the world's most renowned and decorated Olympic athletes, including rare images, fascinating anecdotes, and a brief Olympic history. Published by Wonder House Books, the book includes some of the better-known names like Nadia Comaneci and Carl Lewis.

**Textbook on diabetes management released :-**

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has released a diabetes treatment textbook, which has been published by Springer, a well-known medical publisher based in the United States. The book, titled Management of Diabetic Complications: A Team-Based Approach, is intended to serve as a complete reference for doctors

worldwide, with a focus on early detection and successful management of diabetes-related problems. It emphasises the importance of early detection, integrated care, and the role of the latest medical technologies in improving patient outcomes.



Book 'Chronicles of Economic Diplomacy' by Dr. Asif Iqbal Launched :-

Dr. Asif Iqbal, President of the Indian Economic Trade Organization (IETO), recently released his book, 'Chronicles of Economic Diplomacy', in Mumbai. The event was hosted by acclaimed author Chetan Bhagat, who presented the book and spoke about its relevance. In Chronicles of Economic Diplomacy, Dr. Iqbal discusses his considerable experience forging economic ties between nations. The book delves into his journeys through Africa, the Gulf, the Middle East, and the Caribbean, offering readers a blend of personal anecdotes and professional insights.



The Hindu Group launches documentary filmmaker Krishnaswamy's book :-

S. Krishnaswamy, an accomplished documentary and television director, launched his book "Voyages Retraced: India's Influence in East Asia" in Chennai, published by The Hindu Group of Publications. The book

explores ancient India's influence on Southeast Asian countries, as well as a period in history when Indian sailors traveled to countries such as Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand, serving as conduits for the spread of Indian culture, architecture, and fine arts over centuries. It is a narrative of the author's travels between 2005 and 2010.



Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launches 41 books under PM YUVA 2.0 at NDWBF 2025 :-

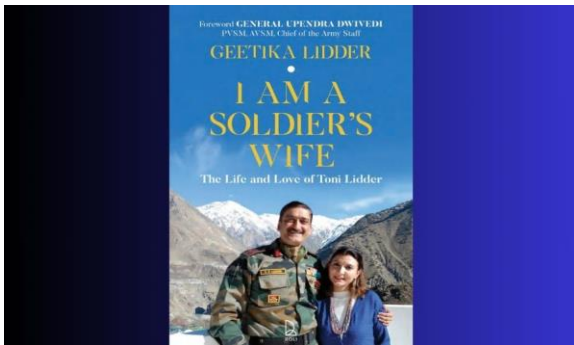
Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister for Education, launched 41 new books for the PM YUVA 2.0 scheme at the New Delhi World Book Fair 2025, based on to a Ministry of Education press release. The Governor of Tripura, Indrasena Reddy Nallu, was the event's guest of honor. In his address, Dharmendra Pradhan congratulated the 41 young authors whose works were launched, expressing confidence in their ability to enrich the literary landscape and influence intellectual discourse through their creative writings.



Three books by Haryana Speaker's wife released :-

Three novels written by Reshma Kalyan Meera, wife of Haryana Speaker Harvinder Kalyan, were released during a ceremony. Two of the works, Kishti Badbani

(Dastaanon Ki Nazmgoyi) and Akele Lamp Post, are poetry collections, while Murabba Se Moksha Tak is a short story collection. The chief guest, Kuldeep Chand Agnihotri, vice-chairman of the Haryana Sahitya and Sanskriti Academy, praised Reshma's work as of the highest literary level and encouraged her to continue her work. Retired IAS officer and writer Sumedha Kataria praised Reshma's portrayal of women's inner struggles.



A Book Titled 'I Am a Soldier's Wife' By Geetika Lidder Launched :-

Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi has inaugurated the book *I Am a Soldier's Wife*, authored by Geetika Lidder, the late Brigadier Lakhwinder Singh Lidder's wife. Brigadier Lidder died in the December 2021 helicopter crash in Tamil Nadu's Nilgiri Hills, which also killed former Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat. Speaking at the event, General Dwivedi described the book as a tribute to not only the life of a soldier but also a devoted husband, loving father, and an aspiring leader—both in the Indian Army and the J&K Rifles Regiment.



Grand Launch of the Book Hamare Pran Jugal Bihari :-

The famous Yashwantrao Chavan Hall in Mumbai hosted the ceremonial premiere of Shri Ajay Dhoot's

book *Hamare Pran Jugal Bihari*. Shri Ajay Dhoot, a well-known businessman from Mumbai, is a devout follower of Jugal Bihari Ji and a fervent admirer of Shrimad Bhagwat. His previous work, *Mann Ke Moti*, was well-received by readers for its profound insights and spiritual essence. The book was ceremoniously launched by the eminent Vaishnava saint, speaker, and scholar of Vedic knowledge, Shri Pundrik Goswami Ji Maharaj.



Dr. Anisha Patel's Book 'BranDent - 32 Pearls of Wisdom' Launched by Chetan Bhagat :-

Dr. Anisha Patel's highly anticipated book '*BranDent - 32 Pearls of Wisdom*' was launched at the famous Book Turner Gala Event, which was organized by Times Applaud. The event's highlight was the launch by acclaimed novelist Chetan Bhagat, who gave it a touch of literary fame. The book, authored by a dentist with over 20 years of experience and an aptitude for marketing, is jam-packed with actionable techniques to help dental offices become patient-adored brands. The book delivers 32 pearls of wisdom, empowering dentists to craft memorable patient experiences, build trust, and redefine the perception of dentistry.



Book Titled "Northeast Region In The Context Of Indian Nationhood" Released :-

The book "Northeast Region in the Context of Indian Nationhood" was published at the University of Delhi's Department of African Studies. The Tangkhul Scholars Association (TSA) initiated this magazine, which was launched by Dr. Yaruimgam Awungshi, Chief of the Department of African Studies. The book was edited by Tuisem Ngakang, Rammathot Khongreiwo, Franky Varah, and Pamreihor Khashimwo. The book offers an exploration of the unique cultural, social, and political landscapes of India's Northeast and its relationship with the broader Indian nation.

Book 'Punjab Atay Parvas' released, explores complexities of migration :-

NRI Affairs Minister Kuldeep Dhaliwal has released a book titled 'Punjab Atay Parvas', which examines the

historical and present elements of migration from Punjab. The book, developed by former Jalandhar Police Commissioner Gurpreet Singh Toor, former PAU and UNBC professor Amarjeet Singh Bhullar, and Principal of Shri Guru Angad Dev College, Khadoor Sahib, Balwant Singh Sandhu, was released at the NRI Sabha office during the launch of a two-day seminar on 'Punjab's Global Migration'. The book presents an in-depth analysis of Punjab's migration patterns.



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7: Defence



Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers signs MoU with Apollo Micro Systems :-

Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers and Apollo Micro Systems have signed a five-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) to form a business partnership for joint research and development (R&D), co-production, export of underwater weapons and vehicles, underwater mines, underwater communication systems, and air defense systems, as well as supply of advanced weapons and electronic systems for both defense and non-defense industries. A key aspect of this partnership is leveraging and

enhancing the manufacturing infrastructure of both companies to produce critical components and sub-assemblies for these systems.



DRDO successfully conducts three trials of indigenous man portable air defence system :-

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully completed three consecutive flight trials of the Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) from Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha. These tests were conducted against high-speed objects flying at extremely low altitudes. VSHORADS is a fourth-

generation technically sophisticated miniaturized Man Portable Air Defence System (MANPAD) created and developed in-house by DRDO's premier facility in Hyderabad, Research Centre Imarat (RCI), in collaboration with other DRDO facilities and Indian industry partners.



India-Maldives Begin 13th Joint Military Exercise Ekuverin :-

The 13th iteration of the joint military exercise 'Ekuverin' involving the Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Force has begun in the Maldives, officials said. According to the statement, the ceremony was attended by Maldives National Defence Force Chief Major General Ibrahim Hilmy and Indian High Commissioner G Balasubramanian. Ekuverin, meaning 'Friends' in Dhivehi, is a bilateral annual exercise held alternately in India and the Maldives. In 2023, it was conducted at Chaubatia in Uttarakhand from June 11 to 24.



Indian Army to boost firepower with 70,000 new AK-203 rifles as part of Russia deal :-

According to army officials, the Indian Army will receive 70,000 AK-203 assault rifles in 2025, followed by

another one lakh units in 2026, as part of an arms deal with Russia. This supply, as part of a bigger arrangement with Moscow, intends to provide Indian forces with one of the most modern and dependable assault rifles in the world. The Indian Army has already received 35,000 of these rifles for 2024. The AK-203, manufactured under a joint Indo-Russian venture in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh, is replacing the ageing INSAS (Indian Small Arms System) rifles currently in service.



Fort William, Army's Eastern HQ, renamed Vijay Durg :-

The Army has renamed Kolkata's Fort William, the headquarters of its Eastern Command, 'Vijay Durg' in an effort to eliminate colonial fingerprints. The decision was made in mid-December 2024, and internal communications inside the military have already incorporated the new name, while an official announcement is still pending. The renaming to 'Vijay Durg' pays homage to the oldest fort on Maharashtra's Sindhudurg coast, which served as an impregnable naval base of the Marathas during Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's reign.



Indian Navy's First Training Squadron Docks at Changi Naval Base :-

The ships of the First Training Squadron (1TS), which include INS Sujata, INS Shardul, and ICGS Veera, recently visited Changi Naval Base in Singapore. The visit is a component of the Squadron's Long-Range Training Deployment to South East Asia and represents an important step toward boosting maritime cooperative engagement and building mutual understanding. The squadron had already visited Singapore in October 2023. During the visit, the ships were engaged in several activities aimed at enhancing cooperation and inter-operability between the Indian Navy and the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN).



Indian Army and IAF Execute 'Winged Raider' in Eastern Theater :-

The Indian Army recently conducted a rigorous training exercise known as Ex Winged Raider. The exercise centered on special airborne operations, displaying a high degree of operational readiness and inter-service coordination. This joint operation demonstrates the seamless cooperation between the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force, demonstrating the efficacy of integrated training programs. The exercise also witnessed a first in the Eastern Theatre in terms of training on airborne operations from the Chinook Helicopter.



Joint Military Exercise 'Cyclone 2025' Between India and Egypt Begins in Rajasthan :-

India and Egypt have begun a combined military exercise in Rajasthan from February 10 to 23. The "Cyclone 2025" exercise is being conducted at the Mahajan Field Firing Range. The exercise will include special troops from both countries. The Indian and Egyptian armies would train together in desert circumstances. The emphasis will be on counterterrorism, high-intensity fighting, and survival skills. This is the third edition of Cyclone. The goal is to improve coordination between the two armies. Training will include real-world scenarios and tactical drills.

Aero India 2025: India's Largest Defence Expo :-

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is participating in the 15th edition of Aero India, which will be held at the Air Force Station Yelahanka in Bengaluru from February 10 to 14, 2025, in order to integrate diverse stakeholders in the country's defence R&D ecosystem. It will exhibit indigenously developed cutting-edge technologies and systems, working models, and innovations in all formats, including an indoor pavilion, outdoor displays, an India pavilion, and

a flying display. This Pavilion at Aero India 2025 will showcase India's commitment to its Make-in-India initiative by displaying indigenous defence manufacturing capabilities and cutting-edge technologies ready for the global stage.

Aero India 2025: Defence ministry signs deal to procure critical components for BrahMos :-

At the Aero India 2025, the Ministry of Defense and HHV Thermal Technologies (HHVTT) inked a Transfer of Technology (ToT), allowing HHVTT to produce vital parts for the BrahMos missile system. These cutting-edge materials are essential for missile propulsion, guidance, and stealth. With the ToT in effect and HHVTT already

having undergone the necessary training in the manufacturing process, the company is poised to supply critical thermal components to various Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) centers involved in missile production.



8: Economy



IRDAI Limits Senior Citizens' Health Premium Hike to 10% Annually :-

The insurance regulator IRDAI (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India) published a new circular prohibiting all health and general insurers that offer indemnity-based health insurance from increasing health insurance premiums charged to elderly citizens by more than 10% in a year. This comes in the wake of several concerns from senior residents about rising health insurance prices. Recently, there were reports of some insurance companies even resorting to 100% premium hikes, eroding consumers' ability to avail themselves of comprehensive coverage.



Cabinet Approves Revised Ethanol Procurement Prices :

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved a raise in the ethanol purchasing price for Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) for the Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) 2024-25, which runs from November 1, 2024 to October 31, 2025, as part of the government's Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme. As a result, the ex-mill price of ethanol derived from C Heavy Molasses (CHM) for the 2024-25 EBP programme has been set at Rs 57.97 per litre, up from Rs 56.58 per litre.



Aditya Birla Housing Finance raises ₹830 crore from IFC

Aditya Birla Housing Finance Ltd (ABHFL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital, has obtained a capital investment of ₹830 crore via Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs) from the International Finance Corporation. The money raised through IFC's investment would be used to close crucial gaps by providing housing loans to low- and middle-income groups (LIG and MIG), with a special emphasis on enabling women to own homes, Aditya Birla Capital and IFC stated in a joint statement.



Budget 2025: Prioritizes Healthcare with ₹98,311 Cr Allocation :-

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled the Union Budget 2025, which prioritized healthcare development, medical tourism, and increased access to medical services. The government allotted ₹98,311 crore to the healthcare sector, up from ₹90,658.63 crore in the previous fiscal year. Beyond healthcare, the budget emphasizes youth and innovation. 50,000 Atal Tinkering Labs will be constructed over the next five years to encourage scientific thinking among young people. five national skilling centres will be launched

with international expertise ensuring better job opportunities.



Budget 2025: No income tax for upto ₹12 lakh in new tax regime :-

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman declared in her Union Budget 2025 speech that incomes up to ₹12 lakh would be tax-free, aiming to increase household consumption and demand. The new tax regime has increased the standard deduction from ₹75,000 to ₹12.75 lakh. Explaining the reason for the revised taxation limit, the Minister stated that the new structure will significantly lower taxes for the middle class and give more discretionary income, thereby boosting household consumption, savings, and investment.



Sharan Hegde's 1% Club Secures SEBI RIA License :-

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has granted The 1% Club, a financial education platform run by Sharan Hegde, a Registered Investment Advisor (RIA) license. As a result, The 1% Club is now among the first influencer-led platforms to obtain an RIA license from SEBI. "I started this journey 4 years back by first creating content on financial planning. Two years later I started teaching financial planning through live sessions

and taught over 5 lakh students. Now it's time to finally walk the talk and actually manage public's money with a team of 45+ people," he wrote.



RBI MPC Meeting 2025: Repo Rate Cut By 25 bps to 6.25% :-

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) reduced the repo rate, the rate at which the RBI lends to other banks, by 25 basis points to 6.25 percent. This is the RBI's first rate cut in five years, with the most recent in May 2020. The RBI's MPC unanimously decreased the repo rate in an effort to encourage economic activity by making borrowing more affordable, so stimulating consumption and investment. The move comes barely a week after the Centre cut personal income tax to boost consumption.



Wholesale price inflation eases to 2.31% in January 2025 :-

India's wholesale price inflation fell slightly from 2.37% in December to 2.31% in January, with a slowing in food inflation roughly offset by an increase in the rate at which manufactured expenses grow, according to government data. While fuel and power inflation remained in negative zone, prices fell 2.8% from a year

ago, compared to a 3.8% decline in December. The Wholesale Food Index was up 7.5% in January, cooling a bit from the 8.9% rise in food prices recorded through November and December. Manufactured products inflation rose from 2.14% in December to 2.51% in January.



SEBI Enhances Corporate Governance with New RPT Portal :-

SEBI, the market regulator, has issued new industry guidelines specifying the minimal information that listed businesses must disclose to the audit committee and shareholders when requesting permission for related party transactions (RPTs). The new guidelines, developed by the Industry Standards Forum (ISF), which comprises officials from ASSOCHAM, CII, and FICCI, aim to expedite the approval process and assure market-wide compliance. These standards will require listed entities to provide detailed information to the audit committee when placing RPT proposals for review.



Bank of Maharashtra Receives RBI Approval to Establish Branch in GIFT City :-

The state-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) announced that it has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India to establish an International

Financial Services Centre (IFSC) Banking Unit in GIFT City. The branch would be Bank of Maharashtra's first overseas branch, carrying out offshore banking operations from India. Speaking on the development, BoM MD & CEO Nidhu Saxena said, "This is a significant opportunity for our bank as we continue to expand our operations across geographies."



RBI Fines Shriram Finance, Ujjivan SFB, and Nainital Bank for Violations :-

The Reserve Bank of India imposed penalties on Shriram Finance, Nainital Bank, and Ujjivan Small Finance Bank for failing to follow certain regulatory criteria. The central bank fined Nainital Bank Rs 61.40 lakh for failing to comply with guidelines on interest rates on advances and customer service. Ujjivan was fined Rs 6.70 lakh for failing to issue loan agreements to certain borrowers at the time of loan sanction and payout. Shriram Finance was slapped with a Rs 5.80 lakh fine for failing to put in place a system of periodic review of risk categorisation of accounts among other issues.



Zomato Introduces AI-Powered Customer Support Platform 'Nugget' :-

Zomato, a food and delivery platform, has launched Nugget, an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered customer

care platform that aims to assist businesses streamline operations. Deepinder Goyal, Zomato's co-founder and CEO, made the announcement via social media platform X. Nugget is a no-code, AI-powered customer support solution that allows businesses to automate customer assistance without the need for technical skills. It is designed to handle up to 80 per cent of customer queries autonomously, continuously learning and adapting in real time, Goyal boasts.



Centre Releases 15th Finance Commission Grants for Rural Local Bodies :-

The Union Government has issued the Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV FC) Grants for Rural Local Bodies in Punjab, Uttarakhand, and Chhattisgarh for the fiscal year 2024-25. These grants to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) / Rural Local Bodies (RLBs) are critical to developing grassroots democracy. Bihar has received ₹821.8021 crores as the second tranche of Untied Grants. Haryana has received ₹202.4663 crores as the second installment, along with ₹7.5993 crores from the withheld first installment.



TRIFED Partners with Meesho, IFCA, and MGIRI :-

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (Trifed) has inked Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Meesho, the Indian

Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA), and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Rural Industrialization (MGIRI) in a major move to improve economic opportunities for tribal communities. These partnerships aim to transition tribal businesses from a B2C (Business-to-Consumer) model to a B2B (Business-to-Business) approach, expanding market access and strengthening capacity-building initiatives.



Tata Power partners with Amazon Web Services for smart energy transition :-

Tata Power has established a cooperation with Amazon Web Services to promote India's smart and consumer-centric energy transition by modernizing its digital infrastructure and energy management. Tata Power has begun a data-driven transformation with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to speed up the transition of the nation to a greener, smarter, and more consumer-centric energy sector, according to a statement. Tata Power's partnership with AWS exemplifies this digital-first approach, harnessing cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), and IoT to build a smarter, more efficient power ecosystem.



India's Road to High-Income Status by 2047 :-

According to a survey, India is on track to become a high-income country by 2047, with a predicted GDP of USD 23 trillion to USD 35 trillion, driven by the services sector. By 2047, the services sector is expected to

account for 60% of India's GDP, while manufacturing will account for 32%, making them critical drivers of economic growth, according to a report by Bain & Company and Nasscom. "With nearly 200 million individuals expected to enter the workforce in the coming decades, India has a unique opportunity to drive high-value job creation and unlock significant economic potential," the report said.



RBI to Inject \$10 Billion Through Forex Swap to Ease Liquidity Crunch :-

India's central bank intends to inject \$10 billion through a foreign exchange swap as it steps up efforts to address a cash crisis in the banking system. The three-year swap auction will take place on February 28, the Reserve Bank of India announced in a statement. The exchange involves the central bank purchasing dollars from banks against the rupee while agreeing to sell the greenback at a later date. When the central bank buys dollars, it injects an equivalent quantum of rupee liquidity. This is the second such swap in recent weeks as the monetary authority tries to curb a liquidity deficit in the banking system that currently stands at around two trillion rupees.



SEBI Fines Axis Securities ₹10 Lakh for Rule Violations

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The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) issued a Rs 10 lakh penalty on Axis Securities for violating brokerage laws and other regulatory requirements. According to the regulator's order, the brokerage business must pay the amount within 45 days. The

SEBI's 82-page ruling identifies numerous flaws in Axis Securities' operations, determining that the brokerage firm failed to follow required processes in a variety of areas, including reporting discrepancies and handling customer cash. It noted that Axis Securities had inconsistencies in its enhanced supervision reports submitted to stock exchanges.

9: International**Elon Musk's X will launch its first digital wallet this year**

Elon Musk's social networking platform X is cooperating with Visa to launch a real-time payment system, a step toward Musk's long-term ambition of transforming the platform into a "everything app." Visa has been revealed as the first partner for the platform's planned "X Money Account" service, which is set to launch later this year, according to a post by X CEO Linda Yaccarino. The service will enable in-platform digital wallets and peer-to-peer payments linked to users' debit cards, with an option to transfer funds directly to bank accounts.

**Switzerland to End Bilateral Development Programs in Bangladesh, Albania, and Zambia by 2028 :-**

Days after the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) decided to discontinue assistance to Bangladesh, the Swiss government is likewise discontinuing development aid programs in the South Asian country. This means that the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) will discontinue its bilateral development initiatives in Bangladesh by the end of 2028. The decision will also impact two other countries, Albania and Zambia. The move is likely to halt critical aid programs as it will ensure that billions of dollars in life-saving assistance are put on hold.

**International Big Cat Alliance Now a Treaty Organization :-**

The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), which Prime Minister Narendra Modi established in April 2023 to conserve seven big cats worldwide, became an officially recognized treaty-based intergovernmental organisation on January 23, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and IBCA. To bring the IBCA framework agreement into force, five signatory

countries, including India, have to approve and formally deposit their instruments of ratification. Liberia became a party to the framework agreement last month, the fifth to ratify the agreement along with India, Nicaragua, Eswatini and Somalia, the MEA stated.



China's Antitrust Investigation into Google :-

The Chinese government's decision to launch an antitrust investigation into Google marks the latest stage in a long and tumultuous relationship that dates back to the early 2000s. The inquiry was one of several Chinese retaliatory actions announced in response to US President Donald Trump's 10% tariff on Chinese imports. Others included tariffs on American liquified natural gas and other products, and the placing of two other American firms on an unreliable entity list that could bar them from investing in China.



Trump Pulls US from UN Human Rights Council :-

President Donald Trump has stated that the United States will withdraw from the top United Nations human rights committee and will not renew financing for the UN organization that assists Palestinian refugees. Trump made the announcement on the same day he spoke with touring Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu, whose country has long accused both the human rights organization and UNRWA of prejudice against Israel and antisemitism. The United States, with the world's largest economy, pays 22% of the U.N.'s regular operating budget, with China the second-largest contributor.



After US Exit, Argentina Cuts Ties with WHO :-

Argentina has declared its withdrawal from the World Health Organization (WHO), following the United States' same decision on President Donald Trump's first day back in the White House in January. Argentina's libertarian President, Milei, who considers Trump a close ally, ordered the country's leave in response to what he described as "deep differences" in the WHO's treatment of health crises, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic. He also highlighted concerns about the WHO's perceived lack of independence from the political influence of other states.



Trump Signs Executive Order Banning Trans Women from Women's Sports :-

President Donald Trump of the United States has signed an executive order titled "Keeping men out of women's sports" with the goal of prohibiting transgender women

from competing in female sports. The order, which went into effect immediately, states that transgender women in high school, university, and any type of grassroots sport cannot compete in the female category. Trump also wants the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to disallow transgender women from participating in the female category at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028.



Panama Withdraws from China's Belt and Road Initiative :-

Panama has formally withdrawn from China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative, according to President Jose Raul Mulino, amid increased pressure from US President Donald Trump's administration to limit Chinese involvement in the Panama Canal. Panama's president went on to say that the country has already given Beijing the required 90-day notice of its embassy closure. The notice indicates Panama's decision not to renew its involvement in the ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).



PM Modi and Macron to Inaugurate Indian Consulate in Marseille :-

French President Emmanuel Macron greeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Paris and expressed his enthusiasm for the AI Action Summit, which the two leaders will co-chair. Macron also sent a cordial greeting to US Vice President JD Vance, who is attending the summit. PM Modi's visit has diplomatic and geopolitical implications, complementing efforts to improve Indo-French relations. As part of this, he and Macron will jointly inaugurate India's first consulate in Marseille, marking a key step in bilateral engagement.



Romanian President Resigns Amid Impeachment Pressure :-

Romanian President Klaus Iohannis has resigned, a day before facing an impeachment vote stemming from the suspension of the country's presidential election last year. Opponents have been urging him to be suspended because of his choice to stay in office until the May election. Romania's top court controversially nullified the election in December, citing Russian state intervention claims that Iohannis had helped to raise. Tens of thousands of Romanians have demonstrated in the streets, and lawmakers were due to begin a parliamentary process this week to suspend him from office.



Meta's 50,000 km Cable to Boost India-US Digital Connectivity :-

Facebook parent firm Meta's Project Waterworth, a 50,000-kilometer underwater cable project interconnecting India, the United States, and other locations, will boost the country's digital infrastructure and assist its ambitious digital economy objectives, the business claimed. India is the largest market for Meta's family of apps, which includes Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, with over a billion monthly users. It is also a crucial market for the company's global artificial intelligence (AI) efforts.



India-Qatar to Double Trade to \$28B by 2030 :-

During a conference between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, the two countries agreed to double their existing trade of \$14 billion over the course of the next five years. Two agreements and five memoranda of understanding were signed during the visit. The first agreement concerns the formation of a bilateral strategic partnership. A revised double taxation avoidance agreement was also signed. Both the sides also signed MOUs during the visit, including on economic partnership, cooperation in the area of archives and documentation and youth affairs and sports.



India Becomes IALA Vice President, Boosts Maritime Leadership :-

The International Organization of Aids to Marine Navigation (IALA) in Singapore has elected India as its vice president. In addition to marking IALA's transformation from a non-governmental organization (NGO) to an intergovernmental organization (IGO), the organization's inaugural General Assembly also saw India elected as its Vice President. This underscores India's strong leadership and contributions to maritime affairs, reaffirming its commitment to sustainable and secure marine navigation, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways said in a statement.



Brazil Joins OPEC+ as Observer :-

Brazil's government has accepted membership in OPEC+, a group of big oil-exporting nations, indicating the country's transition to a major oil state just nine months before hosting the United Nations' annual climate meeting. The National Council for Energy Policy gave its approval in response to a formal invitation in 2023. The group includes the 12 members of OPEC, the longstanding group set up to coordinate oil production to stabilize markets, plus 10 more significant oil-producing nations with Russia by far the largest.



Mount Dukono erupts in Indonesia :-

Mount Dukono, in Indonesia's North Maluku region, erupted lately, leading the Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation Centre to issue an aviation alert. The volcano on Halmahera Island spewed ash up to 2,000 meters into the sky, with thick white-to-grey clouds migrating south of the crater. Residents, visitors, and tourists in the vicinity of Mount Dukono are advised to avoid any activities near the Malupang Warirang crater, an active crater on the volcano, within a 4 km radius.



India Assumes Chairmanship of Bay of Bengal Inter-Governmental Organisation :-

India takes over the chairmanship of the Bay of Bengal Inter-Governmental Organization, a fisheries-focused think tank. The BOBP-IGO, established in 2003, is a regional fisheries organization dedicated to assisting member nations in boosting livelihood options and improving the quality of life for small-scale/artisanal fisher folk in the Bay of Bengal region. The current members of the organisation are Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka while Indonesia, Malaysia,

Myanmar and Thailand are cooperating non-contracting parties.



Indian Vishvaa Rajakumar Prodigy Wins Global Memory Championship :-

Vishvaa Rajakumar, a 20-year-old Indian student, won the Memory League World Championship by recalling the order of cards, numbers, names, photos, and words. Mr Rajakumar was able to recall the order of 80 random digits in 13.50 seconds. According to the official Memory League World Championship website, he could recall 30 images in 8.53 seconds. Mr Rajakumar, who is from Manakula Vinayagar Institute of Technology in Puducherry, was up against 16 people in the Championship, which is conducted online.

10: Miscellaneous



IOB Joins Global Partnership for Carbon Accounting :-

Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) has signed the Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials (PCAF) agreement. As part of this endeavor, the bank will quantify and disclose greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions related with its sponsored activities, as well as use globally harmonized GHG accounting procedures that are consistent with international best practices in the financial industry. With this step, the public sector bank has become one of the early adopters in the Indian banking sector to join this global initiative to combat climate change and promote responsible banking, IOB said in a statement.



Zomato Board Approves Name Change To Eternal Ltd, Unveils New Logo :-

Zomato, a food and grocery delivery network, has announced that it will rename itself "Eternal" and introduced a new logo, more than two years after the Deepinder Goyal-led company began using the new moniker internally. The Zomato app will not be renamed, but the stock ticker will change from Zomato to Eternal. Eternal will now include four significant businesses: Zomato, Blinkit, District, and Hyperpure. Though the company's board has approved the name change, it will now require shareholders' nod to formally change the name.



Australia's All-Rounder Marcus Stoinis Bids Farewell to ODIs :-

Before the commencement of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, Australia's best all-rounder, Marcus Stoinis, startled everyone with a stunning news. Stoinis has stated that he will retire from ODIs with immediate effect to focus on T20 cricket. Stoinis played 71 ODIs, scoring 1,495 runs and taking 48 wickets. Stoinis' highest score in this format is 146 *. Stoinis was part of Australia's ODI World Cup title triumph in 2023. Stoinis

is currently playing for Durban Super Giants in the South Africa T20 franchise competition.



AIIMS Delhi Unveils 'Srjanam' for Biomedical Waste Management :-

Union Minister for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh officially opened the "Srjanam" biomedical waste conversion rig at AIIMS in New Delhi, marking a huge step forward in biomedical waste management. Srjanam is a waste management system developed by CSIR-NIIST in Thiruvananthapuram. "It offers a cost effective, greener alternative to existing technologies for biomedical waste disposal, including incineration," read a statement by the union minister's office. The waste system has a capacity of 400-kg-per-day.



PM Modi Receives Starship Heatshield Tile from Musk :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, at the Blair House in Washington. Mr Musk, joined by his three children and partner Shivon Zilis, presented Prime Minister Modi with a highly visible gift. The entrepreneur, who oversees the Trump administration's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), presented Prime

Minister Modi with what seems to be a heatshield tile from SpaceX's spaceship test flight 5 in October last year. The relic was engraved with the words: "Starship Flight Test 5. October 13, 2024."



President of India Inaugurates International Women's Conference by Art of Living :-

India's Nari Shakti (women power) is breaking down barriers and influencing the country's future. Every step a woman makes toward her objective is a step toward a developed India, according to President Droupadi Murmu during the 10th International Women's Conference (ICW) held in Bengaluru by the Art of Living International Centre. The President emphasized how women are succeeding in science, sports, politics, the arts, and culture, making our country proud. She said true progress requires mental strength to challenge stereotypes, and urged women to dream big, gather courage, and use their full potential.



Axis Bank Pledges ₹104 Crore to Ashoka University for Research Growth :-

Axis Bank has pledged to a CSR contribution of Rs 104 crores over four years as part of a strategic collaboration with Ashoka University to support the

latter's PhD, Post-Doctoral, and Research courses. The newly declared Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Axis Bank and Ashoka, titled "Co-building Interdisciplinary Sciences and Research at Ashoka University," will strengthen the university's research ecosystem and facilitate the development of advanced scientific facilities.



Campa Cola Replaces Thums Up as IPL 2025 Co-Presenter :-

Reliance Consumer Products Ltd (RCPL) announced that Campa, the company's soft drink product, has secured the rights to the 'co-powered' sponsorship position in this year's Indian Premier League for both broadcast and digital platforms. Last year, Coca-Cola's Thums Up brand owned the rights. The company did not specify the financial terms, but industry executives familiar with the facts estimated the sale at around ₹200 crore. Coca-Cola's Thums Up acquired the rights last year for a similar amount, they added. Campa will take centre stage on TV, while Campa Energy will be advertised on digital platforms.



Google unveils 'Ananta,' its largest campus in India :-

Google opened Ananta, one of its largest worldwide operations, in Bengaluru. The corporation claims that its new campus demonstrates its commitment to India's digital development and role as a significant technology hub. The building's name, Ananta, is Sanskrit for 'infinite' or 'limitless'. It also represents the limitless possibilities for using technology to better people's lives. Ananta incorporates numerous sustainability features, including 100% wastewater recycling, rainwater harvesting, and a large smart glass installation to reduce energy use. Interior materials are almost entirely locally sourced.



India's First Open-Air Art Wall Museum Inaugurated at Mausam Bhawan :-

Union Minister Jitendra Singh opened India's first 'Open Air Art Wall Museum' at Mausam Bhawan in the national capital, representing and commemorating the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) 150-year history. The program, devised in partnership with 'Delhi Street Art', transforms the walls of IMD's offices on Lodhi Road into a colorful visual narrative of India's meteorological advances, history, and the impact of weather science on society. The artwork illustrates crucial meteorological events, advancements in technology such as satellites and radars.



RBI Unveils RBIDATA App for Seamless Economic Data Access :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has introduced the smartphone application 'RBIDATA', which will give users access to over 11,000 different series of economic data linked to the Indian economy. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in a release that the mobile app provides macroeconomic and financial statistics about the Indian economy in a user-friendly and visually appealing format. The RBI also stated that individuals will be allowed to view time series data in graphs/charts and download data for analysis. There will also be details such as data source, unit of measurement, frequency and recent updates.



Government extends Chief Economic Adviser Nageswaran's term :-

According to a government decree, the term of India's Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran has been extended for two years, till March 2027. Nageswaran, an IIM Ahmedabad alumnus, was named as CEA in January 2022. In January, he authored India's annual economic review, which projected GDP growth of 6.3%-6.8% for the fiscal year beginning April 1. Prior to his appointment, Nageswaran taught international economics, exchange rates, and financial markets at leading B-Schools in Singapore as well as India. He also holds a doctoral degree from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.



NITI Aayog forms panel on transforming AIIMS :-

The government think tank NITI Aayog has constituted a committee to develop a strategy for converting AIIMS,

New Delhi, into a leading institution for medical research and practice. The purpose of the group lead by NITI Aayog member V K Paul includes extensively analyzing AIIMS's existing systems and processes and suggesting significant modifications with precise dates for execution, according to the Aayog's annual report 2024-25. According to the report, this is an ongoing body of work and envisages extensive government and stakeholder consultations to identify potential pathways tailored to India's specific needs and context.

11: National



Supreme Court Permits High Courts To Appoint Retired Judges :-

The Supreme Court has eased its prior requirement to appoint ad hoc judges in High Courts to clear the backlog of unresolved criminal cases, saying vacancies in HCs should not exceed 20% of its sanctioned strength. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, Justices B R Gavai, and Surya Kant stated that the ad hoc judges shall sit on a bench presided over by a sitting judge of the High Court and decide ongoing criminal appeals. The April 2021 order said the trigger for recourse to Article 224A would not arise only in case the vacancies exceed 20 per cent.



India Adds 4 New Ramsar Wetlands, First for Jharkhand & Sikkim :-

On World Wetlands Day, India added four new wetlands to its list of Ramsar Convention sites, bringing the total to 89 internationally acknowledged wetlands. Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary and Therthangal Bird Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu, Sikkim's Khecheopalri Wetland, and Jharkhand's Udhwa Lake are among the newly recognized places. Tamil Nadu now holds the most Ramsar sites in India, with a total of twenty. Sikkim and Jharkhand have also marked their presence by adding their first Ramsar sites to the list.



Indian Railways Launches 'SwaRail' SuperApp for Seamless Travel :-

The Indian Railways has officially unveiled its much-anticipated 'SwaRail' SuperApp, which will provide passengers with a smooth travel experience, and has welcomed people to try it out during the beta period. The SuperApp would provide passengers with a one-stop solution by integrating various railway services, eliminating the need for several applications and lowering space usage on user devices. Developed by the Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS), the beta version of the app is now available for download on the Google Play Store and Apple App Store.



Delhi Assembly Elections 2025, BJP secures victory :-

The BJP made a triumphant comeback in Delhi after more than 26 years, winning 48 of the 70 seats in the Assembly elections. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) won 22 seats, while the Congress failed to capture a single seat for the third consecutive election. According to Election Commission (EC) records, AAP candidate Aaley Mohammad Iqbal from Matia Mahal won by the largest margin of 42,724 votes, defeating BJP's Deepti Indora. The BJP's vote share was 45.56%, while the AAP secured

43.57% votes and the Congress's poll percentage was 6.34.



Lok Sabha Expands Translation Services to 6 More Languages :-

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has stated that translation services in the House will now be available in six new languages: Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, Manipuri, Sanskrit, and Urdu. Until now, translation services were available in 10 languages: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Tamil, and Telugu, in addition to Hindi and English. Birla said that efforts are being made to gradually extend the service to all languages based on available human resources. According to Schedule 8 of the Constitution, 22 languages, including Sanskrit, are officially recognised.



Government Announces ₹100 Commemorative Coin Honoring Mohammed Rafi's Legacy :-

To commemorate the birth centennial of famed playback singer Mohammed Rafi, the government will produce a commemorative coin with a denomination of ₹100. Though commemorative coins are legal currency, they are not available for general circulation. They can be obtained from the specified agencies. The

inscription "Mohammed Rafi Ki Janam Shatabdi" shall be written in Devnagari script on the upper periphery and the inscription "BIRTH CENTENARY OF MOHAMMED RAFI" in English is depicted on the lower periphery of the coin.



BHARAT TEX 2025: A Premier Global Textiles Event Showcasing India's Textile Industry :-

The second edition of BHARAT TEX 2025, one of the world's major textile events, took place from February 14 to 17, 2025. The festival was held at two major venues: Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi and the India Expo Centre & Mart in Greater Noida. This important event, supported by the Ministry of Textiles, intended to highlight India's textile sector to the globe by bringing together key players such as manufacturers, buyers, industry experts, and innovators. The event was focused on multiple sectors, including Apparel, Home Furnishings, Technical Textiles, Sustainable Textiles, and Fashion Accessories.



President Droupadi Murmu Inaugurates National Tribal Festival 'Aadi Mahotsav' in New Delhi :-

The Hon'ble President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, inaugurated Aadi Mahotsav-2025, the central program of the Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development

Federation of India Limited (TRIFED) under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in New Delhi. This lively celebration, held from February 16 to 24, 2025, honors India's unique tribal heritage, culture, arts, crafts, cuisine, and commerce. Speaking on the occasion, the President emphasized the significance of Aadi Mahotsav in empowering tribal artisans and entrepreneurs.



Government to Establish Deregulation Commission to Reduce State's Role in Governance :-

PM Narendra Modi stated that the Centre would soon establish a deregulation commission to reduce the administrative burden on society and minimize government intervention. "We have ended hundreds of compliances, and now with Jan Vishwas 2.0, we are further reducing compliances. To reduce govt interference in society, a deregulation commission is also being established," Modi added, referring to a slew of initiatives implemented over the last decade to overhaul the complicated web of laws and regulations. He stated that the tax cuts announced in the latest Union Budget would benefit the middle class and increase economic growth.



Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana Turns Nine :-

According to the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), a scheme that provides comprehensive coverage for farmers against crop losses triggered by unpredictable natural disasters, has paid out Rs 1.75 lakh crore in claims to more than 23.22 crore farmers over the last nine years. PMFBY, launched in 2016 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has played an important role in stabilizing farmers' incomes and encouraging the use of innovative agricultural practices. The scheme witnessed a 25% growth in farmer enrolment in 2023-24 compared to the previous year.

India Rolls Out Digital Pilot Licenses, Second After China

Civil Aviation Minister K Rammoohan Naidu has inaugurated the Electronic Personnel License (EPL) for pilots, marking a significant step toward digital

transformation and improving the safety, security, and efficiency of civil aviation in India. With the debut, India became the world's second country, after China, to implement EPL for flight crew. "The launch of EPL by the DGCA is not just a step forward for aviation, but also for the future of digitalization across sectors," Naidu said. He insisted that the initiative will enhance convenience, transparency, and efficiency for pilots.



12: Obituaries

**Former Chief Election Commissioner Navin Chawla Dies At 79 :-**

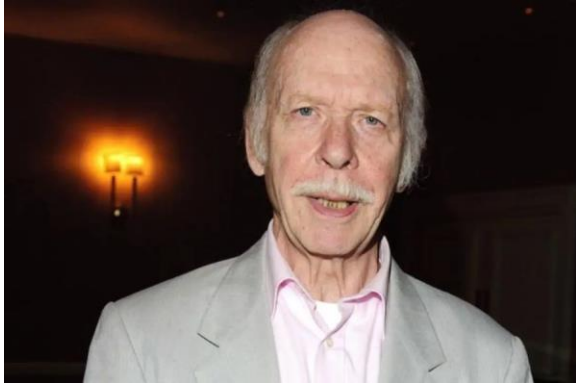
Navin Chawla, the former Chief Election Commissioner of India, died, according to a top official of the Election Commission of India. Navin Chawla (79), who died of heart arrest, served as CEC from 2009 to 2010. Chawla joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1969. He had been an Election Commissioner since 2005. In April, 2009 he took over as Chief Election Commissioner. During his tenure he successfully completed the General

Elections in April – May 2009 and initiated several important reforms.

**Veteran banker Victor Menezes passes away at 77 :-**

Pune-born Victor J Menezes, one of the first CEOs of Indian ancestry to run international corporations, died at the age of 77 in Miami, Florida, USA. Victor Menezes graduated from both IIT-Bombay and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Menezes interviewed with several Wall Street financial organizations after graduating from MIT, but he chose Citibank since it provided him with the opportunity to

return to Mumbai. He had a 32-year-long association with Citibank and retired as the global banking major's Senior Vice Chairman in January 2005.



Veteran Actor Brian Murphy Passes Away at 92 :-

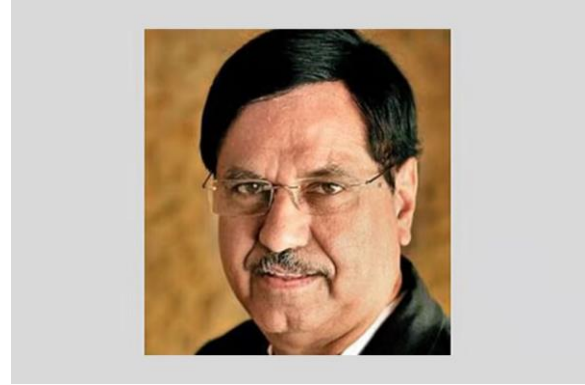
Brian Murphy, known for his performances in classic British sitcoms such as 'Man About the House' and 'George & Mildred,' died at the age of 92. Murphy was born on the Isle of Wight on September 25, 1932. He worked in the Royal Air Force at RAF Northwood before opting to pursue an acting career. Murphy's early television performances included guest roles in iconic spy dramas like 'The Avengers' and 'Callan,' as well as police shows like 'Z-Cars' and 'Dixon of Dock Green.' However, he became widely recognized in 1973 when he was cast as George Roper in the sitcom 'Man About the House.'



South Indian actress Pushpalatha passes away :-

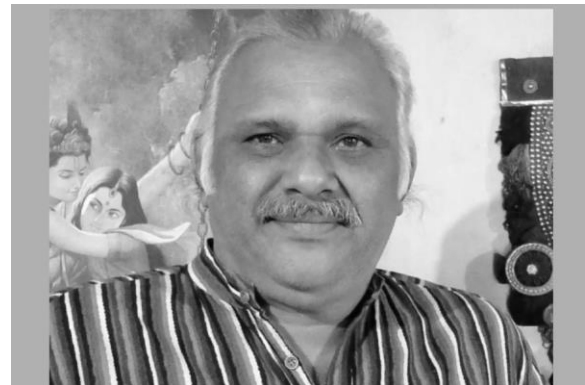
Pushpalatha, a veteran South Indian actress, died in Chennai at the age of 87. She began her classical dance training at the age of nine, acquiring Bharatanatyam. Pushpalatha was born in Mettupalayam, Coimbatore, to a Catholic Chettinadu family and was the fifth of eight children. Her acting career began with a cameo

appearance in 'Nalla Thangai' (1955), followed by a starring role in 'Konga Nattu Thangam' (1962). She went on to star in acclaimed films like 'Sarada,' 'Aalayamani,' 'Paar Magaley Paar,' and 'Kalyanaraman,' sharing the screen with icons like Sivaji Ganesan and Rajinikanth.



Writer & Cricket Commentator Dwarkanath Sanzgiri Passes Away At 74 After Prolonged Illness :-

Dwarkanath Sanzgiri, a renowned writer and television personality, died at the age of 74 after a protracted illness. Sanzgiri's career spanned nearly five decades and included substantial contributions to a variety of periodicals, especially in Marathi. He wrote multiple books on a variety of topics, including sports, travel, social issues, and film. However, his love of cricket and Marathi literature molded him into a well-known cricket commentator. His writings were always highly appreciated by Marathi cricket enthusiasts.



Malayalam actor Ajith Vijayan passes away :-

Malayalam actor Ajith Vijayan died at the age of 57 in Kochi. He was an established actor in both films and television, renowned for his versatility. Ajith has appeared in several popular films, including Oru Indian Pranayakatha, Amar Akbar Anthony, Bangalore Days

(Tamil), and the anthology film 5 Sundarikal. His performance as Ambiswamy in the Kullante Bharya segment of 5 Sundarikal received significant applause. The story, directed by Amal Neerad, gained attention for its unique narrative, and Ajith's performance left a lasting impact.



Acharya Satyendra Das, chief priest of Ayodhya's Ram Janmabhoomi Temple, passes away at 83 :-

Acharya Satyendra Das, the main priest of Ayodhya's Ram Mandir, died at the age of 83 at the Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGI), Lucknow. The hospital verified his death. On February 3, Acharya Satyendra Das was admitted to SGPGI after having a stroke. He was initially treated at a private hospital in Ayodhya before being transferred to SGPGI for more advanced medical care. Last month, Acharya Satyendra Das, who was the longest-serving chief priest of the Ram temple, participated in the first anniversary celebrations of the Pran Pratistha ceremony of the Ram Lalla idol.



South Korean actress Kim Sae-ron passes away at 24 :-

Kim Sae-ron, a South Korean actress, was found dead in Seoul, authorities said. Kim began her career as a child actor and was widely regarded as one of South Korea's most brightest young actors. Born in Seoul in 2000, she rocketed to popularity with her appearance in the 2009 film A Brand New Life, which landed her at the Cannes Film Festival. She went on to star in South Korea's highest-grossing film of 2010, The Man from Nowhere, and the 2012 thriller The Neighbor, for which she got an award. Other notable roles include the 2014 film A Girl at My Door and television roles such as Mirror of the Witch in 2016.



Milind Rege, Former Mumbai Captain, passes away at 76 :-

Former Mumbai captain Milind Rege, known as the "encyclopedia of Mumbai cricket," died of a heart arrest on February 19, 2025, in a hospital. He was 76. Rege, an off-spinning all-rounder who played 52 First Class matches during Mumbai cricket's golden era, was a member of Mumbai's five consecutive Ranji title-winning seasons. From Sachin Tendulkar to Yashasvi Jaiswal, he was among the first former cricketers to spot their talent and promote them at the highest level. For the last four years, he was roped in as an advisor by the Mumbai Cricket Association.

13: Ranks & Reports



India tops global list in passenger loads on domestic flights :-

According to the most recent International Air Transport Association (IATA) estimate, India's domestic flights might have a passenger load factor of 86.4 percent in 2024, putting it ahead of the United States and China, who are ranked second and third, respectively. According to data published by India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the country's rapidly expanding aviation sector would carry 16.3 crore passengers on domestic flights in 2024. India achieved a passenger load factor of 86.4 per cent, the highest among all domestic markets, the IATA report states.



Sri Lanka Sees Record Deflation in 65 Years :-

Consumer prices in Sri Lanka plummeted by 4.0 percent in January, the biggest pace of deflation since July 1960, according to government figures, as the South Asian

country recovers from its worst economic crisis in decades. The Colombo Consumer Price Index showed that January was the seventh consecutive month of deflation. In September 2022, at the height of the country's economic crisis, inflation reached a record 69.8 percent, resulting in months of widespread consumer goods shortages. Officials said sharp reductions in electricity and fuel costs contributed to the sharp fall in prices in January, but the central bank forecasts annual inflation in 2025 to be around 5.0 percent.



India's Gold Investments Soar 60% to ₹1.5 Lakh Crore in 2024 :-

According to a research, gold investments in India increased by 60% in 2024, hitting \$18 billion (roughly Rs 1.5 lakh crore) over 2023 levels. According to the World Gold Council (WGC) report, gold investment demand reached 239 tonnes, its highest level since 2013. This was a 29% rise from the 185 tons reported in 2023. Gold investment remained strong in the October-December quarter, with demand reaching 76 tonnes, nearly matching the previous quarter's performance, the report highlighted.



Zepto Becomes World's Second Most Downloaded Food & Drink App :-

Zepto, an Indian rapid commerce startup, became the world's second most downloaded mobile app in the foods and beverages category in 2024, according to Sensor Tower statistics. McDonald's, the US fast food business, has the most mobile app downloads, according to the research. Zepto's competitor, Blinkit, was the tenth most downloaded app in the category. The category also included fast food and fast casual restaurants, restaurant order and delivery, other food delivery services, dining and listing, reviews and reservations and dining and restaurant apps.



India Achieves 100 GW Solar Power Capacity :-

India has met its aim of producing 100 GW of solar energy, an important achievement in its renewable energy journey. New and Renewable Energy Minister Pralhad Joshi attributed this success to measures such as solar panels, solar parks, and rooftop solar projects, which have transformed the industry. India wants to reach 500 GW of non-fossil fuel energy capacity by 2030. The minister highlighted that the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana is transforming rooftop solar into a

household reality and is a game-changer in sustainable energy, empowering homes with clean power.



Henley Passport Index 2025: Singapore Ranks No. 1, India at 80th :-

According to the 2025 Henley Passport Index, the Singaporean passport is the strongest in the world, granting visa-free or visa-on-arrival entry to 193 of 227 countries. India ranked 80th on the list, with easy access to 56 nations. India ranked 80th, alongside Algeria, Equatorial Guinea, and Tajikistan. Myanmar secured the 88th spot, with access to 45 venues. Bangladesh shared the 93rd with Libya and the Palestinian Territories, Nepal is at 94th rank and Pakistan is at 96th spot with Yemen.



India's Retail Inflation Drops to 4.31% in January 2025 :-

Headline and food inflation in the rural sector fell significantly in January 2025 to 4.64 percent (provisional), from 5.76 percent in December 2024. In January 2025, urban inflation was 3.87 percent (provisional) compared to 4.58 percent in December 2024. Vegetable inflation fell to 11.35% in January from 26.56% in December, while pulse inflation was 2.59%

versus 3.83% in December. While Cereals and Products inflation came in at 6.24 per cent, milk and products inflation stood at 2.85 per cent.



Kevin Durant Reaches 30,000 Points – 8th Player in NBA History :-

Kevin Durant became the eighth NBA player to reach 30,000 points, making a free throw against the Memphis Grizzlies late in the third quarter. The 36-year-old Phoenix Suns forward, who was just named to his 15th All-Star squad, now joins LeBron James, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Karl Malone, Kobe Bryant, Michael Jordan, Dirk Nowitzki, and Wilt Chamberlain in the 30,000-point club. Durant is a four-time NBA scoring champion and remains one of the league's elite shot makers in his 17th NBA season.



BJP Emerges as India's Richest Political Party in 2023-24 with Over ₹4,300 Crore Income: ADR Report:-

According to a research by the Association for Democratic Rights (ADR), the BJP claimed an income of Rs 4,340.47 crore in 2023-24, an increase of 83.85 percent from the previous fiscal, and accounted for

approximately 75 percent of the total income of six national parties, which was Rs 5,820.91 crore. The Congress came in second with an income of Rs 1,225.11 crore in the previous fiscal year, up Rs 772.74 crore, or 170.82 percent, from 2022-2023. CPI(M) declared an income of Rs 167.63 crore, followed by BSP at Rs 64.77 crore, AAP at Rs 22.68 crore and NPP at Rs 22.44 lakh.



India's Smartphone Exports Reach ₹1.5 Trillion :-

According to a report in The Financial Express, India's smartphone exports set a new record of Rs 1.55 trillion from April to January. Exports increased by more than Rs 1.31 trillion in FY24, thanks to the government's production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme. January (2025) alone saw the highest-ever monthly exports of Rs 250 billion, a 140 percent rise over January 2024. Exports during the 10 months leading up to January were 56 per cent higher than the Rs 991.2 billion recorded in the same period of FY24.



Reliance Beats Apple, Ranks 2nd in FutureBrand 2024 :-

Under the leadership of billionaire Mukesh Ambani, Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has achieved a key milestone by placing second in the FutureBrand Index 2024. This is the first time an Indian business has surpassed IT behemoth Apple and landed in the top three of this prestigious global ranking. The FutureBrand Index evaluates firms based on brand impressions rather than financial performance. RIL's brand positioning, consumer trust, and strategic improvements across industries like energy, telecom, and retail are the primary reasons for its rise from 13th rank in 2023 to second place in 2024.



Third time in a row, Bengal tops bird count list in India :

For the third year in a row, Bengal had the most species reported during the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) across the country's 37 states and union territories. The exercise, one of the world's greatest birding activities, took place from February 14 to 17, and Bengal led the way with 543 of the 1,068 species reported in India. Participation this year was fewer than in 2024 due to various reasons, including the timing of the exercise that clashed with the exam season. The overall species in India rose this time to 1,068 from 1,036 last year.



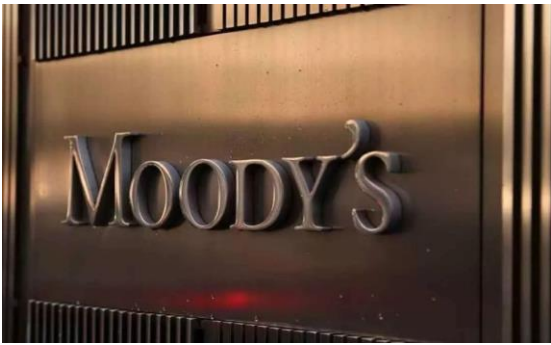
India's Q3 GDP growth likely at 6.2%-6.3%, SBI says :-

The State Bank of India's (SBI) Economic Department predicts that India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would expand by 6.2% to 6.3% in the third quarter of FY25. "Impinging upon our in-house developed 'Nowcasting Model' that leverages 36 high frequency indicators, we estimate the GDP growth for Q3 FY25 should come around 6.2%-6.3% (data due on 28th February)," stated SBI in a report on special research. In December, the RBI forecasted a 6.8% GDP growth rate for the third quarter of FY25. At the most recent MPC meeting earlier this month, the RBI projected 6.4% GDP growth in FY25.



Purnima Devi Barman Named in TIME's Women of the Year List :-

Time Magazine has chosen an Indian biologist and animal conservationist as one of this year's 'Women of the Year,' recognizing "extraordinary leaders" fighting to make the world a better, more equitable place. Purnima Devi Barman, 45, is the sole Indian woman on Time's Women of the Year 2025 list. In recognition of her outstanding contributions to the sector, Barman previously earned the highest civilian award for Indian women, the 'Nari Shakti Puraskar', from former President Ram Nath Kovind. In the same year, she was also awarded the Whitley Award, known as the Green Oscar, presented by Anne, Princess Royal of the United Kingdom.



India's GDP Growth to Slow to 6.4% in 2025: Moody's :-

Moody's Analytics predicts that India's economic growth will slow to 6.4% in 2025, down from 6.6% in 2024, owing to a drop in global demand and "new tariffs". The agency predicts global growth to slow to 3.7% in 2025 and 3.5% in 2026, down from a projected 3.9% in 2024. Moody's Analytics' research, headlined "Asia-Pacific (APAC) Outlook: Chaos Ahead," stated that growth in the Asia-Pacific economy will decline in 2025 due to trade disputes, policy moves, and unequal recoveries. "Growth across the region will slow as new tariffs and softening global demand weigh on exports," the report said.



India's Suicide Rate Drops 30% in Three Decades: Lancet

According to a study recently published in The Lancet Public Health, India's suicide fatality rate decreased by more than 30% between 1990 and 2021, indicating considerable success in health policies. The analysis, based on the results of the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) 2021, revealed that the suicide death rate in India was 18.9 per lakh population in 1990, 13.1 per lakh population in 2019, and 13 per lakh population in 2021. From 1990 to 2021, the suicide death rate in India declined to 31.5 per cent.

14: Schemes & Committees



Mansukh Mandaviya rolls out state-specific microsites under e-Shram :-

Union Minister for Labour and Employment, Mansukh Mandaviya, has established state and union territory microsites as part of the e-Shram program and the Occupational Shortage Index (OSI). The minister announced the two proposals during a meeting with state and union territory labour ministers and

secretaries held here, according to a labour ministry statement. At the launch, Mandaviya said the multilingual e-Shram microsite facility is aimed at providing seamless access to both state and Central government welfare programmes to workers in the unorganised sector.



Maha Kumbh Tragedy: 3-Member Panel Begins Investigation :-

A three-member judicial commission began its probe into the Maha Kumbh stampede, while state authorities separately began looking into whether additional similar accidents occurred during the big religious festival on the same day, according to individuals familiar with the case. The group, led by retired Allahabad High Court Judge Harsh Kumar and including retired IPS officer VK Gupta and senior IAS officer DK Singh, arrived at Sangam, where at least 30 persons were murdered in a predawn stampede. Maha Kumbh Nagar's deputy inspector general (DIG) Vaibhav Krishna said officials were scanning CCTV footage to see if other disasters also occurred at the ghat, which might have gone unreported.



Kavach shield for entire Railways in six years: Ashwini Vaishnaw :-

India is going to implement automatic train protection (ATP) technology Kavach across the entire railway network within the next six years, according to Union Railways, Information Technology, and Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. Kavach installation is underway on 10,000 locomotives and 15,000 kilometers of track. We've trained 12,000 technicians, pilots, and engineers. The process of installation, design, commissioning, is going on. We will be able to deploy Kavach on the entire Indian Railways network in the coming six years, he added.



Gujarat Appoints Panel for Uniform Civil Code Draft :-

The Gujarat government has constituted a committee led by a senior Supreme Court judge to analyze the state's need for the Uniform Civil Code and develop a bill to implement it. The five-member committee, led by retired Supreme Court judge Ranjana Desai, would present its report within 45 days, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel stated. Following receipt of the report, the state government will make a decision on how to implement the UCC. Other members of the committee include retired IAS officer CL Meena, advocate RC Kodekar, educationist Daxesh Thakar and social worker Gita Shroff.



Centre Launches Several Key Schemes To Upgrade Agricultural Technology To Improve Productivity :-

The Centre has initiated numerous significant initiatives to promote agricultural productivity, sustainability, and farmer income. The Digital Agriculture Mission is a major program that uses technology such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and geospatial data to improve crop monitoring, soil management, and weather forecasting. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), during the last ten years, has developed 2900 varieties out of which, 2661 varieties

are tolerant to one or more biotic and/or abiotic stresses, Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Bhagirath Choudhary, in a written reply, said in Lok Sabha.



Shivraj Singh Chouhan Launches Watershed Yatra :-

Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Union Minister for Rural Development, Agriculture, and Farmers Welfare, inaugurated the Watershed Yatra with the theme 'Jal Laaye Dhan-Dhanya'. The campaign was launched via video conferencing. The Watershed Yatra van will travel for 60 to 90 days in 805 projects, visiting 13, 587 villages and 6, 673 Gram Panchayats in 26 states and two Union Territories. During the Watershed Yatra, 1,509 Gram Sabhas will be organised and 1,640 'Prabhat Feris' (morning walks) will also be organised.



Shatavari for Wellness: Nationwide Campaign Launched :-

Following successful efforts for medicinal herbs such as amla, moringa, giloe, and ashwagandha, the Ayush Ministry has begun a new campaign to promote the Shatavari plant for health benefits. Prataprao Jadhav, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Ayush, inaugurated the species-specific campaign, "Shatavari -For Better Health". He also emphasized the Ministry of Ayush's considerable development over the

previous decade and praised the National Medicinal Plants Board's (NMPB) efforts in initiating this new program to raise awareness about Shatavari.



Odisha Govt Launches 'Bikashita Gaon' Scheme for Village Development :-

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi introduced the "Bikashita Gaon, Bikashita Odisha" initiative for rural infrastructure development projects in the state, although the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) condemned it as a "political gimmick". This initiative, similar to the Naveen Patnaik-led government's major rural scheme "Ama Odisha Nabin Odisha," would focus on creating road infrastructure, civic facilities, and improving rural sports and educational infrastructure. Panchayati raj and rural development minister Rabi Narayan Naik was also present at the event.



Gujarat Launches G-SAFAL to Uplift 50,000 Underprivileged Women :-

Under the leadership of Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, the state government has launched G-SAFAL (Gujarat Scheme for Antyodaya Families for Augmenting Livelihoods), an initiative aimed at improving the standard of living of Antyodaya families (underprivileged families), empowering women, and

encouraging economic self-sufficiency, according to a CMO statement. This initiative is expected to uplift 50,000 Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) cardholder families across 25 talukas in 10 districts of Gujarat over the next five years.



Centre approves continuation of PM-AASHA scheme till 2025-26 :-

Through the 15th Finance Commission cycle, the Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) initiative will continue to be implemented until 2025–2026, as approved by the Center. By improving procurement processes, the program seeks to stabilize the prices of customers' critical commodities while guaranteeing farmers fair prices. To boost domestic production and reduce import dependence, the government has allowed 100% procurement of Tur (Arhar), Urad, and Masur under PSS for the 2024-25 procurement year.



Shivraj Singh Chouhan Launched NAKSHA for Urban Land Survey :-

Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Union Minister of Rural Development, Agriculture, and Farmers' Welfare, launched the National Geospatial Knowledge-based

Land Survey of Urban Habitations (NAKSHA) pilot program. The program debuted in Raisen, Madhya Pradesh, with 152 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) from 26 states and three Union Territories (UTs). The NAKSHA program, spearheaded by the Department of Land Resources under the Ministry of Rural Development, aims to modernize land survey processes in urban areas.



Delhi Cabinet Approves Ayushman Bharat in First Meeting :-

Rekha Gupta, the BJP politician who took oath as Delhi Chief Minister recently, headed the first meeting of her cabinet hours later and made two crucial decisions: to execute the Ayushman Bharat scheme with a Rs 5 lakh top-up and to table the 14 pending CAG findings in the first session of the Assembly. Rekha Gupta addressed a press conference and unveiled the portfolios of her council of ministers. She said that the Delhi government will implement the Centre's flagship scheme in the national capital. She also announced the tabling of CAG reports, which had not been tabled by the AAP government.



Kerala Unveils nPROUD for Safe Drug Disposal :-

In the absence of a scientific procedure for collecting and disposing of date-expired or unused/waste drugs, the State Drugs Control Department has launched a new initiative, nPROUD (New Programme for Removal of Unused Drugs), under which unused/date-expired drugs will be collected directly from homes or spaces will be created where they can be safely disposed of. Unscientific disposal of date-expired or unused/waste drugs into general wastes, soil or waterbodies has been contributing significantly to antimicrobial resistance and environment pollution because the active chemical ingredients eventually find their way into ground water and food chain.



'Desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyaan' Sets 5 Guinness World Records :-

According to the Ayush ministry, the Desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyaan campaign has set five Guinness World Records, which is unparalleled. The campaign set a new record for the most pledges received for a health initiative in a week, totaling 6,004,912. It exceeded the minimal criterion of 14,571, creating a new global benchmark because there was no previous record

holder. The campaign also set a record for the most pledges collected for a health campaign in a single month, at 13,892,976. It surpassed the previous record of 58,284 pledges held by Cigna and CMB Life Insurance Company in China.



PM-KISAN completes 19 successful installments :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 19th installment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) initiative in Bhagalpur, Bihar. The tranche, worth more than Rs.22,000 crore, will offer direct cash support to over 9.8 crore farmers nationally, including 2.41 crore women farmers. The PM-KISAN plan, launched in February 2019, promises to meet the financial needs of small and marginal farmers (SMFs) by distributing Rs.6,000 per year in three installments. Since its inception, the government has disbursed over Rs.3.46 lakh crore across 18 instalments as of February 2025.

15: Science & Technology



Tata Steel Develops India's First Hydrogen-Transport Pipes :-

Tata Steel claims to have become India's first steel manufacturer to produce pipes for hydrogen transportation, a significant step forward in the country's hydrogen goal. The pipes, which were processed at Tata Steel's Khopoli mill using steel from its Kalinganagar plant, successfully met all of the crucial qualities required for hydrogen transportation, according to a company release. In 2024, Tata Steel

became the first Indian steel company to produce hot-rolled steel for the transportation of gaseous hydrogen.



Sunita Williams Sets New Spacewalk Record :-

Sunita Williams, a NASA astronaut, broke former astronaut Peggy Whitson's spacewalking record, marking a momentous moment. The International Space Station (ISS) announced on X: "NASA astronaut Sunita Williams just surpassed former astronaut Peggy Whitson's total spacewalking time of 60 hours and 21 minutes today. Sunita is still outside in the vacuum of space removing radio communications hardware." During this extraordinary spacewalk, Williams performed maintenance on the ISS and collected material samples from the Destiny laboratory and Quest airlock for scientific investigation.



ISRO's 100th mission faces hurdle after tech glitch hits NVS-02 satellite :-

The Indian Space Research Organisation's (Isro) 100th rocket mission has been stalled after the NVS-02 navigation satellite, which was safely launched on January 29, encountered a significant technical fault on February 2. According to the most recent space agency update, the satellite's orbit-raising procedures could not

progress as anticipated due to a valve problem. The unexpected glitch has now delayed—or potentially jeopardised—the satellite's journey to its final intended orbit. The NVS-02 has remained in nearly the same position since January 29.



Japan's H-3 Rocket Successfully Launches Michibiki No. 6 Satellite :-

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) effectively launched its fifth H-3 rocket, carrying the Michibiki No. 6 satellite, which is an important addition to Japan's independent positioning system. The Michibiki satellite series works with Japan's Quasi-Zenith Satellite System (QZSS), which gives highly accurate position data down to centimeter precision. Since the launch of the first Michibiki satellite in 2010, four operational satellites have helped Japan improve its location capabilities. Japan's government plans to expand the system to seven operational satellites by fiscal 2025.



UK Becomes First Country to Criminalize AI-Generated Child Abuse Content :-

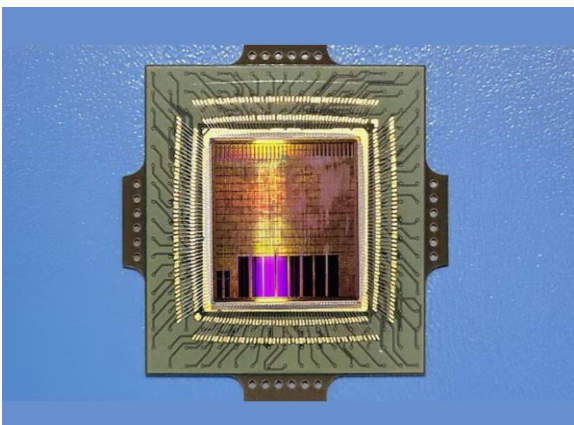
The government declared that Britain will be the first country to pass legislation prohibiting the use of AI

techniques to generate images of sexual abuse. The government will make it unlawful to own, manufacture, or distribute AI tools meant to generate sexualised photographs of children, punishable by up to five years in prison, Interior Minister Yvette Cooper announced. The new laws are "designed to keep our children safe online as technologies evolve. It is vital that we tackle child sexual abuse online as well as offline," she added.



World's First Kangaroo Embryos Created via IVF :-

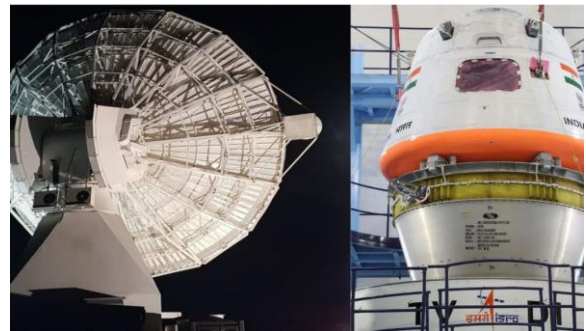
Scientists have successfully developed the first kangaroo embryos using in vitro fertilization (IVF), a finding that they believe could be key to saving the species from extinction. Researchers from the University of Queensland in Australia conducted a study published in the journal Reproductive, Fertility, and Development that documented the possibility of assisted reproduction for native marsupial conservation. In this study, the researchers tracked how lab cultures of kangaroo eggs and sperm developed over time.



ISRO and IIT Madras develop indigenous semiconductor chip :-

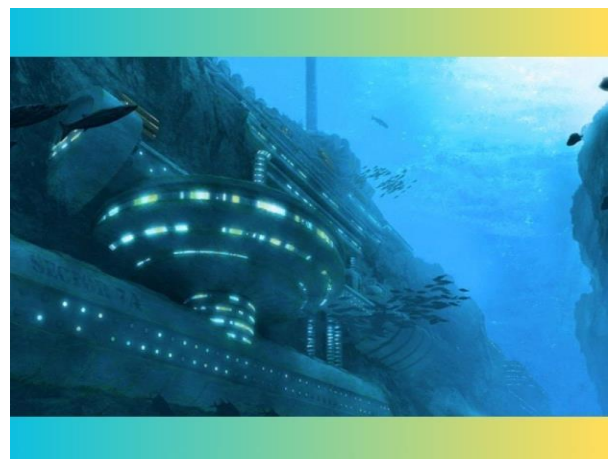
The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) have made a significant advance in indigenous technology by

successfully developing and booting an aerospace-grade, SHAKTI-based semiconductor device. This represents a big step toward self-reliance in semiconductor technology. The 'IRIS' (Indigenous RISC-V Controller for Space Applications) chip was developed from the 'SHAKTI' processor baseline. It can be used in IoT and compute systems.



ISRO tests Gaganyaan communications with ESA ground station network :-

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has completed essential communications testing with the European Space Agency's (ESA) ground station network, marking a milestone in its Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission. To maximize communication coverage during Gaganyaan missions, ISRO intends to use both its own facilities and external ground station cooperation from international partners. The recently conducted Radio Frequency Compatibility Tests (RFCT) validated the network operations of the Gaganyaan Orbital Module's communications systems, marking a critical step toward ensuring reliable communication during future manned missions.



China to Build First Deepwater 'Space Station' in South China Sea :-

China has disclosed plans for a deep-sea mega-lab that will be concealed 6,500 feet beneath the highly contested South China Sea. The undersea base will investigate "cold seep" habitats, which are unique seabed settings teeming with life and could contain large stores of fuel. China's facility will be outfitted with improved life-support systems, allowing scientists to live and operate underground for up to a month. It will also run a permanent monitoring network to measure levels of methane - the natural fuel scientists have detected down there.



NISAR satellite to be sent to ISS soon, says PM Modi after meeting with Trump :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that the NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite would soon be launched to the International Space Station (ISS). His statement came during a meeting with President Donald Trump amid his recent trip to the United States. "NISAR will soon take off for the International Space Station," according to the prime minister. According to NASA, NISAR is a collaborative mission between NASA and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) that aims to track changes on Earth's surface with unparalleled precision. This technology allows it to monitor earthquakes, deforestation, glacier movement, and even infrastructure damage from natural disasters.



Elon Musk Unveils Grok 3 AI: The Smartest AI on Earth

Elon Musk's artificial intelligence business xAI unveiled the updated Grok-3 model, displaying a version of the chatbot software that the billionaire claims is the "smartest AI on Earth." Grok-3 outperforms Alphabet Inc.'s Google Gemini, DeepSeek's V3 model, Anthropic's Claude, and OpenAI's GPT-4o on math, science, and coding benchmarks, according to the company's live broadcast. Grok-3 has "more than 10 times" the compute power of its predecessor and completed pre-training in early January, Musk said in a presentation alongside three of xAI's engineers.



New Bat Coronavirus HKU5-CoV-2 Discovered in China :

Researchers at China's Wuhan Institute of Virology have discovered a new coronavirus in bats that enters cells through the same pathway as the virus that causes Covid-19. According to Chinese researchers, the novel bat coronavirus has the potential to transmit to people in the future. The study was led by Shi Zhengli, well known as "Batwoman" for her vast research on bat coronaviruses. The study has now sparked global concerns over a possible future pandemic. Researchers have warned that the virus can infect human cells but its transmission risk remains significantly lower than that of Covid-19 pandemic.

16: Sports



India thrash England by record 150-run margin to cap T20 series win :-

Abhishek Sharma's amazing 54-ball 135 created new records, becoming the second-fastest century and highest score by an Indian in T20Is, as India defeated England by 150 runs in the fifth T20I to win the series 4-1. After England decided to field, Abhishek's aggressive batting helped India to their best T20I total against England of 247/9. England crumbled for 97 in 10.3 overs. This victory margin of 150 runs stands as India's second-largest in T20Is, following their 168-run victory over New Zealand in 2023.



India lift second straight Women's U-19 T20 World Cup title :-

Defending champions India won the 2025 ICC Women's U-19 T20 World Cup, thrashing South Africa by nine wickets in a one-sided match in Kuala Lumpur. South Africa, batting first, was dismissed for 82 runs in 20 overs. In reply, India scored 84 runs in 11.2 overs, losing

only one wicket. Gongadi Trisha grabbed three wickets for India, with Vaishnavi Sharma, Aayushi Shukla, and Parunika Sisodia taking two each. Chasing 83 runs to lift the title, opener Gongadi Trisha scored an unbeaten 44 off 33 balls after the other opener, Ga Kamalini, fell for eight.



R Praggnanandhaa Wins Tata Steel Masters Chess Title

R Praggnanandhaa overcame world champions D Gukesh in a thrilling tie-breaker to win his first Tata Steel Masters 2025 title in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands. Gukesh, who became the world's youngest champion last year, made a mistake in the sudden death match, and his 19-year-old teammate capitalized, securing an exciting victory. Gukesh, the 18-year-old world champion, was defeated unexpectedly by Arjun Erigaisi, and Praggnanandhaa was also unable to defeat Vincent Keymer of Germany, forcing the championship to a tiebreaker.



Sports Ministry ends cash prizes for junior athletes :-

The Sports Ministry has broadened the eligibility for cash incentives to include medal winners at world and continental championships in sports such as Mallakhamb, e-sports, and breakdancing. However, the ministry has withdrawn financial incentives for young and sub-junior athletes, including in Olympic sports. A updated list of 51 sports has been released, which includes all Olympic, Asian, Commonwealth, and World University Games events. The ministry continues to support para-athletes and has increased cash rewards for medalists in events featuring deaf, blind, and intellectually challenged athletes.



Varun Chakravarthy Becomes India's 2nd Oldest ODI Debutant :-

Varun Chakaravarthy became the second-oldest cricketer to make his One-Day International (ODI) debut for India since the game's inception in 1974. The 33-year-old spinner won his first ODI cap from experienced all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja ahead of the second of three ODIs against England at Cuttack's Barabati Stadium. Farokh Engineer still holds the record for the oldest debutant, having played his first ODI at the age of 36 years and 138 days in 1974. Ajit Wadekar, also part of that historic 1974 match against England in Leeds, debuted at the age of 33 years and 103 days — making him the third-oldest after Engineer and Chakaravarthy.



Carlos Alcaraz Claims First Indoor Hardcourt Title at Rotterdam Open :-

Carlos Alcaraz has reached a new milestone in his stellar tennis career, winning his maiden indoor victory at the Rotterdam Open. The 21-year-old Spaniard demonstrated his potential by overcoming Australia's Alex de Minaur 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 in an exciting final. This is Alcaraz's first indoor prize, adding to his previous wins on grass, clay, and outdoor hardcourts. Alcaraz made history by being the first Spanish player to win the tournament in its 52-year history. He also surpassed his coach and tennis legend Juan Carlos Ferrero by securing his 17th ATP Tour title.



Rohit Sharma Becomes Second-Highest Six-Hitter in ODI History :-

India skipper Rohit Sharma's superb effort saw him overtake Chris Gayle's record for the second-most sixes in ODI cricket. The milestone occurred during India's second ODI against England at Cuttack. Rohit demonstrated his devastating batting abilities on what

proved to be a great batting surface while chasing a goal of 305 runs. Rohit broke Gayle's record of 331 sixes in ODIs, bringing his total to 338 during his 119-run innings off 90 balls. Pakistan's Shahid Afridi maintains the overall record with 351 sixes in ODI cricket.



Jil Teichmann Clinches Mumbai Open 2025 Title :-

Prarthana Thombare of India and her Dutch partner Arianne Hartono lost to the Russian combination of Amina Anshba and Elena Pridankina in the doubles final, while Jil Teichmann defeated Mananchaya Sawangkaew to win the singles title at the Mumbai Open WTA 125 Series. While Teichmann of Switzerland overcame her Thai opponent Sawangkaew 6-3, 6-4, Anshba and Pridankina beat Thombare and Hartono 7-6 (4), 2-6, 10-7. The former world No 21 Teichmann was in complete control of the match and walked away with the winning prize and trophy.



Kyrian Jacquet Clinches 2025 Chennai Open Title :-

France's Kyrian Jacquet won the Chennai Open 2025 tennis men's singles title by defeating Sweden's Elias Ymer in the final at the SDAT Tennis Stadium in Nungambakkam, Tamil Nadu. World No. 273 Kyrian Jacquet defeated Elias Ymer, ranked 332nd, 7(7)-6(1), 6-4, to win his first ATP singles tennis title. Jacquet started

the match well by breaking Ymer's serve in the first game of the final. He then held his serve for the next three games before being broken by Ymer in the eighth game. Both players held on to their serve for the remainder of the set, leading to a tie-break, which Jacquet won 7-1.



Bangladesh's Shohely Akhter Becomes First Woman Cricketer Banned by ICC for Corruption :-

Shohely Akhter of Bangladesh has become the first lady cricketer to be banned by the International Cricket Council (ICC) for corruption. The ICC convicted her guilty of attempting to manipulate matches in the 2023 Women's T20 World Cup. The 36-year-old off-spinner earned a five-year suspension. Before her last appearance for Bangladesh in 2022, she had played two One Day Internationals (ODIs) and 13 T20 Internationals. Shohely admitted to breaching five provisions of the ICC Anti-Corruption Code. The charges were linked to corrupt approaches made during the tournament in South Africa.



Inaugural Olympic Esports Games to be held in Riyadh in 2027:-

The International Olympic Committee announced that the first Olympic Esports Games will take place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in two years, as part of a 12-year agreement reached with the kingdom last year. For some years, the IOC has been looking into Esports, including a specific commission to find ways to reach out to a younger generation of gamers. As its usual audience base ages, the governing body is attempting to connect with a younger generation of potential Olympic fans. A six-member committee has been set up to define which games will be part of the first edition of the Esports Olympics.



Badminton : Indonesia Defeats China to Win First Asia Mixed Team Title :-

With a 3-1 victory over the hosts, the People's Republic of China, Indonesia took home the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships 2025 for the first time. Following the mixed doubles match between Rinov Rivaldy and Siti Fadia Silva, the Indonesian shuttlers sped to a decisive 2-0 lead. Before Alwi Farhan defeated Hu Zhe An 21-15, 21-13, Ramadhanti defeated Wu Mengying and Gao Jiaxuan of China 21-11, 21-13. Muhammad Shohibul Fikri and Daniel Marthin dominated China's Chen Xujun and Huang Di 21-15, 21-9 in the men's doubles to secure the title.



Jacob Kiplimo Breaks Half-Marathon World Record in Barcelona :-

Uganda's Jacob Kiplimo smashed the half-marathon world record, becoming the first athlete to finish in under 57 minutes. The 24-year-old Kiplimo, a two-time global cross country champion, finished the Barcelona Half Marathon in 56 minutes and 42 seconds, breaking Ethiopia's Yomif Kejelcha's record of 57 minutes and 30 seconds set last year in Valencia. Kiplimo held the world record between 2021 and 2024 before Kejelcha's run in Spain. However, the Ugandan reclaimed the same in Spain itself with a spectacular performance.



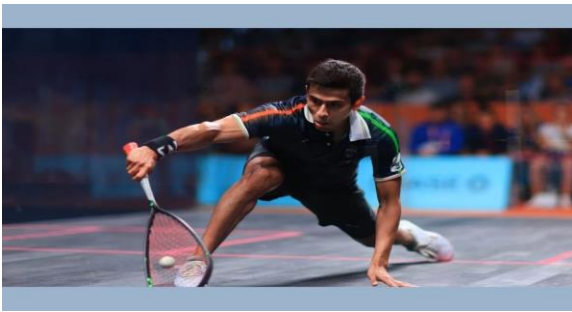
Rohit Sharma Becomes Second Fastest to Complete 11,000 ODI Runs :-

Rohit Sharma added another feather to his cap by becoming the world's second-fastest hitter to reach 11,000 runs in ODI cricket. Rohit accomplished a major accomplishment during India's third ODI match against Bangladesh at Dubai Cricket Stadium. India's Virat Kohli holds the record for the fastest 11,000 runs in ODIs. Kohli passed the 11,000-run mark in his 222nd innings. For Rohit, it took him 261 knocks to attain the feat. Rohit reached the milestone with his 12th run in the innings and also became the only fourth Indian to cross the landmark.



Mohammed Shami Joins Elite Club with 200 ODI Wickets :-

Md Shami, India's star bowler, reached a historic milestone by taking three wickets in India's first match against Bangladesh in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 in Dubai, bringing his total to 200 in one-day international cricket. Shami is the eighth Indian cricketer to accomplish this milestone. The only active Indian cricketer ahead of him on the list is Ravindra Jadeja, who has 224 wickets. While Shami has finished his 200 ODI wickets at a rapid clip, he remains 43rd on the list of players with the most ODI wickets overall. Sri Lankan legend M Muralidaran leads the list with 534 wickets, while Anil Kumble, with 334 wickets, is the highest-ranked Indian player.



Saurav Ghosal clinches Sydney Classic 2025 title :-

Saurav Ghosal, an Indian squash star, made a triumphant comeback from retirement, winning the Octane Sydney Classic. Former World No. 10 Ghosal retired from the PSA (Professional Squash Association) Tour in April of last year, but he expressed a desire to continue representing India. On January 1, he rejoined the PSA Tour to pursue his dream of playing for his country. The 38-year-old Ghosal, seeded second at the PSA Challenger Tour (second-tier of professional circuit) event, defeated World No. 142 Abdelrahman Nasser of Egypt 3-0 (11-2, 11-6, 11-2) in the final.



Virat Kohli Breaks Tendulkar's Record for Fastest 14,000 Run :-

Virat Kohli became the quickest hitter to amass 14,000 ODI runs during the Champions Trophy 2025 match against Pakistan at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. Kohli scored his 51st century in ODIs, helping India overcome Pakistan by six wickets. Kohli, 36, eclipsed Sachin Tendulkar's record of 350 innings in just 287 innings. Kohli achieved the milestone as he scored 15 runs in the chase against Pakistan. In September 2023, Kohli reached his 13,000th ODI run, incidentally while playing against Pakistan in the Asia Cup in Colombo.



Mohun Bagan Clinched ISL Winners Shield :-

Mohun Bagan Super Giants overcame Odisha FC 1-0 to reclaim the Indian Super League (ISL) Winners Shield in Kolkata's Salt Lake Stadium. The Kolkata club dominated ISL 2024-25, becoming the first team to defend the League Shield title. FC Goa became the first Indian team to advance to the AFC Champions League group stage with a 5-0 victory over Jamshedpur FC in the 2019-20 season. The club ended the season with 39 points, winning 12 out of 18 matches, losing just three. The side also scored the most goals this season, 46, which is 15 more than the next highest-scorer ATK on 31.

17: State



Gujarat Declares Its First Biodiversity Heritage Site :-

The Gujarat Biodiversity Board has formally designated the 'Inland Mangrove Guneri' site in Guneri village, Lakhpat taluka, Kutch district, as Gujarat's first 'Biodiversity Heritage Site', according to the state government. The declaration, issued under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and Forest and setting Minister Mulubhai Bera, aimed to protect this unique mangrove ecosystem that survives in a rare non-tidal setting, hence increasing the region's ecological importance. This recognition not only bolsters Kutch's ecological identity but also contributes to biodiversity conservation.



IIM Sambalpur Joins Hands With Odisha Government To Take Subhadra Scheme A Notch Further :-

The Subhadra Scheme, a major effort of the Odisha Government's Women and Child Development Department, is improving the lives of women

throughout the state. To make sure the success of the Subhadra Scheme, IIM Sambalpur inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Women and Child Development. The association was officially established during the recently completed Utkarsh Odisha Business Conclave. The collaboration aims to use IIM Sambalpur's experience in research, policy analysis, and strategic planning to increase the scheme's impact.



Karnataka Cabinet approves Greater Bengaluru Integrated Satellite Town project for Ramanagara :-

The State Cabinet authorized a proposal by the Bengaluru Metropolitan Region Development Authority (BMRDA) to develop the Greater Bengaluru Integrated Township in Ramanagara district. The integrated township in Ramanagara and Harohalli taluks will be self-sufficient, environmentally sustainable, and consistent with the Work-Live-Play model. The township will integrate residential, commercial, and recreational areas, with the goal of achieving a sustainable and balanced development model. The project will encompass 8,943 acres across 10 villages, with the initial land already acquired by the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB).



India's First White Tiger Breeding Centre Approved in MP :-

The Central Zoo Authority (CZA) has approved India's first white tiger breeding center in Madhya Pradesh's Rewa area, which is thought to be home to the only white tiger in the wild. The Centre gave in-principle permission for this initiative in 2011. The breeding centre will now be established in Govindgarh. The state's only white tiger safari is in Mukundpur, just 10 kilometers distant. The breeding centre is evidence that the MP govt remains dedicated to biodiversity conservation, said deputy CM Rajendra Shukla, adding it will boost wildlife tourism and create job opportunities for locals.



Kerala Secures Rs 2,424 cr World Bank Loan to Strengthen Healthcare System :-

The Kerala government has authorized the Kerala Health System Improvement Programme, which includes a loan of Rs 2,424.28 crore from the World Bank. The state Cabinet meeting, headed by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, approved the project and opted to implement it using the Programme for Results (P for R) approach. According to a CMO release, the

main objective of the programme is to ensure an excellent standard of living and life expectancy while helping the people of the state build a life free from preventable diseases, accidents, and premature deaths.



Assam to Host World's Largest Jhumur Festival On 24th February :-

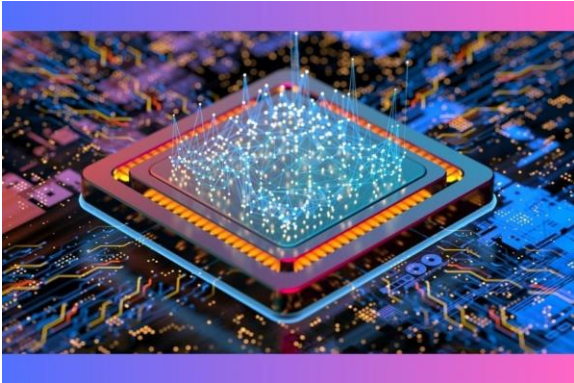
Assam is set to host two significant events: the Mega Jhumur Dance Performance and the Advantage Assam 2.0 investment and development summit, both of which Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend. According to a release from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma presided over a high-level review meeting at Lok Sewa Bhawan in Guwahati to assess preparations for these crucial events. The meeting focused on the progress of various committees handling guest management, medical support, technical coordination, and traffic arrangements, the statement noted.



Manipur CM Biren Singh Resigns Amid Ethnic Violence

N Biren Singh, the chief minister of Manipur, resigned amid turmoil in the northeastern state. Since May 2023, ethnic violence in Manipur has killed over 250 individuals and left others homeless. Earlier, Biren Singh

stated that his government is working tirelessly to restore peace in the conflict-torn northeastern state and ensure that people may coexist as they once did. Biren Singh's tenure as Manipur Chief Minister has been marked by several controversies, primarily centred on his handling of ethnic violence that erupted in May 2023, allegations of instigating conflict, and questions regarding his governance.



Lam Research to Invest ₹10,000 Crore in Karnataka's Semiconductor Industry :-

Lam Research, a global semiconductor equipment manufacturer, plans to invest over ₹10,000 crore in Karnataka in the coming years. Sessa Varadarajan, Senior Vice President, Global Products Group at Lam Research, made the announcement during the launch event of Invest Karnataka 2025. The American corporation creates tools for semiconductor production, including wafer processing and semiconductor device wiring. The Chief Minister emphasized this investment places Karnataka at the heart of the global semiconductor ecosystem.



Jharkhand Govt Prohibits Gutkha, Pan Masala for a Year

The Jharkhand government has issued a one-year ban on selling, production, storage, and distribution of gutkha and pan masala throughout the state. The Health and Family Welfare Department issued a notification to enforce the ban under Section 30 (2) (a) of the Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006 and the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations of 2011. Health Minister Irfan Ansari emphasized the health risks associated with gutkha, particularly its role in causing oral cancer. The move aims to protect public health, especially the youth, from the harmful effects of tobacco consumption.



Rajasthan Unveils First Green Budget: Prioritizing Bijli, Sadak, Paani :-

Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari delivered the Bhajan Lal government's second comprehensive budget, which is the first 'green budget' with an emphasis on climate change adaptation, forests, the environment, and biodiversity. In her 138-minute address, the state Finance Minister detailed Rajasthan's goal of becoming a \$350 billion economy by 2030. The Finance Minister said that the budget projects estimated revenue receipts of Rs 2,94,536.49 crore for 2025-26, while the estimated revenue expenditure stands at Rs 3,25,545 crore.



Uttarakhand Tightens Land Laws for Outsiders :-

The Uttarakhand cabinet has passed a tough new land legislation, a long-standing desire of the state's

inhabitants in the face of perceived threats to their rights from 'outsiders'. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, who announced the decision, noted that the cabinet acted in full accordance with public mood. "This historic step will protect the state's resources, cultural heritage and rights of citizens as well as play an important role in maintaining the original identity of the state. This law will also prove helpful in maintaining the original form of the state," he said in a social media post.

18: Summits & Conferences



India to Host BRICS Youth Entrepreneurship Meet in March 2025 :-

The Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, will host the BRICS Youth Council Entrepreneurship Working Group Meeting from March 3rd to March 7th, 2025. The meeting's theme is "Youth Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Growth". The meeting will be accompanied by approximately 45 BRICS youth representatives. At the Working Group Meeting, India will provide a platform for representatives of the BRICS Youth Council to exchange policies, programmes, and cooperation prospects in the field of entrepreneurship.



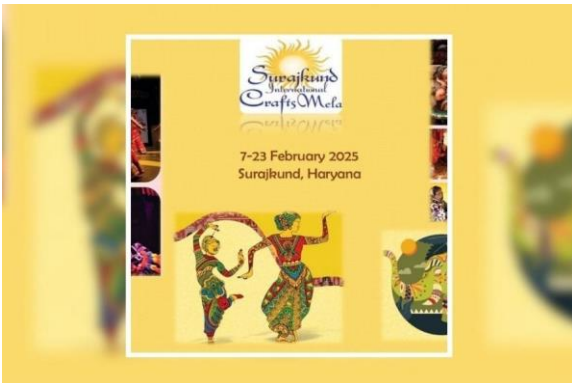
Russian Lawmaker Vyacheslav Volodin's Official Visit to India :-

Vyacheslav Volodin, Chairman of the Russian Parliament's Lower House, was in India on an official visit. His conversations with Indian authorities centered on expanding economic, cultural, educational, and technological collaboration, as well as strengthening bilateral inter-parliamentary interaction. Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin is set to attend India's annual summit this year. The dates for the visit will be worked out through diplomatic channels, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.



HYSEA national summit, awards function on February 11 :-

The next annual national summit and awards ceremony of the Hyderabad Software Enterprises Association (HYSEA) will take place in Hyderabad on February 11. This year's summit subject is 'AI and beyond: redefining the future', reflecting the fast changing technology landscape and its far-reaching impact on society and industry. The discussions will focus on the transformative applications of AI across critical domains, including life sciences; sustainable systems and green software; and e-governance and citizen services, HYSEA said in a release.



38th Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2025 :-

The 38th Surajkund International Crafts Mela will take place from February 7 to February 23, 2025, at Surajkund, Faridabad, Haryana. It is recognized as one of the world's largest crafts fairs, attracting over a million visitors each year. The mela highlights India's numerous handicrafts, cultural performances, and culinary delicacies, providing attendees with a vivid and exciting experience. The fair has over 1,000 stalls displaying a diverse range of handicrafts, textiles, and

cultural objects. The grounds are organised into sections representing various Indian states, allowing visitors to explore the nation's rich artistic heritage.



Dubai's Global Justice Summit :-

Dubai is preparing to hold the inaugural Global Justice, Love, and Peace Summit on April 12-13, 2025, at the Dubai Exhibition Centre in Expo City. The I am Peacekeeper Movement has arranged the event, which will feature 2,800 peacekeepers and 72 renowned speakers, including 10 Nobel Laureates, presidents of state, and religious leaders. Under the patronage of Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan, Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, the summit aligns with the UAE's declaration of 2025 as the Year of Community. The summit will become an annual event in Dubai.



75th Anniversary of the National Sample Survey (NSS) Vigyan Bhawan Celebrated :-

On February 7, 2025, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) of the Government of India hosted a special event at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the National Sample Surveys (NSS). This milestone marks the beginning of a nationwide series of

initiatives aimed at highlighting the vital function National Sample Surveys (NSS) data plays in establishing policies based on evidence, raising awareness about the value of data for nation-building, and engaging stakeholders from all walks of life.



BIMSTEC Youth Summit 2025 : Gandhinagar :-

India will hold the inaugural BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) Youth Summit in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, from February 7 to 11, 2025, according to an official release from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The program, announced at the 4th BIMSTEC Summit, is co-organized by the Ministries of Youth Affairs & Sports and External Affairs, with the Confederation of Indian Industry's Young Indians (CII YI) serving as the knowledge partner.



Global Investor Summit to take MP startups to new heights: CM Mohan Yadav :-

Entrepreneurs and inventors are very excited about the upcoming Invest Madhya Pradesh Global Investors Summit (GIS), which will be hosted in the state capital of Bhopal on February 24 and 25. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav asserted that the Summit would

enhance the state's industrial sector and create more job opportunities for its young. Companies from UK, Germany, and Japan have expressed their commitment to supporting the state's progress in the field of technology.



Paris AI Summit Kicks Off with PM Modi as Co-Chair :-

The third edition of the AI Action Summit will officially begin in Paris, France's capital, on February 10 and 11, making the country the focal point of the artificial intelligence (AI) debate. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to co-chair the Paris Summit. It is the latest in a series of global conversations on AI governance, following two previous editions conducted in the United Kingdom in 2023 and a smaller event in Seoul, South Korea, last year. It also comes amid the meteoric rise in popularity of the low-cost Chinese foundational model DeepSeek, which has shook up the industry.



India to Host Inaugural WAVES Summit in Mumbai from May 2025 :-

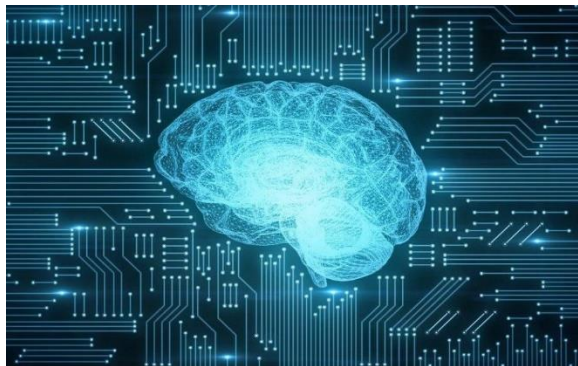
India will hold the inaugural World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) in Mumbai on May 1-4, bringing together media CEOs, entertainment icons, and

creative minds from all over the world. WAVES dates were announced by Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in a post on X, one day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the summit's Advisory Board meeting. The WAVES summit is being positioned by the government as India's global event for the entertainment sector to what Davos is for the economic sector.



Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs Hosts "Culinary, Crafts & Clicks – Moods & Magic" Festival :-

From February 8th to February 23rd, 2025, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) will hold "Culinary, Crafts & Clicks - Moods & Magic," a Street Food & Handicraft Festival at Amrit Udyan, Rashtrapati Bhavan. This program intends to showcase India's various street food and handicrafts by providing a platform for self-help groups (SHGs) around the country and street food sellers to expand their reach and integrate into mainstream markets. To uphold Swabhav Swachhata and Sanskaar Swachhata, the festival is a zero-waste event with no use of single-use plastic.



India to Host Next Global AI Summit: PM Modi :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that India will host the next Global AI Summit following discussions at the AI Action Summit in Paris. The meeting, co-chaired by Prime Minister Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron, aimed to boost worldwide cooperation in the development of artificial intelligence technologies. During his concluding address, PM Modi welcomed the establishment of the "AI Foundation" and the "Council for Sustainable AI." He lauded France and President Macron for their leadership in these initiatives, assuring India's full support.



International Bird Festival To Be Held In Prayagraj :-

Visitors to Mahakumbh 2025 will be able to see over 200 species of migratory and indigenous birds at a three-day International Bird Festival in Prayagraj, which will take place from February 16 to 18. With the goal of encouraging environmental conservation and biodiversity, this event will provide a one-of-a-kind chance for nature enthusiasts, ornithologists, and devotees to watch rare bird species and learn about their value in conservation. The International Bird Festival will not only offer the chance to view birds but also raise awareness about bird conservation through various competitions and educational activities.



Cairo to host an Emergency Arab Summit :-

Egypt has declared that it will hold an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) following the Arab summit in Cairo on February 27. This gathering will reaffirm Arab and Islamic countries' strong support for Palestinian rights. According to Egypt's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the summit will take place to highlight Arab and Islamic nations' ongoing support for the Palestinian cause. The announcement comes just after former US President Donald Trump made headlines with a controversial proposal about the Gaza Strip.



India Energy Week 2025 :-

Inaugurated by the Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri, the third edition of the India Energy Week 2025 was held at the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre in New Delhi from 11 to 14 February. India signed a number of significant agreements at India Energy Week 2025, reaffirming its commitment to ensuring affordable, sustainable, and diverse energy sources while developing global cooperation. Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, stressed that these agreements would help India achieve its energy transition goals and enhance its energy ecosystem.



Ex-ISRO head opens Youth Space Conference :-

The Youth Space Conference 2025 (YSC-2025) began at the CSIO in Chandigarh, marking an important step toward promoting worldwide space education and innovation. Dr Prakasha Rao, former ISRO Director and scientist, opened the event with an exciting keynote address that emphasized the future of human space exploration and the importance of inter-disciplinary collaboration. He stressed on the patience, risk and dedication required in space R&D, explaining, "Unlike mass-produced innovations like smartphones or cars, rockets take 10-15 years to develop, with real-time technical failures revealed only at launch."



BRICS Summit in Rio Amid U.S. Tariff Threats :-

The Brazilian government confirmed that the next BRICS summit will be held in Rio de Janeiro on July 6-7, 2025. As the bloc's next chair, Brazil will head BRICS until the end of 2025, concentrating on global governance reform and increased cooperation among Global South nations. One significant topic will be the establishment of an alternative payment system independent of the US currency, a move that has sparked condemnation from US President Donald Trump, who has threatened BRICS members with harsh tariffs if they undermine the dollar's dominant position.



Advantage Assam 2.0 investment summit :-

The Assam government expects big global cooperation during the Advantage Assam 2.0: Investment and Infrastructure Summit 2025, which will be held in Guwahati on February 25 and 26. According to the state government, Japan, Singapore, Bhutan, Australia, Thailand, and Malaysia have already confirmed as partner countries, while the Philippines, Finland, Iceland, Austria, and Republic of Korea additionally confirmed their participation in the two-day conclave. Confirmation from another 14 nations is also expected soon.

**51st Khajuraho Dance Festival 2025 :-**

The 51st Khajuraho Dance Festival will take place from February 20th to 26th, 2025 at Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh. Since its inception in 1975, this festival, organized by Madhya Pradesh's Department of Culture and supported by Madhya Pradesh Tourism, has been a light of traditional dance. Set against the stunning background of the Khajuraho Group of Temples, this festival not only honors India's rich cultural legacy, but also encourages creativity in classical dance while keeping its traditional spirit. Performances included Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Manipuri, Mohiniyattam, Kathakali, Yakshagana, and more.

SECTION 2

PRACTICE QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS



BY RAMAN ACADEMY



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“inspiring excellence”

SECTION 3

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF IMPORTANT EVENTS



BY RAMAN ACADEMY

Economics

Budget 2025-26 removes 7 Custom Duties for Industrial Goods



Why in the News?

Following a similar approach in Budget 2023-24, the Budget 2025-26 seeks to eliminate seven customs tax rates for industrial goods. With just eight tariff rates remaining, including a zero rate, the customs duty structure will become more predictable and transparent.

What is Customs Duty?

- In order to control the movement of products across international boundaries, customs duties are levied.
- By regulating imports and exports, it contributes to the protection of a nation's economy, employment, environment, and citizens.
- It brings in money for the government, guarantees fair competition, and stops illicit trade.
- The 1962 Customs Act establishes and governs customs duties in India.
- Customs duties are administered by the Ministry of Finance's Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).
- **Types of Customs Duties in India:**

1. **Basic Customs Duty (BCD):** Levied on imported goods (0-100%).
 2. **Countervailing Duty (CVD):** Imposed to balance foreign subsidies (0-12%).
 3. **Social Welfare Surcharge (SWS):** 10% surcharge to support welfare projects.
 4. **Anti-Dumping Duty:** Imposed on goods sold below market price to prevent unfair trade.
 5. **Compensation Cess:** Levied on items like tobacco and pollution-causing goods.
 6. **Integrated GST (IGST):** Imposed on imports at 5%, 12%, 18%, or 28% rates.
 7. **Safeguard Duty:** Applied when excessive imports harm domestic industries.
 8. **Customs Handling Fee:** 1% charge for customs processing.
- **Customs Duty Calculation:** Based on product value, origin, composition, and international trade agreements.

Key Changes Announced to Customs Tariffs:

- Social Welfare Surcharge was eliminated on 82 products, and tariff rates were lowered from 15 to 8.
- 36 new life-saving medications are exempt, while six additional medications have a 5% duty.
- Complete BCD exemption for 28 mobile battery items, 35 EV battery capital goods, and essential minerals like lithium and cobalt.
- Duty-free shipbuilding materials for ten years; Ethernet Reduce the duty cut to 10% from 20%.
- The export period for handicrafts was extended to one year, and the 20% export duty on crust leather was eliminated.
- To increase seafood exports, the tariff on frozen fish paste was reduced from 30% to 5%.
- Customs assessments are only valid for two years, and importers report quarterly rather than monthly.

How India is Protecting Its Economy from Trade War Impact?

- Trade agreements based on rupees with Russia, the United Arab Emirates, and Sri Lanka aim to lessen reliance on the dollar.
- accumulating necessary imports, such as crude oil, rare earth metals, and semiconductors.
- luring businesses away from China with PLI manufacturing incentives.
- Blockchain documentation, AI-powered trade monitoring, and paperless customs clearance for more efficient trade.
- bolstering international trade partnerships for supply chain stability, such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and the Japan-Australia Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI).

New Makhana Board and Food Institute to be opened in Bihar



Why in the News?

The Union Budget 2025 has announced the establishment of a Makhana Board in Bihar to improve production, processing, value addition, and marketing of makhana (fox nut).

What is Makhana?

- The edible seed of the prickly water lily (*Euryale ferox*), which is cultivated in freshwater ponds throughout India and South Asia, is called makhana, or fox nut.

- With significant centers in Darbhanga, Madhubani, Purnea, and Katihar, Bihar produces 90% of India's makhana.
- It is a low-fat, nutrient-dense superfood that is becoming more and more well-liked in both home and foreign markets.
- Makhana, which has historically been utilized in religious ceremonies, is being marketed for its potential in the marketplace and health advantages.

About the Makhana Board

- The Makhana Board will provide farmers with training, guarantee market access, control prices, and encourage exports.
- The Food Processing Institute will concentrate on research, quality assurance, value addition, and facilitating international trade.
- **Aims & Objectives:**
 - Promote high-yield cultivars like Sabour Makhana-1 and Swarna Vaidehi to boost output. Upgrade processing facilities to cut waste and improve product quality.
 - Encourage exports with trade alliances, branding campaigns, and shipping infrastructure.
- **Structural Mandate:**
 - Governing body headed by representatives of the government, farmers, and business professionals.
 - To help farmers, there are regional centers in important makhana-producing districts.
 - collaborations for financial and research support with agricultural universities, ICAR, and NABARD.
 - Initial capital for market expansion, training, and infrastructure is ₹100 crore.
- **Powers & Functions:** Regulate production, enforce quality standards, provide subsidies,

promote research, develop export infrastructure, and launch branding campaigns.

10 New Agricultural Commodities added to the E-NAM platform



Why in the News?

The Agriculture Ministry has allowed trading of 10 additional commodities on the electronic-National Agriculture Market (E-NAM), taking the total number of tradable items on the platform to 231.

About the 10 new commodities:

The newly added commodities include dried Tulsi leaves, Besant (Chickpea flour), wheat flour, chana sattu (Roasted Chickpea Flour), water Chestnut flour, asafoetida, dried fenugreek leaves, baby corn, dragon fruit and water Chestnut, the ministry said in a statement.

Current Status of E-NAM (As of December 2024):

- 1,410 mandis connected across 22 states and Union Territories.
- Inter-state trade worth ₹5,022 crore has been recorded.
- ₹6,831 crore e-payments made across 948 mandis.
- Trade in 1.44 lakh metric tonnes of grains and 3.4 crore units of perishable commodities such as bamboo, betel leaves, coconuts, and lemons.

What is E-NAM?

- On April 14, 2016, the Indian government inaugurated E-NAM, a pan-India electronic trade platform.

- In order to establish a single national market for agricultural products, it unifies the current Agriculture Produce Market Committees (APMCs).
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare oversees the Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC), which is in charge of e-NAM implementation.
- By facilitating online trade in agricultural commodities between states, the platform improves price discovery and transparency for farmers, merchants, and buyers.

Objectives of e-NAM

- By combining APMC mandis into a single online platform, market efficiency can be increased.
- A competitive bidding method can improve price discovery and guarantee farmers receive fair market prices.
- Encourage interstate commerce by lowering obstacles and bringing India's agricultural markets together.
- Lessen reliance on intermediaries to guarantee farmers receive direct benefits.
- To guarantee speedy and clear financial transactions for farmers, enable e-payments.

What is E-NAM 2.0?

- Launched to enhance interstate agricultural trade, logistics, and farmers' digital accessibility, E-NAM 2.0 is an improved version of the Electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM).
- By integrating logistics service providers, it enables farmers to use a farm-gate module to sell produce straight from their fields.
- Real-time price discovery, e-KYC based on Aadhaar, warehouse-based trade, and direct online payments are some of the salient characteristics.
- The platform lessens reliance on middlemen by improving efficiency, transparency, and access to a national market.
- It seeks to establish a single digital agricultural ecosystem throughout India, increase farmer

earnings, and reduce waste.

NITI Aayog launches Swavalambini Initiative



Why in the News?

The NITI Aayog has launched Swavalambini Women Entrepreneurship Programme in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

About Swavalambini Women Entrepreneurship Programme:

- It is a program to foster entrepreneurial skills among female students in higher education institutions across Assam, Meghalaya, and Mizoram.
- **Aims and Objectives:**
 - Empowerment: To encourage and prepare young women to take on leadership roles and create jobs, therefore promoting economic growth in Northeast India.
 - Skill Development: To improve participants' entrepreneurial competencies by offering organized training covering key business topics.
- **Provisions and Features:**
 - A two-day program called the business Awareness Programme (EAP) teaches 600 female students the principles of business.

- 300 carefully chosen applicants will undergo an intense 40-hour training program called the Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP), which covers subjects like market access, financial planning, legal compliance, and business networking.
- Mentoring: Participants will receive six months of committed mentoring to help them turn their business concepts into successful ventures.
- The Faculty Development Programme (FDP) is a five-day course designed to help faculty members become better mentors of prospective business owners.

SEBI proposed Retail Algo Trading Framework



Why in the News?

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has suggested allowing retail involvement in algorithmic trading, or "algo trading," which was previously restricted to institutional investors in order to maintain market stability.

What is Algo Trading?

- The process of employing computer programs and preset rules to carry out financial market

trades quickly and effectively is known as "algorithmic trading," or "algo trading."

- It permits trades based on mathematical models, historical data, and market conditions by doing away with human interaction and emotions.
- **How Does Algo Trading Work?**
 - It finds trading opportunities and executes orders using pre-programmed algorithms.
 - It determines trade entry and exit locations based on a variety of inputs, including volume, price fluctuations, and technical indications.
 - The technology can conduct trades in milliseconds and monitor many marketplaces at once.
 - A subset of algorithmic trading known as High-Frequency Trading (HFT) entails making thousands of deals every second.
 - Compared to manual trading, it lowers slippage, transaction costs, and market impact.

Key Highlights of Regulatory Framework:

- **Broker Responsibilities:** Only registered brokers are permitted to provide retail investors with algo trading services. Without broker approval, direct retail algo trading is prohibited.
- **Market Surveillance:** To stop market manipulation and excessive order placement, exchanges need to keep an eye on algorithmic trading.
- **Co-location and Latency Regulations:** SEBI has established regulations to prevent unfair benefits and guarantee equitable access to low-latency trading infrastructure.
- **Risk management:** Circuit breakers are in place to stop excessive market volatility, and traders are required to have sufficient margins.
- **Pre-Approval of Strategies:** In order to reduce market disruption, algorithm trading strategies

need to be evaluated and authorized prior to implementation.

- **Algo vs. Non-Algo Identification:** For improved transparency and control, SEBI requires distinct tagging of algo trades.
- **Prohibition of Self-Trading:** Algorithms are not allowed to manipulate market prices by executing self-trades.

Economic Capital Framework (ECF) of the RBI



Why in the News?

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has initiated an internal review of its Economic Capital Framework (ECF) to assess the contingency risk buffer (CRB) and overall capital reserves.

What is Economic Capital Framework (ECF)?

- **The ECF is the risk management policy used by the RBI to determine:**
 1. How much capital and reserves the central bank should maintain for financial stability.
 2. How much surplus the RBI can transfer to the government under Section 47 of the RBI Act, 1934.
- **Key Components**
 1. **Contingency Risk Buffer (CRB):** A financial safeguard for monetary, fiscal, credit, and operational risks.
 2. **Total Economic Capital:** Includes capital, reserves, risk provisions, and revaluation balances.

- **Surplus Transfers:**

- **FY24:** ₹2.11 lakh crore (highest-ever surplus).
- **FY23:** ₹87,416 crore | **FY22:** ₹30,307 crore | **FY21:** ₹99,122 crore.

Review of ECF and Its Significance

- The Bimal Jalan Committee's recommendations (valid till June 2024) required a periodic reassessment.
- As of March 31, 2024, the CRB stands at 6.5%, and the RBI is evaluating whether changes are needed.
- Potential Impact
 - Higher CRB → More financial stability, but lower surplus transfers to the government.
 - Lower CRB → More funds available for government spending, but with potential financial risks.
- Impact on Budget: RBI's surplus plays a major role in fiscal planning for infrastructure & welfare programs.
- The RBI must ensure financial resilience while also supporting economic development.

About Bimal Jalan Committee (2018)

- **Objective:** To review RBI's reserve management and surplus transfer policy.
- **Key Recommendations:**
 - CRB should be between 5.5% – 6.5% of the balance sheet.
 - Periodic ECF review every 5 years.
 - Only realized surplus (net income) should be transferred to the government.
 - Revaluation reserves should not be used for operational losses.
- **Impact:**
 - Led to higher surplus transfers and a structured capital policy.
 - Strengthened transparency & financial governance in RBI's operations.

India introduces new HS code for GI-recognised Rice Varieties



Why in the News?

India has introduced a Harmonised System (HS) code for geographical indication (GI) recognised rice exports under an amendment to the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the 2025-26 Union Budget on February 1, 2025.

India's GI-Tagged Rice Varieties:

The **Indian Patent Office** has granted **GI status** to **20 rice varieties**, including:

- Navara, Palakkadan Matta, Pokkali, Wayanad Jeerakasala, Wayanad Gandhakasala, Kalanamak, Kaipad, Ajara Ghansal, Ambemohar, Joha, Gobindobog, Tulapanji, Katarni, and Chokuwa (awarded GI tag before March 2020).
- Bhadara Chinoor, Mushqbudji, Marcha, Khaw Tai (Khamti), Uttarakhand's Lal Chawl, Kalonunia, and Koraput Kalajeera (received GI recognition between April 2023 and March 2024).
- Andaman Karen Musley (awarded GI status in the current fiscal year).

Pending GI Applications for Rice Varieties:

Currently, 20 additional rice varieties are awaiting GI certification, including:

- Seeraga Samba, Seoni Jeera Shankar, Thooyamalli, Kanakchur, Sivagangai Karuppu

Kavuni, Ramanathapuram Poongar, J&K Red Rice, and Wada Kolam Paddy rice.

- Most of these varieties are grown on small landholdings, typically less than 12,500 acres.
- Kalapad rice (Kerala) is an exception, grown over 30,000 acres, with maximum yields of 2,200 kg per acre.

About Harmonised System (HS) Code

- The World Customs Organization (WCO) created the widely accepted HS Code classification system for commercial products.
- The HS Code is a six-digit numerical code, categorized as follows:
 - First two digits: Represent the chapter of goods (e.g., "10" for cereals).
 - Next two digits: Indicate the heading (e.g., "06" for rice).
 - Last two digits: Define the subheading (e.g., "30" for semi-milled or wholly milled rice).
- Countries can extend the HS Code beyond six digits to accommodate specific national requirements (e.g., India uses an 8-digit system).

Impact of HS Code on GI Rice Exports:

Trade experts believe that the **introduction of an HS code** will:

- Facilitate GI rice exports, even when general rice exports are restricted.
- Ensure better market access for specialty rice varieties in global markets.
- Differentiate GI-tagged rice from conventional rice exports to prevent mislabelling.

About the World Customs Organization (WCO):

- An intergovernmental body called the WCO is in charge of monitoring and harmonizing international customs laws.
- Originally called the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC), it was founded in 1952 and changed its name to the WCO in 1994.
- **Key Functions of the WCO:**
 - Develops and maintains the HS Code, used by over 200 countries and territories.
 - Regulates customs procedures, trade facilitation, and enforcement of trade laws.
 - Supports the fight against illegal trade, smuggling, and counterfeit goods.
- As a WCO member, India abides by its trade restrictions using the HS classification system.
- India's initiatives to modernize its customs are modeled around the WCO's Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC).

Environment & Diversity

Four new sites to get Ramsar Tag



Why in the News?

The Environment Ministry announced the addition of four new Ramsar sites, increasing India's total to 89 ahead of World Wetlands Day (February 2). Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary and Therthangal Bird Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu, Khecheopalri Wetland in Sikkim, and Udhwa Lake Bird Sanctuary in Jharkhand are the recently named locations. As a result, Tamil Nadu currently has the most Ramsar sites in the nation (20), followed by Uttar Pradesh (10).

About the Newly Added Ramsar Sites:

	Description
Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu. Originally an irrigation tank, now a designated bird sanctuary. Recharged by northeast monsoon (Oct-Jan). Supports 42+ bird species, including Spot-billed Pelican, Grey Heron, Little Cormorant, and Black Kite.
Therthangal Bird Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: Theerthangal Village, Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu. A freshwater ecosystem and an important breeding ground for waterbirds. Recorded 96 bird species across 18 orders and 44 families. Notable species include Oriental Darter, Black-headed Ibis, Asian Woolly-necked Stork, and Spot-billed Pelican.
Khecheopalri Wetland, Sikkim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: West Sikkim, near Khecheopalri Village. A sacred lake revered by Buddhists and Hindus. Part of a temperate Himalayan peatland ecosystem, surrounded by broad-leaved mixed temperate forests. Flora: Rich in macrophytes, phytoplankton, and zooplankton. Fauna: Supports fish species like Cyprinus carpio, Danio aequipinnatus, and various migratory birds (Common Merganser, Tufted Duck).
Udhwa Lake Bird Sanctuary,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location: Sahebganj District, Jharkhand. Comprises two interconnected

Jharkhand	<p>lakes: Pataura (155 ha) and Berhale (410 ha).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connected to the Ganga River via the Udhwa Nala (25 km stretch). Pataura Lake depth: ~2 meters; Berhale Lake depth: ~70 cm, covered with aquatic vegetation. Flora: Home to 42 algae species and 36 aquatic macrophytes. Fauna: Habitat for 83 bird species, including the Near Threatened Black-necked Stork and 22 commercially valuable fish species.
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Srjanam- India's first indigenous Automated Bio Medical Waste Treatment Plant



Why in the News?

Union Ministry of Science & Technology has launched India's first indigenous Automated Biomedical Waste Treatment Plant, named "Srjanam," at AIIMS, New Delhi.

About Srjanam

- Designed by CSIR-NIIST, Thiruvananthapuram, Srjanam is the first Automated Biomedical Waste Treatment Rig in India to be produced domestically.

- It supports India's Waste to Wealth goal by offering a sustainable, non-incineration-based method of disposing of biological waste.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Eco-friendly & Non-Incineration-Based:** Reduces hazardous emissions by doing away with the necessity for incineration.
 - **High-Efficiency Pathogen Elimination:** Has antimicrobial activity verified by a third party and disinfects blood, urine, sputum, and lab disposables.
 - **Secure & Completely Automated:** reduces the chance of spills and illnesses by minimizing human exposure.
 - **Scalability and Capacity:** 400 kg of biomedical waste are processed every day, with a phase one capability of 10 kilogram of degradable waste each day.
 - **Odor neutralization:** Makes the environment safer by getting rid of offensive odors.
 - **Promotes the Circular Economy:** Lessens the load on landfills by improving waste segregation and recyclability.

The ambitious 3,858-hectare Aravalli Safari Park, which would be sprawled over Gurugram and Nuh, has been planned by the Haryana government with the goal of becoming the largest safari park in the world.

About the Aravalli Range

- Dating back to the Proterozoic age, the Aravalli Range is among the world's oldest fold mountain ranges.
- It travels 692 miles through Rajasthan and Haryana on its way from Gujarat to Delhi.
- By serving as a natural green barrier, the range stops the Thar Desert from spreading into the Gangetic plains and eastern Rajasthan.
- Guru Shikhar, located in Mount Abu, Rajasthan, is the highest peak at 1,722 meters.
- Rivers originating from the Aravalli Range:
 - Banas and Sahibi Rivers (tributaries of the Yamuna).
 - Luni River, which flows into the Rann of Kutch.
- Abundant in mineral resources, such as marble, lead, zinc, and copper.
- As natural aquifers, the Aravalli hills are essential for groundwater replenishment.
- Haryana, Delhi, and Gujarat make up the remaining range, with Rajasthan accounting for 80% of it.

What is the Aravalli Safari Park Project?



Why in the News?

What is the Aravalli Safari Park Project?

- The 3,858-hectare Aravalli Safari Park, which the Haryana government has proposed, is meant to be the biggest in the world.
- The project encompasses 1,284 hectares in Nuh and 2,574 hectares in Gurugram.
- It will feature hotels, cable cars, aquariums, botanical gardens, animal hospitals, and animal cages.
- The initiative, which was once run by the Tourism Department, is currently run by the Forest Department and is being monitored by an expert group.

Why is there Opposition?

- **Ecological Concerns:** Large-scale building may interfere with biodiversity and groundwater recharge, and the Aravallis prevent desertification.
- **Danger to Water Security:** The area serves as an aquifer, and too much construction, tourism, and transportation could exacerbate the water situation in Gurugram and Nuh, which the Central Ground Water Board has already labeled as "over-exploited."

- **Legal Violations:** The project falls under protected forest areas, governed by:
 - Forest Conservation Act, 1980.
 - Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA), 1900, restricting deforestation.
 - T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad Judgment (1996), which extends legal protection to non-notified forest land.

Governance

National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM)



Why in the News?

As part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM) introduced the Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar (MGMD) portal in June 2023, facilitating comprehensive documentation of the cultural heritage of 6.5 lakh villages across India.

About National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM):

Details	Launched by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and implemented by Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA).
Aims and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record the performing arts, artists, crafts, and other aspects of India's cultural legacy. • mapping 6.5 lakh Indian villages, with a preliminary emphasis on

	Bihar. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • platform with IT capabilities for managing and storing cultural data using a mobile app and web portal (Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar).
Significant Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of databases for cultural components such as historical sites, festivals, cuisine, art, customs, and oral traditions. • To preserve culture, the National Register of Artists and Art Practices was established. • increasing understanding of the importance of cultural heritage for both national cohesion and economic growth.
Initiatives under the Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Villages are documented by Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar (MGMD), which emphasizes customs, history, and culture. • Arts and Crafts, Ecology, Scholastic Traditions, Epics, History, Architecture, and Distinctive Features are the seven categories of cultural data. • Sanskriti Pratibha Khoj: Using cultural mapping to identify traditional artists.

- National Cultural Workplace and Outreach: Contains media, content design, newsletters, periodicals, booklets, and ads.

What is Deposit Insurance?



Why in the News?

According to the Financial Services Secretary, the Center is actively contemplating raising the deposit insurance coverage over the present ₹5 lakh cap.

What is Deposit Insurance?

- Deposit insurance provides depositors with financial security in the event that a bank fails or is subject to RBI limitations.
- Even in the event that the bank is unable to restore the funds, it guarantees reimbursement up to a predetermined amount.
- It is offered by RBI subsidiary Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC).

History of Deposit Insurance in India:

- 1962: Deposit Insurance Corporation (DIC), which covered ₹1,500 per depositor, was first introduced in Asia.
- 1978: Created DICGC by a merger with the Credit Guarantee Corporation.
- 1993: The deposit cap was increased to one lakh rupees.
- 2020: The ceiling was raised from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh following the PMC Bank crisis in Pune.
- 2021: The law was changed to guarantee

insured reimbursements within ninety days of a bank becoming subject to limitations.

About DICGC & Its Functions

- Under the DICGC Act of 1961, DICGC was founded as a wholly-owned RBI subsidiary.
- It includes all commercial banks, cooperative banks, foreign banks operating in India, and regional rural banks.
- Depositors are not charged; banks cover the insurance price.
- It guarantees prompt payment within ninety days following a bank failure.

How does Deposit Insurance work?

- Deposits up to ₹5 lakh per depositor per bank are insured by DICGC.
- Both principal and interest are included in the ₹5 lakh cap.
- According to Section 18A of the DICGC Act, 1961, depositors may seek insurance if a bank is experiencing financial difficulties or limits imposed by the RBI.
- Payout Timeline:
 - Within 45 days: The troubled bank must submit a list of depositors to DICGC.
 - Within 90 days: DICGC processes and pays depositors up to ₹5 lakh.
- After obtaining a list of claims from the bank's liquidator, DICGC pays the insured amount in the event that a bank enters liquidation within two months.
- Depositors are entitled to their insured deposits when the RBI limits bank withdrawals.

National Consumer Helpline (NCH) witnesses growth in NE-States



Why in the News?

In Arunachal Pradesh, complaints to the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) have increased by 300%, indicating a greater understanding and confidence in the resolution of consumer grievances.

What is National Consumer Helpline (NCH)?

- The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, and the Department of Consumer Affairs launched NCH to give consumers access to a national grievance redressal system.
- For customers who are having problems with goods, services, or unfair business practices, it provides support, direction, and advice.
- **Key Features of NCH:**
 - Consumer Helpline Toll-Free: 1800-11-4000/1915 (Apart from national holidays, available from 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM).
 - Registration for Multi-Channel Complaints: Complaints can be filed by SMS, WhatsApp, email, mobile apps, and websites.
 - encompasses a wide range of industries, including digital payments,

e-commerce, telecom, finance, insurance, and transportation.

- operated under the auspices of the Indian Institute of Public Administration's (IIPA) Centre for Consumer Studies.

How has the NCH succeeded in Northeast India?

- In 2024, there were 36,609 complaints, up from 9,162 in 2020, with Arunachal Pradesh experiencing a 50-fold increase in customer complaints.
- Online complaint registrations have increased by 517 percent, and regional language support has been added to improve accessibility.
- Rural and tribal people gained an understanding of consumer rights through workshops, SHG alliances, and NGO collaborations.
- Consumer participation was raised through Panchayat training programs, funds to NE states, and "Jago Grahak Jago" activities.
- In situations like e-commerce refunds, postponed product deliveries, and service-related problems, customers received quicker resolution.

History

Who was Sant Guru Ravidas?**Why in the News?**

Every year on February 12th, people commemorate the birth anniversary of Sant Guru Ravidas, a key player in the Bhakti movement in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Who was Sant Guru Ravidas?

- A well-known saint, poet, and social reformer of the Bhakti movement in 15th-century India, Guru Ravidas is sometimes called Bhagat Ravidas.
- He was born in Seer Govardhanpur, Uttar Pradesh, in 1377 CE, and devoted his life to advocating equality and eliminating societal inequality.
- Because of his intelligence, humility, and commitment to God, Guru Ravidas became

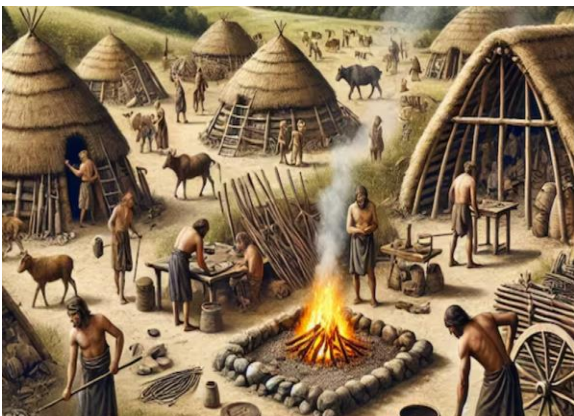
well-known while being subjected to caste-based tyranny.

- He is thought to have met Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, and was a contemporary of Sant Kabir.
- His considerable effect on Sikhism and Bhakti traditions is seen in the inclusion of his hymns in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Key Contributions of Guru Ravidas

- Equality & Social Justice: Disapproved of untouchability and caste prejudice.
- Bhakti Movement: Promoted spiritual enlightenment via devotion rather than rituals.
- The Begumpura Concept envisioned a society devoid of suffering and persecution.
- Contributions to Literature: Wrote more than 40 devotional songs for the Guru Granth Sahib.
- influenced Meera Bai's devotion to Lord Krishna in a spiritual way.
- Universal Brotherhood: taught that regardless of caste or creed, God is for everyone.
- Impact on Sikhism: Had an impact on Guru Nanak and Sikh teachings of devotion and equality.

Iron Age in India



Based on research from Mayiladumparai, Sivagalai, Adichanallur, and Kilnamandi, the chief minister of Tamil Nadu has declared that the Iron Age started on Tamil land more than 5,300 years ago (4th millennium BCE).

Iron Age in India

- At first, it was believed that India's Iron Age started between 700 and 600 BCE.
- With the discovery of evidence of iron smelting in the Eastern Vindhyas and Central Ganga Plain, radiocarbon dating pushed the chronology back to 1800 BCE.
- Iron metallurgy may have been developed in South India as early as 3300 BCE, according to recent finds made in Tamil Nadu.

Notable Iron Age Sites in India:

1. Central and Northern India

- Raja Nala-ka-tila (UP): Iron tools and slag found in pre-NBP (Northern Black Polished) deposits (1400–800 BCE).
- Malhar (Chandauli, UP): Furnaces and iron slag indicate a major iron metallurgy center (1200 BCE).
- Dadupur (UP): Large-scale iron smelting evidence dating back to 1000 BCE.
- Hastinapur (UP): Iron tools associated with the Painted Grey Ware (PGW) culture (1000 BCE).
- Takshashila (Punjab, Pakistan): Iron tools found in Gandhara settlements (800 BCE).

2. Western and Central India

- Ahar (Rajasthan): Chalcolithic culture (2500–1700 BCE) showed early evidence of iron artifacts.
- Naikund (Vidarbha, Maharashtra): Discovery of an iron smelting furnace (1000 BCE).
- Mahurjhari (Nagpur, Maharashtra): Horse ornaments made of copper with iron knobs (800 BCE).

3. South India

- Paiyampalli (Tamil Nadu): Large-scale iron smelting and slag deposits (1200 BCE).
- Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu): Iron tools and burial urns linked to Megalithic culture (1000 BCE).
- Mayiladumparai (Tamil Nadu): Recent findings date iron usage to 3300 BCE, making it one of the oldest sites of iron metallurgy in India.

- Sivagalai (Tamil Nadu): Iron artifacts and slag deposits, indicating early smelting practices (1100 BCE).

Iron Age in Tamil Nadu: New Discoveries

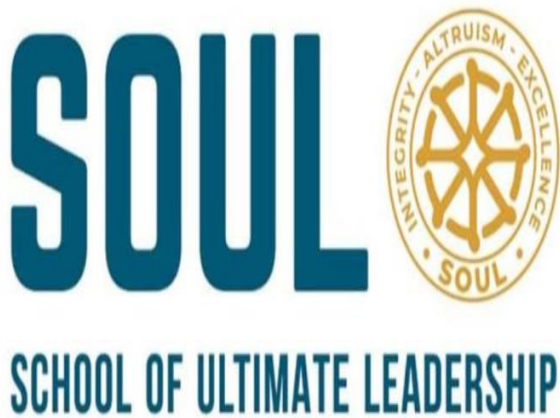
- The Iron Age started 4,200 years ago, according to earlier research in the Mayiladumparai Excavation (2022) (3rd millennium BCE).
- There is a technological difference between the locations, as this timeline corresponds with North India's Copper/Bronze Age.
- Iron smelting started as early as 3,345–2,953 BCE, according to the most recent report from

the State Archaeology Department, "Antiquity of Iron: Recent Radiometric Dates from Tamil Nadu."

- The early adoption of iron technology may have resulted from South India's limited supply of copper ores.
- According to excavations in Sivagalai, Adichanallur, Kilnamandi, and Mayiladumparai, Tamil Nadu's Iron Age predates that of most of North India.

International Relations

School of Ultimate Leadership (SOUL) Conclave



Why in the News?

At New Delhi's Bharat Mandapam, the Prime Minister officially opened the inaugural School of Ultimate Leadership (SOUL) Leadership Conclave.

The keynote speaker, Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay of Bhutan, emphasized India's leadership in influencing public service and government.

What is the SOUL Leadership Conclave?

- PM Modi launched the prestigious leadership gathering known as the School of Ultimate Leadership Conclave, or SOUL Leadership Conclave.

- Beyond conventional political hierarchies, it seeks to develop transformational leaders.
- The purpose of the event is to bring together leaders from a variety of fields, such as public policy, business, sports, politics, media, and spirituality, to exchange leadership experiences and views.
- The forthcoming SOUL Leadership Institution, a prestigious leadership training academy in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, is built on the foundation of the conference.

Key Features of SOUL Conclave:

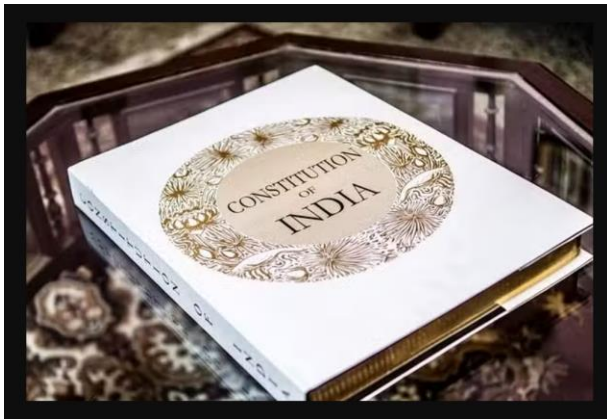
- Bringing together leaders from different sectors to encourage cross-sector cooperation and knowledge exchange is known as multi-sector leadership.
- Beyond conventional political dynasties, training and development aims to produce morally upright and internationally savvy leaders.
- The SOUL Leadership Institute is a formal leadership training facility being built on a 22-acre, ₹150 crore campus in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

- Global Leadership Insights: Talks with national and international leaders about leadership issues, governance, and policymaking.

- Developing India's Leadership Pipeline: This initiative seeks to educate the country's future leaders in innovation, economics, government, and diplomacy.

Polity

Article 200 of the Indian Constitution



Why in the News?

The Supreme Court has questioned the Tamil Nadu Governor's handling of state bills under Article 200 of the Constitution, criticizing him for causing a "impasse" by refusing to consent to them and then sending them to the President. Twelve bills, mostly pertaining to higher education and the appointment of vice chancellors of state colleges, have been withheld by the governor.

Rameshwar Prasad Case (2005)

- Governors are immune from legal charges for activities made in their official position under Article 361.
- However, in Rameshwar Prasad & Ors. vs Union of India & Anr., the Supreme Court ruled that:
 - Judicial review of the Governor's acts is not precluded by immunity under Article 361.
 - A governor's decision may be declared unlawful if they do so with malice.
 - Governors cannot act arbitrarily;

instead, they must give good cause for refusing assent.

What is Article 200?

- When a bill passed by the state legislature is put up for approval, the governor's options are governed by Article 200.
- It describes the Governor's latitude in approving, rejecting, returning, or reserving bills.

Provisions and Features:

- The Governor has four options when presented with a State Legislature Bill:
 1. Assent to the Bill: The Bill becomes law.
 2. Withhold Assent: The Governor can refuse approval.
 3. Return the Bill: If it is NOT a Money Bill, the Governor can send it back to the State Legislature for reconsideration.
- **Reserve the Bill for the President's Consideration:** If the Bill-
 - Violates the Constitution or a Central law.
 - Affects national interests or is ultra vires.
 - Opposes the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP).
 - Concerns compulsory property acquisition under Article 31A.
 - Endangers the position of the State High Court (mandatory reservation).
- **Article 201 deals with Bills reserved for the President's approval, granting the President the power to:**

- Assent to the Bill or withhold assent.
- Return the Bill for reconsideration by the State Legislature.
- **Key Constitutional Debates:**
 - There is no deadline for the governor to take action, which causes delays and constitutional issues.

- Recent Supreme Court decisions have raised concerns about the extended withholding of assent under judicial scrutiny.

Science, Technology, Art & Culture

China's Artificial Sun creates Record in Fusion Research



Why in the News?

China's Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST), commonly referred to as the Artificial Sun, has set a new world record by sustaining a high-confinement plasma operation for 1066 seconds. The artificial sun reached an extreme temperature of 100 million degrees Celsius, surpassing its own previous record of 403 seconds.

What is the EAST Project?

- EAST is a nuclear fusion research facility developed by the Chinese Academy of Sciences (ASIPP) in 2006.
- It aims to replicate solar fusion reactions to create a sustainable, clean energy source for future power generation.
- The project serves as a global research platform for fusion experiments and advancing magnetic confinement technology.
- It uses superconducting magnets to

contain ultra-hot plasma, necessary for fusion.

Comparison with Other Fusion Projects

- **China's EAST (Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak):**
 - Record: 1066 seconds at 100 million degrees Celsius (2025).
 - Previous Record: 403 seconds at high confinement mode.
 - Goal: Develop a commercial fusion power plant.
- **Korea's KSTAR (Superconducting Tokamak Advanced Research):**
 - Record: 100 million degrees Celsius for 20 seconds (2020).
 - Goal: Sustain a longer plasma confinement period.
- **France's ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor):**
 - Largest global fusion project, involving 35 nations.
 - Expected to achieve plasma ignition by 2035.
 - Focuses on demonstrating large-scale fusion feasibility.

Significance of This Achievement

- **Record-Breaking Fusion Operation:** EAST sustained plasma at 100 million°C for 1066 seconds, surpassing its previous record of 403 seconds.
- **Progress Toward Fusion Power Plants:** Prolonged plasma confinement is crucial

for achieving continuous, self-sustaining fusion reactions.

- **Potential for Clean Energy:** Fusion produces zero carbon emissions and could serve as an unlimited energy source once commercially viable.
- **Global Competition:** Other projects like ITER (France) and KSTAR (Korea) are also advancing fusion research, aiming for similar breakthroughs.

Challenges in Nuclear Fusion

- **Extreme Temperatures:** Plasma must be sustained at over 100 million°C, requiring high-energy input.
- **Material Limitations:** Reactor components must withstand intense heat and radiation, yet no material can do so indefinitely.
- **Energy Input vs. Output:** Current reactors consume more energy than they generate, preventing commercial viability.
- **Magnetic Confinement Issues:** Plasma instability can disrupt reactions, making sustained fusion difficult.
- **High Costs:** Fusion research requires expensive superconductors, cryogenics, and containment systems.

Samudrayaan Project



Why in the News?

In a major boost to India's **Deep Ocean Mission**, Finance Minister allocated **₹600 crore** for the **Samudrayaan project** under the Union Budget 2025-26.

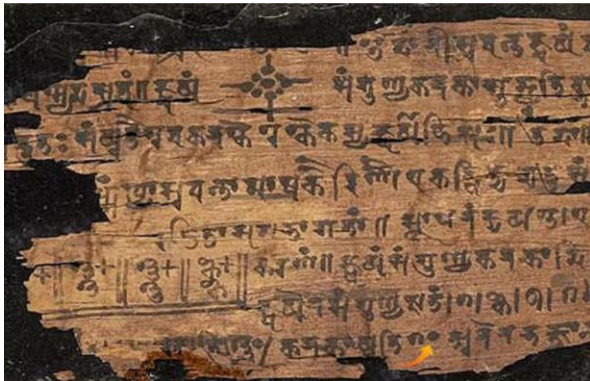
About Samudrayaan Project

- Samudrayaan is India's first manned deep-sea mission, designed for exploring ocean resources and conducting deep-sea research.
- It falls under the Deep Ocean Mission (DOM) of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).
- The project involves sending scientists in a deep-sea submersible to explore mineral resources and biodiversity at depths of up to 6,000 metres.
- **Aims and Objectives**
 - **Deep-Ocean Exploration:** Study deep-sea resources, including minerals, hydrothermal vents, and marine biodiversity.
 - **Technological Development:** Advance underwater robotics, deep-sea mining technology, and manned submersible vehicles.
 - **Sustainable Resource Utilization:** Explore polymetallic nodules, which contain cobalt, nickel, manganese, and copper.

Significant Features:

- **Manned Submersible: MATSYA 6000:**
 - Being developed by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai.
 - Developed under Samudrayaan to carry three crew members for up to 12 hours of exploration (extendable to 96 hours in emergencies).
 - Designed for operation at a depth of 6,000 metres.
 - Equipped with life-support systems and scientific sensors.
- **Exploration of India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):**
 - Mapping the ocean floor for mineral resources.
 - Conducting geological and environmental studies for sustainable deep-sea mining.

Gyan Bharatam Mission



Why in the News?

The Union Budget 2025-26 has introduced the Gyan Bharatam Mission, a comprehensive initiative for surveying, documenting, and conserving India's manuscript heritage.

What is Gyan Bharatam Mission?

- It is a nationwide initiative launched in the Union Budget 2025-26 to survey, document, and conserve India's manuscript heritage.
- The mission aims to cover over one crore manuscripts, ensuring the systematic preservation of ancient texts housed in academic institutions, museums, libraries, and private collections.
- It is a revival and expansion of the National Manuscripts Mission (NMM), which was originally established in 2003 but had limited impact due to inadequate funding and structural challenges.
- The mission aligns with India's broader cultural conservation goals and is expected to create a centralized repository for India's rich textual and intellectual heritage.
- **Aims and Objectives:**
 - Survey and document manuscripts across institutions and private collections.
 - Digitize rare texts and create a centralized repository for research and preservation.

- Restore and conserve fragile manuscripts using modern preservation techniques.

• Features and Significance:

- Budget Allocation Increased: Funding for NMM raised from ₹3.5 crore to ₹60 crore.
- Digital Preservation: AI-driven archiving, metadata tagging, and translation tools for easy access.

Asteroid 2024 YR4

Why in the News?

NASA has identified a newly discovered near-Earth asteroid, 2024 YR4, which has a slightly more than 1% chance of impacting Earth in 2032.



Asteroid 2024 YR4 and its Geographical Features:

- The asteroid was discovered in December 2024 by an observatory in Chile.
- It measures between 40 to 100 meters across, making it roughly the size of a football field.
- The exact size is uncertain because astronomers estimate an asteroid's size based on its brightness.
- On December 25, 2024, the asteroid passed within 800,000 kilometers of Earth, which is approximately twice the distance of the Moon.
- It will fade from sight in April 2025 and will not be visible again until 2028, when it approaches Earth once more.

- The asteroid is currently rated 3 on the Torino Scale, which measures the risk of impact on a scale from 0 to 10.

Potential Destruction from 2024 YR4 Impact:

- If 2024 YR4 collides with Earth, it is expected to release between 8 to 10 megatons of energy, equivalent to multiple nuclear explosions.
- In comparison, the Apophis asteroid, discovered in 2004, was initially rated 4 but was later downgraded after further observations ruled out an impact threat.

How often do Asteroids crash Into Earth?

- Thousands of small asteroids burn up in Earth's atmosphere daily due to friction.
- The Chelyabinsk meteor (2013) exploded over Russia with 30 times the power of the Hiroshima bomb.
- Asteroids around 40 meters can cause regional destruction if they hit Earth.
- Large asteroids (1 km+ in size) can trigger global disasters, occurring about once every 260 million years.
- The Chicxulub asteroid (66 million years ago) led to the extinction of dinosaurs.

How Space Agencies prevent Asteroid Collisions?

- NASA and global space agencies work on planetary defense to prevent impacts.
- In 2022, NASA's DART mission successfully changed asteroid *Dimorphos*'s trajectory using kinetic impact.
- Scientists explore 3 key methods for asteroid deflection:
 - Kinetic Impact: Using spacecraft to hit an asteroid and alter its path.
 - Gravity Tractors: Using a spacecraft's gravity to pull an asteroid off course.
 - Nuclear Explosions: As a last resort, detonating a nuclear device near an asteroid to deflect or destroy it.

Reimei: World's 1st Hybrid Quantum Supercomputer goes Online



Why in the News?

Japan has officially launched the world's first hybrid quantum supercomputer, integrating a 20-qubit quantum processor, Reimei, into Fugaku, the world's sixth-fastest supercomputer.

About Reimei

- Reimei is a 20-qubit trapped-ion quantum computer developed by Quantinuum and integrated into Fugaku, the world's sixth-fastest supercomputer, at Riken, Japan.
- It is the first fully operational hybrid quantum supercomputer, combining quantum and classical computing for advanced problem-solving.
- **Key Features:**
 - Trapped-Ion Qubits: Unlike superconducting qubits, Reimei uses trapped-ion technology, offering higher stability, longer coherence times, and stronger qubit connectivity.
 - Hybrid Integration: Works alongside Fugaku to solve complex calculations faster than classical supercomputers.
 - Ion Shuttling: Enables physical movement of qubits, allowing for more complex quantum algorithms.
 - Error Correction: Uses logical qubits, reducing error rates 800 times lower than standard qubits.
- **Applications:**

- Physics & Chemistry Research: Used for molecular simulations, material science, and high-energy physics.
- Quantum Cryptography & AI: Enhances cybersecurity and artificial intelligence models.
- Optimization & Machine Learning: Solves large-scale optimization problems.
- **Significance:**
 - Bridges classical and quantum computing, serving as a transition to fully scalable quantum systems.
 - Paves the way for real-world quantum applications, accelerating scientific and technological advancements.

Dhokra Artwork



Why in the News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has gifted a Dhokra (or Dokra) artwork to French President Emmanuel Macron.

About Dhokra Artwork

- Dhokra Art is an ancient metal-casting craft from India, primarily practiced by the Dhokra Damar tribes.
- It uses the lost-wax casting technique, where a wax model is made, coated in clay, and molten metal is poured into the mold after the wax melts.
- This technique has been in use for over 4,000 years, with the earliest known artifact being the dancing girl from Mohenjo-Daro.
- Dhokra is practiced in Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana, with distinct regional styles.
- In 2018, Adilabad Dokra from Telangana received the GI tag for its distinct style.

Features of Dhokra Art:

- **Primitive:** The designs are rustic and simplistic, often featuring animals, religious figures, and tribal motifs.
- **Seamless:** Dhokra pieces are crafted as a single unit without joints, providing a unique and smooth finish.
- **Long Crafting Time:** Each figurine can take up to a month to complete due to the intricate processes involved.
- **Non-ferrous Metal:** Brass and copper are mainly used in Dhokra Art due to their strength and malleability.
- **Casting Types:**
 - **Solid Casting:** Common in Southern India, uses solid wax.
 - **Hollow Casting:** Predominant in Central and Eastern India, uses a clay core.

Matsya-6000



Why in the news?

India's 4th generation deep-ocean submersible Matsya-6000 has successfully completed wet testing at Chennai harbor, paving the way for shallow-water demonstrations at depths of up to 500 meters by 2025.

About Matsya-6000

- Made of titanium alloy to withstand extreme oceanic pressure.
- Built with a 2.1-meter diameter sphere to accommodate three crew members.
- Moves at speed of 5.5 km/hr using multidirectional thrusters.
- Uses GPS, underwater acoustic positioning, and joystick-controlled maneuverability.
- Operates for 12 hours, with an emergency endurance of 96 hours.
- Includes emergency buoyancy modules and high-pressure-resistant escape hatches.
- Features robotic arms for sample collection.
- Uses high-resolution imaging and oceanographic sensors for deep-sea research.
- **Future Trials:**
 - Shallow-water tests up to 500m planned by late 2025.
 - Full deep-sea trials at 6,000m scheduled for 2026.

What is Deep Ocean Mission (DOM)?

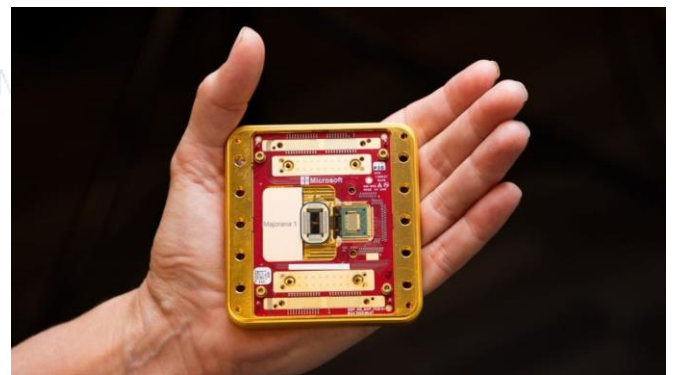
- The DOM launched by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) in 2021, aims to enhance India's deep-sea exploration capabilities while supporting the Blue Economy policy.
- It focuses on resource utilization, climate monitoring, and marine biodiversity conservation.
- **Objectives of DOM:**
- Develop advanced technologies for ocean mining, biodiversity assessment, and deep-sea surveillance.
 - Enable climate change research through real-time ocean data collection.

- Establish a Marine Station for Ocean Biology for research on marine ecosystems and pharmaceuticals.
- Support the Samudrayaan Mission, which includes the development of Matsya-6000, India's first deep-ocean human submersible.

- **Structural Mandate of DOM:**

- Deep-ocean survey and identification of polymetallic nodule and sulfide deposits.
- Harnessing ocean energy through wave, tidal, and thermal sources.

Microsoft unveils 'Majorana 1' Chip for Quantum Computing



Why in the News?

Microsoft has unveiled Majorana 1, a groundbreaking quantum chip that introduces a more stable and scalable approach to quantum computing.

What is Microsoft's Majorana 1 Chip?

- Majorana 1 is Microsoft's latest quantum processor that introduces a new type of stable and scalable qubit based on Majorana fermions.
- Microsoft believes that this breakthrough could enable practical quantum computing by 2027-29.
- **Majorana Fermions:**
 - First theorized by Ettore Majorana in 1937.
 - Exotic particles that act as their own antiparticles.

- Microsoft engineered them using topological conductors, making qubits more stable and resistant to errors.

Features of Majorana 1 Chip:

- Uses topological qubits, which require less error correction compared to traditional superconducting qubits.
- More scalable, allowing the quantum chip to reach up to 1 million qubits in the future.
- Built from indium arsenide-aluminum topological conductors, unlike conventional silicon-based quantum chips.
- Operates at near absolute zero temperature, tuned with magnetic fields to create a stable quantum environment.
- Currently an 8-qubit chip, but designed with an architecture that supports significant expansion.

What is Quantum Computing?

- Quantum computing is a new approach to computation based on the principles of quantum mechanics that allows computers to process information exponentially faster than classical computers.
- Unlike classical computers that use binary bits (0 or 1), quantum computers use qubits, which can exist in both 0 and 1 simultaneously (superposition).
- Key Principles of Quantum Computing:
 - Superposition: Qubits exist in multiple states at once.
 - Entanglement: –Qubits can be linked, meaning a change in one affects the other instantly.
 - Quantum Tunneling: Qubits can pass through energy barriers.
 - Quantum Interference: Enhances correct probabilities while canceling out incorrect ones.
- Quantum computers solve complex problems that are impossible for classical

computers, such as simulating molecules, optimizing logistics, and advancing AI.

Assam to recognize Bathou Faith



Why in the News?

The Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) government in Assam has officially included 'Bathouism' as an option in the religion column of key application forms, including admission forms, birth and death certificates.

What is Bathouism?

- Bathouism is the traditional faith of the Bodo people, primarily practiced in Assam and the foothills of Bhutan.
- It is a nature-centric religion that worships Bathoubwrai, the supreme deity believed to govern the universe.
- The central symbol of Bathouism is the Sijou plant (*Euphorbia antiquorum*), representing Bathoubwrai and planted in sacred enclosures (Bathou Thansali).
- Bathou Puja is performed to seek divine blessings for prosperity, health, and well-being.
- The Assam government has recently recognized Bathouism as a distinct faith, allowing its inclusion in official documents.

Philosophy of Bathouism

- Bathouism is based on five fundamental elements, known as Ba (five) Thou (deep thought), representing natural forces:
 1. Bar (Air) – Symbolizes breath, movement, and life force.

2. San (Sun) – Represents light, energy, and warmth.
 3. Ha (Earth) – Stands for stability, fertility, and sustenance.
 4. Or (Fire) – Denotes transformation and purification.
 5. Okhrang (Sky) – Represents infinite wisdom and cosmic balance.
- *Bathoubwrai (Sibwrai)* is considered almighty, omniscient, and eternal, beyond time and space. He is indestructible—fire cannot burn him, water cannot moisten him, air cannot dry him, and weapons cannot pierce him.

- Bathouism promotes:
 1. Truthfulness, honesty, and righteousness.
 2. Respect for elders, ancestors, and nature.
 3. Peaceful coexistence and non-violence.
 4. Gratitude through rituals and pujas.
- Bathou rituals involve five bamboo sticks symbolizing the five elements, with offerings of rice beer, milk, flowers, and incense.
- Ancestral veneration and community harmony are integral aspects of the faith.

Security Issues

Joint Military Exercise 'Ekuverin'



Why in the News?

The 13th edition of Exercise Ekuverin, the bilateral joint military exercise between India and the Maldives, commenced in the Maldives on February 4, 2025.

About Exercise Ekuverin

- In the Dhivehi language, the word "Ekuverin" means "Friends," indicating the strong bonds that exist between India and the Maldives.
- First carried out in 2009, the exercise was a yearly bilateral military exercise.
- It encourages military cooperation between the two countries and is alternately hosted in India and the Maldives.
- The drill took place in Chaubatia, Uttarakhand, in 2023 from June 11 to June 24.

- The drill is being held in the Maldives in 2025, which will further improve defense ties.

Features and Significance:

- Improving military interoperability is the goal of the exercise.
- It emphasizes cooperative counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations, enhancing both countries' readiness.
- Disaster relief and humanitarian aid (HADR) activities are covered in the training, preparing both troops to handle emergencies with effectiveness.
- It aims to improve regional security and defense cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

India's Defence Exercises with Southeast Asian Neighbours

India actively participates in joint military exercises with its Southeast Asian partners to bolster regional security and defence cooperation.

Key Bilateral and Multilateral Exercises:

- In November 2022, the Sangga Buana Training Area in Indonesia hosted the Garuda Shakti: Special Forces exercise with Indonesia.
- Last held in 2022, Mitra Shakti is an annual military drill between India and Sri Lanka.

- The third iteration of the joint military exercise with Vietnam, known as VINBAX, took place in 2022.
- The latest known iteration of the bilateral exercise between India and Myanmar, known as IMBEX, took place in 2017–18.
- Maitree: A yearly military drill between Thailand and India that has been going on since 2006.
- To maintain marine security, CORPAT: Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) exercises are conducted with Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia.
- AIME 2023: In May 2023, the navy of India and ASEAN countries (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) participated in the inaugural ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME).

Exercise CYCLONE-III



Why in the News?

The 3rd edition of Joint Special Forces Exercise CYCLONE commenced at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan.

Note: India and the UAE held the 'Desert Cyclone 2024' joint military exercise in Rajasthan in January 2024. One must not get confused with this.

About Exercise CYCLONE-III

- This is the third iteration of India and Egypt's cooperative Special Forces Exercise, which aims to improve counterterrorism capabilities,

interoperability, and cooperative tactical operations.

- From February 10–23, 2025, the exercise will take place at Rajasthan's Mahajan Field Firing Ranges.
- Every year, CYCLONE is an exercise that alternates between Egypt and India.
- In January 2024, CYCLONE-II, the previous event, was held in Egypt.
- High-intensity special forces training in desert and semi-desert environments is the main objective of the exercise.

Features and Significance:

- Twenty-five people from each side participate in this exercise, which focuses on heliborne operations in desert environment, hostage rescue, CQB, and counterterrorism.
- While an Indian defense technology exhibition fortifies military links, the 48-hour final validation exercise evaluates combat methods in semi-desert settings.
- The exercise boosts joint counterterrorism capabilities, strengthens defense collaboration between Egypt and India, and increases operational preparedness.
- Additionally, it strengthens defense cooperation and regional security by expanding India's strategic reach throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) area.

Exercise Dharma Guardian



Why in the News?

India and Japan are set to commence the 6th edition of the Dharma Guardian military exercise at Mount Fuji.

Other India-Japan Military Exercises

- Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and Indian Navy naval cooperation is known as JIMEX (Japan-India Maritime Exercise).
- Veer Guardian is a joint air force exercise between the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) and the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- Malabar practice: Japan takes part in this high-level naval practice alongside the US, Australia, India, and the other Quad nations.

About Exercise Dharma Guardian

- The Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) and the Indian Army participate in this yearly joint military drill, which alternates between Japan and India.
- It started in 2018.
- Mount Fuji in Japan will host the sixth edition from February 25 to March 9, 2025.
- With an emphasis on counterterrorism and urban warfare, 120 Indian soldiers from the Madras Regiment will take part.
- **Key Features:**

- Joint Counter-Terrorism Training: Focus on urban and semi-desert warfare.
- Advanced Tactical Drills: Close-quarters combat, live fire, and battlefield medical evacuation.
- 48-hour Validation Exercise: Tests real-time combat coordination.
- Cultural and Professional Exchange: Strengthens India-Japan military ties.

Significance:

- Expands India-Japan defense cooperation within the Indo-Pacific framework, strengthening strategic ties.
- Boosts Regional Security: Complies with the goals of the Quad (India, Japan, the United States, and Australia).
- Enhances Defence Technology Cooperation: The Unicorn Stealth Antenna System was co-developed.
- Enhances Military Preparedness: supports cooperative UN disaster relief and peacekeeping efforts.

2023 Selections

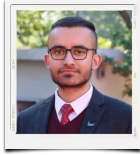


Himani
Rank - 2 (SDM)



Yogesh Kumar
Rank - 7 (SDM)

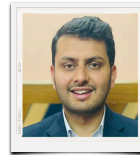
Previous Selections



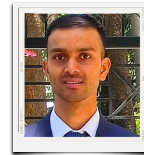
Kartikeya Sharma
SDM HAS 2022



Abhishek Singh Thakur
SDM HAS 2022



Dheeraj Sharma
Tehsildar HAS 2022



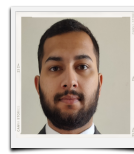
Jitender Singh
Tehsildar HAS 2022



Ravinder Singh
Naib Tehsildar 2022



Arun Kumar Sankhyan
Naib Tehsildar 2022



Arjun Singh Parmar
Naib Tehsildar 2022



Jagriti
Naib Tehsildar 2022



Abhishek Barwal
Rank - 1 SDM
HAS - 2021



Amit Kalthiak
Rank - 1 SDM
HAS - 2020



Kshitiz Rana
Rank - 824
UPSC 2022



Rashmi Sharma
DSP
HAS 2021



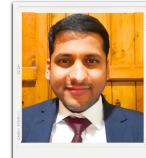
Gireesh Nadda
ARCS
HPAS - 2021



Mohit Shukla
ETO
HPAS - 2019



Nipun Kashyap
ETO
HPAS - 2019



Apurav Chandel
ETO
HPAS - 2018



Karan Singh
BDO
HPAS - 2018



Ankur Verma
RM - HRTC
2020



D.P. Thakur
AE -
HPSEBL 2019



Govind Prashad
Teh Welfare
Officer 2020



Dipali Tomar
Teh Welfare
Officer 2020



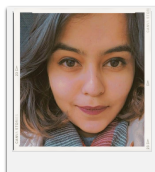
Arsh Singh Rana
Assistant
Professor



Aman Sharma
Assistant
Manager HPSCB



Kartik Thakur
ETI
2020



Mukta Sharma
ETI
2020



Sidarth Negi
Inspector Audit
2020



Swati Sharma
Inspector Audit
2020