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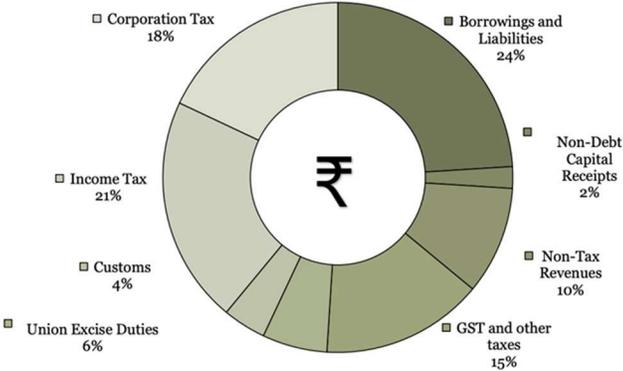


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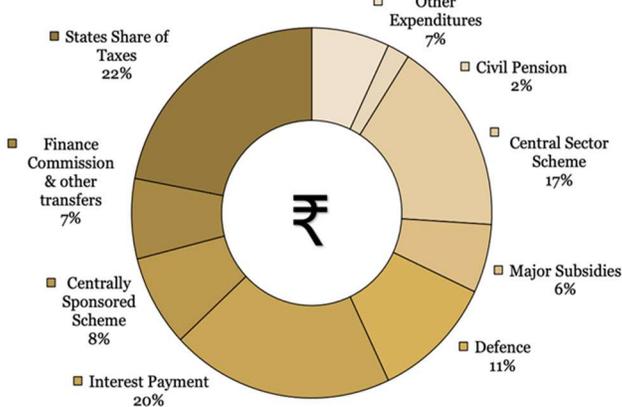


UNION BUDGET 2026-27

Rupee Comes From



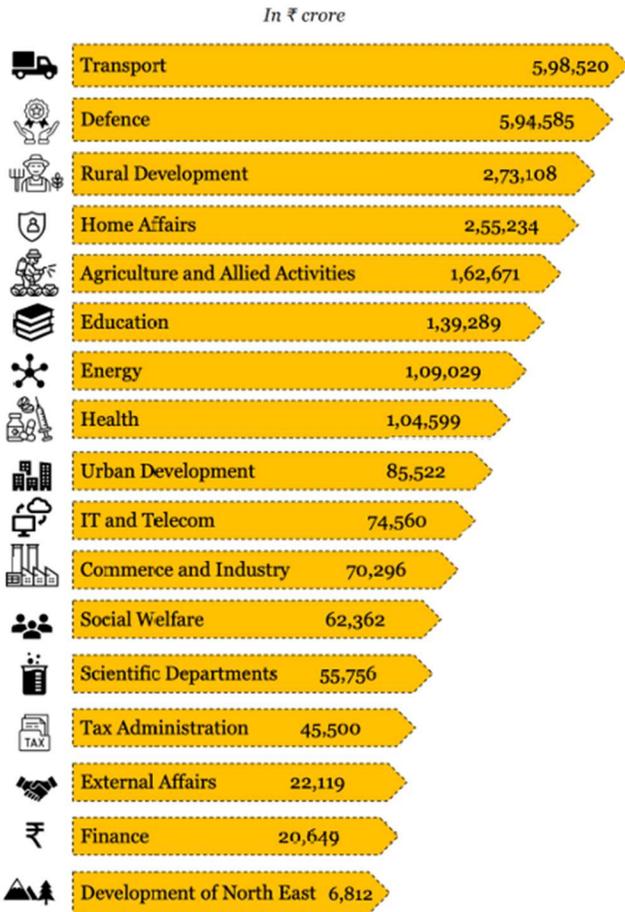
Rupee Goes To



Pillars of Growth and Development



Expenditure of Major Items



NATIONAL

ANDHRA PRADESH TO GET NEW SPACEPORT AT HOPE ISLAND FOR PRIVATE LAUNCHES -

- India's space infrastructure is set to expand further with Andhra Pradesh announcing a new spaceport. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu confirmed that Hope Island will host a launch facility primarily for private missions, marking a significant step in supporting commercial space activities and strengthening India's position in the global space economy.



Why in News?

- The government of Andhra Pradesh has announced plans to establish a new spaceport at Hope Island, aimed mainly at supporting private launch providers. The announcement was made by N. Chandrababu Naidu on January 17, 2026.

Hope Island Spaceport: Key Announcement

- The proposed spaceport at Hope Island is part of Andhra Pradesh's broader Space City initiative.
- Designed primarily for commercial and private launch missions.
- Intended to complement existing national launch facilities.
- Focused on small and medium-lift launch vehicles.
- Although timelines and technical specifications are yet to be released, the announcement signals strong state-level support for India's private space sector.

DELHI LAUNCHES UNIFIED EMERGENCY HELPLINE 112 -

- Delhi is set to overhaul its emergency response framework with the launch of a unified emergency helpline number, 112. Announcing the initiative, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the

move aligns the national capital with the Centre's vision of a single, easily accessible emergency number for all citizens.



Alignment with National Emergency Framework

- The Chief Minister stated that the Ministry of Home Affairs has declared 112 as India's national emergency number. In line with this directive, Delhi will integrate all existing emergency helplines into a single access point. Once operational, residents will no longer need to remember multiple numbers for police, fire or medical emergencies.

SECOND GLOBAL BUDDHIST SUMMIT TO BE HELD IN NEW DELHI -

- The International Buddhist Confederation, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, will organise the second edition of the Global Buddhist Summit on January 24 and 25, 2026. The event will take place at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi and is expected to serve as a major international forum for dialogue on Buddhist perspectives addressing contemporary global challenges.



Theme and Contemporary Relevance

- The 2nd Global Buddhist Summit will be organised under the theme "Collective Wisdom, United Voice, and Mutual Coexistence". At a time marked by rapid social, political, and environmental transformations, the summit aims to highlight the relevance of Buddha Dhamma in responding to conflict, alienation, and uncertainty. The principles of compassion, harmony, and wisdom will be examined as guiding values for peaceful coexistence and shared prosperity.



FINKE RIVER RECOGNISED AS THE WORLD’S OLDEST FLOWING RIVER -

• Rivers have shaped human civilization for thousands of years, but some rivers tell stories far older than humanity itself. Scientists now believe that the Finke River, flowing through the arid heart of Australia, is the oldest river system still surviving on Earth. Geological evidence suggests it has been following the same course for hundreds of millions of years.



Why in News?

• Recent geological studies have reaffirmed that the Finke River of Australia is likely the world’s oldest continuously surviving river system, with origins dating back 300-400 million years, far earlier than most known rivers on Earth.

Ancient Origins in Central Australia

- The Finke River, known as Larapinta to the Indigenous Arrernte people, began flowing long before dinosaurs appeared on Earth.
- It stretches for about 640 kilometres, traversing the Northern Territory and parts of South Australia.
- Its course cuts across some of the oldest rock formations on the planet, making it a natural archive of Earth’s geological evolution and climate history.

BRICS 2026 -

- Recently, India’s External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar formally launched the BRICS 2026 Presidency logo, theme and official website in New Delhi.
- **India officially assumed the BRICS presidency from Brazil on January 1, 2026, marking its fourth term in this role. India had previously held the Chairship in 2012, 2016, and 2021.**



Previous 5 Presidency and Themes

- 2025- Brazil Presidency: “Strengthening Global South Cooperation for More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance.”

- **2024- Russia Presidency:** “Strengthening Multilateralism for Fair Global Development and Security”
- **2023- South Africa Presidency:** “BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Multilateralism”
- **2022- China Presidency:** “Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development”
- **2021- India Presidency:** “BRICS @ 15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation and Consensus”

India’s Key Priorities for BRICS 2026

- **Resilience:** India plans to strengthen cooperation in critical areas like agriculture, health, disaster risk reduction, energy, and supply chains.
- **Innovation:** India will focus on leveraging the role of startups, MSMEs, and emerging technologies in addressing development challenges.
- **Cooperation and Sustainability:** India will emphasize climate action, clean energy, and sustainable development, while ensuring that these efforts are fair and sensitive to national circumstances.

BHARAT ELECTRICITY SUMMIT 2026: INDIA TO HOST GLOBAL POWER SECTOR MEET IN MARCH -

- India is preparing to host a major global event in the power sector with the announce ment of the Bharat Electricity Summit 2026. The four-day conference-cum-exhibition will focus on clean energy transition, resilient electricity systems and global cooperation. The summit reflects India’s growing leadership in the global energy landscape and its shift from energy scarcity to energy abundance.



Why in News?

- The Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 will be held from 19-22 March 2026 at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi, as announced by Union Power Minister Manohar Lal.



About Bharat Electricity Summit 2026

- Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 is a global conference-cum-exhibition for the power and electricity sector.
- It is being organised to showcase India's leadership in the global energy transition while addressing challenges across generation, transmission, distribution, storage and smart consumption.
- The summit will bring together stakeholders from government, industry, academia and civil society, providing a common platform to deliberate on the future of electricity systems and sustainable energy pathways.

TURKMAN GATE -

- Turkman Gate is in the news following a recent demolition drive that turned violent, recalling the Emergency (1975-77) when the area witnessed forced demolitions and coercive sterilisation drives, later examined by the Shah Commission.
- **About:** Turkman Gate was one of the 14 gates of Shahjahanabad, the walled city founded by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in the mid-17th century (around 1650 AD).
- It was named after the Sufi saint Hazrat Shah Turkman Bayabani, whose mausoleum lies in the vicinity, giving the area enduring cultural and religious significance.
- **History:** The significance of Turkman Gate predates Mughal Delhi. The area formed part of an important pre-existing urban and spiritual landscape, reflecting Delhi's role as a major centre of Sufism.
- The saint Shah Turkman Bayabani is traditionally associated with early ascetic Sufi traditions in Delhi, and the proximity of Razia Sultan's grave to his shrine indicates the reverence attached to the site over centuries.
- **Location:** The gate stood along a key arterial route linking Fatehpuri Masjid – Hauz Qazi – the old Yamuna belt, a thoroughfare that was incorporated into Shahjahanabad's urban design. Today, it is located in Old Delhi, near Jama Masjid.



- **Significance:** Like other gates of the walled city, Turkman Gate served both defensive and commercial functions, protecting the city from external threats while regulating the movement of people and goods.
- It survived major historical disruptions, including the Revolt of 1857, colonial-era demolition of city walls, Partition, and subsequent commercial restructuring.

DELHI GOVERNMENT BRINGS FINANCES UNDER RBI FRAMEWORK WITH HISTORIC MOU -

- Delhi Government has signed a significant Memorandum of Understanding with the Reserve Bank of India, marking a major shift in the capital's financial governance. For the first time, Delhi will operate under the RBI's complete banking, cash management and debt management framework, aligning its finances with nationally accepted fiscal practices.



Why in the News?

- The Delhi Government signed an MoU with the Reserve Bank of India to bring Delhi under the RBI's full banking and debt management system. This move allows RBI to act as Delhi's banker, debt manager and financial agent.

What the MoU Provides

- Under the agreement, the RBI will manage Delhi's banking operations, cash flows and public debt.
- The arrangement enables market borrowings through State Development Loans, automatic investment of surplus cash, and access to low-cost liquidity facilities.
- It also introduces professional cash management practices, improving efficiency and reducing borrowing costs.

NATGRID-NPR INTEGRATION -

- National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) has been linked to the National Population Register (NPR), allowing authorised agencies real-time access to family-level demographic data of nearly 119 crore residents,



significantly expanding India's intelligence and investigation architecture.



What are the Key Facts About National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)?

- **NATGRID:** It is a secure, integrated intelligence-sharing platform designed to help law enforcement and security agencies access multiple databases in real time for counter-terrorism and criminal investigations.
- NATGRID was conceived in 2009, in the aftermath of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks (2008), to overcome information silos among security agencies and enable faster, intelligence-led responses.
- It became operational in 2023 and currently processes around 45,000 data access requests per month from authorised agencies.
- **Initially limited to 10 central agencies (IB, RAW, NIA, ED, FIU, NCB, DRI, etc.) had access. It has now been expanded to SP-rank officers of State police, strengthening Centre–State coordination.**
- **Key Tools:** Advanced analytics tools like Gandiva support facial recognition, entity resolution, and multi-source data analysis, allowing investigators to identify suspects using images and family-linked NPR data.
- An Organised Crime Network Database is being developed on NATGRID to enable secure data-sharing between the NIA and State Anti-Terror Squads.
- **Nature of Data Access:** NATGRID allows access to Aadhaar, banking, tax, FASTag, passport, travel, Financial Intelligence Unit and social media data. The information is categorised as non-sensitive, sensitive, and highly sensitive (bank statements, financial and tax data, export-import details).
- **Privacy and Safeguards:** Each query is logged, purpose-based, and subject to senior officer oversight, but data access without a First Information Report (FIR) raises concerns over privacy, proportionality, and due process.

- **Federal Dimension:** States have been encouraged to actively use NATGRID, strengthening Centre–State intelligence coordination.
- NATGRID's architecture is designed to integrate databases connected to nearly 14,000 police stations across the country.

RASHTRA PRERNA STHAL -

- The Prime Minister (PM) inaugurated the Rashtra Prerna Sthal in Lucknow on the 101st birth anniversary of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee, dedicating it to the ideals of unity, self-respect, and service.



- **Multi-Leader Tribute:** The site honors Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay, and Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee with 65-foot bronze statues and a lotus-shaped museum.
- **Atal Bihari Vajpayee:** He served as India's PM 3 times—in 1996, 1998–1999, and 1999–2004—and was awarded the Padma Vibhushan (1994) and the Bharat Ratna (2015). His birth anniversary (25th December) is observed as Good Governance Day.
- **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay:** He was an Indian politician and ideologue of RSS and Bharatiya Jana Sangh, focused on Antyodaya—uplifting the most disadvantaged. His philosophy of Integral Humanism emphasized social justice and self-reliance, and his birth anniversary (25th September) is observed as Antyodaya Diwas.
- **Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee:** He was an Indian politician, the youngest Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University (1934), and founder of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh (1951), which later evolved into the Bharatiya Janata Party. He famously opposed Article 370, arguing one nation cannot have two constitutions, two heads, or two flags, and was known for his sharp parliamentary debates, earning the title The Lion of Parliament.



GOA ANNOUNCES THIRD DISTRICT KUSHAVATI -

- Goa is set to get its third district, named Kushavati, marking a major administrative reorganisation in the coastal state. The announcement was made by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who said the new district would be named after the ancient Kushavati river that flows through parts of the region. At present, Goa has only two districts—North Goa and South Goa.

Composition and Administrative Structure

- The proposed Kushavati district will be carved entirely out of South Goa. It will comprise four talukas—Dharbandora, Quepem, Sanguem and Canacona. Until the required infrastructure is created, all administrative work of the new district will continue to be managed from the South Goa district headquarters. The South Goa collector will temporarily oversee district administration until a full-time collector is appointed.

SUPREME COURT STAYS 2026 UGC EQUITY RULES -

- The Supreme Court of India has stayed the implementation of the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026.



Background of the Regulations

- The UGC notified these new rules, commonly referred to as the 2026 UGC Equity Regulations, on January 13, 2026.
- They aimed to replace the earlier 2012 UGC Regulations on the same subject.
- Key requirement:** All higher education institutions (colleges and universities) must form “equity committees” to handle complaints of discrimination and promote equity/inclusion on campuses.
- The focus was primarily on addressing discrimination (especially caste-based) against marginalized groups like Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and others.

Controversy and Criticisms of the Guidelines

- Petitioners challenged the rules which define “caste-based discrimination” narrowly, only against SC, ST, and OBC members.
- Critics argued this creates a “hierarchy of victimhood” by excluding general category students from protection, even if they face discrimination.
- Concerns raised:** The rules could be misused (e.g., in ragging cases where a general category fresher resists a senior from a reserved category, potentially leading to one-sided complaints, police cases, or ruined futures).
- Broader issues:** The definition was seen as exclusionary, potentially divisive, and not inclusive of all forms of discrimination (e.g., regional, cultural, or against students from Northeast/South India facing bias over language/food/practices).

WHAT IS ECONOMIC SURVEY? WHY IT IS PRESENTED BEFORE THE UNION BUDGET ? -

- The Economic Survey for FY26 is being presented in Parliament by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. This important document works like a yearly report card of the Indian economy. It explains how the economy performed in the past year and what lies ahead in the near and long term. At a time when global uncertainty is high and markets are volatile, the Economic Survey becomes even more meaningful for policymakers, investors and common citizens.



What is Economic Survey?

- The Economic Survey is an official government document that gives a detailed review of India’s economic condition. It analyses major areas such as economic growth, inflation, employment, government finances, agriculture, industry, services and external trade. The survey uses data, trends and expert analysis to explain how the economy has performed and what challenges and opportunities may arise in the future. It acts as a guiding document for understanding India’s economic direction.



INTERNATIONAL

BOARD OF PEACE FOR GAZA -

- Recently, the U.S. President Donald Trump invited India to join the proposed Board of Peace for Gaza.



About the Board of Peace for Gaza

- It is a U.S.-led, invitation-only mechanism proposed under President Trump's Gaza peace plan to oversee post-conflict governance, stabilisation, and reconstruction in Gaza.
- It represents a shift towards ad hoc conflict-management arrangements outside traditional UN-centric frameworks.
- Origin:** It was first proposed in October 2025.
- UN Backing:** UNSC Resolution 2803, which authorised supervision of Gaza's transition till 2027

Objectives

- Supervise Gaza's transitional governance through a technocratic, apolitical Palestinian administration.
- Ensure stabilisation and reconstruction, including management of international funding.
- Oversee arrangements until the Palestinian Authority completes institutional reforms.
- Act as a potential global template for conflict resolution amid UN Security Council paralysis.

Members of the Board

- Chair:** U.S. President Donald Trump.
- Composition:** Select invited countries and global leaders, including figures like former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair.
- Nature:** Non-universal with invitation-based body membership.

INDIA AND UAE SET \$200 BILLION TRADE TARGET BY 2032, DEEPEN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP -

- India and the United Arab Emirates have taken a major step to strengthen their economic and strategic ties. During delegation-level talks in New Delhi, both nations

agreed to double bilateral trade to 200 billion dollars by 2032. The meeting also resulted in multiple agreements across defence, space, energy, infrastructure and cultural cooperation, reflecting the deepening India-UAE partnership.



Why in News?

- India and the UAE agreed to double bilateral trade to \$200 billion by 2032. Several agreements were signed during talks between Narendra Modi and Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in New Delhi.

Trade Expansion and Economic Vision

- The decision to double bilateral trade to \$200 billion by 2032 highlights the growing economic interdependence between India and the UAE.
- The UAE is one of India's largest trading partners and a key gateway to West Asia and Africa.
- This ambitious target builds on the momentum created by recent trade facilitation measures and investment flows.
- Both countries aim to diversify trade beyond traditional sectors by strengthening cooperation in manufacturing, energy, logistics, technology and services, ensuring long-term and resilient economic growth.

FIRST MEDICAL EVACUATION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION -

- In a historic moment for spaceflight, NASA carried out the first-ever medical evacuation from the International Space Station (ISS). On 15 January 2026, the SpaceX Crew-11 mission was cut short after a non-critical medical issue affected one astronaut. The crew safely returned to Earth, marking a major milestone in space healthcare and astronaut safety.



Why in News?

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- NASA successfully completed the first medical evacuation from the ISS on 15 January 2026. The SpaceX Crew-11 mission returned early to ensure advanced medical care on Earth, even though the astronaut's condition was stable in orbit.

What Happened During the Medical Evacuation?

- The medical evacuation involved the early return of SpaceX Crew-11 from the International Space Station.
- The crew had arrived at the ISS on 2 August 2025 and was scheduled for a six-month mission.
- However, following health concerns detected during routine checks in early January 2026, NASA decided to prioritize ground-based diagnostics.
- Although the condition was not critical and manageable onboard, NASA chose an early return as a precaution.
- This decision reflects a shift towards conservative medical risk management in long-duration space missions.

US SECONDARY TARIFFS OVER IRAN TRADE -

- The US President has announced to impose a 25% tariff on any nation trading with Iran, but expected to have minimal direct economic impact on India due to already diminished bilateral trade.



India-Iran Economic Relations

- **Minimal Trade:** India-Iran trade has declined sharply from nearly USD 15 billion pre-2020 to USD 1.6 billion in FY25, making Iran not among India's top 50 trading partners and limiting direct tariff impact.
- **Key Sectors Affected:** Despite low volume, targeted Indian exports like cereals, tea, coffee, spices, animal fodder, and fruits & nuts could face strain.
- **Chabahar Port Investment:** Beyond trade, India has significant strategic investment in Iran's Chabahar Port, a gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asia, involving a 10-year operations contract, USD 120 million grant, and a USD 250 million Line of Credit.

- **Historical Context:** India was a major importer of Iranian crude oil until US sanctions under the Trump administration in 2018 forced a halt, demonstrating prior vulnerability to US secondary sanctions.
- **Global Implications:** The proposed tariffs would primarily affect China, Iran's largest trading partner, which bought over 80% of Iran's shipped oil in 2025 and accounted for USD 22 billion in total Iranian exports in 2022. Iran's other major trade partners include the UAE, Türkiye, and the EU.

UN FLAGS UNADDRESSED VIOLENCE IN SRI LANKA'S CIVIL WAR -

- The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights) has released a report titled "We lost everything – even hope for justice", highlighting conflict-related sexual violence, primarily by security forces, against Tamil civilians during Sri Lanka's decades-long civil war.



What are the Key Highlights of the UN Human Rights Report on Violence in Sri Lanka?

- **Violence During the Civil War:** Sexual violence was systematically used during Sri Lanka's civil war, primarily by State security forces, as a method of intimidation, punishment, and control.
- The violence largely targeted Tamil civilians, including actual or perceived supporters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).
- **Lack of Accountability and Justice:** Even years after the war ended in 2009, survivors continue to be denied justice.
- The absence of investigations, prosecutions, and reparations has created a deep-rooted culture of impunity.
- **Impact on Survivors:** Victims continue to suffer chronic physical injuries, infertility, psychological trauma, and suicidal tendencies. Persistent surveillance, stigma, and intimidation have led to widespread under-reporting.
- **UN Recommendations:** The UN states that conflict-related sexual violence may amount to war crimes or



crimes against humanity.

- It calls on Sri Lanka to acknowledge past abuses, issue a formal apology, implement survivor-centred reforms, establish an independent prosecution mechanism, and ensure psychological and social support for survivors.

PAX SILICA -

- Recently, the U.S. Ambassador to India said it would invite India to join the Pax Silica silicon supply chain.

About Pax Silica

- It is a US-led strategic initiative to build a “secure, prosperous, and innovation-driven silicon supply chain”. The first Pax Silica Summit held in December 2025.
- **Scope:** From critical minerals and energy inputs to advanced manufacturing, semiconductors, AI infrastructure, and logistics.
- **Strategic Objective:** To streamline supply chains and build a trusted technology ecosystem, recognising that “economic security is national security”.
- **Inaugural Members (9):** US, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Australia.



Meaning if the Term “Pax Silica”

- **Etymological Roots:** The term “Pax Silica” is derived from the Latin word pax, which signifies peace, stability, and long-term prosperity, similar to historical concepts such as Pax Romana and Pax Americana.
- **Technological Reference:** The word silica refers to the compound refined into silicon, a critical element used in semiconductor chips.
- **Strategic Symbolism:** The name ‘pax silica’ reflects the idea that control over silicon and chip supply chains will shape global stability and power in the AI era.

ISRAEL WITHDRAWS FROM SEVEN UN AGENCIES OVER ALLEGED BIAS -

- Israel has taken a strong diplomatic step by announcing its immediate exit from seven United Nations agencies. The decision comes amid growing criticism of UN institutions

by Israel and reflects dissatisfaction over alleged political bias and ineffective functioning. The move signals a shift in Israel’s approach towards multilateral forums at a time of global geopolitical uncertainty.



Why in News?

- Israel has decided to withdraw from seven UN agencies and affiliated bodies. The announcement was made on January 14, 2026, by Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar, citing bias and bureaucratic inefficiency.

Trigger Behind the Decision

- The decision followed a comprehensive internal review initiated after the United States exited 66 international organisations.
- Israeli officials said the review assessed whether continued engagement with various UN bodies served national interests.
- According to the foreign ministry, several agencies were found to have repeatedly taken positions hostile to Israel or failed to function in a neutral and effective manner.
- As a result, Israel decided to immediately sever contact with some bodies while reassessing ties with others.

US FREEZES IMMIGRANT VISA PROCESSING FOR 75 COUNTRIES UNDER TRUMP ADMINISTRATION -

- In a major tightening of immigration rules, the United States has announced a blanket suspension on immigrant visa processing for citizens of 75 countries. The decision, taken by the Trump administration, applies only to permanent immigration and has no fixed end date. The move signals a sharp shift in US immigration policy with wide global implications.



Why in News?

- The United States has indefinitely suspended immigrant visa processing for nationals of 75 countries, starting



January 21, 2026, as part of a sweeping immigration restriction under the Trump administration.

About US Decision

- The Trump administration has ordered an indefinite freeze on immigrant visas, which are meant for individuals seeking to live and work permanently in the US.
- The suspension is based on nationality, not individual applications, and affects countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.
- Importantly, the decision does not apply to tourist, business or temporary work visas, narrowing its scope strictly to permanent residency pathways.

Reason Behind the Visa Suspension

- According to the US State Department, the decision uses long-standing legal authority that allows visa denial if applicants are likely to depend on government welfare.
- However, for the first time, this authority is being applied as a blanket nationality-based suspension.
- State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott said the freeze aims to prevent abuse of America's immigration system and protect public resources under an "America First" approach.

INDIA UNVEILS LOGO AND WEBSITE FOR BRICS PRESIDENCY 2026

- India has officially begun preparations for its BRICS Presidency in 2026 by unveiling the logo and dedicated website for the grouping. The launch signals India's vision for a people-centric and inclusive chairship at a time of growing global uncertainty. The initiative reflects India's intent to strengthen cooperation among emerging economies and promote shared development goals.



Why in News?

- India launched the official logo and website for BRICS Presidency 2026. The announcement was made by S. Jaishankar, marking the formal start of India's preparations to assume the BRICS chairship.

India's BRICS Presidency 2026 Vision

- India's BRICS chairship aims to bring together the collective potential of BRICS nations for greater global welfare. According to Jaishankar, India will assume the presidency at a significant moment, as BRICS completes 20 years in 2026. Over the years, BRICS has evolved into a major platform for cooperation among emerging markets and developing economies. India's approach focuses on people-centric development, dialogue and practical cooperation, while adapting to changing global realities and expanding membership.

CHILE BACKS INDIA'S PERMANENT UNSC SEAT -

- Chile has formally expressed support for India's aspiration to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), stating that New Delhi can play a stabilising role in global affairs. The endorsement comes amid growing international calls for reform of the UN system to better reflect present-day geopolitical realities.



Chile's Support for UNSC Reforms

- Speaking to the media, Chile's Ambassador to India, Juan Angulo, emphasised the need for comprehensive reforms in the multilateral system. He said the UNSC must evolve to remain functional, transparent, and accountable, and should no longer mirror the power structure that emerged at the end of the Second World War. According to Chile, reform is essential for maintaining faith in a rules-based international order.

India's Role in Contemporary Global Affairs

- The Chilean envoy highlighted that India's global standing today is significantly different from what it was eight decades ago. He noted that India's political influence, economic scale, and diplomatic reach position it as a credible and stabilising force in international affairs. Chile views India's inclusion as a permanent member as reflective of current global dynamics rather than historical legacies.



U.S. WITHDRAWS FROM 66 INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS UNDER TRUMP ORDER –

- The United States has announced its withdrawal from 66 international organisations, marking a significant escalation in President Donald Trump’s retreat from multilateral global cooperation. The decision, formalized through an executive order signed on January 7, 2026, represents a comprehensive recalibration of U.S. participation in international bodies, particularly those affiliated with the United Nations system. This action follows extensive review of U.S. participation and funding in international institutions, with the administration characterizing many targeted bodies as redundant, inefficient, or misaligned with U.S. national interests and sovereignty. The withdrawals signal a fundamental shift toward unilateral and selectively multilateral approaches to international engagement.

Key Facts for Competitive Exams and Current Affairs

- **Number of Organizations:** 66 international organisations, agencies, and commissions
- **Executive Order Date:** January 7, 2026
- **Primary Targets:** UN-affiliated bodies focusing on climate, labour, and social development
- **Key Exit:** UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- **Climate Alliance Exit:** International Solar Alliance (India-France led, launched 2015)
- **UNFCCC Adoption:** 1992 (foundational treaty for Paris Agreement)
- **U.S. Position:** Among world’s largest historical greenhouse gas emitters
- **Previous Withdrawals:** WHO, UN Human Rights Council, UNESCO
- **Selective Engagement:** International Telecommunications Union, International Maritime Organization, International Labour Organization
- **Primary Focus:** Strategic competition with China

US ATTACK ON VENEZUELA -

- Recently, the United States carried out Operation Absolute Resolve, capturing and removing Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in Caracas, Venezuela.
- The move marked a shift from diplomatic pressure to direct military intervention, with the US announcing temporary control over Venezuela and plans to sell its oil, reshaping regional geopolitics.
- **“Don-roe Doctrine” in Action:** The 2026 intervention marked the operationalisation of Trump’s rebranded Monroe Doctrine, asserting US dominance in the Western Hemisphere through direct action rather than diplomacy.
- **Narco-State Justification:** The US Justice Department portrayed President Nicolás Maduro as the head of a narco-state, citing criminal indictments linking him to the Tren de Aragua network and alleged conspiracies to traffic cocaine and fentanyl into the United States.
- The US argues that under Maduro, organised drug trafficking became embedded within state structures, with illicit revenues sustaining regime survival and influencing state policy—a phenomenon commonly described as narco-terrorism.



INDIA EMERGES AS WORLD’S LARGEST RICE PRODUCER -

- India has achieved a major agricultural milestone by overtaking China to become the world’s largest rice producer. The announcement underscores the country’s expanding foodgrain capacity and its growing role in global food supply chains. The development comes alongside a significant push towards seed innovation and crop diversification, aimed at strengthening farm productivity and food security.



India Surpasses China in Rice Output

- Union Agriculture Minister “Shivraj Singh Chouhan” announced that India’s rice production has reached 150.18



million tonnes, surpassing China's output of 145.28 million tonnes. He described the achievement as unprecedented, noting that India has transitioned from a food-deficient nation to a leading global food producer. The minister highlighted that Indian rice is now being supplied extensively to overseas markets, reinforcing the country's position in global agricultural trade.

AMBASSADORS OF THE QUADRILATERAL SECURITY DIALOGUE (QUAD) COUNTRIES- THE US, INDIA, AUSTRALIA, AND JAPAN, HELD A RARE PUBLICISED MEETING IN BEIJING, DESCRIBING THEIR TIES AS "STABLE AND STRONG." -

- The QUAD began as a humanitarian coordination mechanism after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.
- Originally proposed in 2007 by Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the framework remained inactive after Australia stepped back in 2008 before being revived in 2017 against the backdrop of China's growing Indo-Pacific assertiveness.
- It focuses on regional security, economic cooperation, maritime safety, infrastructure, and supply chain resilience, while not being a formal military alliance.
- **Vision of the Quad:** The 2021 QUAD Leaders' Summit adopted the "Spirit of the Quad", reaffirming a free, open, inclusive Indo-Pacific anchored in democratic values, rule of law, and freedom from coercion.



Key QUAD Initiatives:

- **QUAD At Sea Ship Observer Mission:** Launched under the Wilmington Declaration (2024) of the QUAD, it is an initiative to boost interoperability, maritime domain awareness, and operational coordination in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Malabar Exercise:** It is a major annual multilateral naval drill involving the Quad nations, focused on enhancing

maritime coordination, interoperability, and readiness in the Indo-Pacific.

- **Expansion Potential:** The "Quad Plus" engagements have involved countries such as South Korea, New Zealand, and Vietnam, reflecting the grouping's potential for future expansion.
- **China's Opposition:** It has repeatedly opposed the Quad, describing it as "bloc politics like NATO" and warning against cooperation that targets third countries, reinforcing China's discomfort with Indo-Pacific coalitions.
- Despite China's claims, the Quad has no mutual defence treaty. It focuses on strategic coordination, maritime security, economic cooperation, and rules-based order, not collective military defence.

CANADA TARGETS DOUBLING INDIA TRADE TO \$60 BILLION -

- Canada has set an ambitious goal to double its bilateral trade with India from \$30 billion to \$60 billion by the end of the decade, signalling a renewed strategic push in economic engagement. The target comes as Ottawa prepares for a high-level visit to New Delhi and reflects a broader recalibration of ties amid global economic uncertainty and shifting supply chains.



Trade expansion as a strategic priority

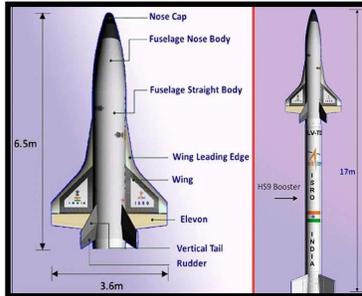
- Speaking at India Energy Week, Canada's Energy and Natural Resources Minister Tim Hodgson said the trade objective has been clearly defined by the Canadian Prime Minister, who has set measurable performance benchmarks for the partnership.
- Hodgson described the India-Canada trade relationship as underdeveloped relative to its potential, despite strong complementarities in energy, resources and technology. The proposed expansion is being positioned as a mutually beneficial move to enhance economic resilience for both countries.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

REUSABLE LAUNCH VEHICLE (RLV) TECHNOLOGY -

• Rapid advances in reusable launch vehicle technology have transformed the global space sector into a fast-growing commercial industry, projected to exceed \$1 trillion by 2030.



• It is driven by cost reduction and higher launch frequency.

About Reusable Launch Vehicles (RLVs)

- Reusable Launch Vehicles are space transportation systems designed to recover and reuse rocket stages or spacecraft.
- **Components:**
- Recoverable first-stage boosters or spaceplanes,
- Restartable engines
- Advanced guidance and control systems,
- Thermal protection for atmospheric re-entry,
- Landing mechanisms such as retro-propulsion, grid fins, and autonomous navigation software.

GOA GOVERNMENT SIGNS MOU WITH STARLINK TO BOOST INTERNET CONNECTIVITY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS -

• The Goa government has recently signed an important agreement with Starlink Satellite Communications, the company led by Elon Musk, to improve internet and digital services in the state. This partnership aims to bring faster, reliable, and wider digital access to citizens, public services, and key infrastructure across Goa.

Partnership Aims to Strengthen Digital Infrastructure

• The agreement, or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), between Goa's Department of Information Technology, Electronics & Communications (DITE&C) and Starlink focuses on enhancing connectivity solutions. The main goals include supporting digital inclusion,

improving public services, ensuring coastal safety, and enhancing emergency response systems.



- Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant said this move will help Goa achieve its vision of becoming a digitally empowered state, benefiting citizens, businesses, and government operations.

Benefits for Citizens and Governance

- According to Rohan Khaunte, Minister for ITE&C, the partnership will help modernize Goa's governance. It will:
- Improve public services through better connectivity.
- Bridge the digital divide, ensuring remote areas have internet access.
- Promote tourism, investment, and talent growth by making Goa more digitally advanced.
- The collaboration will use modern technology to make government services faster, smarter, and more efficient.

GUJARAT WITNESSES LAUNCH OF INDIA'S FIRST INTEGRATED PRIVATE SATELLITE MANUFACTURING UNIT AT SANAND -

• India has taken a big step in space technology with the start of its first integrated private satellite manufacturing facility. The foundation stone was laid at Khoraj in Sanand, Gujarat, marking a new chapter in the country's growing space sector. This development highlights the increasing role of private companies in strengthening India's space capabilities.



Azista Space Launches Advanced Space Facility

• The new facility is being set up by Azista Space and will focus on building satellites and high-end electro-optical payloads. The plant, named Palmnaro, is designed to



support end-to-end satellite manufacturing under one roof. It will help India reduce dependence on imports and encourage local innovation in space technologies.

Foundation Stone Laid in Presence of State Leadership

- The groundbreaking ceremony was held in the presence of Gujarat’s Minister for Science and Technology, Arjun Modhwadia. His participation underlined the state government’s strong support for space research and advanced manufacturing. The event reflected Gujarat’s ambition to become a key hub for futuristic technologies.

INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANISATION (ISRO) IS FACING SCRUTINY AFTER TWO CONSECUTIVE PSLV MISSION FAILURES (PSLV-C61 (MAY 2025) AND PSLV-C62 (JANUARY 2026)) BOTH LINKED TO THIRD-STAGE ANOMALIES -

- The near-identical issues raise concerns about quality control in the PSLV, ISRO’s most reliable workhorse, while ISRO’s overall launch record remains strong, these setbacks could affect strategic surveillance missions and weaken commercial launch credibility.



Summary

- Two consecutive PSLV failures (C61 and C62) linked to third-stage anomalies have raised concerns over ISRO’s quality control, strategic surveillance capability, and declining commercial credibility in the global launch market.
- Restoring confidence requires reliability-first engineering, transparent failure analysis, diversified launch infrastructure, accelerated indigenisation, and stronger military–space integration.

What is the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)?

- About: The PSLV is India’s third-generation launch vehicle developed by the ISRO. Since its first successful launch in October 1994, PSLV has become the backbone of India’s space launch programme.
- PSLV was the first Indian rocket to use liquid propulsion stages, marking a major technological leap in India’s

space programme.

- PSLV is known as ISRO’s “workhorse” because of its long record of consistent, precise, and cost-effective launches, especially into Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and Sun-Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO).
- **PSLV Structure:** Technically, PSLV is a four-stage rocket using an optimal mix of solid and liquid propulsion:
- **PS1 (First Stage):** It has a solid rocket motor that uses HTPB (hydroxyl-terminated polybutadiene) as propellant and generates high lift-off thrust, providing the initial lift-off force.
- In the PSLV-XL configuration, this stage is augmented by six solid strap-on boosters, significantly increasing thrust at launch and enabling the vehicle to carry heavier payloads.
- **PS2 (Second Stage):** It is powered by the Vikas liquid engine, which ensures a controlled and stable ascent after lift-off.
- It uses UDMH (unsymmetrical dimethylhydrazine) as fuel and N₂O₄ (nitrogen tetroxide) as oxidiser, producing thrust, allowing precise velocity and trajectory control.
- **PS3 (Third Stage):** It is a solid rocket motor that again uses HTPB propellant.
- It operates during the near-vacuum phase of flight and provides high thrust to accelerate the vehicle to the required orbital velocity, making it a critical stage for mission success.
- **PS4 (Fourth Stage):** It is a liquid propulsion stage with two engines, using MMH (monomethylhydrazine) and MON (mixed oxides of nitrogen).
- This stage enables highly precise orbital insertion, allowing PSLV to deploy satellites accurately, including in multi-orbit and multi-satellite missions.
- **PSLV’s Payload Capacity:** It can place up to 1,750 kg into a 600 km Sun-Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO), and around 1,425 kg into Sub-Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO), demonstrating high mission flexibility.
- **Achievements:** Its credibility was cemented by landmark interplanetary missions such as Chandrayaan-1 and the Mars Orbiter Mission, which successfully travelled to



the Moon and Mars respectively.

- PSLV has also launched a large number of foreign commercial satellites, reinforcing India's position in the global launch market.

HAL LAUNCHES DHRUV NG FOR CIVIL AVIATION -

- Recently, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) conducted the maiden flight of the Dhruv–New Generation (NG) in Bengaluru, marking its formal push into the civil and export helicopter markets.

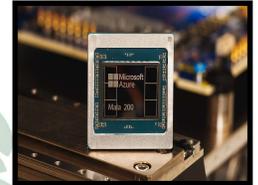


- **Positioning:** The Dhruv Civil NG is being projected as a cost-effective indigenous alternative to imported twin-engine helicopters, with lifecycle support spanning manufacturing, maintenance, and upgrades.
- **Logistics:** HAL plans to ensure higher fleet availability through integrated support models such as Power-By-Hour and performance-based logistics.
- **Design:** Dhruv NG is a 5.5-tonne, indigenously developed, twin-engine, multi-role helicopter, capable of day-night, all-weather operations, and derived from the Dhruv ALH Mk-III civil platform.
- **Capability:** Powered by indigenous Shakti engines with Cat-A performance and AS4-compliant systems, it is suitable for demanding roles including offshore operations of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC).
- **Certification:** HAL secured Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) type certification for indigenous manufacture of the Shakti civil engine (a national first) and restricted certification from the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) in 2023.

- **Significance:** Building on a proven Dhruv platform with over 3.75 lakh flying hours, Dhruv NG strengthens Aatmanirbhar Bharat, reduces import dependence, and anchors India's indigenous civil helicopter ecosystem.

MICROSOFT UNVEILS MAIA 200 AI CHIP, CHALLENGES NVIDIA'S DOMINANCE -

- In a major development in the global technology and artificial intelligence race, Microsoft has unveiled the next generation of its in-house AI chip, Maia 200. The announcement signals Microsoft's intent to reduce dependence on external chipmakers and directly challenge Nvidia, which currently dominates the AI hardware and software ecosystem.



Why in News?

- Microsoft has launched its Maia 200 AI chip along with a new software stack, positioning it as a competitor to Nvidia's AI chips and its widely used CUDA software platform.

What Is the Maia 200 AI Chip?

- The Maia 200 is Microsoft's second-generation custom-built artificial intelligence chip, following the original Maia introduced in 2023.
- The chip has gone live in a Microsoft data centre in Iowa, with plans for deployment in Arizona.

Designed for large-scale AI workloads such as chatbots and generative AI systems, Maia 200 aims to improve performance, reduce costs, and enhance control over Microsoft's cloud-based AI infrastructure.



ECONOMY & FINANCE

RBI TIGHTENS PRIORITY SECTOR LENDING (PSL) NORMS -

- The Reserve Bank of India has strengthened the compliance framework for Priority Sector Lending (PSL) to prevent misuse and ensure genuine credit flow to priority sectors like agriculture, MSMEs, and weaker sections.



What is Priority Sector Lending (PSL)?

- Priority Sector Lending (PSL) is an RBI-mandated credit policy that directs banks to lend a specified portion of credit to priority sectors to promote inclusive and balanced economic growth.

Purpose of PSL:

- Promote financial inclusion
- Support agriculture, MSMEs, education, housing, exports
- Ensure credit flow to weaker sections of society
- Reduce regional and social inequalities

Major Sectors under PSL:

- Agriculture
- Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)
- Export Credit
- Education Loans
- Housing Loans
- Social Infrastructure & Renewable Energy
- Weaker Sections (SC/STs, SHGs, small & marginal farmers, etc.)

IMF FORECASTS STEADY GLOBAL GROWTH IN 2026 AS AI BOOM COUNTERS TRADE PRESSURES -

- The global economy is expected to remain resilient in 2026 despite trade uncertainties and geopolitical risks. According to the latest outlook by the International Monetary Fund, rapid investment in artificial intelligence is helping offset tariff-related pressures and supply chain disruptions. The IMF believes this technology-led

momentum will support stable growth across major economies in the coming year.

Why in News?

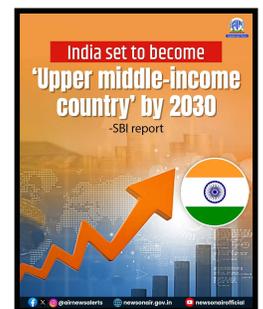
- The IMF has raised its global growth forecast for 2026 to 3.3%. The upgrade is driven mainly by strong AI investment and easing trade tensions, especially in the US.

IMF's Latest Global Growth Projections

- In its updated World Economic Outlook, the International Monetary Fund projected global GDP growth of 3.3% in 2026, up by 0.2 percentage points from its October estimate.
- Growth in 2025 is also expected at 3.3%, slightly higher than earlier forecasts.
- The IMF sees 2027 growth at 3.2%, indicating steady but moderate expansion in the global economy.

INDIA ON TRACK TO AN UPPER-MIDDLE-INCOME NATION -

- India is moving steadily towards a major economic milestone. According to a recent analysis by the State Bank of India, the country is expected to enter the upper-middle-income category by the end of this decade. Rising per capita income, strong GDP growth and structural reforms are placing India among the world's fastest-growing large economies.



Why in News?

- A report by State Bank of India projects India's per capita income to reach \$4,000 by 2030. This would shift India into the upper-middle-income category under World Bank classifications.

About Upper Middle Income

- The World Bank classifies countries based on per capita Gross National Income (GNI).



- Economies are grouped as low income, lower-middle income, upper-middle income and high income.
- The current threshold for the upper-middle-income group is around \$4,000-4,500 per capita GNI.
- Once India crosses this level, it will join countries like China and Indonesia, reflecting higher living standards and stronger economic capacity.

India's Income Journey Since 1990

- India's transition has been gradual but steady. In 1962, India's per capita GNI was about \$90.
- It took nearly six decades to move into the lower-middle-income category in 2007, when GNI reached around \$910.
- Since then, income growth has accelerated.
- Per capita income crossed \$1,000 in 2009, doubled to \$2,000 by 2019, and is expected to reach \$3,000 in 2026, showing a clear upward trajectory.

IMF LIFTS 2026 GLOBAL GROWTH OUTLOOK TO 3.3% -

- The "International Monetary Fund" has raised its global growth forecast for 2026 to 3.3%, signalling sustained resilience in the world economy despite persistent trade tensions, geopolitical conflicts, and supply-chain disruptions. The upward revision is driven largely by a surge in artificial intelligence-led investment, which the Fund says is offsetting the drag from protectionist trade policies.

**AI Investment Drives Upward Revision**

- In its latest World Economic Outlook update, the IMF increased its 2026 growth estimate by 0.2 percentage points compared with its October projection, bringing it in line with its revised forecast for 2025. The Fund highlighted rapid expansion in AI-related spending, particularly on data centres, advanced semiconductors, and power infrastructure, as a key driver of improved growth prospects across major economies.

INDIA'S FOREX RESERVES RISE BY \$392 MILLION TO \$687.19 BILLION -

- India's external sector showed stability in mid-January 2026 as the country's foreign exchange reserves registered a modest increase. According to the latest weekly data released by the central bank, the overall reserves rose despite a decline in foreign currency assets, supported mainly by a strong jump in gold reserves.

**Why in News?**

- India's foreign exchange reserves increased by \$392 million to \$687.19 billion for the week ended January 9, 2026, as per data released by the Reserve Bank of India.

Overall Trend in Forex Reserves

- The rise in reserves comes after a sharp decline in the previous reporting week, when the total reserves had fallen by \$9.809 billion to \$686.80 billion.
- The latest increase indicates partial recovery and reflects week-to-week volatility influenced by currency movements, valuation changes, and changes in gold prices.
- India continues to maintain one of the largest forex reserve buffers globally, strengthening its ability to manage external shocks.

RBI NOTIFIES NEW FOREIGN EXCHANGE MANAGEMENT (GUARANTEES) REGULATIONS, 2026 -

- The Reserve Bank of India has introduced a new regulatory framework to govern guarantees involving persons resident outside India. By notifying the Foreign Exchange Management (Guarantees) Regulations, 2026, the central bank aims to improve transparency, simplify compliance, and ensure uniformity in the handling of cross-border guarantees by authorized dealer banks.



Why in the News?

- The Reserve Bank of India has issued the Foreign Exchange Management (Guarantees) Regulations, 2026. These regulations provide a consolidated framework for guarantees involving non-residents under FEMA.

Key Features of the New Regulations

- The 2026 regulations lay down a comprehensive framework for issuance, modification, and invocation of guarantees involving persons resident outside India.
- All Authorized Dealer Category-I banks have been directed to strictly follow these rules while facilitating such guarantees.
- The RBI has also instructed banks to ensure compliance with guidelines issued by the Department of Regulation.

FIRST ADVANCE ESTIMATES OF GDP -

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, has released the First Advance Estimates (FAE) of GDP growth for the fiscal year 2025-26.



Key Highlights

- Projected GDP Growth:
- Real GDP Growth:** 7.4% for 2025-26, up from 6.5% in the previous year.
- Nominal GDP Growth:** 8% for 2025-26 (the lowest in 5 years).
- Nominal GDP in Rupee Terms:** Rs 357 lakh crore (~\$3.97 trillion).

Sector-wise Growth Projections:

- Manufacturing Sector:** Expected to grow at 7%, up from 4.5% in 2024-25.
- Agriculture Sector:** Predicted to grow at 3.1%, a slowdown from 4.6% in the previous year.
- Mining and Quarrying:** Estimated to contract by 0.7%, compared to 2.7% growth in 2024-25.
- Global Context:** According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), India is expected to be the only major economy recording growth above 6% in FY 2025–

26, even as global trade faces disruption and overall world growth slows.

- Tertiary Sector (Services):** Expected to grow at 9.1%, an increase from 7.2% in FY 2024–25.

Key Economic Indicators:

- Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE):** Projected to grow at 7%, slightly slower than the 7.2% of 2024-25.
- Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF):** Expected to grow at 7.8%, faster than the 7.1% seen in 2024-25.
- Government Consumption Expenditure:** Expected to grow by 5.2%, up from 2.3% in the previous year, largely due to increased state government spending.

New GDP Series

- Base Year Shift:** GDP data from February 2025 onwards will be based on the new series with a 2022-23 base year instead of 2011-12.
- Impact:** The shift reflects structural transformation in the Indian economy, offering more accurate insights

RBI CANCELS CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION OF 35 NBFCs FOR REGULATORY NON-COMPLIANCE -

- In January 2026, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cancelled the Certificate of Registration (CoR) of 35 Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) for failing to comply with regulatory requirements. These cancellations became effective from December 9 to 31, 2025.



Additionally, 16 other NBFCs voluntarily surrendered their CoR to the RBI, bringing the total number of cancelled registrations to 51 NBFCs. This significant regulatory action demonstrates RBI's commitment to maintaining financial system integrity and enforcing strict compliance standards across the non-banking financial sector.

Why This Action Matters?

- This regulatory crackdown addresses critical compliance failures in the non-banking financial sector. The action serves multiple strategic purposes:



- Financial System Stability – Removes non-compliant entities that pose systemic risks
- Consumer Protection – Prevents unlicensed entities from operating
- Regulatory Enforcement – Demonstrates RBI’s resolve in maintaining standards
- Market Integrity – Eliminates fraudulent or unstable players
- Investor Confidence – Ensures only legitimate NBFCs operate in the market

WHY A RED BAG BECAME THE SYMBOL OF THE BUDGET: THE HISTORY BEHIND IT -

- Every year on Budget Day, the Finance Minister’s appearance outside Parliament attracts huge public attention. Apart from economic announcements, people also notice the bag or folder used to carry the Budget documents. Over the years, this small detail has become a powerful symbol of governance, tradition, and change in India’s financial history.



Breaking Away from the British-Era Briefcase

- For decades, Indian finance ministers followed a tradition inherited from British rule—carrying Budget papers in a leather briefcase. This practice symbolised authority but also reminded many of India’s colonial past.
- In 2019, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made history by breaking this long-standing custom. Instead of a leather briefcase, she carried the Budget documents wrapped in a red cloth. This move was widely seen as a shift towards Indian cultural values and a step away from colonial symbols.

NEW TOBACCO EXCISE DUTY PUSHES CIGARETTE PRICES UP TO ₹55 PER PACK

- Cigarette prices are set to rise sharply from February 2026 following the introduction of a new excise duty and cess

regime on tobacco products, marking India’s first tax hike on cigarettes in nearly seven years. Distributors say the increases have already started reflecting in trade billing, with a pack of 10 sticks costing at least ₹22–25 more in many segments, and premium variants seeing hikes of up to ₹50–55 per pack.



New Tax Regime Replaces GST Compensation Cess

- The new levies, approved by Parliament in December, will replace the GST compensation cess framework that has been in place since the rollout of GST in July 2017. Under the revised structure, cigarettes and tobacco products will attract additional excise duty and cess over and above the highest 40% GST slab, replacing the earlier 28% GST plus compensation cess model.

ORANGE ECONOMY GETS BOOST WITH CREATOR LABS -

- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced a major push for India’s creative industries, described as the “orange economy”, in the Union Budget 2026. The proposals focus on building future-ready creative skills and jobs, especially in fast-growing digital and design-led sectors, as part of India’s broader employment and innovation strategy.



AVGC Sector and Jobs Potential

- Sitharaman highlighted that India’s Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics sector is expanding rapidly and is projected to require around 2 million professionals by 2030. The AVGC industry is increasingly seen as a key source of high-quality creative employment, driven by growth in digital media, gaming, streaming platforms, and global demand for content production services.



IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS

WHY 26TH JANUARY IS CELEBRATED AS REPUBLIC DAY IN INDIA? -

- Republic Day is one of the most important national festivals of India, celebrated every year on 26th January. On this day, the whole country remembers a historic moment when India started governing itself with its own laws. It is a day of pride, unity, and respect for the values that guide the nation.



What is Republic Day?

- Republic Day is the day when the Constitution of India came into force. On 26 January 1950, India officially became a republic. This means the country began to run according to laws made by its own people, not by any foreign power. From this day onward, the people of India became the true source of power.

Difference Between Independence Day and Republic Day

- Independence Day, celebrated on 15 August, marks India's freedom from British rule in 1947. However, even after independence, India was governed under British-era laws. Republic Day celebrates the day when India adopted its own Constitution and became a fully self-governing nation with democratic values.

NATIONAL TOURISM DAY 2026 – DATE, HISTORY, SIGNIFICANCE AND CELEBRATION -

- National Tourism Day is observed every year in India on January 25 to recognize the importance of tourism in the country's growth and development. Tourism is not just about travel and leisure — it plays a major role in boosting the economy, preserving heritage, and promoting cultural exchange. This day encourages people to explore



the rich diversity of India while promoting responsible and sustainable travel practices.

- In 2026, National Tourism Day once again draws attention to how tourism connects communities and strengthens India's identity on the global stage.

Date of National Tourism Day 2026

- National Tourism Day 2026 will be observed on Sunday, January 25 across the country. Various events and awareness programs will be organized by tourism departments, educational institutions, and cultural organizations to celebrate the day.

History of National Tourism Day

- The idea of promoting tourism in India dates back to the post-independence period, when the government recognized tourism as an important sector for economic and cultural development. Over time, India began focusing on showcasing its historical monuments, natural landscapes, wildlife, traditions, and festivals to both domestic and international travelers.
- January 25 was chosen to mark the importance of tourism and to encourage citizens to appreciate India's travel potential. Since then, National Tourism Day has become a platform to highlight the need for organized, sustainable, and inclusive tourism development.

NATIONAL VOTERS DAY 2026: MEANING, DATE, HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE -

- National Voters Day is an important national observance in India dedicated to celebrating the power and responsibility of citizens in a democracy. The day highlights the importance of voting, voter registration, and informed participation in elections. It encourages every eligible citizen, especially young and first-time voters, to take pride in their right to vote and use it responsibly.



- In 2026, India will celebrate the 16th National Voters Day, reinforcing the idea that every vote counts in shaping the nation's future.

Date of National Voters Day 2026

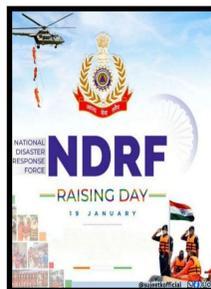
- National Voters Day is observed every year on January 25 across India. In 2026, the day will fall on Sunday, January 25. The date is significant because it marks the foundation day of the Election Commission of India (ECI), the constitutional body responsible for conducting free and fair elections in the country.

History of National Voters Day

- National Voters Day was first celebrated in 2011. The Government of India decided to observe this day to increase awareness about the importance of electoral participation and to encourage more citizens to register as voters.
- The day commemorates the establishment of the Election Commission of India on January 25, 1950, just one day before India became a Republic. Since then, the Election Commission has played a crucial role in maintaining the integrity and transparency of elections in the world's largest democracy.
- The initiative was launched mainly to address the issue of low voter registration, particularly among young people who had newly become eligible to vote.

NATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE FORCE (NDRF) RAISING DAY -

- Recently, the Prime Minister greeted and commended the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) on its Raising Day on 19th January 2026, marking the formation of the force.



National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)

- About:** The NDRF was raised on 19th January 2006 under Disaster Management Act, 2005 and has expanded from 8 to 16 battalions, with 18,556 personnel deployed across 68 locations, including Regional Response Centres and Tactical Pre-positioning Locations.

- Structure:** It operates through four operational zones headquartered in New Delhi, with each battalion comprising 18 specialised search and rescue teams, while the NDRF Academy (2018) serves as the apex training institution with a new campus under development at Nagpur.
- Mandate and Scope:** The NDRF is mandated to respond to all natural and man-made disasters, including collapsed structures, floods, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) incidents, mountain and rope rescue, medical first response and animal rescue, with forest fire response added in 2022.
- Global Disaster Response Experience:** The NDRF has significant international experience, including operations during the Japan disaster (2011), Nepal earthquake (2015) and Operation Dost in Türkiye (2023), and is currently mentoring a Heavy Urban Search and Rescue team for International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) certification.
- CBRN Response & Training:** Recognising emerging risks, the NDRF declared 2024 as the "Year of CBRN Preparedness" and conducted national workshops, specialised training, SOP formulation and coordination exercises.

NATIONAL YOUTH DAY 2026 WILL BE OBSERVED TODAY ACROSS INDIA -

- National Youth Day (Yuva Diwas) 2026 will be observed across India on January 12, reaffirming the belief that a nation's future rests on the direction, character, and purpose of its youth. The day is marked not merely as a celebration but as a moment of national reflection on the values guiding young Indians and the responsibilities they carry in shaping the country's destiny.



Legacy of Swami Vivekananda

- National Youth Day commemorates the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, one of India's most influential philosophers and spiritual leaders. His teachings, centred



on self-confidence, discipline, character-building, and service to the nation, continue to inspire generations. Vivekananda firmly believed that India's strength lay in its youth, and his call to action—"Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached"—remains deeply relevant.

Institutional Recognition and Purpose

- The Government of India declared Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary as National Youth Day in 1984. The objective was to motivate young people by connecting them with his ideals and encouraging their active participation in nation-building. The observance seeks to instil values of leadership, social responsibility, and national service, reinforcing the idea that education extends beyond employment to the formation of character.

RECENTLY, THE BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS (BIS) CELEBRATED ITS 79TH FOUNDATION DAY ON 6TH JANUARY 2026

- BIS is India's National Standards Body under the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, responsible for ensuring product safety, reliability and global competitiveness.
- It was initially set up as the Indian Standards Institution (ISI) that came into being on 6th January 1947.
- **Legal Foundation:** The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Act, 2016, provides statutory backing for standardisation, certification and hallmarking.
- **Vision:** To transform "Made in India" into "Trusted by India and Trusted by the World" through a digitally enabled and globally harmonised quality ecosystem.
- **Reforms:** It provides Annual Minimum Marking Fee concessions (80%–Micro, 50%–Small, 20%–Medium), relaxes in-house laboratory requirements for large industries.
- The Silver HUID Hallmarking Scheme strengthens consumer protection and transparency making HUID-



based marking mandatory while silver hallmarking remains voluntary.

Key Initiatives:

- **BIS Standardisation Portal:** End-to-end digital platform integrating standards formulation, review and expert collaboration.
- **SHINE Scheme (Standards Help Inform & Nurture Empowered Women):** Women-centric quality awareness and empowerment initiative through SHGs and NGOs.
- **BIS-SAKSHAM (Scheme for Acknowledging Knowledge, Skills and High-impact Merit):** Annual excellence recognition framework.
- **Standards National Action Plan (SNAP) 2022–27:** A national roadmap that steers standardisation for emerging technologies, sustainability and climate action, positioning standards as enablers of India's economic growth and quality culture.
- **Achievements:** 94% of Indian standards have been harmonised with the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) standards.

PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS (PBD) 2026: DATE, HISTORY, SIGNIFICANCE AND KEY FACTS -

- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD), also known as Non-resident Indian (NRI) Day, is observed every year on January 9 to recognise and celebrate the invaluable contribution of the Overseas Indian community to India's development. The day holds deep historical importance as it marks the return of Mahatma Gandhi to India from South Africa on January 9, 1915, a moment that later shaped India's freedom struggle.

Date and Observance of PBD 2026

- **Date:** January 9, 2026
- **Nature:** Non-convention year
- **Observance:** Across India and at Indian embassies and consulates worldwide
- Since 2015, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas conventions have been organised biennially. As 2026 is a non-convention



year, no large-scale central event such as plenary sessions or award ceremonies is expected. However, regional events, webinars, cultural programmes, and youth-centric interactions are likely to be organised by Indian missions abroad.

History of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

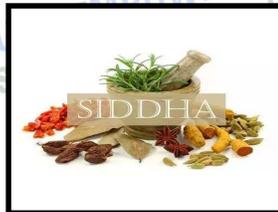
- Launched in 2003 by the Government of India, PBD aims to strengthen ties between India and its vast diaspora, estimated at over 35 million NRIs and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs).

Key milestones:

- **2003–2013:** Annual conventions in cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad
- **2015 onwards:** Shift to biennial format for better planning
- **2023 (17th edition):** Indore, Madhya Pradesh
- **2025 (18th edition):** Bhubaneswar, Odisha
- The 19th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention is expected to be held in 2027.

9TH SIDDHA DAY 2026: CELEBRATING INDIA’S ANCIENT MEDICAL HERITAGE -

- India will observe the 9th Siddha Day on January 6, 2026, celebrating one of the oldest traditional systems of medicine. Siddha medicine, deeply rooted in Tamil culture, focuses on holistic health and prevention of disease. The observance highlights India’s efforts to preserve and promote its rich traditional medical knowledge in modern healthcare.



Why in the News?

- The 9th Siddha Day will be observed on January 6, 2026, as the Ayilyam star falls on this date in the Tamil month of Margazhi. The event will be organised in Chennai with the support of the Ministry of AYUSH.

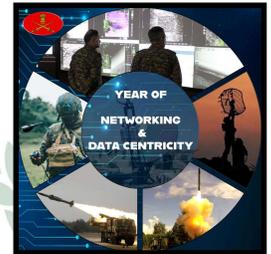
What is Siddha Day?

- Siddha Day is observed annually to commemorate the birth anniversary of Siddhar Agathiyar, who is regarded as the father of Siddha medicine. His birth is traditionally

associated with the Ayilyam star. The Government of India has officially approved the observance of Siddha Day to recognize the contributions of Siddha medicine to healthcare and wellness.

INDIAN ARMY DECLARES 2026 YEAR OF NETWORKING AND DATA CENTRICITY -

- The Indian Army has declared 2026 as the ‘Year of Networking & Data Centricity’, signalling a major push towards digitally integrated warfare and faster decision-making. The initiative is part of a broader decade-long transformation aimed at making the force more resilient, agile, and future-ready amid evolving security challenges and rapid technological change.

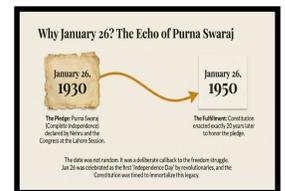


Vision Outlined by the Army Chief

- Army Chief Upendra Dwivedi, in his New Year message, said the force is undergoing a “decade of transformation” anchored on jointness, self-reliance, and innovation. He emphasised that the effective use of indigenous technologies, new operational ideas, and continuous reforms is strengthening India’s military power. Networking and data-centricity, he noted, are providing fresh momentum to this transformation process.

WHY JANUARY 26? THE STORY BEHIND “PURNA SWARAJ” AND REPUBLIC DAY -

- India celebrates Republic Day on January 26 every year to mark the day the Constitution of India came into effect in 1950. But this date was not chosen randomly. Its roots lie in a powerful moment from India’s freedom struggle — the declaration of Purna Swaraj, meaning complete independence, in 1930. The connection between that historic resolution and the birth of the Republic gives January 26 deep national importance.

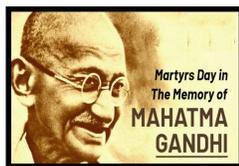


What Was Purna Swaraj?

- During the late 1920s, India’s freedom movement reached a turning point. The British government had offered dominion status, which meant limited self-governance under the British Crown. However, Indian leaders felt this fell short of their aspirations. They demanded full independence.
- At the Lahore Session of the Indian National Congress in December 1929, leaders officially adopted the goal of Purna Swaraj as India’s national objective. This was the first time the Congress formally declared that complete freedom from British rule was its ultimate aim.
- **January 26, 1930:** India’s First “Independence Day”
- After passing the resolution, the Congress decided that January 26, 1930, would be observed across India as Independence Day. On that day:
- People across the country took a pledge of complete independence
- The national flag was hoisted
- Public meetings were held to spread the message of self-rule

WHAT IS MARTYRS 'DAY AND WHY IS IT OBSERVED ON JANUARY 30? -

- On January 30 every year, India pauses to remember the immense sacrifices made for its freedom. Martyrs Day 2026 holds special significance as it marks the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, whose life and ideals shaped India’s non-violent freedom struggle and continue to inspire the nation. Martyrs Day, also known as Shaheed Diwas, is unique because it is marked on two important dates. 30 January commemorates the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948. 23 March remembers the execution of



Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev in 1931 by the British colonial government.

History of Martyrs Day

- Martyrs Day, also known as Shaheed Diwas, commemorates the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 1948.
- Gandhi was shot by Nathuram Godse while on his way to a prayer meeting at Birla Bhavan in Delhi. His death was a defining moment in independent India’s history, occurring just months after freedom was achieved.
- Since then, the day has been dedicated to remembering not only Gandhi but also countless freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for the nation.

MADHYA PRADESH DECLARES 2026 AS YEAR OF AGRICULTURE -

- Madhya Pradesh will observe 2026 as the ‘year of agriculture’, Governor Mangu Bhai Patel announced while addressing the State-level function marking the 77th Republic Day in Bhopal. The declaration underscores the State government’s focus on strengthening agriculture and allied sectors as the backbone of the rural economy.



Rising agricultural budget and development model

- The Governor said the budget for agriculture and allied sectors has increased significantly, from ₹600 crore in 2002–03 to over ₹27,000 crore in 2024–25. He noted that under the vision of “prosperous farmers, prosperous State”, Madhya Pradesh has adopted a multifaceted agricultural development model covering ten focus areas. These include technology transfer, income enhancement, natural farming, innovation, marketing and exports, and digital transparency, which will be implemented across the State.



AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

KOCHI TO HOST INTERNATIONAL SPICE CONFERENCE 2026 ON FUTURE OF GLOBAL SPICE TRADE -

- India's spice capital is set to become a global meeting point for the spice industry. Kochi will host the 9th edition of the International Spice Conference in February 2026, bringing together policymakers, exporters, researchers and global industry leaders. The event aims to discuss future challenges and opportunities in the spice sector amid changing trade, climate and consumer dynamics.



Why in News?

- The 9th International Spice Conference (ISC 2026) will be held in Kochi from February 23 to 26, 2026. The event is being organised by the All India Spices Exporters Forum.

About the International Spice Conference 2026

- The International Spice Conference is a flagship global event of AISEF and has evolved into a key platform for collaboration across the spice value chain.
- The 2026 edition will be a four day conference with participation from policymakers, exporters, scientists, startups and innovators from across the world.
- Discussions will focus on the future of the global spice industry, addressing challenges such as market volatility, climate change and evolving consumer preferences, while exploring opportunities for innovation-led growth.
- **Theme:** 'Spice 360 – Getting Future Ready'
- The theme "Spice 360 – Getting Future Ready" reflects the industry's need to adopt a holistic and forward-looking approach.
- It emphasises navigating global trade risks, climate challenges and supply chain disruptions, while embracing technology and innovation.
- The theme also highlights the responsibility of stakeholders to build resilient, sustainable and inclusive spice value chains.

- It aligns with the growing demand for transparency, quality and sustainability from global consumers, making the conference highly relevant for future planning.

PRESIDENT APPROVES ASHOK CHAKRA FOR GROUP CAPTAIN SHUBHANSHU SHUKLA -

- India has recognised extraordinary courage and service by its armed forces through a major announcement of gallantry and service awards. The President has approved a wide range of decorations, honouring personnel from the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Among these, the conferment of the Ashok Chakra, the country's highest peacetime gallantry award, stands out as a landmark recognition.



Why in News?

- Droupadi Murmu has approved gallantry awards for 70 Armed Forces personnel, including the Ashok Chakra for Shubhanshu Shukla, along with several other gallantry and distinguished service medals.
- Ashok Chakra for Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla
- Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla has been awarded the Ashok Chakra, India's highest peacetime gallantry award.
- He made history by becoming the first Indian to visit the International Space Station, marking a milestone in India's aerospace and defence-linked achievements.
- The award recognises exceptional courage, leadership, and contribution beyond the call of duty.
- The Ashok Chakra is awarded for acts of valour, self-sacrifice, or devotion to duty away from the battlefield, underscoring the national importance of his achievement.

CENTRAL VIGILANCE COMMISSION -

- The President, exercising powers under Section 4(1) of the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003, has appointed Shri Praveen



Vashista as Vigilance Commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).

What is the Central Vigilance Commission?

- **About:** CVC is the apex statutory body mandated to combat corruption and ensure integrity within the Central Government of India, evolving from an executive recommendation to a key pillar of India's vigilance framework.
- **Origin & Evolution:** Established in 1964 based on the recommendations of the Santhanam Committee (1962–64), it was initially non-statutory.
- It was granted statutory status in 1998 via a Union government ordinance and was formalised under the CVC Act, 2003.
- **Composition & Appointment:** It is a multi-member body with a Central Vigilance Commissioner and up to two Vigilance Commissioners. They are appointed by the President based on recommendations from a committee headed by the Prime Minister, with the Union Home Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha as members. They serve a tenure of 4 years or until attaining 65 years of age, whichever is earlier.
- **Independence:** The Central Vigilance Commissioner's salary and service conditions are the same as those of the UPSC Chairman, while a Vigilance Commissioner are the same as those of a UPSC Member; in both cases, these cannot be altered to their disadvantage after appointment.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR FRIEDRICH MERZ VISITS INDIA ON JANUARY 12–13 -

- German Chancellor Friedrich Merz is set to visit India on January 12 and 13, 2026. The high-level visit comes at a crucial time for India–Germany relations, with both countries seeking deeper cooperation in trade, technology, climate action, and global governance. The visit is expected to further strengthen strategic and economic engagement.



Why in the News?

- Friedrich Merz, the Chancellor of Germany, will pay an official visit to India on January 12–13, 2026. The visit aims to enhance India–Germany cooperation across economic, strategic, and global issues.

Purpose of the Visit

- The visit is expected to focus on strengthening bilateral relations between India and Germany. Discussions are likely to cover trade and investment, clean energy cooperation, climate change, digital technologies, and defence collaboration. Both sides may also exchange views on global challenges, including supply chain resilience and geopolitical stability.

AJIT PAWAR CHARTERED PLANE CRASH IN BARAMATI -

- A chartered aircraft carrying Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and Nationalist Congress Party chief Ajit Pawar crash-landed near the runway threshold at Baramati on Wednesday morning, triggering a major emergency response. The aircraft was flying from Mumbai to Baramati and met with the accident at around 8.45 am. Multiple casualties and injuries have been reported, with authorities still verifying final details.



Flight Details and Purpose of Travel

- According to preliminary information, the chartered plane had departed from Mumbai and was scheduled to land at Baramati, Pawar's political stronghold in Pune district. Pawar was reportedly travelling to attend a public rally linked to the Zilla Parishad elections. On board were five people, including two crew members, a personal security officer, and an attendant.

DGCA Statement and Casualties

- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (Directorate General of Civil Aviation) stated that the aircraft crash-landed during the final phase of landing. As per the regulator, five people on board died following the incident. Officials said the aircraft caught fire immediately after impact, complicating rescue efforts. The exact cause of the crash is under investigation.



PROGRAMMES, SCHEMES AND INITIATIVES

A DECADE OF STARTUP INDIA -

- January 16, 2026, marks the 10th Anniversary (National Startup Day) of the Startup India Initiative.



About Startups

- Meaning:** A startup is a newly established, innovation-driven business created to solve a specific problem with a scalable product or service, with the potential for rapid growth.

About National Startup Day

- National Startup Day Declaration:** January 16 was officially designated as National Startup Day in 2022 to provide national recognition to entrepreneurs and innovators across India.
- Ten-Year Milestone:** The 2026 observance marks the completion of a decade of this initiative, reflecting sustained policy continuity and the growing maturity of India's startup ecosystem.
- Startups in India:** In the Indian regulatory context, a Startup is an entity incorporated as a Private Limited Company, a Partnership Firm, or a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP).

To be recognized by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), the entity must:

- Be within Ten Years of its date of incorporation.
- Have an annual turnover not exceeding ₹100 Crore in any previous financial year.
- Focus on the Innovation, Development, or Improvement of products or services, or possess a Scalable Business Model with a high potential for Employment Generation.

PRIME MINISTER'S INTERNSHIP SCHEME

- Data from the Controller General of Accounts show severe underutilisation of funds under the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme (PMIS), pointing

to weaknesses in the scheme's design, demand, and implementation barely a year after its launch.

What is the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme (PMIS)?



- About:** The PMIS, under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, announced in the Union Budget 2024-25, aims to provide one crore internship opportunities over five years in top 500 companies to enhance the employability of youth aged 21-24 years.
- Benefits:** The scheme offers a Minimum Stipend of Rs 5,000 per month, a One-Time Grant of Rs 6,000, and Insurance Coverage under PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and PM Suraksha Bima Yojana, along with exposure to diverse sectors and leading companies.
- Internship Duration:** The internship lasts 12 months, with at least half of the period spent in real workplace or job-based experience, not classroom training.
- Eligibility:** Candidates must be 21-24 years old, possess Minimum Class 10 Qualification or above (ITI, Polytechnic, Graduation etc.), and should not be engaged in Full-Time Employment or Regular Education (distance or online education allowed).
- Ineligible Candidates:** Graduates from IITs, IIMs, NLUs, IISERs, holders of professional or postgraduate degrees (CA, CMA, CS, MBA, MBBS, etc.), candidates trained under National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)/ National Apprenticeship Training Scheme (NATS).
- Income of any family member exceeds Rs 8 lakh for FY 2023-24, families with regular government employees, and applicants already in any government skill, apprenticeship, or internship programme are ineligible.
- Significance:** PMIS aims to enhance employability by providing structured, real-world industry exposure to youth.



- Bridge the education–industry gap through hands-on training in top companies.
- Expand access to internships beyond elite institutions and urban centres.
- Support youth from low-income households with financial assistance during internships.
- Build a skilled workforce aligned with industry needs and national economic growth.

UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) ACT 1967 -

- The Supreme Court of India denied bail in the 2020 Delhi riots case, relying on the wide definition of a “terrorist act” under Section 15 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
- The decision has renewed debate on how the anti-terror law has expanded far beyond conventional notions of terrorism.



What is the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967?

- About: The UAPA, 1967 is India’s principal anti-terror and national security law to curb activities threatening sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India
- The UAPA traces its origins to the National Integration Council formed under Jawaharlal Nehru, aimed at tackling communalism, regionalism, and linguistic chauvinism.
- Its recommendations led to the 16th Constitutional Amendment (1963), which imposed reasonable restrictions on free speech, assembly, and association in the interest of national integrity, and the UAPA was enacted to enforce these constitutional changes.
- Enacted in 1967, the law initially targeted unlawful activities threatening India’s sovereignty and territorial integrity in the post-Independence period marked by secessionist and anti-national movements, and did not address terrorism in its original form.

Evolution of UAPA:

- **2004 Amendment** : Introduced terrorism into the UAPA by adding Chapter IV(Sections 15–23) on terrorist

- acts and punishments.
- It defined terrorism as violent acts intended to threaten India’s security or strike terror among people, and expanded the scope of “unlawful activity” to include acts causing disaffection against India.
- **2008 Amendment:** After the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, Parliament widened Section 15 by adding the phrase “by any other means,” expanding terrorism to a broad range of acts.
- The amendment tightened bail norms by barring anticipatory bail, made regular bail extremely difficult, extended custody periods, and introduced a presumption of guilt in specified cases.
- **2012 Amendment:** Expanded the definition of terrorism to include threats to economic security, covering financial, food, energy, livelihood, and environmental security.
- They also classified counterfeit currency offences as terrorist acts and extended liability to companies, trusts, and societies, with office-bearers presumed responsible unless proven otherwise.
- **2019 Amendment:** It permitted the designation of individuals as terrorists, not just organisations, and enhanced the National Investigation Agency (NIA) powers, including property seizure without state consent.
- **Definition of Terrorism:** Under Section 15 of the UAPA, 1967 a “terrorist act” is defined as any act committed with the intent to threaten the unity, integrity, sovereignty, security, or economic security of India, or to strike terror among people in India or in any foreign country.

42ND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ACT, 1976: THE ‘MINI CONSTITUTION’ OF INDIA EXPLAINED -

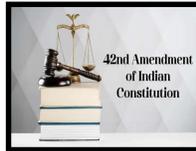
- The 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976 is one of the most significant changes ever made to the Indian Constitution. Enacted during the Emergency period, it brought wide-ranging amendments affecting the Preamble, judiciary, Parliament, and Centre–State



relations, earning it the title of “Mini Constitution” due to its extensive scope.

Background of the 42nd Constitutional Amendment

- The amendment was enacted in 1976, during the Emergency (1975–77), when the country was governed by Indira Gandhi. The ruling Congress government aimed to strengthen parliamentary supremacy and implement its socio-economic vision through constitutional changes. The scale and depth of amendments made it historically unparalleled.



Why Is It Called the ‘Mini Constitution’?

- The 42nd Amendment touched almost every major aspect of the Constitution.
- It amended the Preamble, Fundamental Rights, and Directive Principles.
- It reshaped Centre–State relations.
- It curtailed the powers of the Supreme Court and High Courts.
- It introduced Fundamental Duties for citizens.
- Because of these comprehensive changes, scholars refer to it as the Mini Constitution.

PUNJAB GOVERNMENT INTRODUCES MUKHYA MANTRI SEHAT YOJANA FOR FREE CASHLESS MEDICAL CARE -

- The Punjab government has started a major healthcare scheme called Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojana. Under this scheme, every family in the state will get free and cashless medical treatment worth up to ₹10 lakh. The aim is to make quality healthcare available to all residents without worrying about hospital expenses.



Who Launched the Scheme?

- The scheme was officially launched in Mohali by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann along with AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal. Both leaders said the scheme would bring a big change in Punjab’s healthcare system and help people from all income groups.

Who will Get the Benefit?

- This health insurance scheme will cover all 65 lakh families of Punjab, which means nearly three crore people will benefit.
- Any resident of Punjab who has:
 - An Aadhaar card
 - A Voter ID card
- can avail the benefits of this scheme. There is no income limit, which makes it different from earlier health schemes.

ADAMPUR AIRPORT RENAMED AFTER GURU RAVIDAS, PM MODI HAILS LEGACY

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday announced the renaming of Adampur Airport in punjab/">Punjab after Sri Sant Guru Ravidas Ji, describing the move as a tribute to the saint’s enduring ideals of equality, dignity and selfless service. The announcement was made during an event in Jalandhar to mark Guru Ravidas’ birth anniversary.



Tribute to a Social Reformer

- Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister said the teachings of Guru Ravidas continue to inspire and energise society. He noted that the saint consistently spoke about equality and equal opportunity, values that remain deeply relevant in contemporary India. The airport will now be officially known as Guru Ravidas Ji Maharaj Ji Airport.

DISINVESTMENT TARGET SET AT ₹80,000 CRORE -

- The Centre has set an ambitious target of ₹80,000 crore from disinvestment and asset monetisation in FY27, signalling a renewed push to shore up non-tax revenues under the Union Budget 2026. The sharp increase reflects optimism on market conditions and a stronger pipeline of stake sales, even as fiscal consolidation remains a stated priority of the government led by Nirmala Sitharaman.

Sharp Jump in Miscellaneous Capital Receipts

- The ₹80,000 crore target has been budgeted under miscellaneous capital receipts for 2026–27. This is a



significant jump from the revised estimate of about ₹34,000 crore for the current fiscal year. In FY26, the government had originally budgeted ₹47,000 crore, but muted execution led to a downward revision. Actual receipts in FY25 were even lower at ₹20,214 crore, highlighting persistent challenges in meeting disinvestment goals.

behind BRICS nations (14–15 times more) and Thailand/Malaysia (10 times more).

UTTARAKHAND HAS SOUGHT THE INDIAN AIR FORCE’S (IAF) HELP TO DOUSE A FOREST FIRE RAGING IN THE VALLEY OF FLOWERS NATIONAL PARK -

Valley of Flowers National Park

- **About:** Situated in the Western Himalayas in Chamoli, Uttarakhand, it is a National Park (declared in 1982) and a UNESCO World Heritage Site (inscribed in 2005). It forms one of the two core zones of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve. Pushpawati River flows through it.
- **Discovery & Recognition:** Introduced globally after its 1931 discovery by British mountaineer Frank S. Smythe. Gained further fame through his 1938 book Valley of Flowers.
- **Ecological Uniqueness:** It features a pristine alpine ecosystem (3000 and 5000 m in the western Himalayas) preserved by natural glacial barriers. It lies in a transition zone between the Zaskar and Greater Himalayan ranges. It is renowned for its alpine meadows, rare flora, and diverse fauna.



Biodiversity:

- **Flora:** It is famed for over 500 species of endemic and alpine flowers. Key species include the Brahma Kamal (state flower of Uttarakhand), blue Himalayan poppy, and numerous medicinal plants.
- **Fauna:** Hosts rare and endangered fauna such as the snow leopard, Asiatic black bear, musk deer, brown bear, and the Himalayan monal bird.
- **Cultural Significance:** It is associated with the Bhotia tribe. They practice transhumance, a form of seasonal migration between high-altitude summer pastures (known locally as Bugyals) and lower-altitude winter settlements.

INDIA’S LOW PUBLIC HEALTH SPENDING -

- India's public health spending continues to fall critically short, as the Union government has failed to meet the spending targets set by the National Health Policy (NHP) 2017.



What is the Status of Public Health Spending in India?

- **Missed National Targets:** NHP 2017 target of raising public health spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2025 remains unfulfilled. The Union government's share, aimed at 40% of total public spending (1% of GDP), stands at a mere 0.29% of GDP (2025-26).
- Post-Covid-19, the Union government's health spending declined drastically from 0.37% (2020-21) to 0.29% (2025-26).
- **State vs. Centre Trend:** While states have increased their health spending from 0.67% (2017-18) to 1.1% of GDP (2025-26), the Centre has reduced its share, leading to a trend of financial hyper-centralisation.
- Also, the Union's share of health transfers to states for Centrally Sponsored Schemes has plummeted from 75.9% (2014-15) to 43% (2024-25), undermining state capacity to deliver healthcare.
- **Cess Misallocation:** Funds from the Health and Education Cess (HEC), intended to expand healthcare for the poor, are not supplementing but largely substituting the core health budget. In 2023-24, only one-fourth of HEC collection was allocated to health.
- **Global Disparity:** India's per capita public health spending is among the world's lowest, significantly less than neighbours like Bhutan (2.5 times more) and Sri Lanka (3 times more) in 2021, and far



ANDHRA PRADESH TO HOST WORLD’S LARGEST GREEN AMMONIA PROJECT AT KAKINADA -

• India’s clean energy transition received a major boost as Andhra Pradesh is set to host the world’s largest green ammonia project at Kakinada. Developed by AM Green, the project involves a \$10-billion investment and aims to position India as a global exporter of green ammonia while supporting climate goals and energy security.



Why in News?

• Andhra Pradesh will host the world’s largest green ammonia project at Kakinada, with AM Green planning phased commissioning up to 2030 and targeting India’s first green ammonia exports to global markets.

Project Overview and Investment Plan

- The project is being developed by AM Green through the conversion of an existing ammonia-urea complex at Kakinada.
- With a total planned investment of \$10 billion, the facility will have a final production capacity of 1.5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA).
- Phased commissioning is planned, with 0.5 MTPA by 2027, 1.0 MTPA by 2028, and full capacity by 2030, making it the largest such project globally.

KEYI PANYOR TO BECOME INDIA’S FIRST BIO-HAPPY DISTRICT -

• The newly formed Keyi Panyor district is set to make history by becoming India’s first Bio-Happy District. This pioneering initiative aims to integrate biodiversity conservation with human well-being, offering a new development model that balances ecology, livelihoods, and public health. The project revives the visionary concept of Biohappiness, introduced by the legendary agricultural scientist M. S. Swaminathan.

Biohappiness Concept and Its Revival

• The Bio-Happy District initiative is being implemented by the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation in collaboration with the district administration.

According to Soumya Swaminathan, Chairperson of the Foundation, the project focuses on:

- Livelihood assessment
- Agro-biodiversity mapping
- Ecological system evaluation
- What Is Biohappiness?
- Biohappiness refers to a state of human well-being achieved when biodiversity is conserved and sustainably used to enhance:
 - Nutrition
 - Public health
 - Income and livelihoods
- The concept emphasises harmony between people and nature, making ecological conservation a foundation for development rather than a constraint.



10 YEARS OF PARIS AGREEMENT -

What is Paris Agreement?

- The Paris Agreement is a legally binding global climate agreement adopted in 2015 (21st Conference of the Parties (COP)) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- It replaced the Kyoto Protocol, expanding climate responsibility to all countries.
- **Objective:** It aims to limit global warming to well below 2°C, with efforts to restrict it to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
- **Working Procedure:** The Paris Agreement follows a five-year cycle of progressively stronger climate action by countries.
- Every five years, countries submit updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), outlining plans for emission reduction (mitigation) and climate resilience (adaptation).
- In 2023, the first Global Stocktake concluded at COP28, calling for faster action on mitigation, adaptation, and climate finance by 2030, including a push to transition away from fossil fuels.



- Countries are encouraged to submit long-term low-emission development strategies, though these are voluntary.
- The Paris Rulebook, finalised at COP24 (Katowice, Poland) and COP26 (Glasgow, Scotland), laid down detailed rules for implementing the Agreement.

Key Achievements:

- **Universal Participation:** Nearly all countries (194 States plus the European Union) committed to climate action under a single framework.
- **Climate Finance Commitment:** Developed countries committed to mobilising USD 100 billion per year up to 2025 to support developing countries in climate mitigation and adaptation.
- At COP29 (Baku, Azerbaijan, 2024), a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) was agreed, setting a higher target of at least USD 300 billion annually by 2035.

INDORE DECLARES BHAGIRATHPURA WATERBORNE OUTBREAK AN EPI DEMIC

- Indore's health administration has declared the waterborne disease outbreak in Bhagirathpura locality an epidemic after a sharp rise in cases and fatalities. The outbreak has claimed 10 lives so far, prompting authorities to escalate containment measures and call in specialised teams from central and state agencies. The declaration marks a critical shift in response strategy, with intensified surveillance, treatment, and infrastructure checks underway.

**Epidemic Declaration and Health Rationale**

- Chief Medical and Health Officer "Madhav Hasani" stated that the situation now meets the formal definition

of an epidemic, with reported cases exceeding normal levels for the area. Specialised national teams have been tasked with analysing epidemiological data to determine whether the contamination originated from a single source or multiple points. The focus remains on identifying the precise cause to prevent further spread.

WHY ARE MEGHALAYA'S LIVING ROOT BRIDGES NOMINATED TO UNESCO HERITAGE LIST ? -

- India has officially nominated Meghalaya's famous living root bridges for UNESCO's 2026-27 World Heritage evaluation cycle. These unique bridges, grown naturally from the roots of rubber fig trees, reflect centuries-old indigenous knowledge and sustainable living. Created by the Khasi and Jaintia communities, the bridges are strong, eco-friendly, and deeply connected to local culture. Their nomination brings global attention to Meghalaya's natural beauty and highlights India's rich cultural heritage.

**What Are Living Root Bridges?**

- Living root bridges are natural structures formed by training the aerial roots of rubber fig trees across rivers and streams.
- Over time, these roots grow stronger and interlock to form sturdy bridges.
- Unlike concrete bridges, they are alive and continue to strengthen with age.
- These bridges are mainly found in Meghalaya's Khasi and Jaintia Hills and are examples of sustainable bioengineering passed down through generations.



REPORTS & INDICES

ABU DHABI RANKED WORLD'S SAFEST CITY FOR 10TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR -

Global safety rankings once again place Abu Dhabi at the top. The capital city of the United Arab Emirates has retained its position as the world's safest city for the tenth consecutive year, reflecting consistent efforts in public safety, urban planning and governance. The recognition highlights how long-term policy focus can create a secure and stable living environment.



Why in News?

Abu Dhabi has been named the world's safest city for the 10th year in a row in an international safety ranking released by Numbeo, reaffirming its global reputation for security and quality of life.

About the Global Safety Ranking

The ranking has been released by Numbeo, a well-known global database that compares cities based on crime rates, public safety perception, law enforcement efficiency, and overall quality of life. Abu Dhabi has topped this index continuously since 2017. The ranking is based on user-contributed data and surveys, combined with crime statistics. Maintaining the top position for a decade reflects sustained governance, strong institutions, and effective implementation of public safety measures.

WHOLESALE INFLATION INCHES UP TO 0.83% IN DECEMBER 2025 -

India's wholesale inflation showed a mild increase in December 2025 after two months of deflation. Official data indicates that prices of food items, manufactured products and non-food articles pushed inflation into positive territory. The trend comes amid low retail inflation and an accommodative monetary policy stance by the central bank.

Why in News?

Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation rose to 0.83% in December 2025. It returned to positive territory after deflation in October and November.

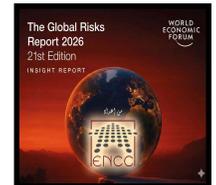


Trend in Wholesale Inflation

The wholesale inflation trend indicates a gradual recovery from deflationary pressures. In October 2025, WPI inflation stood at -1.21%, followed by -0.32% in November. December's positive reading of 0.83% suggests improving demand conditions and stabilisation in input prices. However, inflation remains much lower compared to December 2024, when WPI inflation was 2.57%. This trend reflects overall price moderation in the economy, supported by softer global commodity prices and controlled domestic demand, while still showing signs of recovery in industrial activity.

GLOBAL RISKS REPORT 2026 -

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has released the Global Risks Report 2026, based on its Global Risks Perception Survey. The Report identifies cybersecurity as the most significant risk for India in 2026.



Key Highlights from the Report

Top Global Risk: Geoeconomic confrontation emerges as the single biggest global risk in 2026. It overtakes State-based armed conflict and extreme weather events. **Trend Shift:** Geoeconomic confrontation has risen two positions compared to last year to rank first. State-based armed conflict has fallen to second position.

Technology-Related Risks Rising:



- Misinformation and disinformation rank 5th globally (7% respondents).
- Adverse outcomes of AI technologies enter the top 10 at rank 8.
- Cyber insecurity ranks 9th globally, reflecting heightened digital vulnerabilities.

BAL VIVAH MUKT BHARAT ABHIYAN -

- The Union government recently marked one year of the Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (BVMB) by launching a nationwide 100-day awareness campaign, reaffirming India's commitment to the United Nations target of ending child marriage by 2030.

**Summary**

- Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat Abhiyan represents India's shift from a purely legal response to a preventive, community-driven, and technology-enabled strategy to eliminate child marriage by 2030, aligned with SDG 5.3.
- Despite significant decline in prevalence, deep-rooted socio-economic, educational, and gender inequalities continue to sustain child marriage, necessitating a holistic CHAINS-BREAK approach combining education, enforcement, economic security, awareness, and protection.

What is Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat Abhiyan?

- **About:** BVMB was launched in 2024 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, to eliminate child marriage and make India child marriage-free by 2030.
- It reflects India's commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.3 and marks a shift from a purely legal response to a prevention- and community-driven approach.
- **Objectives:** The campaign aims to reduce the prevalence of child marriage by 10% by 2026 and completely eradicate the practice by 2030.
- Its broader goal is to protect children's rights, delay the age of marriage, promote girls' education, and address the

social norms and economic vulnerabilities that sustain early marriage.

- **Legal and Constitutional Foundation of BVMB:** It is grounded in Article 21 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to life and dignity, and is supported by the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006.

CENTRAL DRUGS STANDARD CONTROL ORGANIZATION GUIDELINES -

- The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has released guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to the compounding of offences under the Drugs and Cosmetics (Compounding of Offences) Rules, 2025.
- These guidelines aim to simplify the regulatory framework for pharmaceutical companies, especially concerning minor violations under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

Background

- Until recently, minor violations of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act often led to criminal prosecution. Jan Vishwas Amendment Act (2023): The Jan Vishwas Act aims to decriminalise minor offences to improve ease of living and doing business, expanding the scope of Section 32B of the 1940 Act to include more offences for compounding, such as production and sale violations, and issues related to record keeping.

INDIAN RAILWAYS HAS ELECTRIFIED 99.2% OF ITS BROAD GAUGE (1.676 METRE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE INNER FACES OF THE TWO PARALLEL RAIL LINES) NETWORK, COVERING 69,427 ROUTE KILOMETRES (RKMS) OUT OF 70,001 RKMS AS OF NOVEMBER 2025, ALIGNING INFRASTRUCTURE GROWTH WITH SUSTAINABILITY -

- **Historical Significance:** Railway electrification in India began in 1925 with the first electric train running between Bombay Victoria Terminus and Kurla Harbour, laying the foundation for energy-efficient rail mobility.



- Acceleration in the Last Decade:** Electrification pace surged from 1.42 km/day (2004–2014) to over 15 km/day (2019–2025). The share of electrified railway tracks increased from 24% in 2000 to over 96% by 2024, reaching 99.2% by November 2025.
 
- Near-Universal State Coverage:** Railways' networks in 25 States/UTs are 100% electrified, with only 5 States (Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Assam, and Goa) having residual non-electrified sections totalling 574 RKMs (0.8%).
- Economic and Environmental Gains:** Electric traction is about 70% more economical than diesel and significantly reduces carbon emissions, air pollution, and fossil fuel dependence.
- Global Railway Electrification (as of June 2025):** Switzerland leads with 100% railway electrification, followed by China (82%), Spain (67%), Japan (64%), France (60%), Russia (52%), and the United Kingdom (39%).
- Integration of Renewable Energy:** As of November 2025, Indian Railways has commissioned 898 MW of solar capacity, up from 3.68 MW in 2014, representing a nearly 244-fold increase. Solar installations now cover 2,626 railway stations across India.

UN-DESA PROJECTS INDIA'S GDP GROWTH AT 6.6% FOR 2026: KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF WESP 2026 REPORT -

- In January 2026, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) released its flagship report titled "World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2026".



The report has projected India's GDP growth at 6.6% in calendar year (CY) 2026, making India the fastest-growing major economy despite global uncertainties. The projection is slightly lower than India's estimated 7.4%

growth for 2025, while growth is forecast to improve marginally to 6.7% in 2027.

Report Details (For Exams)

- What:** UN-DESA projected India's GDP growth at 6.6% in 2026 and 6.7% in 2027
- Report Name:** World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2026
- India's Status:** Expected to remain the fastest-growing major economy

Why India's Growth Remains Strong

According to the report, India's strong performance will be supported mainly by:

- Resilient household consumption
- Strong public investment
- Support from tax reforms and monetary easing
- These factors are expected to help India manage global challenges such as trade tensions and policy uncertainty.

KARNATAKA RECORDS HIGHEST-EVER ORGAN DONATIONS IN 2025 -

- Karnataka has set a new benchmark in organ donation, registering its highest-ever annual tally in 2025. The state recorded 198 organ donors during the year, reflecting growing public awareness and institutional coordination in the area of organ and tissue transplantation.



Record Performance and National Ranking

- The milestone was achieved by Jeevasarthakathe, Karnataka's State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (SOTTO). With 198 donors in 2025, Karnataka ranked third nationally in state-wise organ donations, behind Tamil Nadu and Telangana. The figure surpasses the state's previous record of 178 donors in 2023 and marks a steady rise from 162 donors in 2024.

Donor Profile and Organs Retrieved

- Of the 198 donors, 150 were male and 48 female. A total of 306 kidneys were retrieved, making them the most donated organs, followed by 288 corneas and 167 livers. Other significant donations included 76 heart valves, 50



hearts, 29 lungs, 33 skin grafts, two bone donations, and one small bowel. The diversity and volume of organs retrieved underscore improved coordination between hospitals and transplant teams.

BULGARIA ADOPTS THE EURO, BECOMES 21ST MEMBER OF THE EUROZONE -

• Bulgaria has taken a historic economic step by adopting the euro as its official currency. This move places the country firmly within Europe’s economic mainstream after years of preparation. While many urban and younger Bulgarians see the change as progress, others fear rising prices and loss of national identity. The transition reflects both opportunity and challenge for the country.

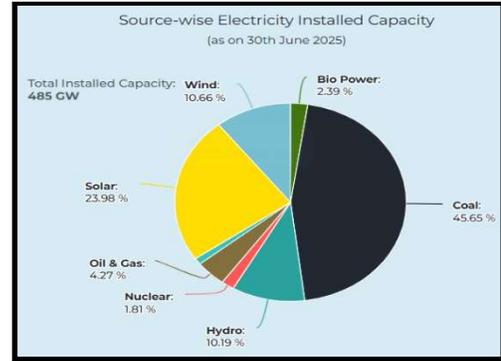


Why in the News?

- Bulgaria has officially replaced its national currency, the lev, with the euro, becoming the 21st member of the eurozone. The move follows years of economic reforms and EU integration, despite political instability and public division over the new currency.
- **Background:** Bulgaria and the Euro
- The Bulgarian lev has been the national currency since 1881.
- Since 1997, the lev has been pegged to major European currencies, first the Deutschmark and later the euro.
- Bulgaria joined NATO and the European Union, then the Schengen Area, before adopting the euro.
- The country has a population of about 6.5 million, making it one of the EU’s poorest members.

INDIA’S POWER SECTOR MILESTONES 2025 -

• The year 2025 proved to be a landmark period for the Ministry of Power, as India’s power sector achieved record milestones, establishing a strong foundation for sustainable growth and enhanced energy security.



What are the Key Achievements of the Ministry of Power in the Year 2025?

- **Record Supply & Reliability:** Successfully met an all-time peak power demand of 242.49 GW in FY 2025-26, reducing national energy shortages to a mere 0.03% from 4.2% in 2013-14. It significantly increased rural and urban power availability to 22.6 and 23.4 hours, respectively.
- India's power sector is poised for massive growth with a projected investment of USD 450 billion by 2032.
- **Massive Capacity Expansion:** Total installed power generation capacity surged to around 509 GW (as of November, 2025), a 104.4% increase since 2014, with 55.57 GW added in 2025.
- Renewable energy capacity additions since 2014 stand at 178 GW, including 130 GW solar and 33 GW wind.



DEFENCE

INDIAN ARMY CONDUCTS EXERCISE SANJHA SHAKTI IN MAHARASHTRA -

• The Indian Army on Saturday conducted Exercise “Sanjha Shakti”, a joint Military–Civil Fusion exercise, at the Dighi Hills Range. The exercise was organised under the aegis of the Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa Area of the Southern Command, with the objective of strengthening coordination between the armed forces and civilian agencies in responding to complex security challenges and emergency situations.



Objective and Operational Focus

• According to the Indian Army, the exercise aimed to enhance civil–military synergy, improve rapid response capabilities, and ensure public safety in rear areas. It focused on preparedness for emergencies such as disasters, internal security challenges, and other contingencies in the hinterland, where coordinated action between multiple agencies is critical.

Participation and Joint Agencies

• More than 350 personnel participated in the drill, bringing together the Indian Army and 16 key civilian agencies. These included the Maharashtra Police, Force One, and various fire and emergency services. The large-scale participation highlighted the importance of integrated planning and execution among diverse stakeholders involved in public safety and disaster response.

DRDO CELEBRATES 68TH FOUNDATION DAY 2026: AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT, CYBER, SPACE & AI LEADERSHIP -

• On January 1, 2026, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), functioning under the Ministry of Defence (MoD), celebrated its 68th Foundation Day at DRDO Headquarters in New Delhi.

• The celebration marked nearly seven decades of extraordinary contributions to India’s defence and

security infrastructure. Union Minister Rajnath Singh, Minister of State Sanjay Seth, and Dr. Samir V. Kamat, Chairman of DRDO and Secretary of the Department of Defence R&D, graced the occasion with their presence, underscoring the national significance of DRDO’s achievements and future trajectory in advancing Aatmanirbhar Bharat—India’s self-reliant defence ecosystem.



Key Facts for Competitive Exams

- Event: 68th Foundation Day of DRDO
- Date: January 1, 2026
- Location: DRDO Headquarters, New Delhi
- Established: January 1, 1958 (68 years of operation)
- Chairman: Samir V. Kamat
- Current Network: 52 laboratories (from initial 10)
- Key Focus Areas: Cyber, Space, and Artificial Intelligence
- 22 AoN Approvals: Worth approximately Rs.1.30 lakh crore
- 11 Defence Contracts: Worth Rs.26,000 crore
- Technology Transfers (LAToT): 245 in 2025 (Total: 2,201)
- Centres of Excellence (CoE): 15 operational; 66 new projects worth Rs.228 crore

IAF COMMEMORATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF TEJAS LIGHT COMBAT AIRCRAFT’S FIRST FLIGHT -

• On January 4, 2026, the Indian Air Force (IAF) proudly commemorated the 25th anniversary of the maiden flight of the indigenously developed Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA). This milestone marks a defining moment in India’s journey towards self-reliance in



defence aviation under the broader vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

- The Tejas programme stands as a testament to India’s growing technological capability in designing, developing, and manufacturing modern combat aircraft.

Genesis of the Tejas LCA Programme

- The Tejas LCA programme was launched in 1983 by the Government of India with a clear strategic objective— to replace the ageing and obsolete fighter aircraft fleet of the Indian Air Force with a modern, lightweight, multi-role combat aircraft designed and built in India.
- This ambitious initiative laid the foundation for India’s indigenous aerospace ecosystem, involving multiple research institutions, public sector undertakings, and private industry partners.

INDIAN ARMY CREATES MODERN WARFARE FORCE ‘BHAIRAV’ WITH OVER 1 LAKH DRONE OPERATIVES -

- In January 2026, the Indian Army announced a major leap in India’s military modernisation with the creation of a new modern warfare force named ‘Bhairav’. This elite force is designed to integrate drone technology into combat operations, significantly enhancing India’s battlefield capabilities in an era of technology-driven warfare.
- The newly raised force will comprise over 1 lakh trained drone operatives, making it one of the largest dedicated drone warfare units globally.



What is the ‘Bhairav’ Force?

- The Bhairav force represents a new-generation combat unit tailored for the challenges of modern, high-intensity warfare. Every soldier in these battalions is trained in advanced drone operations, enabling real-time surveillance, precision strikes, and battlefield intelligence gathering.

Core Capabilities

- Offensive drone strikes on enemy positions
- Real-time reconnaissance and surveillance

- High-speed operations in hostile environments
- Technology-driven battlefield dominance
- This transformation reflects lessons learned from recent global conflicts, where drones have emerged as decisive force multipliers.

SURYASTRA ROCKET LAUNCHER -

- The Indian Army has signed an emergency procurement contract with NIBE Limited for the indigenous Suryastra long-range rocket launcher, enabling fast-track acquisition within the Emergency Procurement framework.
- The system is being domestically produced under a technology collaboration with Elbit Systems, while the Defence Acquisition Council has extended Emergency Procurement powers to allow contract signing until 15 January 2026.



Survastra

- About: Suryastra is India’s first Made-in-India, multi-calibre, long-range rocket launcher system developed by Pune-based NIBE Limited in collaboration with Israel’s Elbit Systems.
- It leverages Elbit’s PULS (Precise & Universal Launching System) architecture to deliver precision surface-to-surface strikes at ranges of up to 150 km and 300 km, marking the first domestic production of a high-precision rocket launcher with 300 km strike capability.
- It has demonstrated a high accuracy of less than five metres circular error probable (CEP) in trials and can also fire loitering munitions up to 100 km.

Key Capabilities:

- **Multi-Calibre Capability:** A single launcher can fire multiple types of rockets and guided munitions, enhancing operational flexibility and reducing logistical burden.
- **High Tactical Mobility:** Mounted on a BEML High Mobility Vehicle (HMV), it enables rapid deployment, shoot-and-scoot operations, reduced



vulnerability to counter-battery fire, and effective operations across diverse terrains.

DRDO'S HYPERSONIC GLIDE MISSILE MAKES REPUBLIC DAY DEBUT -

- India's defense modernisation was on full display at the 77th Republic Day parade with the debut of an advanced hypersonic missile system. Developed indigenously, the new weapon reflects India's growing technological depth in high-speed precision warfare and highlights the emphasis on strengthening maritime security in an evolving strategic environment.



Why in News?

- At the 77th Republic Day parade, Defence Research and Development Organisation showcased its hypersonic glide missile system, the LR-AShM, along with its launcher, marking its first public appearance.

What Is the LR-AShM Missile System?

- The Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile (LR-AShM) is a hypersonic glide missile developed to meet the coastal battery requirements of the Indian Navy.
- Hypersonic glide vehicles travel at speeds greater than Mach 5, following a low and manoeuvrable trajectory that makes detection and interception extremely difficult.
- The system is designed for land-based deployment, allowing rapid response against hostile naval assets approaching India's coastline.

UNION BUDGET 2026: DEFENSE SPENDING RISES 15.3% TO ₹7.84 LAKH CRORE -

- The Union Budget 2026 has delivered one of the strongest signals yet of India's changing security priorities. Just a year after a major military confrontation with Pakistan, the government has raised defense spending by 15.3% to ₹7.84 lakh crore. Presented in Parliament, the Budget reflects lessons from recent conflict, growing geopolitical uncertainty, and the push for self-reliant defense manufacturing. With higher capital outlay, customs duty relief and procurement reforms, defense has emerged as a central pillar of India's strategic and economic planning.



Defense Budget at a Glance

- For FY 2026-27, the Ministry of Defense has been allocated ₹7.84 lakh crore, up from ₹6.81 lakh crore last year.
- This marks a 15.3% increase, one of the highest annual jumps in recent years.
- Of this, ₹3.65 lakh crore is for defence services revenue, ₹2.19 lakh crore for capital outlay, and ₹1.71 lakh crore for pensions.
- Capital expenditure alone rose by 21.8%, signalling a clear focus on modernisation, new platforms and equipment acquisition.



SPORTS

SAINA NEHWAL RETIRES FROM BADMINTON AFTER HISTORIC CAREER AND INJURY BATTLE -

• Indian badminton has reached the end of a golden chapter. Saina Nehwal, one of the country's most celebrated sportspersons, has officially confirmed her retirement from competitive badminton. After struggling with a chronic knee condition for nearly two years, the Olympic medallist has chosen to step away from the sport, closing a career that transformed Indian badminton on the global stage.



Why in News?

• Saina Nehwal has confirmed her retirement from competitive badminton after being inactive for almost two years due to severe knee injuries, including cartilage degeneration and arthritis.

Reason Behind Retirement and Injury Struggles

• Saina Nehwal revealed that severe cartilage degeneration and arthritis in her knees made high-intensity training impossible.

• According to her, elite-level badminton requires eight to nine hours of daily training, but her body could no longer cope beyond one or two hours.

• Frequent swelling and pain forced her to accept that continuing at the highest level was no longer feasible.

• Her decision highlights the physical toll of professional sport and the challenges athletes face when dealing with long-term injuries.

AARYAN VARSHNEY BECOMES INDIA'S 92ND CHESS GRANDMASTER -

• India's rise in world chess continues as a young talent adds his name to the elite list of Grandmasters. Delhi-based Aaryan Varshney achieved a major career milestone by earning the prestigious GM title at an international tournament in Armenia. His achievement reflects India's growing dominance in global



chess and the steady emergence of young champions.

Why in News?

• Indian chess player Aaryan Varshney became India's 92nd Grandmaster after securing his final GM norm at the Andranik Margaryan Memorial Tournament in Armenia.

Historic Achievement in Armenia

• Aaryan Varshney sealed his Grandmaster title by winning the Andranik Margaryan Memorial with a round to spare.

• The 21-year-old secured his third and final GM norm after holding a crucial draw against FM Tyhran Ambartsumian in the eighth round.

• Achieving the norm before the final round underlined his consistency and composure at the international level.

• This victory not only earned him the title but also placed him among India's elite chess players.

NEW SPORTS LAW BEGINS TO RESHAPE INDIA'S SPORTS GOVERNANCE -

• India's sports administration has entered a new phase with the partial implementation of a landmark law from the beginning of 2026. The new legal framework aims to bring transparency, accountability, and athlete focused decision-making in sports bodies. By regulating how sports federations function, the government hopes to professionalise sports governance and create a fair system that supports athletes while maintaining ethical and financial discipline.

Why in the News?

• Select provisions of the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 have come into effect from January 1, 2026. The Union government has activated sections that establish new oversight bodies and set rules for national sports federations, marking a major reform in India's sports governance system.

What is the National Sports Governance Act?

• The National Sports Governance Act, notified in August 2025, is designed to regulate the functioning of sports bodies in India.



- It applies to institutions such as the National Olympic Committee, National Paralympic Committee, and National Sports Federations.
- The Act aims to align Indian sports administration with Olympic and Paralympic Charters, promote ethical practices, and ensure fair treatment of athletes.
- It also introduces legal backing to reforms that were earlier based mainly on government guidelines.

SJOERD MARIJNE RETURNS AS COACH OF INDIAN WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM -

- The Indian women's hockey team has received a major boost with the appointment of an experienced international coach. The return of a familiar face is expected to strengthen team preparation and performance in upcoming global tournaments. This move comes at a crucial time as India prepares for important international qualifiers, aiming to build on past successes and secure a place on the world stage.

Why in the News?

- Hockey India has announced the appointment of Sjoerd Marijne as the chief coach of the Indian women's hockey team. His appointment is significant as India prepares for the FIH Women's Hockey World Cup Qualifiers scheduled in March.

Who is Sjoerd Marijne?

- Sjoerd Marijne is a well-known Dutch hockey coach with strong international experience.
- He previously coached the Indian women's hockey team and guided them to a historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.
- This was India's best-ever performance in women's hockey at the Olympics and came after a gap of over 36 years since their earlier Olympic appearance.
- His understanding of Indian players and conditions makes his return especially valuable.

INDIAN WOMEN'S HOCKEY END 2025 WITH ASIA CUP SILVER -

- The Indian women's hockey team signed off 2025 with a silver medal at the Women's Asia Cup, reaffirming their

status among Asia's leading teams even as the year exposed gaps against elite global opposition. The continental podium finish provided a timely boost after a demanding season marked by mixed results across tours and international competitions.



Strong Start After Asian Champions Trophy Triumph

- India began the year riding confidence from their 2024 Women's Asian Champions Trophy title in Rajgir, where they edged China 1-0 in the final. That victory had underlined India's growing tactical maturity and resilience in high-pressure matches. However, carrying that momentum into a packed 2025 calendar proved challenging as the team encountered stronger and more varied opposition.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN 2026: CARLOS ALCARAZ DEFEATS NOVAK DJOKOVIC TO COMPLETE CAREER GRAND SLAM -

- On February 1, 2026. In a gripping men's singles final at the Australian Open 2026, Spain's Carlos Alcaraz defeated Serbian legend Novak Djokovic to achieved feat and completed the Grand Slam series. At just 22 years of age, Alcaraz completed his career Grand Slam, becoming the youngest man in tennis history to do so. The match was more than a final it symbolized the passing of an era and the rise of a new one in global tennis.



The Final That Redefined Modern Tennis

- The Australian Open 2026 final lived up to its billing.
- Djokovic took the opening set 6-2, showcasing his trademark control and experience.
- However, Alcaraz responded with remarkable composure, taking the next three sets 6-2, 6-3, 7-5.
- His aggressive baseline play, physical endurance and tactical maturity stood out.
- The victory was not just about beating Djokovic, but about doing so on a stage where legends are tested. It reflected Alcaraz's evolution from prodigy to dominant champion.



IMPORTANT MCQ FOR COMPETITIVE EXAMS

- Q1. What is the rank of India in Asia Manufacturing Index (AMI) 2026 ?
a) Fourth b) Fifth c) Sixth d) Seventh
- Q2. Which city has been ranked the world's safest city for the tenth consecutive year, according to 2026 Numbeo Global Safety Index ?
a) Abu Dhabi b) Tokyo
c) Vienna d) Singapore
- Q3. Souparnika River, that was recently seen in news, is located in which state ?
a) Karnataka b) Kerala
c) Tamil Nadu d) Maharashtra
- Q4. Phulkari embroidery, that was recently seen in news, originated in which region ?
a) Rajasthan and Gujarat
b) Maharashtra and Karnataka
c) Punjab and Haryana
d) Uttar Pradesh and Bihar
- Q5. The Liberalised Remittances Scheme (LRS) operates under which Indian law ?
a) Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934
b) Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1973
c) Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999
d) Companies Act, 2013
- Q6. 'Parakram Diwas' is observed to commemorate the birth anniversary of which freedom fighter ?
a) Mahatma Gandhi b) Bhagat Singh
c) Subhas Chandra Bose d) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
- Q7. Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), that was recently seen in news, is classified as which type of disease ?
a) Autoimmune neurological disorder
b) Respiratory disease
c) Cardiovascular disease
d) Infectious bacterial disease
- Q8. Bor Tiger Reserve is located in which state ?
a) Maharashtra b) Gujarat c) Karnataka d) Kerala
- Q9. Dardanelles Strait, that was recently seen in news, is located in which country ?
a) Greece b) Bulgaria c) Italy d) Turkey
- Q10. Which state has India's largest population of saltwater crocodiles in natural habitat ?
a) Gujarat b) Maharashtra c) Kerala d) Odisha
- Q11. Vadhavan Port, that was recently seen in news, is located in which state ?
a) Andhra Pradesh b) Gujarat
c) Odisha d) Maharashtra
- Q12. Bor Tiger Reserve is located in which state ?
a) Maharashtra b) Gujarat
c) Karnataka d) Kerala
- Q13. Voyager 1 is a space probe launched by which space organization ?
a) European Space Agency (ESA)
b) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
c) National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
d) China National Space Administration (CNSA)
- Q14. What is the 'Miyawaki method' that was recently seen in news ?
a) A technique of terrace farming
b) A method of urban waste management
c) A method of dense afforestation in small areas using native species
d) A technique of hydroponic cultivation
- Q15. The Global Risk Report 2026 was released by which organization ?
a) World Bank
b) International Monetary Fund
c) United Nations Development Programme
d) World Economic Forum
- Q16. The "30 by 30" goal, often mentioned in the context of international environmental agreements like the BBNJ Treaty, refers to:
a) Reducing carbon emissions by 30% by the year 2030.
b) Allocating 30% of the UN budget to biodiversity conservation by 2030.



- c) Achieving 30% renewable energy share in the global energy mix by 2030.
d) Protecting 30% of the world's land and 30% of the global ocean area by 2030.
- Q17. Which state is home to India's first full-stack Sovereign Artificial Intelligence (AI) Park ?
a) Tamil Nadu b) Andhra Pradesh
c) Karnataka d) Kerala
- Q18. SAKSHAM (Samrakshan Kshamatha Mahotsav) is an annual awareness campaign initiated by which ministry ?
a) Ministry of Power
b) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
c) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
d) Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
- Q19. The Finke River, that was recently seen in news, is located in which country ?
a) Russia b) Australia
c) New Zealand d) France
- Q20. Bhadrakali inscription, that was recently seen in news, recorded the information about which temple ?
a) Somnath Temple, Gujarat
b) Tirumala Venkateswara Temple, Andhra Pradesh
c) Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Uttar Pradesh
d) Jagannath Temple, Odisha
- Q21. Man-Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM) weapon system is developed by which organization ?
a) Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)
b) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
c) Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)
d) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
- Q22. Which state has become the first in India to operationalise medical colleges under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model ?
a) Rajasthan b) Chhattisgarh
c) Madhya Pradesh d) Odisha
- Q23. Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary, that was recently seen in news, is located on which hill range ?
a) Vindhya b) Aravalli
c) Shivalik d) Satpura
- Q24. The Global Risk Report 2026 was released by which organization ?
a) World Bank
b) International Monetary Fund
c) United Nations Development Programme
d) World Economic Forum
- Q25. What is the 'Miyawaki method' that was recently seen in news ?
a) A technique of terrace farming
b) A method of urban waste management
c) A method of dense afforestation in small areas using native species
d) A technique of hydroponic cultivation
- Q26. What is the name of the pan-Army digital platform launched by the Indian Army in January 2026 to modernise logistics management ?
a) LogiNet
b) Depot Integration Management Edition (DIME)
c) Army Logistics Cloud
d) e-Supply Chain
- Q27. Which institution launched "Creator's Corner platform" to empower digital creators across India ?
a) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
b) Press Information Bureau
c) NITI Aayog
d) Prasar Bharati
- Q28. Which one of the following countries is not a member of the Weimar Triangle ?
a) Poland b) France
c) Germany d) Italy
- Q29. Ratapani Tiger Reserve is located in which state ?
a) Madhya Pradesh b) Gujarat
c) Tamil Nadu d) Maharashtra
- Q30. Which organization has developed the National IED Data Management System (NIDMS) ?
a) National Investigation Agency (NIA)
b) National Security Guard (NSG)
c) Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)
d) Intelligence Bureau
- Q31. Which of the following is the primary objective of the PANKHUDI portal launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development ?



- a) To provide direct cash transfers to victims of domestic violence.
b) To provide a legal aid platform for international child custody disputes.
c) To act as a recruitment portal for Anganwadi workers across India.
d) To streamline CSR partnerships and stakeholder collaboration for women and children.
- Q32. The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) functions under the aegis of which ministry?
a) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
b) Ministry of Textiles
c) Ministry of Finance
d) Ministry of Home Affairs
- Q33. Melghat Tiger Reserve is located in which state?
a) Maharashtra b) Madhya Pradesh
c) Rajasthan d) Gujarat
- Q34. Wangchhu Hydro Electricity Project is located in which country?
a) Sri Lanka b) Myanmar
c) Nepal d) Bhutan
- Q35. Kamala Hydroelectric Project is located in which state?
a) Assam b) Arunachal Pradesh
c) Manipur d) Odisha
- Q36. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) is the apex national sports body established by which ministry?
a) Ministry of Education
b) Ministry of Home Affairs
c) Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
d) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- Q37. Nagauri Ashwagandha, which has recently received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, is mainly grown in which State?
a) Rajasthan b) Gujarat
c) Karnataka d) Madhya Pradesh
- Q38. The Salal Hydroelectric Project is located on which river?
a) Ravi b) Jhelum c) Chenab d) Indus
- Q39. Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme is implemented by which ministry?
a) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
b) Ministry of Heavy Industries
c) Ministry of Science and Technology
d) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- Q40. World Braille Day is observed every year on which day?
a) January 1 b) January 2
c) January 3 d) January 4
- Q41. The maiden flight test of the Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket (LRGR) was successfully conducted at the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha. What is the maximum range of the LRGR tested on 29 December 2025?
a) 80 kilometres b) 100 kilometres
c) 150 kilometres d) 120 kilometres
- Q42. Which category of banks was the main driver of overall employment growth in the Indian banking sector in FY25, according to RBI data?
a) Public Sector Banks b) Private Sector Banks
c) Foreign Banks d) Small Finance Banks
- Q43. The Grand International Exposition of Sacred Piprahwa Relics of Bhagwan Buddha was inaugurated in which city?
a) New Delhi b) Chennai
c) Hyderabad d) Jaipur
- Q44. According to the Economic Survey 2023–24, which of the following is the correct descending order of the top three rice-producing states in India?
a) West Bengal > Uttar Pradesh > Telangana
b) Telangana > Uttar Pradesh > West Bengal
c) Uttar Pradesh > West Bengal > Punjab
d) Telangana > West Bengal > Andhra Pradesh
- Q45. Recently, which country became the 21st member of the Eurozone, bringing it closer to full European integration?
a) Romania b) Croatia
c) Serbia d) Bulgaria
- Q46. What is the name of Goa's newly announced third district?
a) Mandovi b) Zuari
c) Kushavati d) Chandrapur



- Q47. Which state has become the first in India to establish a national Artificial Intelligence (AI) research institution?
a) Gujarat b) Maharashtra
c) Karnataka d) Kerala
- Q48. As of 2025, Santhali, one of India's oldest tribal languages, was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution through which Constitutional Amendment?
a) 86th Amendment Act, 2002
b) 92nd Amendment Act, 2003
c) 94th Amendment Act, 2005
d) 101st Amendment Act, 2016
- Q49. As of 2025, P.V. Sindhu has been elected Chair of which commission for the 2026–2029 term?
a) Indian Olympic Association Athletes' Commission
b) Badminton World Federation Athletes' Commission
c) International Olympic Committee Athletes' Commission
d) Asian Badminton Federation Executive Committee
- Q50. The Rashtra Prerna Sthal inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Lucknow primarily commemorates which of the following leaders?
a) Mahatma Gandhi
b) Jawaharlal Nehru
c) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
d) Atal Bihari Vajpayee
- Q51. Phulkari embroidery, that was recently seen in news, originated in which region?
a) Rajasthan and Gujarat
b) Maharashtra and Karnataka
c) Punjab and Haryana
d) Uttar Pradesh and Bihar
- Q52. 'Parakram Diwas' is observed to commemorate the birth anniversary of which freedom fighter ?
a) Mahatma Gandhi b) Bhagat Singh
c) Subhas Chandra Bose d) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
- Q53. Who has been selected for the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2025 ?
a) Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
b) Graca Machel
c) Winnie Madikizela-Mandela
d) Leymah Gbowee
- Q54. Sea of Japan, that was recently seen in news, is a marginal sea of which ocean?
a) Pacific Ocean b) Atlantic Ocean
c) Arctic Ocean d) Indian Ocean
- Q55. Which species is the natural host of "Nipah Virus" that was recently seen in news?
a) Rodents b) Pigs
c) Fruit bats d) Migratory birds
- Q56. Shri Mahakaleshwar temple, that was recently seen in news, is located in which city of Madhya Pradesh ?
a) Bhopal b) Ujjain
c) Indore d) Satna
- Q57. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently paid tributes to Lala Lajpat Rai on his birth anniversary. Lala Lajpat Rai is best known in India's freedom struggle for which of the following?
a) Leading the Dandi March against the salt law
b) Heading the Bardoli Satyagraha movement
c) Leading protests against the Simon Commission
d) Founding the All India Muslim League
- Q58. Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change declared Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary as an Eco-Sensitive Zone to conserve biodiversity. Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary is located in which Indian state?
a) Gujarat b) Madhya Pradesh
c) Rajasthan d) Maharashtra
- Q59. Pandoh Dam, that was recently seen in news, is constructed on which river?
a) Sutlej b) Ravi c) Beas d) Chenab
- Q60. Which ministry is the nodal authority for the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for White Goods ?
a) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
b) Ministry of Science and Technology
c) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
d) Ministry of Finance
- Q61. Muna Island, that was recently seen in news, is located in which country ?
a) Indonesia b) Japan
c) China d) Philippines



- Q62. India has nominated Meghalaya's Living Root Bridges (Jingkieng Jri / Lyu Chrai Cultural Landscape) for UNESCO World Heritage status. Which of the following statements about Living Root Bridges is correct ?
- They are stone bridges built during the Ahom period
 - They are grown from the aerial roots of living trees by Khasi and Jaintia communities
 - They are temporary bamboo structures replaced every monsoon
 - They are found mainly in the Western Ghats of India
- Show Answer
- Q63. Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change declared Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary as an Eco-Sensitive Zone to conserve biodiversity. Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary is located in which Indian state ?
- Gujarat
 - Madhya Pradesh
 - Rajasthan
 - Maharashtra
- Q64. On 23rd January 2026, President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated Granth Kutir at Rashtrapati Bhavan, which houses a rich collection of manuscripts and books in 11 classical Indian languages. What does Granth Kutir primarily showcase ?
- India's rich and diverse cultural, philosophical, literary, and intellectual heritage
 - An important centre for the preservation of Indian languages and manuscripts
 - A collection of ancient and medieval literary and philosophical knowledge
 - A centre for the study and promotion of India's historical and intellectual heritage
- Q65. The Zapotec civilization, that was recently seen in news, primarily flourished in which country ?
- Mexico
 - New Zealand
 - Indonesia
 - Malaysia
- Q66. Recently, the Indian Army and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police conducted Exercise Agni Pariksha in which state ?
- Assam
 - Manipur
 - Nagaland
 - Arunachal Pradesh
- Q67. Tehri Lake, that was recently seen in news, is located in which state ?
- Himachal Pradesh
 - Uttarakhand
 - Madhya Pradesh
 - Odisha
- Q68. Exercise KHANJAR is a bilateral military exercise conducted between India and which country ?
- Malaysia
 - Indonesia
 - Kyrgyzstan
 - Malaysia
- Q69. Which ministry is the nodal ministry for implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan (PM VIKAS) scheme ?
- Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
 - Ministry of Culture
 - Ministry of Minority Affairs
 - Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
- Q70. Recently, the Union Budget clarified that the capital gains tax exemption will not apply to investors who purchase a particular gold-linked government security from the secondary market and hold it till maturity. This provision relates to which of the following gold-linked government instruments ?
- Gold Monetisation Scheme
 - Gold Exchange Traded Fund (ETF)
 - India Gold Coin Scheme
 - Sovereign Gold Bond

ANSWERS

1- c	2-a	3-a	4-c	5-c	6-c	7-a	8-a	9-d	10-d
11-d	12-a	13-c	14-c	15-d	16-d	17-a	18-d	19-b	20-a
21-d	22-c	23-b	24-d	25-c	26-b	27-d	28-d	29-a	30-b
31-d	32- b	33-a	34-d	35-b	36-c	37-a	38-c	39-d	40-d
41-d	42-d	43-a	44-b	45-d	46-c	47-a	48-b	49-b	50-d
51-c	52-c	53-b	54-a	55-c	56-b	57-c	58-c	59-c	60-a
61-a	62-b	63-c	64-a	65-a	66-d	67-b	68-c	69-c	70-d

