

FEBRUARY 2025

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AYODHYA CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF RAM LALLA'S PRAN PRATISHTHA



Sections Covered

1. National/International News

2. Banking and Finance

3. Appointments and Resignations

4. Important Dates

5. Defence

6. Sports/Rankings/Awards

7. Government Initiatives/MOUs

8. Science and Technology

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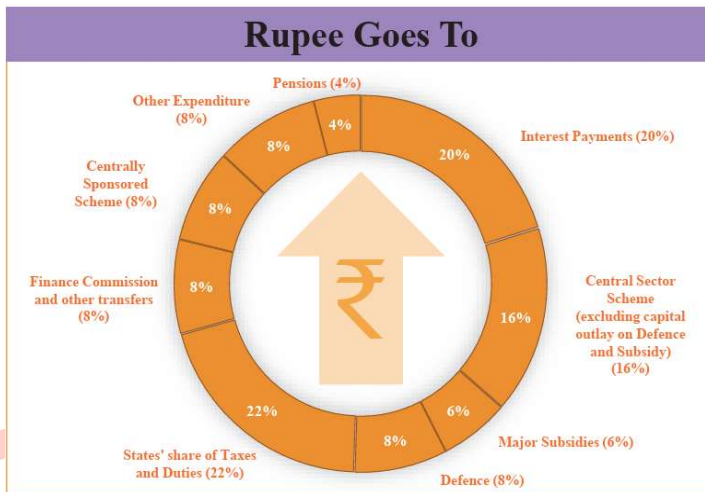
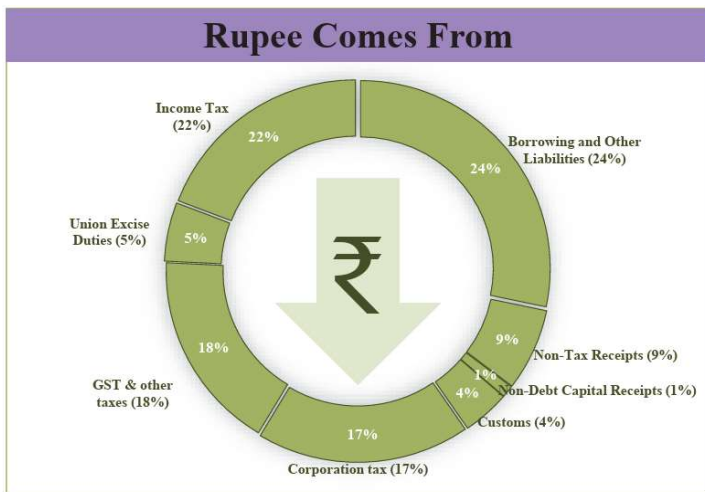
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UNION BUDGET 2025-26



PART A

Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt Nirmala Sitharaman presented Union Budget 2025-26 in the Parliament today. The highlights of the budget are as follows:

Budget Estimates 2025-26

- The total receipts other than borrowings and the total expenditure are estimated at ₹ 34.96 lakh crore and ₹ 50.65 lakh crore respectively.
- The net tax receipts are estimated at ₹ 28.37 lakh crore.
- The fiscal deficit is estimated to be 4.4 per cent of GDP.
- The gross market borrowings are estimated at ₹ 14.82 lakh crore.
- Capex Expenditure of ₹11.21 lakh crore (3.1% of GDP) earmarked in FY2025-26.

AGRICULTURE AS THE 1st ENGINE OF DEVELOPMENT

Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana - Developing Agri Districts Programme

- The programme to be launched in partnership with the states, covering 100 districts with low productivity, moderate crop intensity and below-average credit parameters, to benefit 1.7 crore farmers.

Building Rural Prosperity and Resilience

- A comprehensive multi-sectoral programme to be launched in partnership with states to address under-employment in agriculture through skilling, investment, technology, and invigorating the rural economy.
- Phase-1 to cover 100 developing agri-districts.

Aatmanirbharta in Pulses

- Government to launch a 6-year “Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses” with focus on Tur, Urad and Masoor.
- NAFED and NCCF to procure these pulses from farmers during the next 4 years.

Comprehensive Programme for Vegetables & Fruits

- A comprehensive programme to promote production, efficient supplies, processing, and remunerative prices for farmers to be launched in partnership with states.

Makhana Board in Bihar

- A Makhana Board to be established to improve production, processing, value addition, and marketing of makhana.

National Mission on High Yielding Seeds

- A National Mission on High Yielding Seeds to be launched aiming at strengthening the research ecosystem, targeted development and propagation of seeds with high yield, and commercial availability of more than 100 seed varieties.

Fisheries

- Government to bring a framework for sustainable harnessing of fisheries from Indian Exclusive Economic Zone and High Seas, with a special focus on the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands.

Mission for Cotton Productivity

- A 5-year mission announced to facilitate significant improvements in productivity and sustainability of cotton farming, and promote extra-long staple cotton varieties.

Enhanced Credit through KCC

- The loan limit under the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme to be enhanced from ₹ 3 lakh to ₹ 5 lakh for loans taken through the KCC.

Urea Plant in Assam

- A plant with annual capacity of 12.7 lakh metric tons to be set up at Namrup, Assam.

MSMEs AS THE 2nd ENGINE OF DEVELOPMENT**Revision in classification criteria for MSMEs**

- The investment and turnover limits for classification of all MSMEs to be enhanced to 2.5 and 2 times respectively.

Credit Cards for Micro Enterprises

- Customized Credit Cards with ₹ 5 lakh limit for micro enterprises registered on Udyam portal, 10 lakh cards to be issued in the first year.

Fund of Funds for Startups

- A new Fund of Funds, with expanded scope and a fresh contribution of ₹ 10,000 crore to be set up.

Scheme for First-time Entrepreneurs

- A new scheme for 5 lakh women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes first-time entrepreneurs to provide term-loans upto ₹ 2 crore in the next 5 years announced.

Focus Product Scheme for Footwear & Leather Sectors

- To enhance the productivity, quality and competitiveness of India's footwear and leather sector, a focus product scheme announced to facilitate employment for 22 lakh persons, generate turnover of ₹ 4 lakh crore and exports of over ₹ 1.1 lakh crore.

Measures for the Toy Sector

- A scheme to create high-quality, unique, innovative, and sustainable toys, making India a global hub for toys

announced.

Support for Food Processing

- A National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management to be set up in Bihar.

Manufacturing Mission - Furthering "Make in India"

- A National Manufacturing Mission covering small, medium and large industries for furthering "Make in India" announced.

INVESTMENT AS THE 3rd ENGINE OF DEVELOPMENT**I. Investing in People****Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0**

- The cost norms for the nutritional support to be enhanced appropriately.

Atal Tinkering Labs

- 50,000 Atal Tinkering Labs to be set up in Government schools in next 5 years.

Broadband Connectivity to Government Secondary Schools and PHCs

- Broadband connectivity to be provided to all Government secondary schools and primary health centres in rural areas under the Bharatnet project.

Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Scheme

- Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Scheme announced to provide digital-form Indian language books for school and higher education.

National Centres of Excellence for Skilling

- 5 National Centres of Excellence for skilling to be set up with global expertise and partnerships to equip our youth with the skills required for "Make for India, Make for the World" manufacturing.

Expansion of Capacity in IITs

- Additional infrastructure to be created in the 5 IITs started after 2014 to facilitate education for 6,500 more students.

Centre of Excellence in AI for Education

- A Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence for education to be set up with a total outlay of ₹ 500 crore.

Expansion of medical education

- 10,000 additional seats to be added in medical colleges

and hospitals next year, adding to 75000 seats in the next 5 years.

Day Care Cancer Centres in all District Hospitals

- Government to set up Day Care Cancer Centres in all district hospitals in the next 3 years, 200 Centres in 2025-26.

Strengthening urban livelihoods

- A scheme for socio-economic upliftment of urban workers to help them improve their incomes and have sustainable livelihoods announced.

PM SVANidhi

- Scheme to be revamped with enhanced loans from banks, UPI linked credit cards with ₹ 30,000 limit and capacity building support.

Social Security Scheme for Welfare of Online Platform Workers

- Government to arrange for identity cards, registration on e-Shram portal and healthcare under PM Jan Arogya Yojna, for gig-workers.

II. Investing in the Economy

Public Private Partnership in Infrastructure

- Infrastructure-related ministries to come up with a 3-year pipeline of projects in PPP mode, States also encouraged.

Support to States for Infrastructure

- An outlay of ₹1.5 lakh crore proposed for the 50-year interest free loans to states for capital expenditure and incentives for reforms.

Asset Monetization Plan 2025-30

- Second Plan for 2025-30 to plough back capital of ₹ 10 lakh crore in new projects announced.

Jal Jeevan Mission

- Mission to be extended until 2028 with an enhanced total outlay.

Urban Challenge Fund

- An Urban Challenge Fund of ₹ 1 lakh crore announced to implement the proposals for 'Cities as Growth Hubs', 'Creative Redevelopment of Cities' and 'Water and Sanitation', allocation of ₹ 10,000 crore proposed for 2025-26.

Nuclear Energy Mission for Viksit Bharat

- Amendments to the Atomic Energy Act and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act to be taken up.
- Nuclear Energy Mission for research & development of Small Modular Reactors (SMR) with an outlay of ₹20,000 crore to be set up, 5 indigenously developed SMRs to be operational by 2033.

Shipbuilding

- The Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Policy to be revamped.
- Large ships above a specified size to be included in the infrastructure harmonized master list (HML).

Maritime Development Fund

- A Maritime Development Fund with a corpus of ₹ 25,000 crore to be set up, with up to 49 per cent contribution by the Government, and the balance from ports and private sector.

UDAN - Regional Connectivity Scheme

- A modified UDAN scheme announced to enhance regional connectivity to 120 new destinations and carry 4 crore passengers in the next 10 years.
- Also to support helipads and smaller airports in hilly, aspirational, and North East region districts.

Greenfield Airport in Bihar

- Greenfield airports announced in Bihar, in addition to the expansion of the capacity of Patna airport and a brownfield airport at Bihta.

Western Koshi Canal Project in Mithilanchal

- Financial support for the Western Koshi Canal ERM Project in Bihar.

Mining Sector Reforms

- A policy for recovery of critical minerals from tailings to be brought out.

SWAMIH Fund 2

- A fund of ₹ 15,000 crore aimed at expeditious completion of another 1 lakh dwelling units, with contribution from the Government, banks and private investors announced.

Tourism for employment-led growth

- Top 50 tourist destination sites in the country to be developed in partnership with states through a challenge mode.

III. Investing in Innovation**Research, Development and Innovation**

- ₹20,000 crore to be allocated to implement private sector driven Research, Development and Innovation initiative announced in the July Budget.

Deep Tech Fund of Funds

- Deep Tech Fund of Funds to be explored to catalyze the next generation startups.

PM Research Fellowship

- 10,000 fellowships for technological research in IITs and IISc with enhanced financial support.

Gene Bank for Crops Germplasm

- 2nd Gene Bank with 10 lakh germplasm lines to be set up for future food and nutritional security.

National Geospatial Mission

- A National Geospatial Mission announced to develop foundational geospatial infrastructure and data.

Gyan Bharatam Mission

- A Gyan Bharatam Mission for survey, documentation and conservation of our manuscript heritage with academic institutions, museums, libraries and private collectors to be undertaken to cover more than 1 crore manuscripts announced.

EXPORTS AS THE 4th ENGINE OF DEVELOPMENT**Export Promotion Mission**

- An Export Promotion Mission, with sectoral and ministerial targets, driven jointly by the Ministries of Commerce, MSME, and Finance to be set up.

BharatTradeNet

- 'BharatTradeNet' (BTN) for international trade to be set-up as a unified platform for tradedocumentation and financing solutions.

National Framework for GCC

- A national framework to be formulated as guidance to states for promoting Global Capability Centres in emerging tier 2 cities.

REFORMS AS FUEL: FINANCIAL SECTOR REFORMS AND DEVELOPMENT**FDI in Insurance Sector**

- The FDI limit for the insurance sector to be raised from 74 to 100 per cent, for those companies which invest the entire premium in India.

Credit Enhancement Facility by NaBFID

- NaBFID to set up a 'Partial Credit Enhancement Facility' for corporate bonds for infrastructure.

Grameen Credit Score

- Public Sector Banks to develop 'Grameen Credit Score' framework to serve the credit needs of SHG members and people in rural areas.

Pension Sector

- A forum for regulatory coordination and development of pension products to be set up.

High Level Committee for Regulatory Reforms

- A High-Level Committee for Regulatory Reforms to be set up for a review of all non-financial sector regulations, certifications, licenses, and permissions.

Investment Friendliness Index of States

- An Investment Friendliness Index of States to be launched in 2025 to further the spirit of competitivecooperative federalism announced.

Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0

- The Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0 to decriminalize more than 100 provisions in various laws.

PART B**DIRECT TAX**

- No personal income tax payable upto income of Rs 12 lakh (i.e. average income of Rs 1 lakh per month other than special rate income such as capital gains) under the new regime.
- This limit will be Rs 12.75 lakh for salaried tax payers, due to standard deduction of Rs 75,000.
- The new structure will substantially reduce the taxes of the middle class and leave more money in their hands, boosting household consumption, savings and investment.
- The new Income-Tax Bill to be clear and direct in text so as to make it simple to understand for taxpayers and tax administration, leading to tax certainty and reduced litigation.
- Revenue of about ₹ 1 lakh crore in direct taxes will be forgone.

Revised tax rate structure

- In the new tax regime, the revised tax rate structure will stand as follows:

0-4 lakh rupees	Nil
4-8 lakh rupees	5 percent
8-12 lakh rupees	10 percent
12-16 lakh rupees	15 percent
16-20 lakh rupees	20 percent
20- 24 lakh rupees	25 percent
Above 24 lakh rupees	30 percent

TDS/TCS rationalization for easing difficulties

- Rationalization of Tax Deduction at Source (TDS) by reducing number of rates and thresholds above which TDS is deducted.
- The limit for tax deduction on interest for senior citizens doubled from the present Rs 50,000 to Rs 1lakh.
- The annual limit of Rs 2.40 lakh for TDS on rent increased to Rs 6 lakh.
- The threshold to collect tax at source (TCS) on remittances under RBI's Liberalized Remittance Scheme (LRS) increased from Rs 7 lakh to Rs 10 lakh.
- The provisions of the higher TDS deduction will apply only in non-PAN cases.
- Decriminalization for the cases of delay of payment of TCS up to the due date of filing statement.

Reducing Compliance Burden

- Reduction of compliance burden for small charitable trusts/institutions by increasing their period of registration from 5 years to 10 years.
- The benefit of claiming the annual value of self-occupied properties as nil will be extended for two such self-occupied properties without any condition.

Ease of Doing Business

- Introduction of a scheme for determining arm's length price of international transaction for a block period of three years.
- Expansion of the scope of safe harbour rules to reduce litigation and provide certainty in international taxation.
- Exemption of withdrawals made from National Savings Scheme (NSS) by individuals on or after the 29th of

August, 2024.

- Similar treatment to NPS Vatsalya accounts as is available to normal NPS accounts, subject to over all limits.

Employment and Investment**Tax certainty for electronics manufacturing Schemes**

- Presumptive taxation regime for non-residents who provide services to a resident company that is establishing or operating an electronics manufacturing facility.
- Introduction of a safe harbour for tax certainty for non-residents who store components for supply to specified electronics manufacturing units.

Tonnage Tax Scheme for Inland Vessels

The benefits of existing tonnage tax scheme to be extended to inland vessels registered under the Indian Vessels Act, 2021 to promote inland water transport in the country.

Extension for incorporation of Start-Ups

- Extension of the period of incorporation by 5 years to allow the benefit available to start-ups incorporated before 1.4.2030.

Alternate Investment Funds (AIFs)

- Certainty of taxation on the gains from securities to Category I and Category II AIFs which are undertaking investments in infrastructure and other such sectors.

Extension of investment date for Sovereign and Pension Funds

- Extension of the date of making investments in Sovereign Wealth Funds and Pension Funds by five more years, to 31st March, 2030, to promote funding from them to the infrastructure sector.

INDIRECT TAX**Rationalisation of Customs Tariff Structure for Industrial Goods****Union Budget 2025-26 proposes to:**

- Remove seven tariff rates. This is over and above the seven tariff rates removed in 2023-24 budget. After this, there will be only eight remaining tariff rates including 'zero' rate.
- Apply appropriate cess to broadly maintain effective duty incidence except on a few items, where such incidence will reduce marginally.

- Levy not more than one cess or surcharge. Therefore Social Welfare Surcharge on 82 tariff lines that are subject to a cess, exempted.

Revenue of about ₹ 2600 crore in indirect taxes will be forgone.

Relief on import of Drugs/Medicines

- 36 lifesaving drugs and medicines fully exempted from Basic Customs Duty (BCD).
- 6 lifesaving medicines to attract concessional customs duty of 5%.
- Specified drugs and medicines under Patient Assistance Programmes run by pharmaceutical companies fully exempted from BCD; 37 more medicines added along with 13 new patient assistance programmes.

Support to Domestic Manufacturing and Value addition Critical Minerals

- Cobalt powder and waste, the scrap of lithium-ion battery, Lead, Zinc and 12 more critical minerals fully exempted from BCD.

Textiles:

- Two more types of shuttle-less looms fully exempted textile machinery.
- BCD rate on knitted fabrics revised from “10% or 20%” to “20% or ` 115 per kg, whichever is higher.

Electronic Goods

- BCD on Interactive Flat Panel Display (IFPD) increased from 10% to 20% .
- BCD reduced to 5% on Open Cell and other components.
- BCD on parts of Open Cells exempted.

Lithium Ion Battery

- 35 additional capital goods for EV battery manufacturing, and 28 additional capital goods for mobilephone battery manufacturing exempted.

Shipping Sector :

- Exemption of BCD on raw materials, components, consumables or parts for the manufacture of ships extended for another ten years.
- The same dispensation to continue for ship breaking.

Telecommunication

- BCD reduced from 20% to 10% on Carrier Grade ethernet switches.

Export Promotion

Handicraft Goods :

- Time period for export extended from six months to one year, further extendable by another three months, if required.
- Nine items added to list of duty-free inputs.

Leather sector:

- BCD on Wet Blue leather fully exempted.
- Crust leather exempted from 20% export duty.

Marine products :

- BCD reduced from 30% to 5% on Frozen Fish Paste (Surimi) for manufacture and export of its analogue products.
- BCD reduced from 15% to 5% on fish hydrolysate for manufacture of fish and shrimp feeds.

Domestic MROs for Railway Goods :

- Railways MROs to benefit similar to the aircraft and ships MROs in terms of import of repair items.
- Time limit extended for export of such items from 6 months to one year and made further extendable by one year.

Trade facilitation

Time limit for Provisional Assessment :

- For finalising the provisional assessment, time-limit of two years fixed, extendable by a year.

Voluntary Compliance:

- A new provision introduced to enable importers or exporters, after clearance of goods, to voluntarily declare material facts and pay duty with interest but without penalty.

Extended Time for End Use :

- Time limit for the end-use of imported inputs in the relevant rules extended from six months to one year.
- Such importers to file only quarterly statements instead of a monthly statement.

NATIONAL

UTTARAKHAND'S MANUAL FOR UNIFORM CIVIL CODE -

- Recently, Uttarakhand's government approved a comprehensive manual for its Uniform Civil Code (UCC), aiming to standardise personal laws across the state.
- This initiative marks Uttarakhand as the first state of India to implement the UCC, with preparations underway for training officials and launching online services.
- The UCC seeks to streamline processes related to marriage, divorce, inheritance, and other personal matters, amid ongoing discussions about its broader implications for Indian society.



AYODHYA CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF RAM LALLA'S PRAN PRATISHTHA -

- The sacred city of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh is resonating with devotion and festivity as it marks the first anniversary of the 'Pran Pratishtha' of Ram Lalla at the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir.
- The milestone event, celebrated on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, reflects the city's spiritual legacy and the culmination of centuries of devotion and struggle.
- The grand Pran Pratishtha ceremony of Ram Lalla took place on January 22, 2024, under the auspices of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, marking a historic moment for the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir.
- The ritual, steeped in ancient Hindu traditions, symbolizes the consecration of Lord Ram's idol in the sanctum sanctorum, making it a revered site for millions of devotees.



INDIA WELCOMES ITS FIRST GENERATION BETA BABY -

- As the year 2025 brought upon the world the 'Generation Beta', India got its first baby of this gen on New Year's day, January 1, in Mizoram's Aizawl.
- The baby, named Frankie Remruatdika Zadeng, is recognized as India's first child from the so-called Generation Beta. Born at 12:03 AM on January 1, 2025, at Synod Hospital in Durtlang, Aizawl, the healthy newborn weighed a little over 3.12 kilograms.
- This milestone makes Frankie the "first-gen Beta Baby" of India, symbolizing a new chapter of hope and progress for the nation. Beta Generation babies, born from the mid-2020s, are set to thrive in an era defined by groundbreaking AI, sustainable living, and a seamlessly connected digital world.



PM TO INAUGURATE Z-MORH TUNNEL, BOOSTING KASHMIR-LADAKH CONNECTIVITY -

- The Z-Morh tunnel, set to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 13, 2024, marks a significant step in creating a year-round strategic corridor between Kashmir and Ladakh.
- The tunnel is critical for ensuring continuous access to Sonamarg, a popular tourist destination, which was previously inaccessible during the winter months due to snow and avalanches.
- Built under the Thajiwas Glacier, it bypasses landslide-prone areas and includes an intelligent traffic management system to enhance safety and control vehicle flow. The tunnel is also expected to boost winter tourism in Kashmir and support military logistics to Ladakh.

INDIA'S FY25 GROWTH FORECAST CUT TO 6.5% BY IMF -

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has revised India's economic growth forecast for FY25, reducing

it to 6.5%, down from earlier projections. Despite this downward revision, the IMF retained a stable growth outlook for FY26.

- The adjustment reflects current challenges, including global economic uncertainties and domestic inflationary pressures, which may impact India's growth trajectory.
- This revision comes in the context of the country's ongoing recovery post-pandemic, with the IMF also citing inflation, investment slowdown, and geopolitical risks as key factors that could affect economic momentum.

INDIA TO HOST 28TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE IN 2026 -

- India is set to host the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of Parliaments of Commonwealth Countries (CSPOC) in January 2026.
- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla announced this during the CSPOC Standing Committee Meeting in Guernsey. The conference will focus on the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and social media into parliamentary processes, reflecting India's commitment to technological advancement and modern governance.



TIMELINE OF THE INDIA-BANGLADESH BORDER ISSUE -

- **1975:** India and Bangladesh signed Joint Guidelines and agreed not to construct defense structures within 150 yards of the international border.
- **1980s:** India initiated barbed wire fencing along critical stretches of the India-Bangladesh border to address infiltration, smuggling, and illegal migration.
- **2015:** Land Boundary Agreement (LBA): Resolved long-standing enclave and land disputes between the two nations. Enabled better border demarcation, facilitating



additional fencing. India enacted the 100th Constitutional Amendment to implement the agreement.

- **2019:** Operation BOLD-QIT Launched, Deployed in Assam's Dhubri district under the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS). Introduced electronic surveillance for riverine and porous sections of the border.
- **2023:** Fencing Progress: Approximately 81.5% of the 4,096.7 km border was fenced as of 2023. Challenges such as riverine areas, resistance from local communities, and pending land acquisition continued to impede progress.

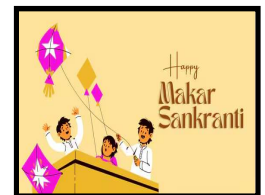
ISKCON TEMPLE INAUGURATED BY PM MODI IN NAVI MUMBAI -

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Sri Sri Radha Madanmohanji Temple of ISKCON in Kharghar, Navi Mumbai, on January 15, 2025.
- Built over 12 years at a cost of ₹170 crore, this temple is Asia's second-largest ISKCON temple.
- It stands as a fusion of spirituality and knowledge, featuring various facilities that reflect ISKCON's mission to serve society.
- The inauguration was attended by prominent figures, including Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Governor CP Radhakrishnan, and MP Hema Malini.



MAKAR SANKRANTI 2025 -

- Makar Sankranti is a vibrant and ancient Hindu festival that celebrates the Sun's movement from the Sagittarius zodiac sign to Capricorn.
- This event marks the end of the long winter nights and the beginning of longer days, symbolizing the triumph of light over darkness. In 2025, Makar Sankranti will be celebrated on Tuesday, January 14.



UP Declares Maha Kumbh Area a New District for 2025 Mela -

- In a significant move, the Uttar Pradesh government has declared the Maha Kumbh area in Prayagraj as a new district, named the Maha Kumbh Mela district, ahead of the grand religious event scheduled for January 2025.
- This decision marks a crucial step to streamline the administrative and logistical efforts for the smooth organization of the Kumbh Mela, which attracts millions of pilgrims from across the world.
- The creation of the new district aims to enhance coordination, law enforcement, and resource management for the event.

**INDIA PLANS ANTI-DRONE UNIT FOR BORDER SECURITY -**

- Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah announced that India will establish a comprehensive anti-drone unit to protect the nation against drone-related threats. Speaking at the 60th Raising Day Parade of the Border Security Force (BSF) in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, Shah highlighted the growing drone challenge, particularly along the borders.
- The government, in collaboration with various security forces and research departments, has developed a laser-equipped anti-drone gun mount system that has significantly improved drone interception rates.
- He also detailed the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) for border monitoring and stressed the welfare initiatives undertaken for security personnel.

**INDIA ACHIEVES TOTAL FERTILITY RATE OF 2.0 -**

- India has reached a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 2.0, which aligns with the goals of the National Population Policy 2000 and the National Health Policy 2017 and the TFR target was set at 2.1. The Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Anupriya Patel, announced this in the Rajya Sabha.
- The government has launched various initiatives under the Family Planning Programme, which aim to provide effective contraceptive methods. They include condoms, oral contraceptive pills, emergency contraceptives, intrauterine devices (IUCDs), and sterilisation options.
- Recent introductions to contraceptive options include the Antara injectable contraceptive and the Chhaya Centchroman pill. These new methods enhance choices for family planning.

**ABATHSAHAYESHWARAR TEMPLE WINS UNESCO AWARD FOR HERITAGE RESTORATION -**

- The Abathsahayeshwarar Temple in Thukkatchi, a 1,300-year-old Chola dynasty structure in Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur district, has gained international recognition by UNESCO's 2023 Award of Distinction for its exceptional conservation efforts.
- The temple was constructed by Kings Vikrama Chola and Kulothunga Chola and featured five prakarams or enclosures. The village was known as Vikrama Chozheeswaram and Kulothunga Chola Nallur. Kulothunga Chola established the idol for Aadhi Sarabeshwarar.



- The temple houses many deities, including Soundaryanayaki Ambal and Ashtabhujā Durgā Parameshwari.

KISAN KAVACH – BHARAT’S INDIGENOUS ANTI-PESTICIDE BODYSUIT -

- Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, unveiled Kisan Kavach, India’s first indigenous anti-pesticide bodysuit.
- Developed by BRIC-inStem, Bangalore, in collaboration with Sepio Health Pvt. Ltd., the suit aims to safeguard farmers from pesticide-induced health risks. The launch aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of leveraging science and technology to empower India’s agricultural community.



GOOGLE PARTNERS WITH NCERT TO LAUNCH YOUTUBE CHANNELS IN 29 INDIAN LANGUAGES -

- Google has expanded its educational initiatives in India through a strategic partnership with the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
- This collaboration aims to make quality education more accessible by launching YouTube channels in 29 Indian languages, including Indian Sign Language, for students in grades 1-12.



- In addition, Google has partnered with NPTEL to offer credentialed courses on YouTube, providing certification opportunities for learners. This move builds on Google’s long-standing commitment to promoting accessible education through digital tools, AI, and partnerships with Indian organizations.

GOVT UNVEILS ‘JALVAHAK’ SCHEME TO BOOST INLAND WATERWAYS CARGO MOVEMENT -

- The Indian government has launched the Jalvahak incentive scheme to encourage long-haul cargo transportation via national waterways. Aimed at decongesting road and rail networks and promoting sustainable transport, the scheme offers direct incentives for transporting goods over 300 km on waterways.
- The Jalvahak scheme, unveiled by Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, covers National Waterways 1 (Ganga), 2 (Brahmaputra), and 16 (Barak). It incentivizes cargo owners by providing up to 35% reimbursement on operating costs, making waterway transportation an economical and eco-friendly alternative.
- This initiative is part of India’s broader effort to unlock the potential of its 20,236 km inland waterways network, which has been underutilized compared to global leaders like the US and China.



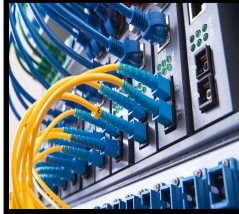
BHARAT MOBILITY GLOBAL EXPO 2025: INDIA’S AUTOMOTIVE MILESTONE -

- The Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 will take place from January 17-22 across Delhi NCR, marking India’s growing role as a global hub for mobility. With over 1,500 exhibitors and an expected 500,000 visitors, the event is set to become the world’s second-largest auto show.
- Key automotive giants such as Maruti Suzuki, Tata Motors, and BYD will showcase new models, with a focus on electric vehicles (EVs), hybrid technologies, and alternative fuels. In its second edition, the expo

promises to build on the success of the inaugural 2024 event, reinforcing India's commitment to sustainable mobility and engineering excellence.

INDIA'S DATA CENTRE INDUSTRY SET TO SURPASS \$100 BILLION BY 2027 -

- India's data centre market is undergoing a significant transformation, with investments expected to exceed \$100 billion by 2027, marking a massive leap from the \$60 billion invested between 2019 and 2024.
- **Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have emerged as the primary hubs for data centre development, with Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi-NCR, and Bengaluru dominating the industry.**
- This surge in demand is driven by sectors like BFSI, technology, fintech, media, and the booming generative AI industry, positioning India as a global leader in digital infrastructure.



CENTRE ENDS NO DETENTION RULES IN SCHOOLS -

- The government of India abolished the 'No-detention policy' for students in class 5 and 8 who fail their year end exams.
- **This significant amendment to the Right of children to free and compulsory education rules, 2010 is aimed at improving learning outcomes among students.**
- The revised policy mandates that students who failed their annual exams will be required to retake within two months, failing which they will have to repeat the academic year.

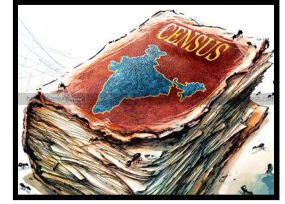


CENTRE TO BEGIN CENSUS FROM 2025 -

- **The Central government is set to commence the long-awaited census exercise in 2025, aiming for completion by 2026. This census was originally scheduled for 2021**

but faced delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following its completion, the BJP-led government plans to initiate a delimitation exercise for Lok Sabha seats, which is expected to be finalized by 2028.



- **Census Start and End:** The census will begin in 2025 and is projected to conclude in 2026, marking a significant delay of four years.
- **Delimitation Process:** The delimitation of Lok Sabha seats will commence post-census completion, with a target completion date of 2028.
- **Future Census Cycles:** The traditional decadal census cycle will be adjusted, with the next census scheduled for 2035.

INDIA'S TEXTILES SECTOR TARGETS \$350 BILLION BY 2030 -

- **India's textiles sector is set for significant expansion, with an 11% year-on-year growth in Ready-Made Garments (RMG) of all Textiles exports, as per India's trade data of August 2024, signaling a bright future.**
- **The Textiles sector in the country is expected to grow to USD 350 billion by 2030, driven by India's inherent strengths and a strong policy framework that encourages investment and exports.**
- A number of schemes and policy initiatives as part of the government's roadmap aim to leverage and catalyze these inherent strengths to help the textile sector achieve the USD 350 billion goal by 2030.



Key factors contributing to the sector's expansion

- 11% Growth in (RMG) Exports
- India's trade data for August 2024 reports an 11% year-on-year growth in RMG (Ready-Made Garments) exports, a positive indicator of the sector's robust future.

YOGI ADITYANATH MARKS MAHA-KUMBH-2025 WITH LOGO REVEAL -

- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath unveiled the new multi-colored logo for Mahakumbh 2025 at an event. Kumbh Mela, recognised by the UNESCO as an ‘Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity,’ is regarded as the world’s largest peaceful gathering of pilgrims.

**Features**

- Design Elements
- Features a temple, a seer, an urn, the Akshayvat tree, and Lord Hanuman.
- Embodies the confluence of nature and humanity in the Sanatan civilization.

Spiritual Significance

- The event is recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- **With Motto:** “Sarvasiddhipradah Kumbhah” (Kumbh bestows all types of spiritual powers).
- The Maha Kumbh is a significant social and religious festival that brings together devotees from around the world.
- This inclusion highlights the spiritual and geographical importance of Prayagraj in the Maha Kumbh’s rich tradition.

CLASSICAL LANGUAGE STATUS GRANTED TO MARATHI, BENGALI, PALI, PRAKRIT, AND ASSAMESE -

- In a significant move, the Union Cabinet approved the conferral of classical language status to Marathi, Bengali, Assamese, Pali, and Prakrit on October 3, 2024.
- This decision, following long-pending demands, highlights India’s rich linguistic



heritage and aims to preserve and promote these ancient languages.

- **The concept of “Classical Languages” was established in 2004 with Tamil being the first to receive this status.** The criteria for classical status include high antiquity of texts dating back over 1500-2000 years, a rich body of ancient literature, and a distinct literary tradition. Revised in 2005, these guidelines have since been applied to Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia.
- The latest additions were approved after recommendations by the Linguistic Experts Committee (LEC) under Sahitya Akademi in 2024, which confirmed that Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali meet these standards.

SUPREME COURT’S JUSTICE STATUE REMOVES BLINDFOLD -

- **The traditional Lady of Justice, often depicted blindfolded with scales and a sword, has undergone a symbolic transformation in the Supreme Court of India.** Under the guidance of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, the newly commissioned statue sheds the blindfold and replaces the sword with the Constitution.
- **This change represents a modern understanding of justice in India, one that is neither blind nor punitive, but instead rooted in constitutional values and equality.**
- The new statue now stands prominently at the judges’ library in the Supreme Court, marking a departure from colonial-era symbolism.
- **Traditionally, Lady Justice was portrayed with a blindfold, symbolizing impartiality and equality before the law.**
- The new statue, however, has its eyes open, symbolizing that justice is not blind in India, but instead aware, conscious, and empathetic.
- The sword, a traditional symbol of authority and punishment, has been replaced by the Indian Constitution.



INTERNATIONAL

AFTER 15 MONTHS OF WAR, WHICH SAW THE DEATHS OF TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE, THE DESTRUCTION OF MUCH OF GAZA AND MULTIPLE ROUNDS OF PAINSTAKING NEGOTIATIONS, HAMAS AND ISRAEL HAVE AGREED TO A CEASEFIRE. -

- The Israel-Hamas ceasefire was implemented after a 15-month-long war that began on October 7, 2023.
- The war caused severe casualties, with over 46,900 deaths in Gaza, the majority being civilians, and the displacement of nearly 2 million people in Gaza.
- In Israel, 1,200 people were killed, and 251 individuals were taken hostage by Hamas.
- The ceasefire agreement was brokered through the diplomatic efforts of Egypt, Qatar, and the United States, based on a framework proposed by U.S. President Joe Biden, endorsed by the UN Security Council in June 2024.



7.1 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE HITS TIBET -

- On January 7, 2025, a 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck the Tibetan region near the Nepal border. The quake's epicentre was approximately 80 km north of Mt Everest, located 10 km below the surface.
- By evening, reports indicated at least 95 fatalities and over 130 injuries in China, with extensive property damage. Tremors were felt as far away as Kathmandu and Kolkata.
- This event marks the seismic activity in the Himalayan region and raises concerns about future earthquakes.



2025 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WINTER WILDFIRES -

- In January 2025, Southern California experienced a severe wildfire outbreak that devastated large portions of Los Angeles, including celebrity homes and neighborhoods like Hollywood Hills.
- Wildfires such as the Palisades fire, Eaton fire, Sunset, Hurst, and Lidia fires led to significant destruction, killing 10 people, displacing 130,000 individuals, and delaying the Oscars nominations.
- Despite winter traditionally being an off-season for wildfires, these fires are particularly intense due to three main contributing factors: wet weather followed by dry conditions, Santa Ana winds, and climate change.



BLOOD MONEY AND PLEA BARGAINING -

- The death sentence of an Indian nurse in Yemen for allegedly murdering her business partner, along with efforts involving blood money (diya under Sharia law) for her acquittal, has reignited debates over its implications.
- Blood money refers to money paid as compensation for unintentional murder, culpable homicide, or when victims' families forgo retribution (qisas).
- Even after reconciliation, the state retains the right to impose penalties.
- India's Position: India does not formally recognize blood money.
- The legal system offers 'plea bargaining' as a negotiation tool but it is not available for crimes against women or children aged below 14, heinous crimes such as murder or rape etc.



- It outlines a procedure where the accused pleads guilty in exchange for concessions from the prosecutor, potentially including victim compensation.
- **It was introduced through the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2005 to the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (BNSS).**
- It can be taken up only for offences that are penalised with imprisonment of less than 7 years.

U.S. WITHDRAWS FROM WHO AND SUSPENDS FOREIGN AID -

- On January 20, 2025, President Donald Trump signed an executive order initiating the United States' withdrawal from the World Health Organization (WHO) and suspending all foreign aid for 90 days. This decision has sparked significant global concern and debate.



The executive order cites several reasons for the withdrawal:

- **Mishandling of the COVID-19 Pandemic:** The U.S. administration criticized the WHO's response to the pandemic, particularly its perceived leniency towards China's initial handling of the outbreak.
- **Lack of Independence:** Concerns were raised about the WHO's susceptibility to political influence from member states, undermining its effectiveness in addressing global health issues.

TRUMP WITHDRAWS US FROM PARIS AGREEMENT AGAIN -

- On January 20, 2025, President Donald Trump initiated the United States' second withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, a move that has significant implications for both domestic and international climate policies.
- **Adopted in 2015, the Paris Agreement is a global accord aimed at limiting global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, with efforts to limit**



the increase to 1.5°C. The agreement encourages countries to set and achieve their own emission reduction targets, known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

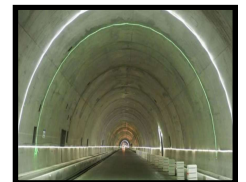
IRAN'S CAPITAL SHIFT TO MAKRAN AND ALEXANDER'S LEGACY -

- Iran plans to relocate its capital from Tehran to the southern Makran coastal region due to economic and ecological concerns.
- **In ancient times, Makran was notable as the region where Alexander the Great lost a third of his men while retreating to Macedonia, after his Invasion of India (327–325 BCE).**
- **Historical Context:** Tehran has been Iran's capital for over 200 years, having been established during the reign of Agha Mohammad Khan, the first ruler of the Qajar dynasty (1794 to 1925) of Iran.
- **Planned Relocation:** Iran intends to move its capital from Tehran to Makran in Sistan and Baluchestan Province due to Tehran's overpopulation, pollution, water scarcity, and energy shortages.
- The idea of relocating the capital was first proposed during Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency in the early 2000s.



CHINA UNVEILS WORLD'S LONGEST TUNNEL, ENHANCES BRI CONNECTIVITY

- China has completed the construction of the Tianshan Shengli Tunnel, the world's longest expressway tunnel, marking a significant advancement in infrastructure development and enhancing connectivity within the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.
- **Tunnel Specifications:** The Tianshan Shengli Tunnel spans 22.13 kilometers and is a pivotal component of the Urumqi-Yuli Expressway, which connects Urumqi in northern Xinjiang to Yuli County in the south. Once



operational, it will reduce travel time through the Tianshan Mountains from approximately three hours to about 20 minutes.

NEPAL AND CHINA SIGN FRAMEWORK FOR BRI COOPERATION -

- During Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli's official visit to China, both countries signed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Cooperation Framework. This agreement aims to accelerate the implementation of BRI projects, marking a pivotal moment in Nepal-China relations. While Nepal joined the BRI in 2017, no projects were executed until now.
- The recent framework, signed by Nepal's acting Foreign Secretary Amrit Bahadur Rai and Liu Sushe of China's National Development and Reform Commission, includes terms like "aid and technical assistance," replacing "grant" with "investment" following deliberations.



INDIA TO CHAIR 68TH SESSION OF UN COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS -

- India has achieved a significant milestone by being named to chair the 68th Session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), marking the first time the country has been chosen for this prestigious role.
- Ambassador Shambhu S Kumaran, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Vienna, officially assumed the chairmanship of this crucial forum.
- The CND, a key policy-making body of the UN, focuses on addressing global drug-related issues and promoting international collaboration on drug control measures.



ELON MUSK REACHES HISTORIC \$400 BILLION NET WORTH -

- Elon Musk is the first person to achieve a net worth of \$400 billion, a milestone driven by financial moves and political developments. Musk sold shares of SpaceX, which greatly increased his wealth, and the recent U.S. election results also played an important role in this financial surge.
- Musk's sale of SpaceX shares added approximately \$50 billion to his net worth. This brought his total to \$439.2 billion. The Bloomberg Billionaires Index marks this remarkable increase. His net worth had previously declined by over \$200 billion in late 2022.



INDIA AND FRANCE COLLABORATE TO ESTABLISH WORLD'S LARGEST MUSEUM

- The Ministry of Culture, in partnership with France Museums Développement (FMD), has launched an ambitious project to develop the Yuga Yugeen Bharat National Museum as a global cultural landmark.
- Spanning approximately 1,55,000 square meters across the North and South Blocks in New Delhi, the museum will celebrate India's civilizational history and serve as a cornerstone of the Central Vista Redevelopment Project.
- Announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the International Museum Expo in May 2023 and emphasized further during the inauguration of Bharat Mandapam in July, the initiative reflects a commitment to cultural heritage preservation and international collaboration.



RUSSIA OFFERS VISA-FREE TRAVEL FOR INDIANS IN 2025 -

- Indians may soon enjoy visa-free travel to Russia as part of a new initiative expected to begin in the spring of 2025. This move follows bilateral discussions between India and Russia in June 2024, aimed at easing visa restrictions and encouraging group tourist exchanges.
- Currently, Indian nationals require visas to visit Russia, but the upcoming agreement could significantly streamline travel processes, boosting tourism and strengthening bilateral ties.

**NEPAL BEGINS ELECTRICITY EXPORT TO BANGLADESH -**

- Nepal has recently initiated the export of electricity to Bangladesh via India's electricity grid and development took place on November 15, 2024.
- The ceremony was attended by key officials from Nepal, Bangladesh, and India. The power flow is anticipated to enhance sub-regional connectivity in the power sector.
- The tripartite power sales agreement was signed on October 3, 2024. This agreement involved NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam, Nepal Electricity Authority, and Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB).
- The agreement aims to facilitate electricity trade among the three nations.

**COP29: THE CRUCIAL CLIMATE SUMMIT IN BAKU, AZERBAIJAN -**

- The 29th UN Climate Summit, COP29, kicked off in Baku, Azerbaijan, on November 11, 2024, with discussions set to focus on vital climate finance mechanisms,



particularly the new “New Collective Quantified Goal” (NCQG).

- The summit, running until November 22, aims to address urgent global climate issues and secure financial commitments to assist developing nations in combating the devastating effects of climate change, caused largely by greenhouse gas emissions.
- COP29 has been dubbed the “Finance COP” due to its central focus on financial strategies, including a push for greater funding commitments and the role of the private sector in driving climate action.

G20 RIO SUMMIT 2024: A FOCUS ON GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND TURBULENCE

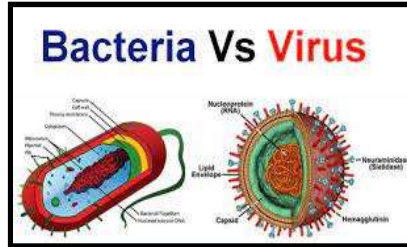
- The 19th G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro concluded with the adoption of the Rio Declaration, addressing critical global issues such as climate change, the Ukraine war, conflicts in West Asia, and economic inequality.
- The declaration outlined pathways to sustainable growth, multilateralism, and humanitarian intervention while exposing deep divisions among member nations.
- The declaration reaffirmed the G20's commitment to the Paris Agreement and progress under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- However, no consensus was reached on boosting climate funding for developing nations, with leaders stating that funding should come “from all sources.”
- The declaration unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms and stressed the importance of protecting civilians, particularly in conflict zones like Gaza and Lebanon.
- It emphasized diplomacy and dialogue to resolve ongoing wars and crises, urging comprehensive ceasefires in Gaza and Lebanon to mitigate humanitarian suffering.
- Leaders called for an enlarged Security Council, advocating better representation for underrepresented regions and groups.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BACTERIA AND VIRUSES -

- Bacteria and viruses are tiny organisms that can cause diseases, but they are very different from each other. Bacteria are living microorganisms that can survive on their own, while viruses need a host to live and multiply.
- **Some bacteria are helpful, but viruses are usually harmful. Understanding their differences helps us know how they spread, affect us, and how we can treat or prevent them.**
- Bacteria are tiny living organisms called prokaryotes. They can survive in almost any environment, including extreme conditions like hot springs, deep oceans and even volcanic areas. While some bacteria cause disease, many are harmless or even helpful to humans.



- Managed by the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT). Maintains records of App Providers, PDOs, and PDOAs.

INDIA JOINS UN PANEL ON BIG DATA -

- India has become a member of the United Nations (UN) Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics (UN-CEBD) after its recent induction into the United Nations Statistical Council (UNSC), signaling its growing influence in global statistical frameworks.
- **UN-CEBD is a specialized body under the United Nations, established to leverage Big Data and data science for strengthening global statistical systems.**
- It was established in 2014, under the aegis of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC).
- It has 31 member states (including India) and 16 international organizations.
- Explore the role of big data in monitoring and reporting progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

THE TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA (TRAI) HAS RECOMMENDED CAPPING INTERNET TARIFFS FOR WI-FI SERVICE PROVIDERS UNDER THE PM-WANI SCHEME AT TWICE THE RETAIL BROADBAND RATE -

- **Launch Year:** Launched in 2020 by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).
- **Aim:** To enhance the proliferation of public Wi-Fi hotspots and create robust digital communication infrastructure, especially in rural areas. Promotes ease of doing business by allowing local businesses to become Wi-Fi providers without licenses or fees.
- **App Provider:** Develops applications to help users locate and connect to nearby PM-WANI hotspots for seamless internet access.

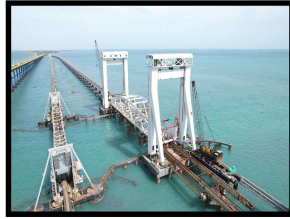
NEW LAUNCHPAD OF ISRO COMING UP AT SRIHARIKOTA -

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the establishment of a third launchpad at ISRO's Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- The project, costing ₹3,985 crore, is a critical step in enhancing India's space transportation capabilities, especially for the Next Generation Launch Vehicles (NGLVs).
- This launchpad is designed to support future human spaceflight missions and India's ambitious plans for space exploration, including an Indian crewed lunar landing by 2040.



INDIA'S FIRST VERTICAL LIFT RAIL BRIDGE: THE NEW PAMBAN BRIDGE -

- The New Pamban Bridge, India's first vertical lift railway sea bridge, is replacing the 105-year-old Pamban Bridge to enhance connectivity between the Indian mainland and Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu.
- This state-of-the-art bridge is a leap in railway infrastructure, designed for speed, safety, and modern train compatibility.
- **The 2.05 km long bridge, built at a cost of Rs 535 crore by RVNL, features a fully automated vertical lift span that provides 22 meters of air clearance for ships. It's designed to handle double tracks and supports high-speed trains.**
- The original Pamban Bridge, constructed in 1914, was decommissioned in December 2022 due to corrosion, and the new bridge is set to replace it after several years of development. Construction began in February 2020, and the project faced delays due to the pandemic, with completion expected by June 30, 2024.

**MAHA KUMBH 2025 TO FEATURE WORLD'S LARGEST AI-POWERED HEADCOUNT -**

- **The Maha Kumbh Mela in 2025 will be a monumental occasion at Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, and is expected to draw between 40 and 45 crore devotees.**
- Attendees will gather at the sacred 'Triveni Sangam', where the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers converge. The Uttar Pradesh government aims to implement the world's largest AI-powered headcount for this event.

**INDIA TO TRIPLE ATOMIC POWER CAPACITY BY 2031 -**

- **India's atomic power capacity has seen remarkable growth, nearly doubling from 4,780 MW in 2014 to 8,081 MW in 2024. Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh, in a statement to the Lok Sabha, highlighted that this progress was achieved in just a decade, a milestone that traditionally took over 60 years.**
- The government's push for political leadership and technical expertise has enabled these strides. By 2031-32, India's atomic power capacity is projected to triple to 22,480 MW, further solidifying the nation's leadership in nuclear energy.

**ADITYA L1 AND PROBA-3 TO UNITE FOR SOLAR RESEARCH IN 2025 -**

- India's Aditya L1 and the European Space Agency's (ESA) Proba-3 missions are set to revolutionize solar research with joint observations starting in 2025. Aditya L1, operational since January 2024 from the Lagrange point (L1) 1.5 million km from Earth, launched in September 2023.



- **Meanwhile, Proba-3, launched on December 5, 2024, is the first mission involving two satellites flying in**

formation to simulate a solar eclipse, facilitating detailed studies of the Sun's corona.

CHINA SETS NEW SPACEWALK RECORD -

- China has achieved a major milestone in space exploration with two astronauts aboard the Tiangong space station completing a nine-hour spacewalk, setting a new global record.



- Chinese astronauts Cai Xuzhe and Song Lingdong set a new global record with a 9-hour extravehicular activity (EVA) outside the Tiangong space station. The spacewalk was confirmed by the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) as a "full success."

ISRO SUCCESSFULLY TESTS CE20 CRYOGENIC ENGINE -

- On December 12, 2024, ISRO successfully completed a critical milestone with the sea-level hot test of its CE20 cryogenic engine at the ISRO Propulsion Complex in Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu.



- This test, conducted on November 29, 2024, was a crucial step for upcoming space missions and demonstrated the engine's restart-enabling systems under ambient conditions.
- The CE20 cryogenic engine, developed indigenously by ISRO, plays a vital role in enhancing India's space exploration capabilities.

SPADEx MISSION: ISRO'S LEAP TOWARDS SPACE DOCKING TECHNOLOGY -

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to launch the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) mission in December 2024, aiming to make India the fourth country to achieve space docking technology.

- The mission, aboard PSLV-C60, involves two 220-kg spacecraft—SDX01 (Chaser) and SDX02 (Target)—that will demonstrate autonomous in-space docking. This breakthrough will enable ISRO to advance its space ambitions, including lunar missions, the Bharatiya Antariksha Station (BAS), and satellite servicing.

ISRO, ESA JOIN HANDS FOR HUMAN SPACEFLIGHT ADVANCEMENTS -

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the European Space Agency (ESA) have signed a landmark agreement to enhance collaboration in human space exploration.



- This partnership aims to foster astronaut training, mission implementation, and joint research experiments. Signed by ISRO Chairman S. Somanath and ESA Director General Dr. Josef Aschbacher, the agreement establishes a robust framework for cooperation, strengthening the relationship between the two premier space agencies.

PROBA-3: ISRO TO LAUNCH ESA'S PRECISION FORMATION FLYING SOLAR MISSION -

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to launch the European Space Agency's (ESA) Proba-3 mission on December 4, 2024, using its PSLV-XL rocket from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.
- This pioneering mission will study the Sun's corona, the outermost and hottest layer of the Sun's atmosphere, through an artificial solar eclipse created by two satellites flying in precise formation.
- Proba-3 represents a significant technological breakthrough and an example of international collaboration in space exploration.

ECONOMY & FINANCE

INDIA'S GDP GROWTH PROJECTED AT 6.4% FOR 2024-25 -

- The National Statistical Office (NSO) has projected India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to grow by 6.4% in the financial year 2024-25, a deceleration from the 8.2% growth recorded in 2023-24.



- Agriculture and Allied Sectors:** Estimated to expand by 3.8% in 2024-25, a significant improvement from the 1.4% growth in 2023-24.
- Construction:** Projected to grow by 8.6%, indicating robust activity in infrastructure development.
- Financial, Real Estate, and Professional Services:** Expected to increase by 7.3%, reflecting sustained demand in these sectors.
- Private Final Consumption Expenditure:** Anticipated to rise by 7.3% during the fiscal year, up from 4% in the previous year, signaling stronger consumer spending.
- Government Final Consumption Expenditure:** Forecasted to grow at 4.1%, compared to 2.5% in the prior fiscal year, contributing to overall economic demand.

GOLD IMPORT DATA DISCREPANCIES -

- The Indian government has formed a committee to establish a reliable system for publishing accurate gold import data, following significant discrepancies in reported figures.



- The errors arose due to the migration of the data transmission system from the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) platform to the Indian Customs Electronic Gateway (ICEGATE).**

Issue with Gold Import Figures

- Unusual Surge in Imports:** Gold imports in November 2024 surged by 331% year-on-year, raising economic concerns such as:

- Weakening of the domestic currency.
- Negative impact on trade and fiscal policies.
- Revised Figures:** November's reported gold import figures were reduced by \$5 billion after corrections.
- Cumulatively, the gold import data from April to November 2024 was revised downwards by \$12 billion, from the initial estimate of \$49 billion to \$37 billion.

THE UNION CABINET, CHAIRED BY THE PRIME MINISTER, RECENTLY APPROVED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE 8TH PAY COMMISSION -

- This move aims to revise salaries and allowances for central government employees and pensioners. Scheduled to replace the 7th Pay Commission (implemented in 2016).



- The new commission will impact over 49 lakh**

employees and 65 lakh pensioners.

- Introduction:** A Pay Commission is constituted by the Central Government approximately every ten years to review and recommend changes to the pay structures of its employees.
- Nodal Agency:** Department of Expenditure (Ministry of Finance).

The recommendations of a Pay Commission apply to:

- Central Government Employees:** Those paid from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- Civil and Military Personnel:** Employees from all central civil services and defense services.
- Pensioners:** Retired personnel receiving pensions from the government.
- Notably, employees of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and autonomous bodies are excluded. PSU employees follow separate pay scales specific to their organization.

GLOBAL RISKS REPORT 2025 -

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) released the 20th Global Risks Report 2025.
- **Global Risks Report is an annual report published by the WEF. It presents an analysis of the most pressing global risks anticipated over short-term (2 years) and long-term (10 years) periods.** Global risk is the potential for an event to significantly harm global GDP, population, or natural resources.
- **Top Risks for India:** The report highlighted the top five risks for India include water supply shortages, misinformation and disinformation, erosion of human rights and civic freedoms, pollution (air, water, and soil), and labour and talent shortages.

Top Global Risks-

- **Immediate Risks (Next 2 years):** Misinformation and disinformation, Extreme weather events, and State based armed conflict.
- **Long-Term Risks (Next 10 Years):** Extreme weather events, Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse and Critical changes to earth systems.

RBI MONETARY POLICY MEETING DEC 2024: RBI CUTS CRR BY 50 BPS TO 4%, KEEPS REPO RATE UNCHANGED -

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) conducted its latest bi-monthly Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting in December 2024. Governor Shaktikanta Das announced several crucial measures and projections to address current economic challenges while maintaining stability. Here's a detailed breakdown:
- **To tackle liquidity concerns, the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) was reduced by 50 basis points to 4%. This move aligns with the RBI's neutral policy stance, aimed at ensuring economic stability without disruptive interventions.**
- The MPC decided by a 4-2 majority to maintain the repo rate at 6.5%. The Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) rate and the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate were also



retained at 6.25% and 6.75%, respectively. This cautious approach reflects the central bank's focus on balancing inflation and growth.

PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS RECORD NET PROFIT OF RS 85,520 CRORE IN FIRST HALF FY2024-25 -

- **In the first half of FY 2024-25, Public Sector Banks (PSBs), including the State Bank of India (SBI), reported a net profit of ₹85,520 crore, marking an impressive 26% growth compared to ₹67,850 crore during the same period in the previous year.**
- This significant achievement underscores the operational efficiency and financial resilience of PSBs, driven by improved asset quality, robust credit monitoring, and enhanced operational efficiency.

**CENTRE EARNS ₹8,625 CRORE VIA DISINVESTMENT IN 2024-25 -**

- **The Indian government has so far collected ₹8,625 crore through various minority stake sale disinvestment transactions during the current financial year 2024-25, according to MoS Finance Pankaj Chaudhary in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.**
- While no specific disinvestment target has been set for FY25, the government continues its policy of strategic disinvestment and privatization, aiming to enhance efficiency and economic potential in sectors where competitive markets have matured.

55TH GST COUNCIL MEETING: KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND PROPOSALS -

- **The 55th GST Council meeting, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, convened ministers from 28 states, two Union Territories, and key**



stakeholders. The discussions centered on vital tax reforms impacting consumers and businesses across sectors, focusing on luxury items, essential services, and rationalizing the tax structure.

Key Highlights

- Proposal to increase GST rates on high-end products,
- Wristwatches priced above ₹25,000 and shoes costing over ₹15,000 per pair may attract a 28% GST (up from 18%).
- Premium garments above ₹10,000 might also face a steep 28% tax, while,
- Garments below ₹1,500 remain at 5%.
- Garments between ₹1,500 and ₹10,000 may see a jump to 18%.
- GST rate for platforms like Swiggy and Zomato may be reduced.
- From 18% with Input Tax Credit (ITC) to a simplified 5% without ITC.

SBI, HDFC BANK, ICICI BANK: RBI'S 2024 LIST OF DOMESTIC SYSTEMICALLY IMPORTANT BANKS (D-SIBS) -

- Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reaffirmed the status of State Bank of India (SBI), HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs).
- This classification remains unchanged from the previous year. The RBI continues to monitor these banks closely due to their important role in the financial system.
- **The D-SIB framework was introduced to ensure financial stability. It requires banks to maintain higher capital buffers. These buffers are determined by a bank's Systemic Importance Score (SIS).** SBI, HDFC



Bank, and ICICI Bank are categorized into different buckets based on their SIS. Each bucket has specific capital requirements.

INDIA'S FOREX RESERVES SEE SHARPEST WEEKLY FALL IN RECORD, HIT 4-MONTH LOW -

- India's foreign exchange reserves suffered their largest weekly drop on record, falling by \$17.76 billion to a four-month low of \$657.8 billion for the week ending November 15, 2024.
- **This marks the sharpest decline since records began in 1998, surpassing the previous high of \$15.5 billion during the global financial crisis of October 2008.**
- The primary causes for the fall include the strengthening of the US dollar, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) intervention to protect the rupee, and declining gold prices.



UK AND INDIA TO RELAUNCH FTA TALKS IN EARLY 2025: STRENGTHENING BILATERAL TIES -

- UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced the resumption of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with India, set to restart in early 2025.
- **This decision follows a meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, where both leaders emphasized strengthening their strategic partnership, which covers key sectors such as security, defense, technology, climate, health, and education.**
- The bilateral trade between the two countries stands at GBP 42 billion annually.



IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS

PARAKRAM DIWAS 2025 -

- On January 23, 2025, India celebrates Parakram Diwas to honor the 128th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, a visionary freedom fighter and one of India's greatest leaders.
- Known for his indomitable spirit and revolutionary ideas, Netaji's legacy continues to inspire generations.
- While his contributions to India's independence are widely known, here are 10 lesser-known facts about him that shed light on his extraordinary life.



WORLD HINDI DAY 2025- CELEBRATING THE GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HINDI

- The World Hindi Day, popularly called the 'Vishwa Hindi Diwas', is celebrated on January 10 every year to promote Hindi as one of the most widely spoken languages around the world, along with English and Mandarin.
- World Hindi Day is an occasion that celebrates Hindi as a global language. Recognized as one of the most spoken languages in the world, Hindi is not merely a medium of communication but an emotion that binds millions of people.
- With a rich history and cultural significance, Hindi has evolved over the centuries, incorporating words from various languages and becoming more refined and understandable. From the media to contemporary writers, Hindi has established itself as a vital language of expression.



MANIPUR, MEGHALAYA AND TRIPURA CELEBRATE STATEHOOD DAY 2025 -

- Every year on January 21, the northeastern states of Manipur, Meghalaya, and Tripura celebrate their Statehood Day, marking the historic moment they attained full statehood under the North Eastern Region (Reorganization) Act of 1971.
- This day holds significant importance for the region, not only as a commemoration of their statehood but also as a celebration of their rich cultural heritage, vibrant history, and significant contributions to India's identity.
- The northeastern states, often referred to as the "Seven Sisters," are renowned for their unique culture, history, and natural beauty, and this day serves as a reflection of their growth into integral and empowered states within the Union of India.

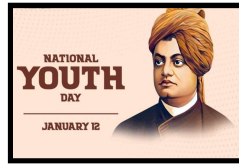
77TH INDIAN ARMY DAY 2025- HONOURING VALOR AND PATRIOTISM -

- Every year on January 15, India marks Indian Army Day, a significant occasion that celebrates the foundation of the Indian Army and the pivotal moment in history when power was handed over to Indian leadership. This day represents both India's military independence and the nation's progress toward self-reliance in defense matters.
- Indian Army Day pays tribute to the valor and sacrifices of soldiers who dedicated their lives to the service of the country.
- This event is not just a celebration of the Indian Army's achievements but also an effort to instill a deep sense of patriotism and unity among citizens. The day is a reminder of the unwavering commitment of our armed forces in ensuring the nation's security.



NATIONAL YOUTH DAY JANUARY 12TH -

- National Youth Day, also known as Rashtriya Yuva Diwas, is celebrated annually on January 12 to honor the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Recognized for his contributions to spiritual growth, national integration, and youth empowerment, Swamiji's life and teachings remain an inspiration to India's youth.
- The Government of India declared his birthday as National Youth Day in 1984 to encourage young people to follow his ideals and work towards a progressive, united, and self-reliant India.

**BSF'S 60TH RAISING DAY PARADE CELEBRATED WITH POMP -**

- Amit Shah honored BSF's valor and announced an anti-drone unit to combat weapon and drug smuggling across borders.
- Border Security Force:
- **Formed:** 1 December 1965.
- Constituting instrument: Border Security Force Act, 1968.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi.
- **Motto:** जीवन पर्यन्त कर्तव्य (Duty Unto Death).
- **Director General:** Daljit Singh Chaudhary.
- First Director General: K F Rustamji.

**ISRAEL EXPANDS SETTLEMENTS IN GOLAN HEIGHTS AMID REGIONAL SHIFTS -**

- Israel recently approved a settlement expansion plan in the Golan Heights, allocating over \$11.13 million to boost population and infrastructure in the region.
- This decision comes amidst rising regional tensions following political changes in



Syria, particularly the fall of the Assad regime. Israel aims to double the population in this strategically significant territory.

- The Golan Heights, captured by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War and annexed in 1981, remains unrecognized as Israeli territory by most of the international community.
- The plateau holds strategic value for defense and water resources. Currently, the region houses about 50,000 residents, including 20,000 Israeli settlers and an equal number of local Druze Arabs and Alawites.

VIJAY DIWAS 2024: CELEBRATING INDIA'S 1971 VICTORY -

- Vijay Diwas, observed annually on December 16, commemorates India's decisive victory over Pakistan in the 1971 Indo-Pak War. This 13-day war, triggered by the humanitarian crisis in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), ended with the surrender of 93,000 Pakistani soldiers and the liberation of Bangladesh as an independent nation.
- On this day in 1971, Lieutenant General A.A.K. Niazi of Pakistan signed the Instrument of Surrender in Dhaka, marking a historic moment led by Indian leaders like Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, and Lt. General Jagjit Singh Aurora.
- This victory reshaped South Asia's geopolitics, showcasing India's commitment to justice, humanity, and democratic values.

**GOOD GOVERNANCE WEEK TO BEGIN ON DECEMBER 19, 2024 -**

- Good Governance Week 2024 is scheduled to take place from December 19 to December 24, 2024. As part of this national initiative, the Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore

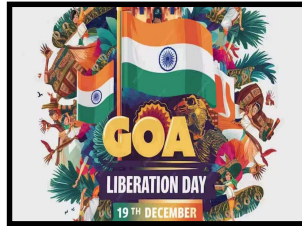


campaign will be held across more than 700 districts, states, and union territories of India.

- The campaign focuses on the redressal of public grievances and enhancing service delivery to rural areas.
- The campaign is a significant element of the Good Governance Week, which highlights the government's commitment to improving governance and reaching out to citizens, especially in rural areas.

GOA LIBERATION DAY 2024 -

- Goa Liberation Day is celebrated on December 19 every year to mark the freedom of Goa from Portuguese rule in 1961. This event symbolizes the end of 451 years of colonial rule and commemorates the bravery and sacrifices of the freedom fighters.
- **Marks the end of 451 years of Portuguese colonial rule in Goa, Daman, and Diu. The day celebrates the relentless struggle of the people of Goa and the Indian army's role in ending Portuguese rule.**



NATIONAL MATHEMATICS DAY 2024: CELEBRATING SRINIVASA RAMANUJAN -

- Every year on December 22, India celebrates National Mathematics Day. This date marks the birth anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan, one of the greatest mathematicians in history.
- **National Mathematics Day was first announced in 2012 by India's former Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, to honour Srinivasa Ramanujan's contributions to mathematics.**
- Srinivasa Ramanujan was born on December 22, 1887, in Erode, Tamil Nadu. Despite having no formal training in mathematics, he made groundbreaking discoveries in fields like infinite series, number theory, and continued fractions.

INDIAN NAVY DAY OBSERVED ON DECEMBER 4 -

- **Indian Navy Day is celebrated on December 4 each year, which honors the Indian Navy's dedication to protecting the nation's maritime borders. The day commemorates Operation Trident from the 1971 India-Pakistan war, which showcased India's naval strength with attack on Karachi.**
- Each year, the Indian Navy selects a theme. Recently, the theme is "Strength and Power through Innovation and Indigenisation." This reflects the Navy's commitment to modernisation and self-reliance.

NATIONAL FARMERS DAY 2024 -

- **National Farmers' Day, celebrated annually on December 23, is a tribute to the backbone of India's agrarian economy—its farmers.**
- Known as Kisan Diwas, this day also commemorates the birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh, India's fifth Prime Minister, who was a staunch advocate for farmers' welfare and rural development.
- The day highlights the importance of empowering farmers and addressing their concerns to ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for the nation.



NATIONAL CONSUMER DAY OBSERVED ON DECEMBER 24 -

- National Consumer Day is observed annually on December 24, and commemorates the enactment of the Consumer Protection Act of 1986.
- The act was established to safeguard consumers against exploitation and unfair trade practices.
- This theme for National Consumer Day 2024 is "Virtual Hearings & Digital Access to Consumer Justice."

AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

USHA VANCE, THE FIRST INDIAN-AMERICAN AND HINDU SECOND LADY OF THE UNITED STATES -

- On January 20, 2025, Usha Vance made history by becoming the first Indian-American and Hindu Second Lady of the United States.



- Her husband, J.D. Vance, was sworn in as the 50th Vice President of the United States, marking a significant milestone in American politics. Usha's journey, deeply rooted in her Indian heritage and her remarkable accomplishments, has garnered widespread attention and admiration.

PRESIDENT MURMU HONORS NATIONAL SPORTS AWARDS 2025 WINNERS -

- On January 17, 2025, the prestigious National Sports Awards were presented by President Droupadi Murmu in a glittering ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.



- The awards, including the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna and the Arjuna Awards, recognized the remarkable achievements of India's sporting champions.
- Among the honored were double Olympic-medalist shooter Manu Bhaker, chess prodigy and youngest world champion D. Gukesh, men's hockey captain Harmanpreet Singh, and Paralympic gold-medalist high jumper Praveen Kumar.
- The event also highlighted the significant contribution of India's para-athletes, who had a spectacular performance at the Paris Paralympics, bringing home 29 medals, including 7 golds and 9 silvers.

- The ceremony not only celebrated the athletes' achievements but also recognized the coaches and institutions that have contributed to their success.

TRUMP NAMED TIME'S PERSON OF THE YEAR -

- Time magazine has named Donald Trump as its Person of the Year for 2024, marking the second time he has received this prestigious recognition.



- The decision highlights Trump's substantial political influence, his historic comeback following his victory in the November 5 election over Vice President Kamala Harris, and his role in reshaping the American presidency. Time's recognition of Trump underscores the significant impact he has had on American politics and the world stage.

PRESIDENT MURMU CONFERS HONORARY GENERAL RANK TO NEPAL ARMY CHIEF -

- President Droupadi Murmu, honored Nepal's Army Chief, General Ashok Raj Sigdel, with the prestigious honorary rank of 'General of the Indian Army.'
- This event, held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, reflects the enduring tradition of mutual respect and deep military ties between India and Nepal, which dates back to 1950.
- This ceremony also emphasizes the shared commitment of both nations to further strengthen their defense collaboration and friendly relations.



PM MODI HONOURED WITH KUWAIT'S TOP CIVILIAN AWARD -

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded Kuwait's highest civilian honour, the Order of Mubarak Al Kabeer, by Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah.
- This prestigious accolade marks the 20th international honour received by PM Modi, symbolizing his contributions to fostering global partnerships and India's growing influence on the world stage.
- The Order of Mubarak Al Kabeer is Kuwait's highest knighthood order.
- **It is conferred upon Heads of State, foreign sovereigns, and members of royal families as a gesture of friendship and goodwill. Previous recipients include global leaders such as Bill Clinton, Prince Charles, and George Bush.**

**V. NARAYANAN TAKES OVER AS ISRO CHIEF AND SPACE SECRETARY -**

- Dr. V. Narayanan, a distinguished scientist with nearly four decades of experience in rocket and spacecraft propulsion, has been appointed as the new Secretary of the Department of Space and Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- **He will succeed S. Somanath, effective from January 14, 2025, as per the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. Currently serving as the Director of the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), Dr. Narayanan brings a wealth of expertise in liquid and cryogenic propulsion systems.**
- His leadership has been instrumental in several landmark ISRO missions, including the development of the GSLV Mk III and Chandrayaan-3 propulsion systems.

**V. RAMASUBRAMANIAN APPOINTED NHRC CHAIRPERSON -**

- The post of Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) remained vacant since Justice (retd) Arun Kumar Mishra completed his tenure on June 1, 2024.
- **The appointment of former Supreme Court judge, V. Ramasubramanian, was confirmed by President Droupadi Murmu on December 23. Ramasubramanian's appointment marks a new chapter in the NHRC, following Mishra's tenure from June 2021 to June 2024.**

3 INDIANS IN FORBES '2024 POWER WOMEN LIST -

- Forbes has unveiled its 21st annual list of the World's 100 Most Powerful Women, a prestigious ranking that celebrates influential figures across business, entertainment, politics, philanthropy, and policymaking.
- This year, three Indian women have made their mark on the global stage with remarkable achievements in their respective fields.
- **They include Nirmala Sitharaman, Roshni Nadar Malhotra, and Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, whose contributions to their industries have earned them prominent spots on the list.**

**INDIAN ARMY CHIEF NAMED HONORARY GENERAL OF NEPALI ARMY -**

- **General Upendra Dwivedi, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) of the Indian Army, was recently conferred with the title of Honorary General of the Nepal Army by the President of Nepal, Ramchandra Paudel.**
- This honor reflects the deep-rooted historical, cultural, and military ties between India and Nepal. **The tradition of honorary generalship between the two nations highlights the strong, enduring friendship and strategic cooperation shared by their armies.**

- General Upendra Dwivedi, COAS of India, received the Honorary General title from the Nepali Army during a ceremony at President House, Sheetal Niwas.
- The title was bestowed by **President Ramchandra Paudel of Nepal**.
- The exchange of honorary generalships between India and Nepal is a long-standing tradition that dates back to the 1950s.
- Every three years, the Chief of Indian Army and the Chief of Nepali Army exchange the title of Honorary General.

PM MODI RECEIVES HIGHEST HONORS FROM GUYANA AND DOMINICA -

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been conferred prestigious awards by Guyana and Dominica in recognition of his significant contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as his efforts in strengthening international ties, especially between India and these Caribbean nations.
- **These awards highlight the deepening diplomatic relations and the global recognition of Modi's leadership in global health, climate resilience, and development cooperation.**
- **PM Modi was awarded 'The Order of Excellence,' Guyana's highest honor, by President Irfaan Ali.** The award acknowledges his exceptional contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic and his global leadership.
- **Modi was also conferred the 'Dominica Award of Honour' by President Sylvanie Burton of Dominica.** The award recognizes Modi's leadership and India's support during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the provision of 70,000 AstraZeneca vaccines to Dominica.



JAY SHAH BECAME A YOUNGEST ICC CHAIRMAN IN HISTORY -

- Jay Shah, an experienced cricket administrator and Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), has officially commenced his tenure as

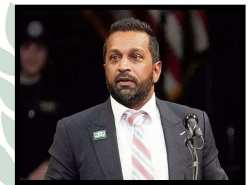
the Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC).

- At 36, Shah becomes the youngest to ever hold the prestigious position. His leadership comes at a critical juncture for global cricket, with significant opportunities and challenges in expanding the sport's reach and inclusivity.



INDIAN-ORIGIN KASH PATEL ANNOUNCED NEXT DIRECTOR OF FBI -

- **US President-elect Donald Trump has announced Kash Patel as the next Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), succeeding Christopher Wray.**
- Patel, a long-time Trump loyalist known for his confrontational stance against the "deep state" and criticism of federal agencies, brings a history of staunch support for Trump's policies.



PADMA BHUSHAN USTAD ZAKIR HUSSAIN PASSES AWAY AT 73 -

- **Born:** 1951, Mumbai, India
- **Father:** Ustad Allah Rakha (Tabla Maestro)
- **Famous Collaborations:** Pandit Ravi Shankar, John McLaughlin, George Harrison, Mickey Hart
- **Key Projects:** Shakti, Planet Drum
- **Awards:** Padma Bhushan, Padma Visbhushan, Padma Shri, Grammy Award
- **Legacy:** Revolutionized the tabla and took Indian music global.



PROGRAMMES, SCHEMES AND INITIATIVES

9TH ANNIVERSARY OF STARTUP INDIA INITIATIVE -

- 16th January 2025 marked the 9 years of completion of Startup India Scheme since it was launched on 16th January 2016.
- This day has been recognized as National Startup Day. Startup India initiative aims to cultivate innovation, support startups, and stimulate investments.
- The Startup India initiative is a government program launched in 2016 that supports entrepreneurs and startups in India.
- The goal of the initiative is to create a strong ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship that will drive economic growth and employment by supporting startups through measures such as tax benefits, easier compliance, and access to funding.

UJALA – 10 YEARS OF ENERGY-EFFICIENT LIGHTING -

- The UJALA (Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All) scheme, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 5th January 2015, has completed a decade of impactful service to the nation.
- This initiative, originally launched as the Domestic Efficient Lighting Programme (DELP), revolutionized India's domestic lighting sector by providing affordable, energy-efficient LED bulbs, tube lights, and fans to households across the country.
- It has contributed to not only lowering energy consumption but also reducing carbon emissions, making India a global leader in energy-efficient lighting. The UJALA scheme, along with the Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP), has significantly impacted the country's energy efficiency, economic savings, and environmental sustainability.



INDIA TO INVEST ₹50,000 CRORE IN NATIONAL WATERWAYS OVER 5 YEARS -

- In a significant move to enhance the country's inland water transport infrastructure, the Indian government has announced an investment of ₹50,000 crore over the next five years. This initiative aims to develop and improve national waterways, promoting sustainable and efficient transportation.
- **New Waterways and Green Shipping:** Approximately 50% of the total investment is earmarked for the development of new national waterways and the promotion of green shipping initiatives. This includes the introduction of 1,000 green vessels to bolster eco-friendly transportation.
- **Expansion of Water Metro Projects:** Building on the success of Kochi's Water Metro project, the government plans to extend similar projects to 15 cities, including Guwahati, enhancing urban water transport connectivity.
- **Infrastructure Development:** The plan includes constructing six floating steel jetties on the river Godavari (National Waterway 4) at locations such as Gandipochamma Temple, Pochavaram, and Perantapalli village in Andhra Pradesh, facilitating better access and trade opportunities.



CABINET NOD FOR 8TH PAY COMMISSION IMPLEMENTATION -

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the constitution of the 8th Central Pay Commission, which will evaluate and recommend revised salary structures and allowances for central government employees and pensioners.



- This early initiative ensures readiness for implementing the recommendations by January 1, 2026. The commission's scope encompasses over one crore employees and pensioners, aiming to address compensation, pensions, and welfare enhancements.

PM-SURYA GHAR: MUFT BIJLI YOJANA -

- The Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has issued operational guidelines for the PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, detailing RESCO (Renewable Energy Service Company) and Utility-Led Aggregation (ULA) models.



- These guidelines will supplement the existing consumer-driven implementation of rooftop solar installations through the National Portal of the scheme.

Two Models for Solar Installation-

- **RESCO (Renewable Energy Service Company) Model:** Third-party entities invest in rooftop solar installations. Consumers only pay for the electricity consumed, without bearing upfront costs. Excess power can be sold to DISCOMs.
- **Utility Led Aggregation (ULA) Model:** Power distribution companies (DISCOMs) or state-designated entities install rooftop solar systems for residential households.
- **Payment Security Mechanism (PSM):** A Rs 100 crore PSM fund has been established to de-risk investments in RESCO-based rooftop solar models. It can be enhanced with additional grants, subject to Ministry approval.

CENTRE TO INCUBATE 8 NEW SMART CITIES UNDER NEW CITIES SCHEME -

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched a new scheme extending the Smart City Mission, with an allocation of Rs 8,000 crore as a performance-based challenge fund for incubating 8 new cities.
- This initiative aims to manage the rapid urbanization pressures following the success of the Smart Cities

Mission. Under this scheme, each state can have only one new city through the allocated fund.



- The selection process included the formation of an Expert Committee to finalize bid parameters and eligibility conditions. A total of 28 proposals from 23 states were received, despite the initial lack of proposals from the North-Eastern States.
- The proposed cities include notable ones like Kopparthay (Andhra Pradesh), Gumin Nagar (Arunachal Pradesh), New MOPA Ayush City (Goa), Aerocity (Kerala), and Thirumazhisai (Tamil Nadu), among others.

GOVT LAUNCHES 'UDAAN YATRI CAFE' INITIATIVE -

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched the "Udaan Yatri Cafe" at Kolkata airport, which aims to provide affordable food and beverages to air travellers.
- The cafe will serve essential items such as water, tea, coffee, and snacks. If successful, the initiative will expand to other airports across India.

'BAL VIVAH MUKT BHARAT' CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED BY UNION MINISTER -

- The Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt. Annapurna Devi, launched the national campaign "Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat" in New Delhi.



- Aimed at eradicating child marriage and empowering young girls, the campaign aligns with the vision of a developed India (Viksit Bharat) by 2047.
- It includes the launch of the Child Marriage Free Bharat Portal, an innovative tool for citizen engagement and enforcement of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.

GOVERNMENT APPROVES PM-VIDYALAXMI SCHEME FOR FUNDING -

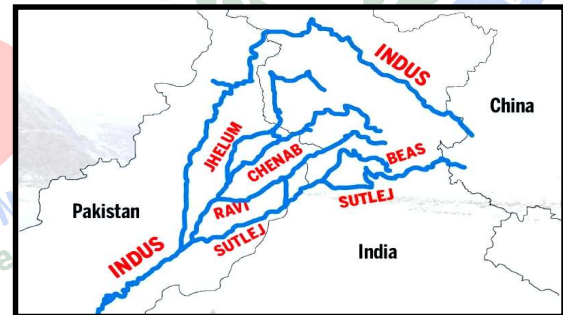
- The government of India approved the PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme and an important equity infusion into the Food Corporation of India (FCI). These decisions aim to enhance access to quality higher education and strengthen food security in India.
- The PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme is a new initiative with a budget of Rs 3,600 crore over five years, starting from the fiscal year 2024-25. It targets meritorious students in both private and public Quality Higher Education Institutions (QHEIs). The scheme is rooted in the National Education Policy 2020.

**PM-YASASVI SCHEME -**

- The PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM-YASASVI) was launched by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. This scheme aims to uplift students from Other Backward Classes (OBC), Economically Backward Classes (EBC), and Denotified Tribes (DNT).
- It provides access to quality education, addresses financial barriers, and supports academic growth.
- PM-YASASVI consolidates previous scholarship initiatives. It includes the Dr. Ambedkar Post-Matric Scholarship for EBCs and the Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for DNTs. These initiatives were merged into PM-YASASVI in 2021-22 to streamline support for disadvantaged students.
- The main goal of PM-YASASVI is to promote educational empowerment. It seeks to help vulnerable groups complete their education. This initiative encourages individual growth and contributes to a more inclusive society.

**AYUSHMAN BHARAT: FREE HEALTH COVERAGE FOR SENIORS 70+ -**

- In a significant expansion of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Ayushman Vaya Vandana Card on October 29, 2024, providing free healthcare coverage to all senior citizens aged 70 and above, irrespective of income.
- This extension, rolled out on Ayurveda Day at the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) in New Delhi, enables seniors to avail free treatment worth up to ₹5 lakh annually at AB PMJAY empaneled hospitals.
- The initiative, however, excludes seniors in Delhi and West Bengal due to non-implementation by these state governments.

DISPUTES RELATED TO INDUS WATER TREATY -

- The Neutral Expert (NE) appointed by the World Bank under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) declared that he is “competent” to adjudicate disputes concerning the Kishanganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).
- This supports India’s stance to exclude the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), reinforcing its diplomatic and legal efforts to assert rights over the Indus waters.

Water Sharing Dispute:

- **Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project:** Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project (HEP) is located on the Kishanganga River (tributary of Jhelum) in J&K. Pakistan objected, claiming that water diversion for power generation violates the IWT.

- **Ratle Hydroelectric Project:** Ratle Hydroelectric Project is a run-of-the-river project on the Chenab River in J&K, Pakistan raised concerns that the dam's design, including the spillway gates, gives India excessive control over river flow.

Dispute Over Resolution Procedure:

- Pakistan objected to the Kishanganga and Ratle projects, initially requesting a NE under the IWT in 2015 but later sought adjudication by the PCA.
- India opposed this, emphasizing the IWT's dispute resolution hierarchy, which prioritizes NE over PCA. In 2022, the World Bank initiated both NE and PCA processes.
- India boycotted the PCA while engaging with the NE, asserting that only the NE has the authority to resolve disputes under the IWT.

What is the Indus Waters Treaty-

- It is a water-sharing agreement between India and Pakistan signed in 1960 under the aegis of the World Bank to divide the waters of the Indus River and its 5 tributaries (Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Jhelum, and Chenab) between the countries.

150 YEARS OF INDIA METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT (IMD) -

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD), established in 1875, is one of the oldest scientific institutions in India dedicated to weather forecasting and disaster preparedness.
- **As it marks its 150th anniversary on January 15, 2025, the IMD continues to play a pivotal role in tracking weather patterns, issuing cyclone warnings, monitoring earthquakes, and studying atmospheric changes.**
- **Ancient Roots:** Early texts like the Upanishads (circa 3000 B.C.) discuss weather phenomena, including cloud formation, rain cycles, and seasons.



- **Modern Meteorology:** Scientific advancements began in the 17th century with the invention of the thermometer, barometer, and gas laws.
- **First Observatory:** Established in 1785 in Kolkata (Calcutta) to conduct weather studies.

EARTH BREACHES 1.5°C LIMIT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 2024 -

- In a landmark event for climate change, 2024 became the first year in recorded history when the mean global temperature exceeded the critical 1.5°C threshold above pre-industrial levels, as reported by the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S).
- **This breach marks a dangerous trajectory for global warming, bringing humanity closer to a point of no return. Climate experts warn that if this trend continues without drastic emission cuts, global temperatures could exceed the 2°C limit by 2050, with devastating consequences for ecosystems, economies, and human livelihoods.**

FLAMINGO FESTIVAL 2025 CONCLUDES IN ANDHRA PRADESH -

- **The three-day Flamingo Festival 2025 in Andhra Pradesh concluded on January 20, 2025, with calls to protect the rich biodiversity of the region, specifically in Pulicat Lake and Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary.**
- The event, which attracted numerous visitors, particularly bird watchers and photographers, was hailed as a major success.
- The closing ceremony saw the participation of Ministers Anam Ramanarayana Reddy and Anagani Satya Prasad, who expressed their gratitude to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for the revival of the festival, which had been dormant for some time.



INDIA INTENSIFIES EFFORTS TO REDUCE SNAKEBITE DEATHS BY 2030 -

- India, which accounts for nearly 50% of global snakebite deaths, has declared snakebite a notifiable disease at the national level.
- **This initiative aims to reduce the high mortality and morbidity rates associated with snakebites, particularly in rural and tribal areas, and aligns with the World Health Organization's (WHO) target of halving global snakebite deaths and injuries by 2030.**
- By mandating reporting of all snakebite cases and deaths, the move enables better surveillance, treatment, and prevention strategies, offering hope to marginalized communities disproportionately affected by this neglected public health issue.

**RATAPANI DECLARED INDIA'S 57TH TIGER RESERVE -**

- India has expanded its tiger conservation footprint with the declaration of Madhya Pradesh's Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary as its 57th tiger reserve. **The creation of these reserves highlights India's commitment to protecting its tiger population, which constitutes over 70% of the global wild tiger population.**
- Tiger reserves are specially designated areas established under the Project Tiger initiative of 1973 to conserve tigers and their habitats. Each reserve comprises:
 - Core Areas: Legally designated as national parks or sanctuaries, where human activity is minimal.
 - Buffer Zones: A mix of forest and non-forest land maintained as a transition zone for both wildlife and human activities.

**UNESCO ALERTS: RISING OCEAN TEMPERATURES THREATEN MARINE LIFE -**

- A recent UNESCO report marks the risks faced by fish species in tropical and subtropical regions.
- **If greenhouse gas emissions continue at current levels, temperatures may rise by 4.4°C by the century's end, termed SSP 8.5, which could push many fish species beyond their heat tolerance limits.**

**MOLDOVA JOINS INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE -**

- Moldova has officially joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA), signalling its commitment to renewable energy and sustainability.
- **The ISA Framework Agreement was signed in New Delhi by India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister Mihai Popșoi. Moldova's inclusion comes after Armenia became the 104th full member last month, marking the continued global expansion of the ISA.**
- Headquartered in India, ISA unites countries to overcome challenges in solar energy financing, technology, and scalability, aiming to mobilize over USD 1,000 billion in investments by 2030.



REPORTS & INDICES

INDIA RANKS 4TH IN GLOBAL FIREPOWER INDEX 2025 -

- India has been consistently ranked as the fourth most powerful military in the world, according to the Global Firepower Index 2025. This ranking underscores India's significant military capabilities, placing it just behind the United States, Russia, and China.
- The Global Firepower Index ranks 145 countries based on their conventional military strength across land, sea, and air. It evaluates over 60 factors, including manpower, natural resources, finance, and geography, without considering nuclear capabilities.
- In the 2025 edition of the Global Firepower Index, India maintains its position at number four, with a score of 0.1184. The index evaluates the military strength of 145 countries based on over 60 parameters, including manpower, natural resources, finance, and geography. A score of 0.0000 represents an ideal military strength, which no country possesses.



The top ten countries in the 2025 ranking are:

- United States of America – Score: 0.0744
- Russia – Score: 0.0788
- China – Score: 0.0788
- India – Score: 0.1184
- South Korea – Score: 0.1656
- United Kingdom – Score: 0.1785
- France – Score: 0.1878
- Japan – Score: 0.1839
- Turkey – Score: 0.1902
- Italy – Score: 0.2164

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KUMBH MELA AND MAHAKUMBH MELA -

- The Kumbh Mela and Mahakumbh Mela are two of the largest religious gatherings in India, attracting millions of devotees. Both events hold immense

significance in Hinduism, where people gather to bathe in holy rivers to cleanse their sins.

- However, they differ in terms of their frequency, spiritual importance and scale. While the Kumbh Mela is held every 3 years, the Mahakumbha Mela takes place once every 12 years.
- Kumbh Mela is a religious festival held every three years in four holy cities of India: Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik and Prayagraj. During this event, devotees take a dip in sacred rivers like the Ganges, Shipra, Godavari and the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati rivers in Prayagraj. People believe that this act cleanses sins and brings spiritual renewal.



HARYANA'S DECLINING SEX RATIO AT BIRTH -

- In 2024, Haryana reported a concerning drop in its sex ratio at birth, reaching an eight-year low of 910 girls for every 1,000 boys. This figure has alarmed activists and civil society members, despite government officials describing it as a minor fluctuation.
- The sex ratio is a critical indicator of gender equality and reflects the status of women in society. Nationally, the sex ratio at birth in India was recorded at 929 in the National Health and Family Survey-5 (NFHS-5) published in 2021.

INDIA'S RANKING IN THE HENLEY PASSPORT INDEX 2025 -

- India's ranking in the Henley Passport Index for 2025 has dropped to 85th, five points lower than its 80th position in 2024.
- The index, based on data from the International Air Transport Authority (IATA), is a globally recognized tool for assessing passport mobility. Singapore retains its top spot for the second consecutive year, while

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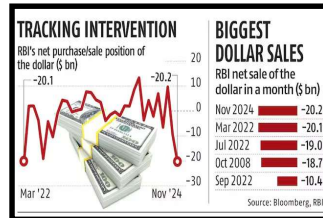
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Japan ranks second after holding the top position from 2018-2023.

RBI'S RECORD FOREX INTERVENTION IN NOVEMBER 2024 -

• In November 2024, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) sold a record \$20.2 billion in the foreign exchange market to stabilize the rupee amid significant foreign portfolio investor (FPI) outflows.



• **This intervention increased the RBI's net short position in the forward market to \$58.9 billion by the end of the month, up from \$49.18 billion in October.**

2025 AS INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF GLACIERS 'PRESERVATION -

• The United Nations will observe 2025 as the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation, with 21st March marked annually as World Day for Glaciers starting in 2025.



• **Glaciers are large, slow-moving masses of ice formed from compacted snow over centuries. They form on land and move due to gravity, slowly moving downward.**

• **Historical Context:** Most glaciers today are remnants of the massive ice sheets that covered Earth during the Ice Age (around 10,000 years ago).

• During Earth's history, there have been glacial periods (or ice ages) when glaciers formed and interglacial periods when glaciers melted.

• **Global Distribution:** Most glaciers are found in polar regions such as Greenland, the Canadian Arctic, and Antarctica because of low solar insolation received in higher latitudes.

• Tropical glaciers exist in mountain ranges near the Equator, like the Andes in South America at high altitudes. Approximately 2% of the Earth's water is stored in glaciers

LIST OF 43 UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN INDIA 2024 (UPDATED) -

• As of December 2024, there are 43 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India with the recent inclusion of "Moidams – the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty from Assam. "The Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala, the famed Hoysala temples of Belur, Halebid, and Somananthpura in Karnataka have been added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage list.

• This inclusion marks the 42nd UNESCO World Heritage Site in India and comes just a day after Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan also received this distinguished recognition. The decision to include Santiniketan in the prestigious list was made during the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Saudi Arabia, reaffirming its importance on the global stage.

INDIA'S POPULATION TO PEAK AT 1.7 BILLION BY 2060S BEFORE DECLINING: UN REPORT -

• **India's population is projected to peak at 1.7 billion in the early 2060s before declining by 12%, as predicted by the United Nations' World Population Prospects 2024 report.** Despite the decline, India will remain the world's most populous country throughout the 21st century.

• **India's population, currently estimated at 1.45 billion, is expected to increase to 1.69 billion by 2054, peaking at about 1.7 billion in the early 2060s.** A decline of 12% is projected, bringing the population to around 1.5 billion by 2100.

• **India surpassed China as the world's most populous nation last year and will retain this status throughout the century.** By the end of the century, India's population will still significantly exceed that of any other country.

• China's population, currently at 1.41 billion, is projected to decline to 1.21 billion by 2054 and further to 633 million by 2100 due to a low fertility rate of around one birth per woman

DEFENCE

INDIA-U.S. COLLABORATION ON SONOBUOY PRODUCTION FOR INDIAN NAVY -

- India and the U.S. have entered into a significant partnership for co-producing U.S. sonobuoys to enhance undersea domain awareness (UDA) for the Indian Navy.



- This move is part of a broader collaboration aimed at improving naval capabilities and tracking submarines in the deep seas, in response to the growing Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).**
- Ultra Marine (UM), a U.S.-based leader in undersea warfare technology, and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) will jointly manufacture sonobuoys, ensuring interoperability between the U.S. and Indian navies, as well as allied nations like Australia and Japan.

INDIA UNVEILS 'UTKASH' AS SECOND MULTI-PURPOSE VESSEL -

- On January 13, 2025, the second of two Multi-Purpose Vessels (MPVs) built by M/s L&T Shipyard for the Indian Navy was launched at the L&T Shipyard in Kattupalli, Chennai.
- The event was graced by Rajesh Kumar Singh, Defence Secretary, along with senior officials from the Indian Navy and L&T Shipyard. The vessel, named 'Utkarsh', signifies a leap forward in India's indigenous shipbuilding capabilities and aligns with the country's broader vision of self-reliance in defense manufacturing.**



COMMISSIONING OF NILGIRI, SURAT AND VAGHSHEER -

- The Indian Navy announced the commissioning of Nilgiri, Surat, and Vaghsheer, built at Mazagon Dock

Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), on 15th January 2025, at Mumbai.

- Nilgiri:** The lead ship of Project 17A, represents a major upgrade over the Shivalik-class frigates, featuring advanced stealth technology and state-of-the-art weapon systems to strengthen naval defense.
- Surat:** The fourth and final destroyer under Project 15B, is an enhanced version of the Kolkata-class destroyers, equipped with long-range missiles and indigenous weapons systems.
- Project 15B is an initiative by the Indian Navy to design and construct four advanced guided-missile destroyers
- Vaghsheer:** The sixth submarine in the Scorpene-class (Project 75), is one of the quietest diesel-electric submarines globally, capable of anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare, surveillance, and special operations.
- Project-75 (India) aims to build 18 conventional submarines and six nuclear-powered submarines for the Indian Navy.



INDIA TESTS 'BHARGAVASTRA' MICRO-MISSILE FOR COUNTERING DRONE SWARMS -

- India has successfully tested its first indigenous micro-missile system, 'Bhargavastra,' designed to counter swarm drone threats. This development marks a significant milestone in enhancing the nation's defense capabilities against emerging aerial threats.



Key Features of the Bhargavastra Micro-Missile System

- Detection and Neutralization:** Capable of detecting small aerial vehicles at distances exceeding 6 km and neutralizing them using guided micro munitions.
- Simultaneous Launch Capability:** Designed to launch over 64 micro missiles simultaneously, enabling effective countermeasures against swarm formations.

- **Mobile Platform:** Mounted on a mobile platform for rapid deployment across diverse terrains, including high-altitude regions.
- **Versatile Design:** Engineered to operate across varied terrains, meeting specific requirements of the Indian military.

HARIMAU SHAKTI 2024: INDIA-MALAYSIA MILITARY DRILL -

- The **4th edition of the India-Malaysia Joint Military Exercise, HARIMAU SHAKTI, commenced on December 2, 2024**, at Bentong Camp, Pahang district, Malaysia.
- This exercise, scheduled to run until December 15, 2024, is an annual event designed to enhance the military cooperation between the two nations.
- The exercise will focus on improving the ability of both forces to undertake joint counterinsurgency operations in jungle terrain, aligned with the United Nations Chapter VII Mandate.

ADANI DEFENCE DELIVERS 2ND DRISHTI-10 DRONE TO INDIAN NAVY FOR MARITIME SECURITY -

- Adani Defence has delivered the second Drishti-10 Starliner surveillance drone to the Indian Navy, enhancing the nation's maritime capabilities. This marks a significant leap in India's indigenous defence technology, underscoring the country's focus on self-reliance.
- **The Drishti-10 drone is a highly advanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) platform designed to monitor vast maritime territories, mitigate piracy, and provide over-the-horizon surveillance with unmatched endurance.**
- The Drishti-10 Starliner drone, manufactured at Adani Defence's Hyderabad facility, offers a 36-hour endurance and a 450 kg payload capacity. It is the only all-weather military UAV certified with NATO's STANAG 4671 for airworthiness, allowing it to operate in both segregated



and unsegregated airspace. The platform supports persistent multi-payload, fully autonomous capabilities and satellite communication-based operations, crucial for monitoring maritime threats.

INS NIRDESHAK: INDIAN NAVY'S NEW SURVEY SHIP COMMISSIONED -

- The Indian Navy is set to commission INS Nirdeshak, a new survey ship, on December 18, 2024, at the Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam. This event, with Hon'ble Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth as the Chief Guest, signifies a major leap in India's naval capabilities.
- **The vessel, constructed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) in Kolkata, is the second ship under the Survey Vessel (Large) Project. INS Nirdeshak will enhance India's maritime presence, especially in the Indian Ocean Region, and will continue the legacy of the original Nirdeshak, which served the Navy for 32 years before being decommissioned in 2014.**



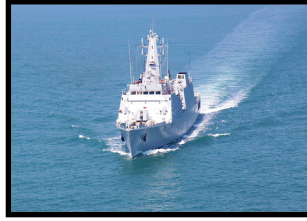
INDIA-RUSSIA DEFENSE PARTNERSHIP SET TO SIGN \$4B RADAR SYSTEM -

- **India is on the verge of finalizing a significant USD 4 billion defence agreement with Russia to acquire an advanced long-range early warning radar system.**
- This cutting-edge system, part of Russia's Voronezh radar series, promises to transform India's missile detection and air defence capabilities, enhancing national security and fostering defence manufacturing under the "Make in India" initiative.



SLINEX 2024: STRENGTHENING SRI LANKA-INDIA NAVAL TIES -

- The Sri Lanka-India Naval Exercise (SLINEX) is a significant annual event that fosters maritime cooperation between the two nations. Initiated in 2005, SLINEX has grown in scope and importance over the years, strengthening the bilateral relationship between India and Sri Lanka.
- The 2024 edition of SLINEX will be held from December 17 to December 20, 2024, at Visakhapatnam under the auspices of the Eastern Naval Command. The exercise will be conducted in two phases: the Harbour Phase and the Sea Phase, focusing on enhancing interoperability, strengthening mutual understanding, and promoting regional maritime security.

**INDIA-CHINA LAC AGREEMENT -**

- India recently announced a pivotal agreement regarding patrolling along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China. This development is seen as a potential stepping stone toward normalizing relations between the two nations following tensions that escalated in 2020.
- The pact entails a structured approach to disengagement and resolution of the long-standing border disputes, specifically in areas like the Depsang Plains and Demchok.
- The agreement allows both nations to restore mutual patrolling rights in the Depsang Plains and the Demchok region, areas where disputes existed even before the 2020 border incursions. Indian troops will



now be permitted to patrol up to Patrolling Points (PP) 10 to 13 in the Depsang Plains and the Charding Nullah in Demchok.

- Notably, areas where previous disengagements occurred—such as Galwan Valley, Pangong Tso, and Gogra-Hot Springs—are explicitly excluded from renegotiation.

INDIA ROLLS OUT ITS FIRST MADE-IN-INDIA C295 AIRCRAFT BY SEPTEMBER 2026 -

- India is set to mark a significant milestone in its aerospace industry with the rollout of the first locally assembled C295 military transport aircraft from the Vadodara facility in September 2026.
- This initiative, part of the “Make in India” campaign, represents a robust collaboration between Airbus and Tata Advanced Systems. The facility was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, highlighting the deepening defense ties between India and Spain.
- The Vadodara final assembly line (FAL) will produce over 85% of the C295 aircraft components domestically, excluding the engines. The project is expected to create approximately 10,000 jobs across the country, with 18,000 components being manufactured indigenously.
- PM Modi emphasized that the factory symbolizes the new work culture in India, showcasing the rapid progress in the country’s manufacturing capabilities. “Just two years ago, the construction of the factory had started, and now it is ready for aircraft production,” he stated.



SPORTS

INDIA TO HOST FIDE CHESS WORLD CUP 2025 -

- The FIDE Chess World Cup 2025 is scheduled to take place from October 31 to November 27, 2025. This tournament is of paramount importance as it features a knockout format with over 200 players from around the world. It also serves as a vital gateway to the Candidates Tournament, offering three qualification spots.
- These spots are highly coveted as the Candidates Tournament determines who will challenge the reigning World Chess Champion.
- Originally, FIDE, the international chess governing body, had listed India as the host nation in its 2025 calendar. However, the announcement was retracted on Monday, with a “to be announced” status replacing it.



DJOKOVIC BREAKS FEDERER'S RECORD FOR GRAND SLAM MATCH COUNT -

- Novak Djokovic, one of tennis' greatest players, added another milestone to his illustrious career on January 17, 2025, by breaking a tie with Roger Federer for the most Grand Slam matches played in tennis history.
- The Serbian tennis star achieved his 430th Grand Slam match during the second round of the Australian Open, where he won a challenging match against Portuguese qualifier Jaime Faria. This victory added to Djokovic's growing list of records, highlighting his unparalleled success in tennis.



INDIA WINS INAUGURAL KHO KHO WORLD CUP 2025 -

- India emerged as the champions of the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup 2025, clinching both the men's and

women's Kho Kho World champions titles by defeating Nepal in the finals.

- **Kho Kho World Cup 2025:** The tournament was backed by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), it included group stages and knockouts for both divisions (men's and women's).
- **Kho Kho's Historical Significance:** It is one of India's oldest traditional tag games, believed to have evolved from the Chakravayuha, a war formation in the Mahabharata, resembling a defensive tactic similar to Kho Kho's ring play.
- Experts believe that Kho Kho originated in Maharashtra, and was initially played on chariots. The modern foot version emerged in 1914 during World War I, with Pune's Deccan Gymkhana Club formalizing its rules and structure.
- A Kho Kho team consists of 9 active players, with 3 substitutes available. Players alternate between chasing, defending, and tagging opponents.

KHELO INDIA WINTER GAMES 2025 LEH AND GULMARG ANNOUNCED AS HOSTS

- The Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) have emerged as a premier event in India's sporting calendar, promoting winter sports and identifying talent for international competitions.
- The 2025 edition promises to continue this tradition with thrilling ice and snow events hosted in the Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir. With a strong emphasis on fostering young talent and promoting winter sports culture, the KIWG serves as a vital platform for aspiring athletes, especially from remote Himalayan regions.
- **Ladakh (Ice Events):** January 23 to 27, 2025.
- **Jammu & Kashmir (Snow Events):** February 22 to 25, 2025.

FIFA WORLD CUP HOSTS UNVEILED FOR 2030, 2034 -

- FIFA has officially announced the hosts for the 2030 and 2034 Men's Football World Cups. Spain, Portugal, and Morocco will jointly host the 2030 tournament, with additional matches in Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay to commemorate the centenary of the competition.
- **Saudi Arabia has been chosen to host the 2034 tournament. These decisions were confirmed during an Extraordinary FIFA Congress meeting, with votes cast by FIFA's 211 member associations. The process has sparked mixed reactions, including support, abstentions, and criticisms of the bidding process.**

GUKESH SHATTERS RECORDS TO BECOME YOUNGEST WORLD CHAMPION -

- Dommaraju Gukesh's rise to becoming the youngest chess world champion is a story of relentless ambition, focus, and resilience. At the age of 18, Gukesh defeated reigning champion Ding Liren in a grueling three-week-long contest in Singapore, surpassing Garry Kasparov's record as the youngest chess world champion in history.
- His journey from a young boy declaring his ambition to this historic feat showcases extraordinary dedication and talent.
- **Champion:** D Gukesh of India, youngest world champion at age 18.
- **Defending Champion:** Ding Liren of China, who won the title in 2023.
- **Venue:** Singapore.
- **Format:** 14-round "classical" chess event with a prize fund of \$2.5 million.
- **Final Score:** Gukesh – 7.5, Ding – 6.5.
- **Decisive Game:** Gukesh, playing with black pieces, won the 14th game after Ding's critical blunder.

**INDIA MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM MOVES TO 5TH IN LATEST FIH RANKINGS FOR 2025 -**

- The Indian men's hockey team has clinched the fifth spot in the latest FIH world rankings, following a stellar performance at the 2024 Paris Olympics, where they secured back-to-back Olympic medals for the first time since 1972. This marks a significant achievement in Indian hockey, which has a rich history of success in the sport.
- The Netherlands retains the top position with 3,267 points, continuing their dominance after winning the gold medal at the Paris 2024 Olympics, the FIH Hockey Pro League, and EuroHockey Championship in 2023.
- **England (3139) and Belgium (3124) follow in second and third, respectively, while India (2955) and Australia (2814) occupy the fourth and fifth spots.**

**DELHI TO HOST 2025 PARA ATHLETICS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS -**

- India is set to host the 2025 Para Athletics World Championships, marking a historic moment for the country as it becomes the first time this prestigious event will be held in India.
- **The competition is scheduled to take place between September 26 and October 5, 2025, at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi. This event will be the 12th edition of the Para Athletics World Championships and the fourth time it is being held in Asia.**
- More than 1,000 athletes from over 100 nations are expected to participate in this landmark event, which will also serve as a critical qualifier for the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympic Games.

INDIA TO HOST ISSF JUNIOR WORLD CUP 2025 -

- India has been announced as the host of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Junior World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun 2025.

- This prestigious event highlights India's growing reputation as a global hub for shooting sports.
- It marks the ninth top-level shooting championship hosted by the country over the past decade and adds another accolade to the National Rifle Association of India's (NRAI) commendable track record.



INDIA CLINCHES WOMEN'S U19 T20 ASIA CUP TITLE -

- India clinched the inaugural U10 Women's Asia cup T20 title by defeating Bangladesh by 41 runs in the final held at the Bayuemas Oval, Kuala Lumpur on December 22, 2024.
- The victory was powered by a stellar half century from Gongadi Trisha and an impressive bowling performance, highlighting India's dominance in the tournament.

BIHAR TO HOST KHELO INDIA YOUTH GAMES AND PARA GAMES IN 2025 -

- In a landmark development, Bihar will host the prestigious Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) and the Khelo India Para Games (KIPG) in April 2025, showcasing the state's growing capabilities in hosting major sporting events.
- This follows the successful organization of the Women's Asian Champions Trophy in Rajgir, further cementing Bihar's reputation in the sports arena.
- The announcement was made by Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, who emphasized the importance of sports in achieving the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

INDIA'S SPORTS INDUSTRY IS EXPECTED TO GROW TO \$130 BILLION BY 2030 -

- A recent report predicts that India's sports sector could grow to \$130 billion by 2030 at an annual rate of 14 percent, which is almost double the growth of India's GDP, driven by increased government investments.
- A shift towards a multi-sport culture is also evident. Furthermore, the rise of digital platforms is reshaping how fans engage with sports.
- The sports sector has the potential to create 10.5 million jobs by 2030. It could also generate \$21 billion in indirect tax revenue. This economic boost will benefit various industries linked to sports.
- The growing interest in sports will stimulate demand for sports goods and services. As a result, a thriving ecosystem will emerge, enhancing overall economic growth.



NADA SUSPENDS BAJRANG PUNIA FOR FOUR YEARS OVER DOPING VIOLATION -

- In a significant development, the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) has imposed a four-year suspension on Olympic bronze medallist Bajrang Punia for violating the anti-doping code.
- The suspension follows his refusal to provide a urine sample for a dope test during selection trials for the national wrestling team on March 10, 2024.
- This decision, which extends beyond NADA's initial provisional suspension in April 2024, has barred him from competitive wrestling and coaching opportunities abroad.

IMPORTANT MCQ FOR COMPETITIVE EXAMS

- Q1. What is the name of India's first indigenous micro-missile system designed to counter swarm drones ?
a) Bhargavastra b) Agni
c) Vayu d) Saryu
- Q2. Where has the first astronomical observatory of Eastern India been inaugurated ?
a) Darjeeling b) Purulia
c) Kolkata d) Howrah
- Q3. What is the name of the first orbital rocket launched by Jeff Bezos's company Blue Origin ?
a) New Shepard b) Falcon Heavy
c) New Glenn d) Starship
- Q4. Which cricket team has won the 2024-25 Vijay Hazare Trophy ?
a) Karnataka b) Tamil Nadu
c) Himachal Pradesh d) Rajasthan
- Q5. Palamu Tiger Reserve is located in which state ?
a) Maharashtra b) Karnataka
c) Bihar d) Jharkhand
- Q6. Kalaripayattu is the traditional martial art of which state ?
a) Tamil Nadu b) Kerala
c) Karnataka d) Maharashtra
- Q7. Neduntheevu Island, that was recently seen in news, is located in which country ?
a) Bangladesh b) Myanmar
c) Sri Lanka d) Indonesia
- Q8. Project Veer Gatha 4.0 a joint initiative of which ministries ?
a) Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Youth Affairs
b) Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Education
c) Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Defence
d) Ministry of Education and Ministry of Sports
- Q9. Joseph Aoun has been elected as president of which country ?
a) Oman b) Lebanon
c) Qatar d) Yemen
- Q10. Diego Garcia Island, that was recently seen in news, is located in which ocean ?
a) Indian Ocean b) Atlantic Ocean
c) Pacific Ocean d) Arctic Ocean
- Q11. Nag Mk 2 Missile is developed by which organization?
a) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
b) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
c) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
d) Bharat Dynamics Limited
- Q12. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 6.5 km Z-Morh tunnel in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district. What is the expenditure incurred for the construction of the Z-Morh tunnel ?
a) ₹2,000 crore b) ₹2,500 crore
c) ₹2,700 crore d) ₹3,000 crore
- Q13. Who has been appointed Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) recently ?
a) Gyanendra Pratap Singh b) Akhilesh Sinha
c) Deepak Kumar d) Ravideep Singh
- Q14. National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) works under which ministry ?
a) Ministry of Defence
b) Ministry of Home Affairs
c) Ministry of Jal Shakti
d) Ministry of External Affairs
- Q15. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 'Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025', the largest mobility expo in the country, at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. Which organization is coordinating the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 ?
a) Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)
b) Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)
c) Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC)
d) National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC)

- Q16. What was the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based retail inflation in December 2024 as reported by MoSPI ?
a) 5.00% b) 5.22% c) 5.48% d) 5.76%
- Q17. The first edition of the Kho Kho World Cup started at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi on 13 January 2025. Who is leading the Indian men's team in the Kho Kho World Cup 2025 ?
a) Pratik Waikar b) Rahul Sharma
c) Rohit Kumar d) Arvind Singh
- Q18. Nicolás Maduro was recently sworn in as the President of which country ?
a) Colombia b) Brazil
c) Argentina d) Venezuela
- Q19. What is the name of the major military exercise conducted by the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force to enhance the operational capabilities of the Indian Armed Forces ?
a) Exercise Shatrujeet b) Exercise Vayu Shakti
c) Exercise Devil Strike d) Exercise Yudh Abhyas
- Q20. Who has been appointed as the Secretary of the Department of Higher Education under the Ministry of Education ?
a) Rajesh Kumar b) Alok Sharma
c) Vineet Joshi d) Anil Chauhan
- Q21. The Gaan Ngai festival commemorates the end of the harvest season and is celebrated in Manipur. Which community celebrates the Gaan Ngai festival in Manipur?
a) Meitei b) Kuki
c) Kabui/Rongmei Naga d) Tangkhul
- Q22. Flamingo Festival 2025 is celebrated in which state ?
a) Odisha b) Tamil Nadu
c) Kerala d) Andhra Pradesh
- Q23. Kalpeni Island, which was seen in news, is located in which state/UT ?
a) Lakshadweep b) Andaman and Nicobar
c) Tamil Nadu d) Puducherry
- Q24. NRI or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated every year on 9th January to mark the contribution of overseas Indian community to the development of India. Where was the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention held in 2025 ?
a) New Delhi b) Varanasi
c) Ahmedabad d) Bhubaneswar
- Q25. Who has been invited as the chief guest for India's 2025 Republic Day parade ?
a) Joko Widodo b) Prabowo Subianto
c) Lee Hsien Loong d) Rodrigo Duterte
- Q26. What is the projected GDP growth rate for India in the fiscal year 2024-25 as per the first advance estimates?
a) 7.0% b) 6.4% c) 6.6% d) 5.8%
- Q27. Who has been appointed as the Secretary, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance ?
a) Arunish Chawla b) Tuhin Kanta Pandey
c) Rajesh Kumar d) Parul Tyagi
- Q28. Who has been appointed as the new space secretary and chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation ?
a) Prahlad Chandra Agrawal b) Anil Bhardwaj
c) V Narayanan d) Shiv Prasad
- Q29. Which country has officially joined the BRICS as a full member in January 2025 ?
a) Singapore b) Mauritius
c) Indonesia d) Malaysia
- Q30. What is the rank of India in terms of the largest metro network in the world ?
a) First b) Second c) Third d) Fourth
- Q31. Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya urged corporates to adopt one sport during the first-ever corporate round-table conference in New Delhi. What is the primary objective behind the Union Minister's initiative to involve corporates in sports ?
a) To promote sports tourism in India
b) To strengthen the Indian sports ecosystem for hosting the 2036 Olympic Games
c) To launch a new national sports league
d) To encourage local sports events only
- Q32. Google-backed Indian space start-up company Pixxel has become the first Indian private company to launch its commercial satellite constellation named Firefly

- on board a Space X rocket. Which rocket was used to launch Pixxel's Firefly satellite constellation ?
a) PSLV-C55 b) GSLV Mk III
c) Falcon 9 d) New Shepard
- Q33. Which organization approved the 2nd Living drug, Qartemi, for treating blood cancer ?
a) Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)
b) Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)
c) All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi
d) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- Q34. Which city is the host of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention 2025 ?
a) Chennai b) Bhopal
c) Bhubaneswar d) Hyderabad
- Q35. Which institute has recently developed bacteria to combat soil pollution and boost agriculture ?
a) IIT Kanpur b) IIT Madras
c) IIT Bombay d) IIT Guwahati
- Q36. What is "INS Surat" that was recently seen in news ?
a) Fleet tanker
b) Kamorta-class corvettes
c) Nuclear powered aircraft carrier
d) Stealth Destroyer
- Q37. Which Indian state is the host of 1st International Olympic Research Conference ?
a) Kerala b) Maharashtra
c) Gujarat d) Karnataka
- Q38. What rank does India hold among the world's largest coffee producer, according to the Commerce Ministry?
a) Fifth b) Sixth c) Seventh d) Eighth
- Q39. Which northeastern states celebrate their Statehood Day on January 21 ?
a) Assam, Meghalaya, and Tripura
b) Manipur, Meghalaya, and Tripura
c) Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Mizoram
d) Meghalaya, Assam, and Nagaland
- Q40. The National Youth Day is celebrated on 12th January every year in commemoration of which Indian leader ?
a) Bhagat Singh b) Chandra Shekhar Azad
c) APJ Abdul Kalam d) Swami Vivekananda
- Q41. According to a United Nations report, by what percentage is the Indian economy expected to expand in 2025 ?
a) 5.6% b) 6.6% c) 7.2% d) 5.0%
- Q42. What is the name of the new food delivery app launched by Swiggy, It is a 15-minute food delivery app offering quick snacks and meals, similar to Zepto's Zepto Cafe ?
a) Swiggy Express b) Snacc by Swiggy
c) Swiggy Snack d) Swiggy Dash
- Q43. Where was the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025 organized ?
a) Assam and Arunachal Pradesh
b) Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir
c) New Delhi
d) Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh
- Q44. The Mannan community is primarily found in which state ?
a) Maharashtra b) Tamil Nadu
c) Kerala d) Karnataka
- Q45. What is the rank of India in the Global Firepower Index 2025 ?
a) First b) Second
c) Third d) Fourth
- Q46. Where is the headquarters of IRDAI ?
a) Mumbai b) Hyderabad
c) Chennai d) Kolkata
- Q47. Which among these is the National Heritage Animal of India ?
a) Elephant b) Tiger
c) Giraffe d) Cow
- Q48. What is the capital of Kyrgyzstan ?
a) Vilnius b) Tripoli
c) Beirut d) Bishkek
- Q49. Which of the following Indian state known as 'Land of Festivals' ?
a) Arunachal Pradesh b) West Bengal
c) Nagaland d) Mizoram

- Q50. Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) Scheme is an initiative of which ministry?
a) Ministry of Women and Child Development
b) Ministry of Education
c) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
d) Ministry of Agriculture
- Q51. Which word has been selected as Oxford Word of the Year 2024 ?
a) Brain Rot
b) Dumpster
c) Heat dome
d) Neuro spicy
- Q52. Which countries will jointly host the 2030 FIFA World Cup ?
a) Spain, Portugal, and Morocco
b) Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Argentina
c) Spain, France, and Italy
d) Portugal, Argentina, and Brazil
- Q53. Read the statements below carefully and choose the correct option:
Statements:
(a) Sanjay Malhotra has been appointed as the 26th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and will assume office on 11 December 2024.
(b) The tenure of an RBI Governor or Deputy Governor is fixed at five years without the possibility of reappointment.
(c) The Central Government appoints the RBI Governor and Deputy Governors under the provisions of the RBI Act of 1934.
a) Only statement (a) is correct.
b) Only statements (a) and (c) are correct.
c) Only statements (b) and (c) are correct.
d) All statements (a), (b), and (c) are correct.
- Q54. World Human Rights Day is observed annually on December 10. What is the theme for World Human Rights Day 2024 ?
a) Dignity for All
b) Equality and Justice for Future Generations
c) Human Rights in Action
d) Our Rights, Our Future
- Q55. Whose death anniversary is commemorated on Mahaparinirvan Diwas ?
a) Mahatma Gandhi
b) Jawaharlal Nehru
c) Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar
d) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
- Q56. Francois Bayrou has been appointed as the new prime minister of which country ?
a) France
b) Ireland
c) Cyprus
d) Denmark
- Q57. What is the name of the chatbot launched by the Prime Minister to assist devotees during Mahakumbh Mela 2025 ?
a) Prayagraj Bot
b) Kumbh Sahayak
c) MelaBot
d) Sangam
- Q58. Which state government has launched the Indira Gandhi Sukh Shiksha Yojana ?
a) Himachal Pradesh
b) Gujarat
c) Punjab
d) Odisha
- Q59. Which Indian temple was selected by UNESCO for the 2023 Award of Distinction for its conservation ?
a) Abathsahayeswarar Temple
b) Mahabodhi Temple
c) Vrindavan Chandrodaya Temple
d) Kamakhya Temple
- Q60. What is Elon Musk's current net worth according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2024 ?
a) \$400 billion
b) \$447 billion
c) \$500 billion
d) \$357 billion
- Q61. Consider the following points about Legendary tabla maestro Zakir Hussain. How many of the given point(s) is/are CORRECT ?
1. Ustaad Zakir Hussain was born in Mumbai on March 9, 1951.
2. In a career spanning six decades, Hussain won five Grammy Awards.
3. His most recent film 'Monkey Man' was released in 2024.
4. Hussain received the Padma Shri in 1988, Padma Bhushan in 2002, and the Padma Vibhushan in 2023
a) only one
b) only two
c) only three
d) all are correct
- Q62. In case of any clash between the central and state government regarding the laws made on the subjects in the concurrent list :
a) The central law prevails

