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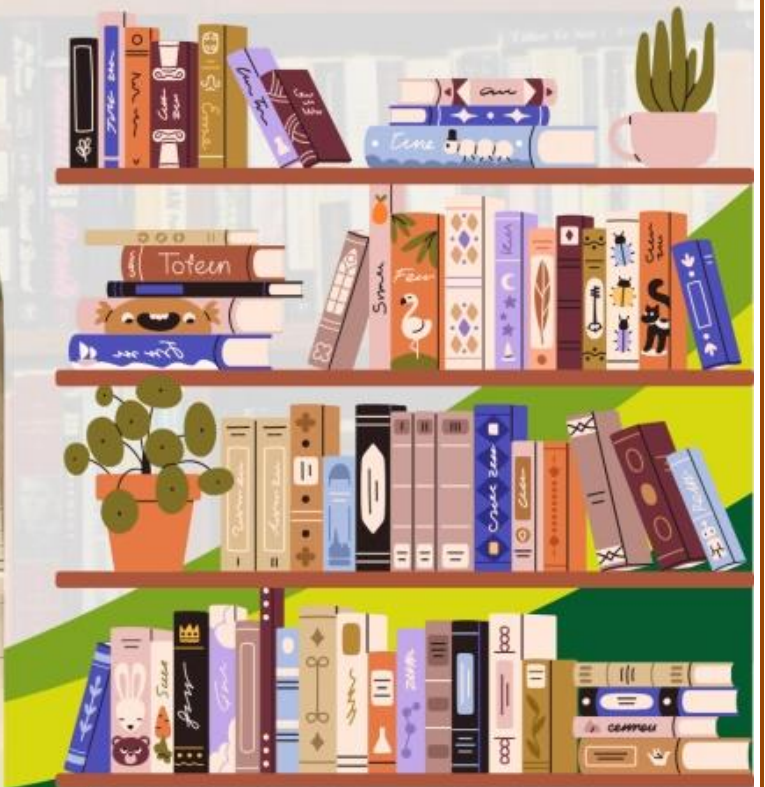
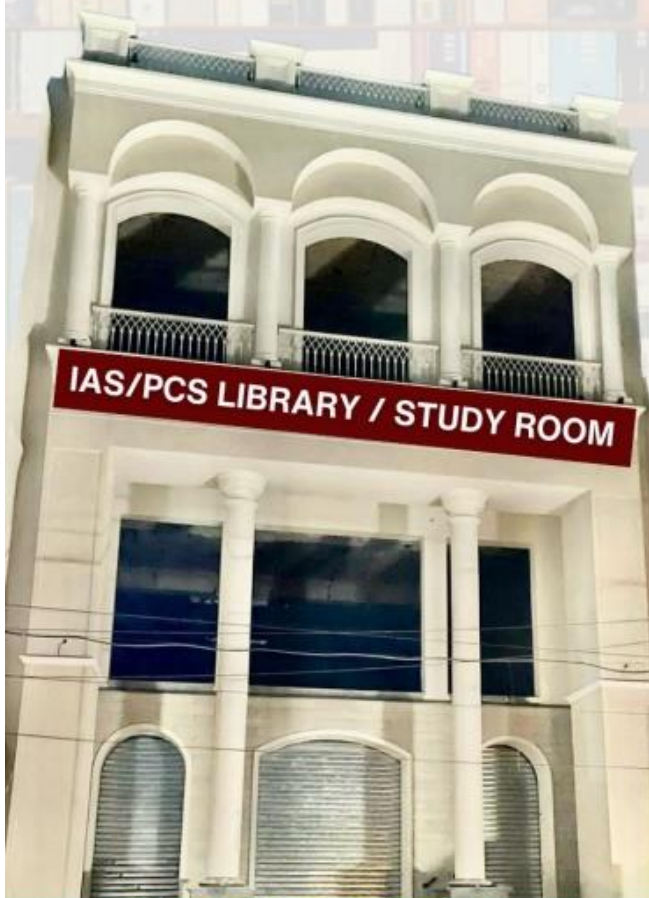
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INDEX

1. NATIONAL NEWS

1. Jan Vishwas Bill, 2026
2. Supreme Court Bans NCERT Textbook
3. E20 Fuel Policy
4. SAMPANN-UMANG Integration
5. YUVIKA (Yuva Vigyani Karyakram)
6. Sadhna Saptah 2026
7. Noida International Airport (Jewar Airport)
8. NIOS Push for 100% Enrolment
9. National Indoor Athletics Championships 2026 (India)
10. Custodial Death in India
11. Babu Jagjivan Ram
12. Most Expensive Indian Artwork: Raja Ravi Varma's Painting
13. Arogya Van Initiative (NHAI)
14. Jyotiba Phule (social reformer)
15. India – 3rd in Renewable Energy Capacity
16. Constitution of India in Sindhi
17. India-flagged LPG tanker Green Asha
18. Elephanta Island (ASI discovery – stepped reservoir)
19. Sadhvi Satish Sail Crowned Femina Miss India World 2026
20. Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2026

2. STATE NEWS

21. Bihar Nalanda temple stampede
22. Purvanchal Mahotsav 'Maati-9'
23. Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana (Delhi)
24. India's First Quantum Computer (Andhra Pradesh)
25. Samrat Samprati Museum
26. Balirajgarh Fort Excavation
27. Braille & Sign Language Services (RPO Bhopal)

28. Kalai-II Hydroelectric Project (Lohit River)
29. Cancer declared notifiable disease (Telangana)
30. Humanoid Robot "Nila" (Puducherry elections)
31. Lanjia Saora Tribe (Odisha)
32. Radio Sikkim Sundari (community radio)
33. AMUL crosses ₹1 lakh crore turnover
34. LIC Apps: MyLIC & Super Sales Saathi
35. Gujarat Police Launches 'NARIT AI' to Strengthen NDPS Investigations

3. INTERNATIONAL NEWS

36. Freight Shinkansen (Japan)
37. Bab al-Mandab Strait significance
38. 4B Movement
39. Indian Softshell Turtle
40. Druzhba Pipeline

4. BOOKS AND AUTHORS

41. 'Tides of Time' by Sudha Murty

5. BANKING / ECONOMY

42. World Air Quality Report 2025
43. India's Economic Ranking Decline

6. SUMMIT, RANKS AND REPORTS

44. One Health Summit
45. IAS Chanchal Kumar Takes Charge as I&B Secretary
46. Vir Vikram Yadav Appointed as DGCA Head
47. Uchral Nyam-Osor Becomes Mongolia's Prime Minister

48. India Tops Global Doping Cases in Track & Field
49. Women's Credit Growth Report (NITI Aayog)
50. TIME100 List (2026)
51. NITI Aayog R&D Reports (2026)
52. India–Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)

7. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS

53. Menaka Guruswamy
54. President of Iraq (2026 – Nizar Amedi)
55. Chief Minister of Bihar (Samrat Choudhary)

8. DEFENCE NEWS

56. Exercise Dweep Shakti
57. NGOPV 'Shachi' Launch
58. Operation Urja Suraksha
59. INS Aridhaman
60. INS Dunagiri
61. Project Chetak
62. Mission MITRA
63. Exercise Cyclone (India–Egypt)
64. Exercise DUSTLIK 2026 (India–Uzbekistan)
65. Samudra Sahas Expedition (Indian Army sailing)
66. Diving Exercise (DIVEX) 2026

9. AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

67. Balakrishna Honoured at IFFD 2026
68. Kalpana Soren Receives BRICS CCI Award
69. Rituparna Sengupta Honoured in UK
70. Stuti Pradhan at World Youth Parliament 2026
71. Samriddh Gram Initiative Nominated for WSIS Prizes 2026

72. Harvard South Asian "Person of the Year"

10. SCIENCE AND TECH

73. Artemis II Mission
74. Artemis II: Humanity's Return to Deep Space
75. Keytruda (Pembrolizumab – cancer drug)
76. UAE – First "10 Giga Nation" (U6GHz network)
77. Meta AI Model – Muse Spark
78. Neuromorphic Computing (frog-inspired sensor)
79. G20 Satellite Likely to be Launched in 2027
80. Atlas Drone Swarm System

11. SPORTS NEWS

81. Hockey India 8th Annual Awards 2025
82. Sheetal Devi Wins Para Archer of the Year
83. Khelo India Tribal Games 2026

12. IMPORTANT DAYS

84. Earth Hour 2026
85. World Health Day
86. World Earth Day

13. GOVT. SCHEMES

87. Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)
88. Womania Initiative (GeM platform)
89. Integrated Infrastructure Monitoring Dashboard (MoSPI)
90. e-SafeHER Programme (cybersecurity for women)
91. Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (11 years)
92. NAMASTE Scheme

14. ENVIRONMENT

93. A humpback whales
94. Snowy Owl
95. Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*)
96. Great Indian Bustard (*Ghorad*)
97. World Autism Awareness Day 2026
98. *Euthalia zubeengargi*
99. Red-Crowned Roofed Turtle:
Return to the Ganga
100. National Chambal Sanctuary
101. Tar Balls
102. Indian Crested Porcupine
103. Ganges River Dolphin
104. Emperor Penguin (Endangered –
IUCN)
105. State of India's Bats (SoIBats)
2024–25 Report
106. Dolphin Friends Initiative
107. India's 99th Ramsar Site

15. OBITUARY

108. Col. Sonam Wangchuk
109. C.D. Gopinath
110. Asha Bhosle

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1. Prabhjot Singh
2. Ayush Raina
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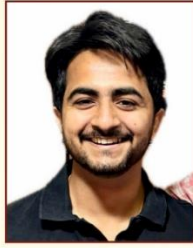
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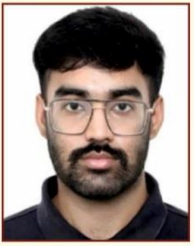
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- IBPS - Specialist Officer
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- RBI - Officer & Assistant
- NABARD - Grade A & B
- SEBI - Grade A Officer

Insurance Exams

- LIC AAO & Assistants
- GIC AO & Assistants

State Govt. Exams

- Food & CS Inspectors
- Co-operative Inspectors
- High Court Clerks
- Taxation Inspectors
- Police SI & Constables
- PUDA, GLADA & PSPCL
- Tehsil Welfare Officer etc.
- Revenue Patwari
- Naib Tehsildar
- Municipal Corporation
- Agricultural Devt. Officer
- Labour Inspector
- Section Officer

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- SSC - CGL
- SSC - CHSL for +2
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- EPF Clerk
- EPF Asstt. Commissioner
- FCI
- PSUs & Railway
- Delhi Police SI/ASI
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1. NATIONAL NEWS

1. Jan Vishwas Bill, 2026



The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, introduced on March 27, 2026 by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, aims to simplify laws and promote ease of doing business. It replaces the 2025 Bill, which covered only 17 Acts. Based on recommendations of a Lok Sabha Select Committee, the 2026 Bill expands its scope to amend 80 central Acts.

A key objective of the Bill is decriminalisation of offences. Many minor violations that earlier attracted imprisonment are now converted into civil penalties (monetary fines). For example, offences under laws like the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and the National Highways Act, 1956 will now attract fines instead of jail terms.

Decriminalisation of Offences

A key objective of the Bill is decriminalisation of offences. Many minor violations that earlier attracted imprisonment are now converted into civil penalties (monetary fines).

- Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 – fines instead of imprisonment
- National Highways Act, 1956 – removal of jail provisions

Removal of Obsolete Provisions

The Bill removes imprisonment provisions in several cases and replaces them with fines. It also omits outdated offences such as:

- Giving false fire alarms
 - Failure to report births and deaths
- This reduces unnecessary legal burden and outdated compliance requirements.

2. Supreme Court Bans NCERT Textbook

Supreme Court of India has imposed a complete ban on a Class 8 social science textbook published by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). The court termed certain content in the book as “extremely contemptuous” and ordered an immediate halt on its publication, reprinting, and digital circulation. The action followed strong observations by Chief Justice Surya Kant, who stated that such material could harm the credibility of the judiciary.



Reason for Controversy

The issue arose from a chapter titled “*The Role of the Judiciary in Our Society*”, which referred to corruption at various levels of the judiciary and highlighted the large backlog of cases (over 53 million pending cases). It also attributed delays in justice delivery to factors such as shortage of judges, complex procedures, and inadequate infrastructure.

The chapter drew criticism from legal experts, including Kapil Sibal and Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who termed it one-sided and inappropriate for school students. Following the backlash, NCERT expressed regret, calling it an “error in judgement,” and withdrew the textbook.

3. E20 Fuel Policy



From 1 April 2026, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has mandated the supply of E20 fuel (20% ethanol blended with petrol) with a minimum 95 RON (Research Octane Number). RON indicates fuel stability and resistance to knocking during combustion in engines.

E20 fuel consists of 80% petrol and 20% ethanol. Under the National Policy on Biofuels, 2018 (amended in 2022), India advanced its target of achieving 20% ethanol blending to Ethanol Supply Year 2025–26, instead of 2030.

The use of E20 fuel offers several benefits such as better combustion, reduced emissions, and improved energy security by lowering dependence on crude oil imports. However, there are concerns including reduced fuel efficiency in some vehicles and potential corrosion or damage in older engines not designed for higher ethanol blends.

4. SAMPANN–UMANG Integration

The SAMPANN (System for Accounting and Management of Pension) platform has been integrated with UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) to provide digital access to pension services for telecom pensioners. UMANG serves as a single platform under the Digital India initiative, offering central, state, and local government services via mobile and web.



SAMPANN is a flagship digital pension system developed by the Office of the Controller General of Communication Accounts and launched nationwide in 2018. It manages the entire pension lifecycle, including processing, e-PPO issuance, payments, accounting, and grievance redressal, shifting towards a pensioner-centric approach without requiring physical visits.

The integration aims to improve accessibility, transparency, and efficiency. Pensioners can now check PPO numbers and Life Certificate status anytime through UMANG. It is further

strengthened by DigiLocker linkage, ensuring secure and seamless access to pension records and documents.

5. YUVIKA (Yuva Vigyani Karyakram)



Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) runs YUVIKA (Young Scientist Programme), a residential training initiative aimed at promoting interest in space science among school students. It specifically targets Class 9 students and has benefited 1,320 students so far, helping develop early scientific curiosity.

Aim and Features

The programme aims to impart basic knowledge of space technology, science, and applications, while encouraging students to pursue careers in this field. Selection is merit-based, involving academic screening and an online quiz, ensuring transparency. It also includes 15% reservation for students from rural and remote areas, promoting inclusive and equitable access.

YUVIKA plays an important role in fostering scientific temper among young students at a crucial stage of career formation. It supports the vision of building a scientifically skilled and innovation-driven nation by nurturing talent early.

6. Sadhna Saptah 2026

Narendra Modi launched Sadhna Saptah 2026, a week-long national programme aimed at strengthening the capacity of civil servants. It is organised under Mission Karmayogi by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) to build a future-ready and citizen-centric civil service.



Aim and Features

The initiative focuses on improving efficiency, performance, and governance skills in line with the vision of *Viksit Bharat*. It ensures nationwide participation from Union and State officials and uses the iGOT Karmayogi platform for digital learning. The programme includes multi-domain training—behavioural, functional, and domain-specific—and covers future-oriented areas like technology, AI, governance reforms, and indigenous knowledge systems.

7. Noida International Airport (Jewar Airport)

Narendra Modi inaugurated Phase-I of Noida International Airport at Jewar (Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh), marking a major step in aviation infrastructure. It is a greenfield



airport project built with an investment of about ₹11,200 crore and is developed by Yamuna International Airport Private Limited (a subsidiary of Zurich Airport International AG) in partnership with central and state governments.

Key Features

The airport aims to strengthen connectivity in northern India and is part of the vision of *Viksit Bharat*. The region is emerging as a logistics hub, supported by freight corridor connectivity at Dadri, enabling faster movement of goods globally. A Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility is also planned to boost domestic aircraft servicing capabilities.

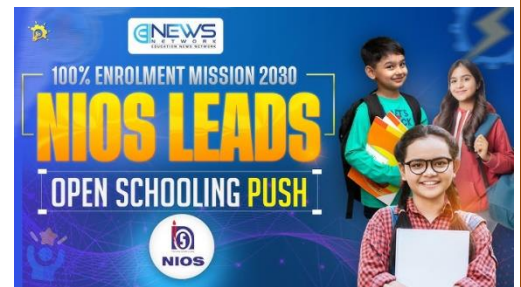
Significance

With this addition, Uttar Pradesh becomes one of the states with the highest number of international airports in India. Other major airports include Lucknow, Varanasi, Kushinagar, and Ayodhya, enhancing regional connectivity, trade, and tourism.

8. NIOS Push for 100% Enrolment

About the Initiative

The Department of School Education and Literacy under the Ministry of Education is strengthening open schooling through National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) to achieve 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) by 2030. The move aligns with the goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047*, aiming to bring out-of-school children back into the education system.

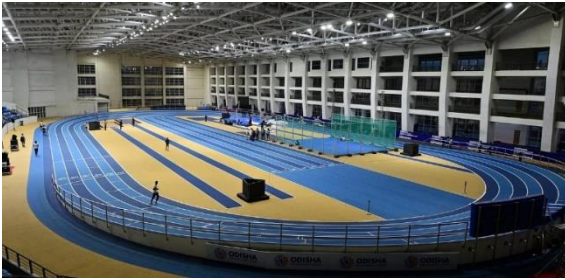


Key Features

NIOS provides flexible, distance-based education with features like multiple exam attempts and on-demand exams, with certifications equivalent to other boards. The government will conduct nationwide identification drives using district-level data to enrol dropouts. A new “NIOS Mitra” programme will deploy facilitators to counsel and support students, especially from marginalised groups. Infrastructure will also be expanded, with plans to establish at least one NIOS centre in every block using existing school facilities like PM SHRI, Kendriya Vidyalayas, and Navodaya Vidyalayas.

The initiative addresses the challenge of millions of out-of-school children, promoting inclusive, flexible, and accessible education. It is a key step toward universal school participation, improving educational outcomes and reducing dropout rates in India.

9. National Indoor Athletics Championships 2026 (India)



India hosted its first National Indoor Athletics Championships 2026 at Kalinga Indoor Stadium, Bhubaneswar, organised by Athletics Federation of India. The event featured over 278 athletes competing on a world-class 200m synthetic indoor track, marking a major milestone in Indian athletics.

Key Features

The Kalinga Indoor Stadium is a state-of-the-art facility with a 200m banked track, 100m sprint track, and dedicated areas for field events. Indoor athletics differs from outdoor events with shorter tracks (200m), banked curves, and controlled conditions, eliminating weather impact. Events included 60m sprint, 60m hurdles, middle-distance races, and field events like long jump, pole vault, and shot put.

Participation and Importance

Top Indian athletes such as Animesh Kujur, Mohammed Afsal, and Praveen Chitravel participated. The championship serves as a preparation platform for the World Indoor Athletics Championships 2028, which will also be hosted in Bhubaneswar. It boosts India's sports infrastructure, global recognition, and readiness for international competitions.

10. Custodial Death in India



A Tamil Nadu court awarded the death penalty to policemen in the Sattankulam custodial murder case, highlighting concerns over custodial violence.

What is Custodial Death?

Custodial death refers to the death of a person under police or judicial custody, often due to torture, excessive force, or negligence. It violates the Right to Life under Article 21.

Key Issues

Custodial deaths in India are a systemic issue marked by weak accountability and continued reliance on coercive interrogation methods. Root causes include a colonial policing mindset, lack of a dedicated anti-torture law, poor training, and institutional impunity. Delayed justice and weak enforcement of safeguards like CCTV further worsen the problem.

Important Judgments

- D.K. Basu vs State of West Bengal – Guidelines on arrest and detention
- Prakash Singh vs Union of India – Police reforms and complaints authorities
- Paramvir Singh Saini vs Baljit Singh – Mandatory CCTV installation

Challenges

Non-functional CCTVs, delayed justice, legal barriers to prosecuting officials, and disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities.

Way Forward

Ratify UNCAT, enact anti-torture law, ensure independent investigations, strengthen forensic methods, and improve police training.

11. Babu Jagjivan Ram



The nation paid tributes to Babu Jagjivan Ram on his 119th birth anniversary. Dignitaries, including Ram Nath Kovind and Meira Kumar, gathered at Samta Sthal to honor his contributions.

Life and Contributions

Babu Jagjivan Ram (1908–1986), popularly known as *Babuji*, was a prominent freedom fighter and a leading advocate of social justice. Born in Chandwa, Bihar, he actively fought against caste discrimination and worked for the upliftment of Dalits. He founded the All India Depressed Classes League in 1935 and participated in the Quit India Movement, for which he was imprisoned. He holds the distinction of being one of India's longest-serving Union Cabinet Ministers (around 35 years) and also served as Deputy Prime Minister in 1979. He played a crucial role in India's Green Revolution as Food and Agriculture Minister and served as Defence Minister during the Indo-Pak War of 1971. He also contributed significantly to labour welfare through measures like Minimum Wages and the Employees' State Insurance (ESI) scheme, and is remembered as a champion of equality and social justice.

12. Most Expensive Indian Artwork: Raja Ravi Varma's Painting



A painting by Raja Ravi Varma has become the most expensive Indian artwork ever sold.

The painting "Yashoda and Krishna" set a record by being sold for ₹167.20 crore. It was purchased by Cyrus S. Poonawalla, Chairman of the Serum Institute of India. Raja Ravi Varma is known for blending European

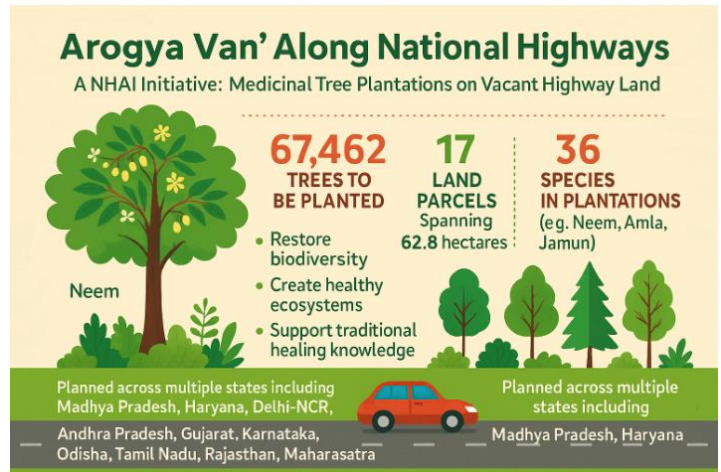
academic techniques with Indian themes and mythology, making his works iconic in Indian art history.

13. Arogya Van Initiative (NHAI)

The National Highways Authority of India has launched the Arogya Van initiative to promote biodiversity along highways.

About the Initiative:

Arogya Van is a plantation programme aimed at developing green corridors by planting medicinal tree species on vacant land along National Highways. The initiative focuses on enhancing ecological sustainability by creating habitats that support pollinators, birds, and microfauna, while also conserving indigenous plant species.



Key Features:

In the first phase, around 17 land parcels covering 62.8 hectares have been identified, with approximately 67,462 medicinal trees to be planted across multiple states including Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Odisha. About 36 species such as neem, amla, jamun, and imli have been selected based on agro-climatic suitability.

The initiative integrates ecological conservation with infrastructure development by enhancing biodiversity and supporting traditional medicinal systems like Ayurveda. It contributes to sustainable highway development while promoting environmental resilience and green cover expansion.

14. Jyotiba Phule (social reformer)



The 200th birth anniversary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was commemorated with tributes at the Parliament House Complex.

Key Developments:

In a historic first, floral tributes were offered to Mahatma Jyotiba Phule within the Parliament premises at Prerna Sthal. The ceremony was led by Droupadi Murmu and Narendra Modi, along with other senior leaders and dignitaries. The initiative was coordinated by the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, with events anchored at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre.

The tribute marks the beginning of year-long nationwide celebrations (April 2026–April 2027) to honour Phule’s contributions to education, social equality, and upliftment of marginalized communities. It reflects institutional recognition of his legacy and reinforces the commitment to promoting inclusive development and social justice in India.

15. India – 3rd in Renewable Energy Capacity

India has ranked 3rd globally in renewable energy installed capacity, as per the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

India has emerged as the third-largest country in the world in renewable energy capacity, after China and the United States, surpassing Brazil. The country’s total non-fossil installed capacity has reached 283.5 GW, comprising solar, wind, hydro, nuclear, and other clean energy sources. In 2025–26 alone, India added a record 55.3 GW of non-fossil capacity, reflecting accelerated expansion in green infrastructure.



Key Trends:

Rooftop solar installations contributed significantly, accounting for 8.7 GW, indicating the growing role of decentralized energy systems. At peak levels, renewable energy accounted for 51.5% of India’s total electricity generation, marking a major milestone in the country’s transition towards a sustainable and low-carbon energy system.

16. Constitution of India in Sindhi



Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan released the Sindhi version of the Constitution of India in two scripts on the occasion of Sindhi Bhasha Diwas.

Key Highlights:

The updated Sindhi translation of the Constitution of India was released at the Vice President’s Enclave in New Delhi. The publication has been brought out in two scripts—Devanagari (first edition) and Persian (second edition)—to ensure wider accessibility among Sindhi-speaking communities.

About Sindhi Language:

Sindhi is one of the 22 official languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. It was incorporated through the 21st Constitutional Amendment Act, reflecting recognition of its linguistic and cultural significance.

17. India-flagged LPG tanker Green Asha

The Indian-flagged LPG tanker *Green Asha* successfully transited the Strait of Hormuz amid ongoing geopolitical tensions in the region.



Key Developments:

The LPG tanker *Green Asha* crossed the strategically significant Strait of Hormuz near Iran, despite heightened tensions following conflict involving the United States and Israel. The strait, which facilitates nearly 20% of global petroleum trade, remains critical for ensuring uninterrupted energy supplies. Despite potential disruptions, Indian shipping operations have continued steadily, reflecting resilience in maritime logistics.

India's Energy Shipping Activity:

Several Indian and associated vessels have sustained active operations in the region. LPG carriers such as BW TYR, BW ELM, Pine Gas, and Jag Vasant have collectively transported over 92,000 tonnes of LPG, while oil tankers Jag Ladki and Jag Prakash carried crude oil and gasoline from the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Additionally, the tanker *Green Sanvi* recently completed its voyage with approximately 46,650 metric tonnes of cargo. These developments underscore India's continued engagement in securing energy supply chains amid volatile geopolitical conditions.

18. Elephanta Island (ASI discovery – stepped reservoir)



The Archaeological Survey of India has discovered a 1,500-year-old stepped reservoir on Elephanta Island.

Key Findings:

The unearthed structure is a T-shaped stepped reservoir with 20 precisely aligned stone steps, constructed using blocks transported from the mainland, indicating advanced engineering for efficient storage of monsoon runoff. Excavations also yielded around 60 coins made of copper, lead, and silver, including those of Krishnaraja of the Kalachuri dynasty (6th century CE), identifiable by distinct motifs and inscriptions. Additionally, nearly 3,000 amphorae fragments of Mediterranean origin and torpedo jars linked to West Asia (including Mesopotamia) were discovered, highlighting extensive long-distance maritime trade.

Archaeological Significance:

The findings point to Elephanta Island's historical role as a prominent trading hub with well-developed port settlements such as Morabandar, Rajbandar, and Shethbandar. Evidence of industrial activity, including a brick structure likely used as a dyeing vat, along with artefacts

like terracotta figurines, bangles, and semi-precious stone beads, reflects a vibrant cultural and economic landscape. These discoveries further enrich the historical importance of the island, already known for the Elephanta Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site featuring rock-cut caves dedicated to Lord Shiva.

19. Sadhvi Satish Sail Crowned Femina Miss India World 2026

Sadhvi Satish Sail from Goa was crowned Femina Miss India World 2026 at the grand finale held in Bhubaneswar, marking a proud moment for the nation. In the 61st edition of this prestigious beauty pageant, Rajnandini Pawar from Maharashtra secured the position of first runner-up after a highly competitive event.



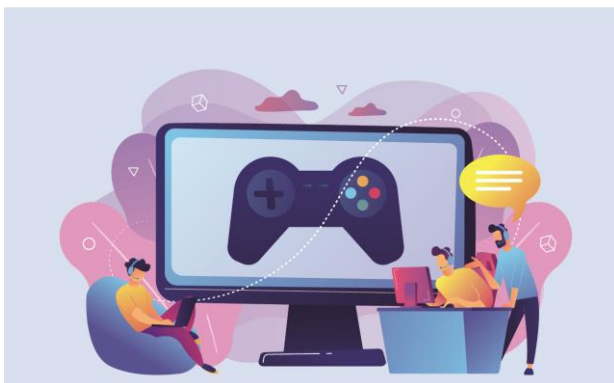
Rajnandini Pawar – First Runner-Up

Rajnandini Pawar from Maharashtra emerged as a strong contender, securing the first runner-up position. She is known for her diverse talents, being both a state-level dancer and a squash player. Her combination of artistic expression and athletic discipline distinguished her as one of the standout performers in the competition.

Here is a clean, formal table summarizing the results:

Position	Name	State/UT
Winner	Sadhvi Satish Sail	Goa
1st Runner-up	Rajnandini Pawar	Maharashtra
2nd Runner-up	Sree Advaita	Jammu & Kashmir

20. Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2026



The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2026, notified by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), establish a unified national framework for regulating India’s online gaming sector. Scheduled to come into force on 1st May 2026, these rules operationalize the provisions of the parent legislation enacted in 2025 and aim to replace fragmented state-level regulations with a cohesive and standardized approach.

Objectives and Rationale

The primary objective of the rules is to ensure a safe, transparent, and well-regulated gaming ecosystem. They seek to address rising concerns related to user addiction, financial fraud, and money laundering, while also providing clarity in classification and compliance for the

rapidly growing online gaming market. Additionally, the framework aims to streamline governance by introducing uniform standards applicable across the country.

Key Features and Provisions

The rules introduce several important regulatory measures to govern the sector effectively:

- **Establishment of OGAI:** Creation of the *Online Gaming Authority of India (OGAI)* under MeitY, with representation from key ministries such as Home, Finance, Information & Broadcasting, Sports, and Law.
- **Game Classification:** OGAI is empowered to categorize games into:
 - Online Money Games (prohibited)
 - Online Social Games
 - E-sports
- **Selective Registration:** Mandatory registration is limited to e-sports and certain notified categories, rather than applying universally to all games.
- **Financial Oversight:** Banks and payment intermediaries are required to verify the regulatory status of games before enabling transactions.
- **User Protection Measures:** Platforms must implement safeguards such as age verification, time limits, parental controls, and fair-play monitoring.
- **Grievance Redressal Mechanism:** A two-tier system allows complaints to be addressed first by the platform and then escalated to OGAI and an appellate authority.
- **Data Localisation:** Gaming platforms are required to store user data and related traffic within India.

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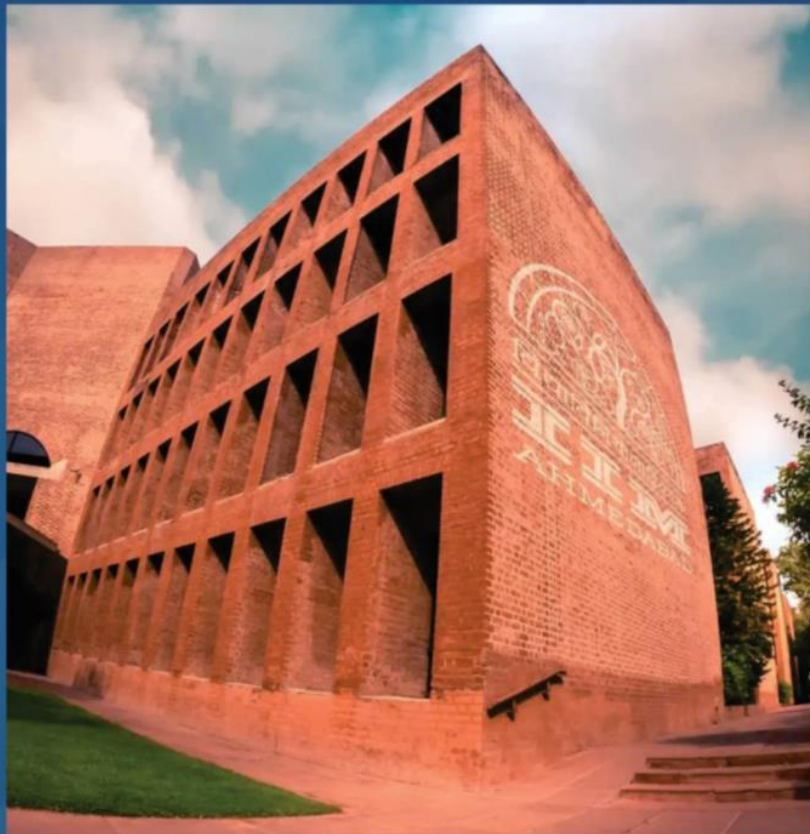
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2. STATE NEWS

21. Bihar Nalanda temple stampede



A tragic stampede occurred during Sheetla Ashtami celebrations at a temple in Nalanda district, Bihar, resulting in the death of eight women devotees and injuries to several others. The incident took place during morning prayers at the Maghra Sheetlaashtami Temple in Bihar Sharif, where a large number of devotees had gathered.

The incident highlights the ongoing issue of crowd management and safety measures at large religious gatherings, where sudden panic can lead to serious consequences.

22. Purvanchal Mahotsav 'Maati-9'

Purvanchal Mahotsav 'Maati-9' is a major cultural festival of the Purvanchal region, centred on the theme of *Maati* (soil). It celebrates the connection between people and their roots through heritage, traditions, arts, and tourism, with participation from artists, artisans, and community groups.

Aim and Features

The festival aims to preserve and promote regional culture and strengthen the link between youth and their traditions. It showcases folk arts, music, local dialects, and performances, along with traditional cuisine, crafts, and tourism potential. It also engages the Purvanchali diaspora, recognising their role in preserving cultural identity globally.

The festival helps in protecting cultural heritage and identity in a globalised world while also creating economic opportunities through tourism, local crafts, and entrepreneurship, supporting sustainable regional development.



23. Lakhpatti Bitiya Yojana (Delhi)

The Delhi Government, under Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, launched the Lakhpatti Bitiya Yojana (notified on 30 March 2026) to support girls' education and financial security from



birth to graduation. It replaces the earlier Ladli Scheme and provides phased financial assistance, which can grow up to ₹1.2 lakh with interest.

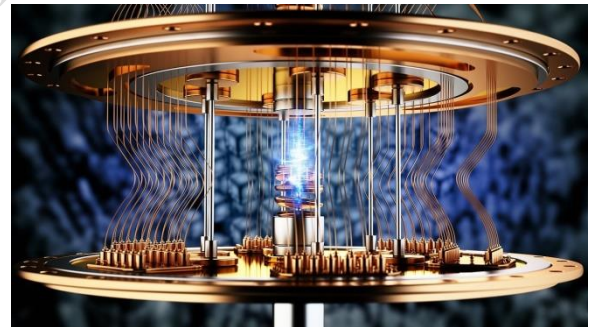
Objectives and Features

The scheme aims to promote girls' education, prevent early marriage, and ensure financial independence, especially for economically weaker sections. Financial assistance is given at key stages—₹11,000 at birth; ₹5,000 at Classes 1, 6, 9, 11, and 12; and additional support for diploma and graduation. The total base benefit is about ₹61,000, which matures over time with interest. The amount is accessible only after Class 12 or upon reaching adulthood, ensuring long-term support.

Eligible beneficiaries must be Delhi residents (minimum 3 years) with annual family income up to ₹1.2 lakh, and the scheme is limited to two girl children per family. It encourages continued education, reduces child marriage, and improves female literacy and workforce participation, contributing to women's empowerment and social development.

24. India's First Quantum Computer (Andhra Pradesh)

N. Chandrababu Naidu announced that India's first quantum computer will be launched on 14 April 2026 in Amaravati. The project is part of the Amaravati Quantum Valley (AQV) initiative and aligns with India's National Quantum Mission.



Objectives and Features

The initiative aims to build end-to-end indigenous capabilities in quantum technologies, including cryogenics, photonics, advanced electronics, and quantum devices, reducing dependence on imports. AQV seeks to position Andhra Pradesh among the top global quantum hubs by 2030. It also integrates emerging technologies like AI, real-time data systems, and digital platforms, with plans for AI-driven services such as AI doctors, tutors, and agronomists.

The project strengthens India's push toward advanced technology leadership and self-reliance, enhancing innovation in governance and public service delivery while boosting the country's presence in the global quantum ecosystem.

25. Samrat Samprati Museum



On the occasion of Mahavir Jayanti (31 March 2026), the Prime Minister inaugurated the Samrat Samprati Museum in Koba, Gandhinagar. The museum preserves Jain heritage and honours Samrat Samprati, known for spreading Jainism much like Ashoka the Great did for Buddhism.

Who was Samrat Samprati?

Samrat Samprati was the 5th Mauryan emperor (c. 224–215 BCE), grandson of Ashoka the Great and son of Kunala. After Ashoka's death (232 BCE), the empire was divided between Samprati and Dasharatha Maurya.

He is a central figure in the Jainism, especially the Shvetambara tradition, earning the title "Jain Ashoka."

Contribution to the Spread of Jainism

- **Temple Building:** Credited with constructing **125,000 temples** and renovating **36,000**, giving Jainism a strong physical presence.
- **Iconography:** Commissioned millions of idols of Tirthankaras.
- **Missionary Work:** Sent missionaries across regions like Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Central Asia, spreading the principle of *Ahimsa*.
- **Regional Expansion:** Strengthened Jainism in South India, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Rajasthan.
- **Welfare Policies:** Established around **700 Sada-vratas** (charitable centres) offering food, shelter, and care.
- **Support to Monks:** Ensured safe travel routes and food access for Jain monks across the empire.

Major Sects of Jainism

Shvetambara ("White-Clad")

- Dominant in western and northern India
- Monks wear white clothes
- Accept Jain Agamas as authentic
- Believe women can attain *moksha*

- Sub-sects: Murtipujaka, Sthanakavasi, Terapanthi

Digambara (“Sky-Clad”)

- Dominant in southern and central India
- Monks practice complete renunciation (no clothing)
- Believe original scriptures were lost
- Hold that women cannot attain *moksha* directly
- Sub-sects: Bisapantha, Terapantha, Taranapantha

Samrat Samprati played a transformative role in institutionalizing and expanding Jainism, making it a widespread and organized religious tradition across the Indian subcontinent and beyond.

26. Balirajgarh Fort Excavation



The Archaeological Survey of India has approved fresh scientific excavation at Balirajgarh Fort in Bihar.

About the Fort

A centrally protected monument (c. 200 BCE), it is linked to the legendary King Bali and offers insights into the early civilisation of the Mithila region. Excavations reveal a continuous sequence from the NBPW phase (700–200 BCE) through Shunga, Kushan, Gupta, and Pala periods, showing long habitation up to the 12th century CE.

Findings & Significance

Discoveries include NBPW pottery, structural remains, and massive fortifications, indicating a major ancient urban centre.

Excavation History

First identified by George Abraham Grierson (1884), with major excavations in 1962–63, 1972–73, and 2013–14.

27. Braille & Sign Language Services (RPO Bhopal)

The Regional Passport Office in Bhopal has introduced Braille and sign language services for passport applicants.

Key Features



The initiative aims to enhance accessibility for visually impaired, hearing-impaired, and speech-impaired individuals. Braille booklets have been introduced to explain the passport application process, including documentation for ECR and Non-ECR categories, application types (Normal and Tatkal), and key guidelines. Additionally, sign language videos linked through QR codes provide easy access to digital information on passport procedures.

Inaugurated by B. S. Mubarak, the initiative promotes inclusive governance by making public services more accessible. The establishment of a grievance redressal cell further strengthens service delivery by ensuring timely resolution of applicant concerns, particularly for differently-abled citizens.

28. Kalai-II Hydroelectric Project (Lohit River)

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the Kalai-II Hydro Electric Project in Arunachal Pradesh.

About the Project:

Kalai-II is a 1200 MW hydropower project to be developed on the Lohit River in Anjaw district. It is the first major hydroelectric project in the Lohit Basin and is being implemented through a joint venture between THDC India Limited and the State Government. The project comprises six units of 190 MW and one unit of 60 MW, with an estimated annual energy generation of about 4852.95 million units (MU).



Key Features & Importance:

The project is expected to be completed within 78 months and includes the development of supporting infrastructure such as roads and bridges. It will contribute significantly to clean energy generation and peak power demand management, thereby strengthening the national grid. Additionally, Arunachal Pradesh will receive 12% free power, along with 1% allocated for the Local Area Development Fund (LADF), supporting regional development and economic growth.

29. Cancer declared notifiable disease (Telangana)

The government of Telangana has declared cancer a notifiable disease.

Key Provisions:

Cancer has been officially classified as a notifiable disease, making it mandatory for all healthcare providers—including public and private hospitals, laboratories, and registrars of

births and deaths—to report diagnosed cases within one month to a centralised portal. The reporting framework covers both pre-cancerous (in-situ) and invasive cancer cases, ensuring comprehensive and systematic data collection across the state.

Objective & Importance:

The initiative aims to establish a reliable, real-time database to assess the actual burden of cancer and facilitate evidence-based healthcare planning. It is expected to improve early detection, monitoring, and management of major cancers such as breast and cervical cancer in women, and oral and lung cancer in men, thereby strengthening public health response and policy formulation.

30. Humanoid Robot “Nila” (Puducherry elections)



An AI-powered robot “Nila” has been deployed at polling booths in Puducherry to assist voters during elections.

About Robot Nila:

Robot Nila is an AI-enabled interactive assistant designed to guide voters at polling stations. It greets voters, provides directions within the booth, and answers basic queries related to the

voting process. The initiative aims to make the voting experience more accessible and user-friendly, particularly for first-time voters and elderly citizens.

The deployment highlights the increasing use of artificial intelligence in electoral processes to enhance efficiency and voter convenience. By reducing confusion and managing crowd flow, such innovations support smoother election management while allowing polling staff to focus on critical administrative tasks.

31. Lanjia Saora Tribe (Odisha)

The Lanjia Saora tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Odisha, has been highlighted for changes in its cultural practices.

About Lanjia Saora Tribe:

The Lanjia Saora are a subgroup of the Saora tribe, residing in the forested hills of Rayagada and Gajapati districts. The broader Saora community is among the ancient tribal groups of India, also found in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh. The tribe comprises groups such as the Lanjia Saora (hill-dwelling, practising shifting cultivation) and Sudha Saora (plains-based, engaged in settled agriculture and wage labour).

They speak the Saora language, which belongs to the Austroasiatic (Mundari) language family.



Culture & Recent Changes:

The community relies on shifting cultivation, foraging, and small-scale farming, with a lifestyle deeply connected to nature. Their traditions include distinctive ornaments such as large metal earrings worn in stretched earlobes and tattoos with geometric and nature-based designs of spiritual significance. However, younger members are increasingly adopting modified practices, including detachable ornaments and temporary tattoos, reflecting a gradual adaptation to modern influences while retaining cultural identity. Their cultural expressions also include vibrant dance and music traditions using instruments like brass pipes, cymbals, and gongs, accompanied by unique attire featuring turbans, feathers, and decorative elements.

32. Radio Sikkim Sundari (community radio)



The Indian Army has launched “Sikkim Sundari,” the first community radio station in a border village of Sikkim.

About the Initiative:

“Sikkim Sundari” is a community radio station established by the Trishakti Corps to enhance communication in remote, high-altitude border areas. It aims to provide timely access to essential information such as local news, weather updates, and government schemes, addressing connectivity challenges in geographically isolated regions.

Significance:

The initiative promotes local culture, language, and community participation, particularly among youth, while strengthening civil-military relations. It also contributes to improved awareness, resilience, and development in strategically sensitive border regions, complementing ongoing infrastructure efforts led by agencies like the Border Roads Organisation.

33. AMUL crosses ₹1 lakh crore turnover

Amul has become the first Indian FMCG company to cross ₹1 lakh crore in annual turnover.

Amul recorded over ₹1 lakh crore in brand turnover in FY26, reflecting an 11% growth over the previous year. Its marketing arm, Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation, reported ₹73,450 crore in revenue, with the remaining value attributed to its cooperative structure. The growth has been driven by strong domestic demand and expanding global operations, particularly in markets such as Europe and the United States.



Cooperative Model & Growth Drivers:

Amul's three-tier cooperative structure—comprising village societies, district unions, and the state federation—has enabled large-scale operations while maintaining decentralized participation. The model involves around 36 lakh dairy farmers, ensuring that profits are reinvested in rural communities. A diverse product portfolio of over 1,200 items, along with a wide distribution network across more than 50 countries, has further strengthened its market position.

The milestone underscores the success of India's cooperative movement and its role in inclusive economic growth. Originating in Anand, Gujarat, Amul played a pivotal role in the White Revolution under the leadership of Verghese Kurien. Its achievement reflects the increasing global competitiveness of Indian FMCG enterprises and highlights the potential of farmer-led business models.

34. LIC Apps: MyLIC & Super Sales Saathi

Life Insurance Corporation of India has introduced two mobile applications—MyLIC and Super Sales Saathi—to enhance digital service delivery and operational efficiency in the insurance sector.

Overview:

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has launched two digital platforms, MyLIC and Super Sales Saathi, aimed at strengthening customer engagement and streamlining insurance-related services.



MyLIC is a customer-oriented application that consolidates policy management, premium payments, claims processing, loan services, and e-KYC functionalities into a single, integrated interface. In parallel, Super Sales Saathi is designed for agents and intermediaries, enabling them to conduct digital sales, manage customer interactions, and monitor performance effectively.

The introduction of these applications represents a significant step toward enhancing digital accessibility and operational efficiency within the insurance sector. By facilitating paperless transactions and real-time service delivery, the initiative improves customer convenience and reduces procedural delays. Additionally, it empowers LIC's field force with advanced digital tools, thereby supporting broader objectives such as increasing insurance penetration, promoting financial inclusion, and advancing India's digital transformation agenda.

35. Gujarat Police Launches 'NARIT AI' to Strengthen NDPS Investigations

In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the Gujarat Police has introduced an artificial intelligence-based tool named NARIT AI (Narcotics Analysis & Retrieval-Augmented Generation-



based Investigation Tool). The system is designed to enhance the efficiency and quality of investigations under narcotics laws and improve conviction rates.

Background and Development

NARIT AI has been developed by the Western Railway Police (Vadodara Division) in collaboration with a Mumbai-based AI startup. It focuses on strengthening investigations under the NDPS Act, 1985, and related criminal laws.

Technological Framework

The tool is based on Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG), which enables it to operate using a closed and verified dataset. This approach minimizes inaccuracies (commonly referred to as “hallucinations”) and ensures that outputs are legally reliable and grounded in authentic sources.

3. INTERNATIONAL NEWS

36. Freight Shinkansen (Japan)



Japan has launched the world’s first freight-only bullet train (Shinkansen), operated by East Japan Railway Company. This marks a shift in logistics by transforming high-speed passenger rail into a fast, efficient cargo transport system.

Key Features and Operations

The system repurposes the E3 series Shinkansen, removing seats and redesigning interiors for cargo. It can carry around 1,000 boxes (≈ 17.4 tonnes) at speeds up to 275 km/h. It operates on the Tohoku route between Morioka and Tokyo, completing the journey in just over three hours, and sometimes integrates with passenger services for efficient track usage.

Cargo and Significance

The train is designed for high-value, time-sensitive goods such as seafood, dairy, medical supplies, and semiconductors. It offers a balance between slow rail freight and expensive air transport. The initiative promotes sustainable logistics, reduced emissions, and efficient supply chains, and could serve as a global model for future freight transport systems.

37. Bab al-Mandab Strait significance

The Bab al-Mandab Strait, meaning “Gate of Tears,” is a narrow maritime passage connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea. It lies between Yemen and the Horn of Africa (Djibouti and Eritrea). The strait is about 30 km wide at its narrowest

point and is divided by Perim (Mayyun) Island into two channels—one narrow and shallow, and the other wider and deeper. It serves as the southern gateway to the Suez Canal route.

Historical Importance

It has been an important trade route since ancient times, linking Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, especially during the spice trade. Its importance increased after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, making it a key route for global commerce.

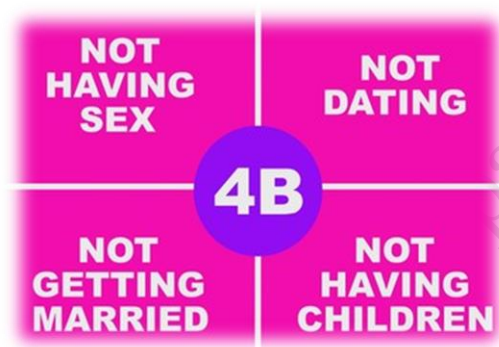
Strategic and Economic Importance

The strait is a major global chokepoint, with around 10–12% of world trade passing through it. It is crucial for the transport of oil, petroleum products, and LNG, connecting markets in Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

Security and Challenges

The region faces security risks due to the Yemen conflict, piracy in the Gulf of Aden, and geopolitical rivalries. Navigational challenges such as strong currents, fog, and narrow passage increase the risk of accidents, which could have serious environmental and economic consequences.

38. 4B Movement



The 4B Movement has re-emerged in debates around patriarchy, gender violence, and women’s autonomy.

What is the 4B Movement?

It is a feminist resistance framework where women reject four patriarchal institutions—no marriage, no childbirth, no dating, and no sex—representing a political refusal of traditional norms.

Origin

The movement began in South Korea in the late 2010s and gained visibility during the MeToo movement.

Key Features

The 4B Movement rejects patriarchal systems rather than reforming them from within. It challenges expectations of unpaid care work, emotional labour, and reproduction imposed on women, while strongly emphasizing bodily autonomy, consent, and self-determination. Instead of individual coping strategies, it promotes collective resistance as a means to address structural gender inequality.

It challenges traditional ideas of womanhood and highlights structural misogyny, sparking global debates on gender and society.

39. Indian Softshell Turtle



Police recently rescued 16 Indian Softshell Turtle in Greater Noida, raising concerns over illegal trade.

About the Species

The Indian Softshell Turtle, also called the Ganges Softshell Turtle, is among the largest freshwater turtles. It has a round, green carapace with yellow borders, a long neck, and a tube-like snout that helps it breathe while submerged. Its flattened shell makes it a fast swimmer.

Habitat & Distribution

It inhabits deep rivers, lakes, and ponds with sandy or muddy bottoms, often staying buried under sand. It is found across India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, especially in river systems like the Ganga, Brahmaputra, Yamuna, and Narmada.

Diet & Behaviour

An omnivore, it feeds on fish, insects, mollusks, carrion, and aquatic plants. Breeding occurs between February and April. In some regions like Odisha, it is considered sacred and kept in temple ponds.

Threats & Conservation Status

Major threats include habitat loss, poaching, illegal trade, and agricultural expansion.

- IUCN: Endangered
- WPA, 1972: Schedule I

The species plays a key role in maintaining aquatic ecosystem balance, making its conservation crucial.

40. Druzhba Pipeline

The Druzhba Pipeline, also known as the *Friendship Pipeline*, is one of the largest crude oil pipeline networks in the world. Recently, it returned to operation after repairs, restoring the flow of Russian oil through Ukraine to countries such as Hungary and Slovakia. This development highlights its continued geopolitical and economic significance in Europe's energy landscape.

Historical Background

Constructed in the 1960s during the Soviet era, the Druzhba Pipeline was designed to transport crude oil from the USSR to Eastern and Central European countries. Over time, it has evolved into a major energy corridor and remains a key route for the transportation of Russian and Kazakh oil across Europe.

Key features include:

- Total length: लगभग 5,500 km (including all branches)
- Origin point: Almetyeysk (Russia), where oil from Siberia, the Urals, and the Caspian region converges
- Status: One of the largest and oldest operational pipeline networks globally

Capacity and Significance

The pipeline has a current capacity of approximately **1.2–1.4 million barrels per day**, with the potential to increase up to **2 million barrels per day**.

4. BOOKS AND AUTHORS

41. 'Tides of Time' by Sudha Murty



Sudha Murty's book "Tides of Time: Bharat's History through Murals in Parliament" was unveiled by C. P. Radhakrishnan at Samvidhan Sadan. The book presents India's civilizational journey through 124 murals displayed in the Parliament, combining art, history, and culture into an engaging narrative.

Key Highlights

The book interprets Parliament murals as storytelling tools, depicting India's evolution from ancient to modern times. It reflects themes of civilizational continuity, cultural richness, and democratic traditions. The Vice President highlighted India's legacy as the "Mother of Democracy," citing ancient systems like Vaishali's republic and the Kudavolai system.

Coverage and Significance

The book spans major historical phases—from the Indus Valley Civilization, teachings of thinkers like Valmiki, Chanakya, Mahavira, and Buddha, to the reign of Ashoka, contributions of Shivaji, Bhakti movement, architectural heritage, and the freedom struggle (e.g., Dandi March). It makes history accessible and visually engaging, reinforcing awareness of India's heritage and democratic roots.

5. BANKING / ECONOMY

42. World Air Quality Report 2025

The World Air Quality Report 2025, released by IQAir, ranked India as the 6th most polluted country out of 143 nation, with an average PM2.5 level of 48.9 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, nearly ten times higher than the World Health Organization guideline of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Loni (Uttar Pradesh) emerged as the most polluted city, while New Delhi remained the most polluted capital city globally for the eighth consecutive year. Pakistan is on 1st rank.

Global Scenario

The report highlights that 66 of the world's 100 most polluted cities are in India. Globally, only 14% of cities met WHO air quality standards, and about 91% of countries exceeded safe PM2.5 limits. The most polluted countries included Pakistan, Bangladesh, Tajikistan, Chad, and DR Congo, while Nieuwoudtville (South Africa) was the cleanest city.

The findings underline the severe air pollution crisis, especially in South Asia, and the urgent need for strong policy measures, emission control, and sustainable urban planning to improve air quality and public health.

43. India's Economic Ranking Decline

India has slipped to the 6th position among the world's largest economies as per the IMF World Economic Outlook (WEO) 2026. This shift is primarily attributed to GDP revisions and the depreciation of the Indian rupee, which affected comparisons in US dollar terms.

Latest Update

According to the IMF's 2026 estimates, India is no longer the 5th largest economy and now ranks 6th globally. This marks a reversal from 2022, when India had surpassed the United Kingdom.

How Global Economic Rankings Are Determined

Global economic rankings are based on **nominal GDP measured in US dollars**. The IMF calculates this using:

- GDP in local currency
- Exchange rate relative to the US dollar

This approach implies that even if an economy grows domestically, currency depreciation can lower its global ranking.

India's Position in 2026

- **India's GDP (2026):** Approximately **\$4.15 trillion**
- **United Kingdom:** Around **\$4.27 trillion**
- **Japan:** Around **\$4.38 trillion**

Due to these estimates, India currently ranks as the **6th largest economy**, slightly behind the UK and Japan.

Key Reasons for the Decline

The drop in ranking does not indicate a fundamental economic slowdown but is driven by technical factors:

1. GDP Revision

India updated its GDP series with a new base year, leading to a downward revision.

- GDP for 2025–26 revised from **₹357 lakh crore to ₹345 lakh crore**

2. Rupee Depreciation

A weaker rupee reduced the dollar value of India's GDP.

3. Relative Currency Performance

The British pound and Japanese yen remained comparatively stronger, boosting their dollar-denominated GDP.

4. Sensitivity of Dollar-Based Rankings

Since rankings rely on exchange rates, even small currency fluctuations can alter positions when economies are closely matched.

Global Economic Context

- **United States:** Largest economy (over \$32 trillion)
- **China:** Second largest (around \$20 trillion)
- Other major economies (India, Japan, Germany, UK) are clustered near the \$4 trillion range

This close grouping makes rankings highly sensitive to minor economic or currency changes.
Future Outlook for India

Despite the current dip, India's long-term outlook remains strong:

- Expected to become the 4th largest economy by 2027
- Projected to rise to the 3rd position by 2031, surpassing Germany

These projections indicate that the present decline is likely temporary.

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6. SUMMIT, RANKS AND REPORTS

44. One Health Summit

The One Health Summit 2026 was held from April 5–7, 2026, in Lyon, France, under the G7 Presidency of France.

The summit emphasized the *One Health* approach, which recognizes that human, animal, plant, and environmental health are closely interconnected. It brought together global experts and countries to strengthen cooperation in preventing diseases, particularly zoonotic diseases that spread between animals and humans, and to promote coordinated global health strategies.

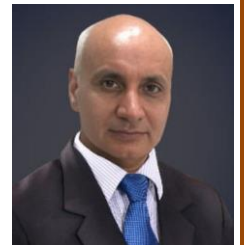
45. IAS Chanchal Kumar Takes Charge as I&B Secretary



Chanchal Kumar has assumed charge as Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. A 1992-batch IAS officer of the Bihar cadre, he now heads the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, which regulates media, broadcasting, and digital communication, and oversees institutions like Doordarshan and All India Radio.

46. Vir Vikram Yadav Appointed as DGCA Head

Vir Vikram Yadav has been appointed as the head of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The DGCA is India's primary regulatory body for civil aviation, responsible for safety oversight, airworthiness standards, licensing of pilots and engineers, registration of aircraft, and investigation of aviation incidents.



47. Uchral Nyam-Osor Becomes Mongolia's Prime Minister



Uchral Nyam-Osor has been elected as the new Prime Minister of Mongolia.

His appointment comes amid political instability in Mongolia during 2025–26, driven by corruption scandals, internal party conflicts within the Mongolian People's Party, and rising public dissatisfaction over inflation and cost of living.

48. India Tops Global Doping Cases in Track & Field

According to the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) report released in April 2026, India has recorded the highest number of doping violations in track and field globally. As per the AIU data, India has 148 suspended athletes—the highest in the world—highlighting serious concerns about doping in athletics. Kenya ranks second, while Russia stands third with 66 cases. The findings underline the need for stricter anti-doping measures, improved awareness, and stronger enforcement mechanisms in sports governance.



49. Women's Credit Growth Report (NITI Aayog)

NITI Aayog released a report highlighting the surge in women's participation in India's credit market.

The report titled *"From Borrowers to Builders: Women and India's Evolving Credit Market"*, developed in collaboration with the Women Entrepreneurship Platform, TransUnion CIBIL, and MicroSave Consulting, reveals that women now account for a credit portfolio of ₹76 lakh crore, representing 26% of India's total credit. Women's outstanding credit has grown nearly 4.8 times between 2017 and 2025, while credit penetration increased from 19% to 36%, indicating expanding financial inclusion.

Trends & Growth Drivers:

The report highlights rapid growth in commercial credit among women entrepreneurs, with a CAGR of 31% between 2022 and 2025. There is also a shift from microfinance to retail and business loans, reflecting upward mobility within the credit ecosystem. Geographic expansion is evident, with rising participation in states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, alongside traditional strongholds in southern and western India. Increased adoption of digital public infrastructure has played a key role in enabling access to formal credit systems.

The findings indicate a structural transformation where women are transitioning from basic borrowers to active economic contributors and entrepreneurs. Enhanced access to credit, coupled with digital inclusion, is strengthening women-led enterprise development and contributing to broader economic growth. The report underscores the need for continued policy support to sustain this momentum and translate credit access into long-term economic empowerment.

50. TIME100 List (2026)

TIME has released the TIME100 list for 2026, highlighting the world's most influential individuals.

About TIME100 List:

The TIME100 is an annual list recognising the most influential individuals globally based on their impact, leadership, and ability to shape future trends. It covers diverse fields such as politics, business, technology, science, and entertainment, with categories including Leaders, Innovators, Artists, Titans, Icons, and Pioneers. The 2026 edition marks the 23rd iteration of the list.

Key Highlights (2026):

The list features 100 global figures influencing areas such as artificial intelligence, climate action, governance, and business. Prominent political leaders include Xi Jinping, Donald Trump, Benjamin Netanyahu, and Claudia Sheinbaum. In technology and business, notable names include Sundar Pichai and Michael Dell. The list also highlights cultural figures such as Ranbir Kapoor and Dakota Johnson.

Indian Representation & Significance:

India's presence in the list includes Sundar Pichai for global tech leadership, Vikas Khanna for culinary excellence, and Ranbir Kapoor for contributions to global cinema. The list underscores the growing influence of technology-driven leadership and cultural impact, reflecting a shift from traditional power metrics to individuals driving meaningful global change.

51. NITI Aayog R&D Reports (2026)

NITI Aayog released reports on improving the ease of doing Research & Development (R&D) in India.

Key Highlights of the Reports:

The reports propose the ROPE (Removing Obstacles and Promoting Enablers) framework to address administrative and regulatory bottlenecks in India's research ecosystem. They emphasise the need for "lab-to-market" translation through mission-oriented R&D, ensuring that scientific research leads to commercially viable technologies. Additionally, they advocate increasing private sector participation, including leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds, and call for flexible, responsive governance structures. A shift towards a trust-based, outcome-oriented research environment with greater autonomy for scientists is also recommended.

Challenges & Way Forward:

India's R&D expenditure remains low at around 0.6–0.7% of GDP, with limited private sector contribution and fragmented funding mechanisms. Bureaucratic hurdles, weak industry-academia collaboration, and a gap between research output and commercialization further constrain innovation. To address these issues, the reports recommend increasing investment levels, reforming procurement systems, strengthening university-industry-government linkages, and promoting merit-based career structures to retain talent. These

measures aim to build a robust, innovation-driven ecosystem supporting technological self-reliance and economic growth.

52. India–Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)

The India–Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) is the principal institutional platform for engagement between India and African nations. India is set to host the Fourth IAFS in 2026, marking the first summit in over a decade since 2015. It serves as a high-level consultative mechanism between the Government of India and member states of the African Union (AU), aimed at strengthening South–South cooperation and fostering long-term strategic partnerships.

Objectives and Evolution of the Summit

The IAFS was first held in April 2008 in New Delhi, laying the foundation for structured India–Africa relations. Its core objective is to expand and deepen cooperation across multiple sectors for mutual benefit. Over time, the partnership has evolved from a focus on aid and trade to a more comprehensive engagement model.

Key aims include:

- Supporting Africa in health, education, and human resource development (e.g., IIT Madras campus in Zanzibar)
- Promoting investment-led growth through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and industrial partnerships
- Moving beyond traditional Lines of Credit toward sustainable economic collaboration

Evolution of Summits:

- 2008 (New Delhi): Focus on food and energy security
- 2011 (Addis Ababa): Expansion to infrastructure and capacity building
- 2015 (New Delhi): Participation of all 54 African nations, marking a major diplomatic outreach

7. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS

53. Menaka Guruswamy



Menaka Guruswamy has become India's first openly queer Member of Parliament, marking a significant milestone for inclusivity and representation in Indian politics.

Menaka Guruswamy was elected to the Rajya Sabha from West Bengal as a candidate of the All India Trinamool Congress. A senior advocate of the Supreme Court and a noted constitutional law expert, she has consistently advocated for civil liberties and LGBTQ+ rights. She was also part of the landmark *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* case, which led to the decriminalization of Section 377 and strengthened the

framework of individual rights in India. Her entry into Parliament represents a major step toward greater diversity, equality, and representation for the LGBTQ+ community in India's democratic system.

54. President of Iraq (2026 – Nizar Amedi)

Iraq's parliament has elected Nizar Amedi as the new President.

Nizar Amedi, a Kurdish politician and former environment minister, has been elected as President following parliamentary elections held in November. He has also served as the head of the political office of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan in Baghdad since 2024.



Political System in Iraq:

Iraq follows a sectarian power-sharing arrangement, under which key political positions are distributed among major communities. The President is traditionally a Kurd, the Prime Minister a Shia Muslim, and the Speaker of Parliament a Sunni Muslim. Following the presidential election, the formation of the government now hinges on the selection of a Prime Minister, making it a crucial and closely monitored political development.

55. Chief Minister of Bihar (Samrat Choudhary))



Samrat Choudhary is set to be sworn in as the Chief Minister of Bihar.

Key Developments:

Samrat Choudhary, currently Deputy Chief Minister and a senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party, will assume office as the Chief Minister following his unanimous selection as leader of the NDA legislature party. He staked claim to form the government before Governor Syed Ata Hasnain at Lok Bhavan, Patna. The swearing-in ceremony is scheduled to take place in Patna.

Political Context:

The leadership change follows the resignation of Nitish Kumar after his election to the Rajya Sabha. With the BJP emerging as the single largest party in the 243-member Bihar Assembly, this marks a significant political development, as Samrat Choudhary becomes the first BJP leader to hold the Chief Minister's post in the state.

UNION PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION					
PROGRAMME OF EXAMINATIONS/RECRUITMENT TESTS (RTs) -2026					
Sl. No.	Name of Examination	Date of Notification	Last Date for receipt of Applications	Date of commencement of Exam	Duration of Exam
1.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			10.01.2026 (Saturday)	2 Days
2.	Reserved for UPSC Examination			17.01.2026 (Saturday)	2 Days
3.	Combined Geo-Scientist (Preliminary) Examination, 2026	03.09.2025	23.09.2025	08.02.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
4.	Engineering Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2026	17.09.2025	07.10.2025	08.02.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
5.	CBI (DSP) LDCE	24.12.2025	13.01.2026	28.02.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAY
6.	CISF AC(EXE) LDCE-2026	03.12.2025	23.12.2025	08.03.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
7.	N.D.A. & N.A. Examination (I), 2026	10.12.2025	30.12.2025	12.04.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
8.	C.D.S. Examination (I), 2026				
9.	Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2026	14.01.2026	03.02.2026	24.05.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
10.	Indian Forest Service (Preliminary) Examination, 2026 through CS(P) Examination 2026				
11.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			06.06.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
12.	I.E.S./I.S.S. Examination, 2026	11.02.2026	03.03.2026	19.06.2026 (Friday)	3 DAYS
13.	Combined Geo-Scientist (Main) Examination, 2026			20.06.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
14.	Engineering Services (Main) Examination, 2026			21.06.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
15.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			04.07.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
16.	Central Armed Police Forces (ACs) Examination, 2026	18.02.2026	10.03.2026	19.07.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
17.	Combined Medical Services Examination, 2026	11.03.2026	31.03.2026	02.08.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
18.	Reserved for UPSC Examination			08.08.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
19.	Civil Services (Main) Examination, 2026			21.08.2026 (Friday)	5 DAYS
20.	N.D.A. & N.A. Examination (II), 2026	20.05.2026	09.06.2026	13.09.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
21.	C.D.S. Examination (II), 2026				
22.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			26.09.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
23.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			10.10.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
24.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			31.10.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
25.	Indian Forest Service (Main) Examination, 2026			22.11.2026 (Sunday)	7 DAYS
26.	S.O./Steno (GD-B/GD-I) LDCE	16.09.2026	06.10.2026	12.12.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
27.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			19.12.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS

Note: The dates of notification, commencement and duration of Examinations/ RTs are liable to alteration, if the circumstances so warrant.

TENTATIVE CALENDAR OF EXAMINATIONS FOR THE YEAR 2026-2027

S.No.	Name of Examination	Tier/Phase	Date of Advertisement	Closing Date	Month of Exam
1.	JSA / LDC Grade Limited Departmental Competitive Examination, 2025 (for DoPT only)	Paper-I (CBE)*	16 March 2026	07 April 2026	May 2026
2.	SSA / UDC Grade Limited Departmental Competitive Examination, 2025 (for DoPT only)	Paper-I (CBE)*	16 March 2026	07 April 2026	May 2026
3.	ASO Grade Limited Departmental Competitive Examination, 2025	Paper-I (CBE)*	16 March 2026	07 April 2026	May 2026
4.	Combined Graduate Level Examination, 2026	Tier-I (CBE)*	March 2026	April 2026	May – June 2026
5.	Junior Engineer (Civil, Mechanical & Electrical) Examination, 2026	Paper-I (CBE)*	March 2026	April 2026	May – June 2026
6.	Selection Post Examination, Phase-XIV, 2026	CBE*	March 2026	April 2026	May – July 2026
7.	Combined Higher Secondary (10+2) Level Examination, 2026	Tier-I (CBE)*	April 2026	May 2026	July – September 2026
8.	Stenographer Grade 'C' & 'D' Examination, 2026	CBE*	April 2026	May 2026	August – September 2026
9.	Combined Hindi Translators Examination, 2026	Paper-I (CBE)*	April 2026	May 2026	August – September 2026
10.	Multi-Tasking (Non-Technical) Staff & Havaladar (CBIC & CBN) Examination, 2026	CBE*	June 2026	July 2026	September – November 2026
11.	Sub-Inspector in Delhi Police & Central Armed Police Forces Examination, 2026	Paper-I (CBE)*	May 2026	June 2026	October – November 2026
12.	Constables (GD) in Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), NIA, SSF and Rifleman (GD) in Assam Rifles Examination, 2027	CBE*	September 2026	October 2026	January – March 2027

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8. DEFENCE NEWS

56. Exercise Dweep Shakti



Exercise Dweep Shakti is a high-intensity tri-service military exercise conducted by the Indian Armed Forces to test integrated combat capabilities in coastal and island environments. It focuses on defending India's strategic island territories and maritime borders through coordinated operations of the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Location and Command Structure

The exercise was conducted under the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), India's only theatre command, using the strategic location of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This region is crucial for monitoring key sea routes and enhancing India's maritime security.

The main aim of Dweep Shakti is to ensure jointness and interoperability among the three forces. It tests how effectively they can operate together as a single unit, especially in rapid deployment, amphibious warfare, and maritime dominance operations.

Key Operational Features

The exercise includes amphibious assaults, where troops are transported from ships to shore; beach landing drills involving tanks and heavy equipment; and maritime patrol operations to secure sea routes. It also incorporates advanced technologies such as swarming drones, electronic warfare systems, and real-time communication networks for better coordination.

57. NGOPV 'Shachi' Launch

Indian Navy launched Shachi (Yard 1280), the first Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NGOPV) at Goa Shipyard Limited. It is the lead ship of an 11-vessel project and is named from Indian mythology, meaning "*one who renders assistance.*" These vessels will enhance the Navy's existing offshore patrol fleet.



Development and Aim

The NGOPV project is being executed at Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata. The aim is to strengthen maritime security through advanced, versatile, and indigenously built platforms capable of multi-domain operations.

Key Features and Significance

These vessels are fully indigenous and designed for roles such as surveillance, search and rescue, anti-piracy operations, protection of offshore assets, and disaster relief (HADR). The project boosts India's self-reliance in defence manufacturing, aligning with *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* and *Make in India*, while enhancing maritime vigilance and operational capability.

58. Operation Urja Suraksha



Indian Navy launched Operation Urja Suraksha, a maritime security mission to protect India-bound energy shipments from the Persian Gulf region. The operation focuses on safeguarding critical sea routes, especially around the Strait of Hormuz, a key global energy chokepoint.

Aim and Features

The mission aims to ensure uninterrupted energy supply by providing naval escort and secure navigation in conflict-prone waters. Indian warships escort vessels after they exit Hormuz, ensuring safe passage through the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea. It involves layered maritime security, including deployment of destroyers and frigates, real-time monitoring, and identification of safe shipping corridors to avoid threats like sea mines and disruptions.

Operation Urja Suraksha strengthens India's energy security by protecting imports of crude oil, LNG, and LPG from disruptions. It also enhances India's role as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region, reinforcing its strategic maritime presence.

59. INS Aridhaman

India has inducted its third nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, INS Aridhaman, marking a major strategic milestone. For the first time, India will be able to maintain three operational SSBNs simultaneously at sea. In addition, the induction of the stealth frigate INS Taragiri further strengthens the capabilities of the Indian Navy in safeguarding national interests in the Indian Ocean Region.

• **THE THREE ARIHANT-CLASS SUBMARINES**

Submarine Name	Commissioned	Vertical Launch Tubes	Firepower
INS Arihant	2016	Four	K-15 Sagatika missiles, over 700-km range
INS Aridhaman	2026	Believed to be eight	More advanced reactors — understood to be an upgrade over the ones that power its predecessors
INS Arighaat	2024	Similar in terms of power, launch tubes and displacement but much more technologically advanced than the Arihant.	Believed to support K-4 missiles with 3,500 km range in addition to K-15s

INS Aridhaman Displacement: 7,000 tonnes

INS Arighaat Displacement: 7,000 tonnes

FIREPOWER*: K-4 missiles with 3,500 km range

*in addition to the capability to carry more K-15 missiles

TYPES OF NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINES

- SSN (Submersible Ship Nuclear):** Carries conventional weapons.
- SSBN (Ship Submersible Ballistic Nuclear):** Capable of carrying ballistic missiles that may be nuclear armed. Typically the largest and most complex type.
- SSGN (Ship Submersible Guided Nuclear):** Carries guided missiles with conventional warheads

Note: The specifications of Arihant-class submarines are classified. This sketch is an approximation. Wikimedia Commons

INS Aridhaman is the third SSBN of the Arihant-class, following INS Arihant (commissioned in 2016) and INS Arighaat (commissioned in 2024). It has been developed under India's Advanced Technology Vessel (ATV) programme.

- **INS Arihant (2016):** A 6,000-tonne submarine that established the sea-based component of India's nuclear triad and completed its first deterrence patrol in 2018.
- **INS Arighaat (2024):** The second SSBN, enhancing India's sustained underwater strategic presence.

Advanced Capabilities

- **Higher Missile Capacity:** The 7,000-tonne INS Aridhaman is equipped with 8 vertical launch tubes, enabling it to carry a greater number of K-15 (700 km) and K-4 (3,500 km) submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs).
- **Strengthened Nuclear Triad:** Its induction reinforces India's nuclear triad—land-based (Agni missiles), air-based (fighter aircraft), and sea-based systems—ensuring a reliable second-strike capability in line with India's No First Use doctrine.

Strategic Significance

With this development, India joins an elite group of countries—such as United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, and China—that possess operational sea-based nuclear deterrent systems.

60. INS Dunagiri



The Indian Navy has inducted INS Dunagiri (Yard 3023), advancing India's goal of Aatmanirbharta in defence. It revives the legacy of the earlier INS Dunagiri (1977–2010). Designed by the Warship Design Bureau, the ship has about 75% indigenous content, supporting over 200 MSMEs.

Technology and Combat Power

Dunagiri features a CODOG propulsion system with Controllable Pitch Propellers, managed by an IPMS. It is equipped with BrahMos missiles, MFSTAR radar, MRSAM air defence, and anti-submarine warfare systems.

Project 17A Significance

It is the 5th ship of Project 17A (Nilgiri class), an advanced successor to the Shivalik-class frigate. The project is being executed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited and Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited, strengthening India's naval capabilities and indigenous shipbuilding ecosystem.

61. Project Chetak



Border Roads Organisation's Project Chetak marked its 47th Raising Day on 4 April 2026 at Bikaner.

About the Project

Project Chetak is a major infrastructure initiative launched in 1980 to develop and maintain roads and defence infrastructure in western border areas, particularly in Rajasthan, Punjab, and northern Gujarat. It maintains over 4,000 km of roads, includes Ditch Cum Bund (DCB) structures for border security and flood control, and focuses on upgrading roads near the International Border to double-lane national highway standards.

Significance

The project enhances national security by enabling rapid troop movement and strengthens regional development by improving connectivity, trade, and socio-economic integration in border areas.

62. Mission MITRA

Mission MITRA (Mapping of Interoperable Traits and Response Assessment) is a joint initiative by ISRO and the Institute of Aerospace Medicine to study the physiological, psychological, and behavioural responses of astronauts and support teams under stress. Conducted in Ladakh, the mission leverages extreme conditions such as low oxygen, cold temperatures, and isolation to simulate space-like environments. It focuses on teamwork, decision-making, and coordination between astronauts (Gaganyatris) and ground control. The findings of Mission MITRA are expected to enhance crew interoperability, stress management, and operational efficiency in long-duration missions. This makes it highly relevant for India's human spaceflight programme, particularly Gaganyaan, and future deep-space exploration efforts.



63. Exercise Cyclone (India–Egypt)

The Indian Army is participating in the 4th edition of Exercise Cyclone-IV with Egypt.

About Exercise Cyclone-IV:

Exercise Cyclone is a bilateral special forces exercise between India and Egypt, initiated in 2023 and conducted alternately in both countries. The 4th edition is being held at Anshas, Egypt, from 9th to 17th April 2026, involving elite Special Forces units from both sides to enhance joint operational capabilities and interoperability.

Focus & Objectives:

The exercise emphasises counter-terrorism operations in urban and semi-urban areas, advanced special operations such as sniping, reconnaissance, and tactical combat casualty care, along with desert warfare training suited to arid terrains. It facilitates the exchange of best practices, techniques, and procedures, strengthening professional expertise and coordination.

Strategic Importance:

The exercise reinforces defence cooperation under the India–Egypt Strategic Partnership (2023), promoting collaboration in counter-terrorism and regional security. It also complements other joint military engagements such as Exercise Desert Warrior and Exercise Bright Star.

64. Exercise DUSTLIK 2026 (India–Uzbekistan)

The 7th edition of the India–Uzbekistan joint military exercise *DUSTLIK* is scheduled to be held in Namangan, Uzbekistan.

Overview:

Exercise *DUSTLIK* is an annual bilateral military exercise between India and Uzbekistan, first conducted in 2019 and held alternately in both countries. The 7th edition emphasises tri-services integration, involving coordinated participation of the Indian Armed Forces and the Uzbekistan Armed Forces. The exercise focuses on enhancing interoperability through joint tactical drills, strike operations, and land navigation exercises, particularly in semi-mountainous terrain, with an aim to strengthen coordinated responses to security challenges.

**Significance:**

The exercise plays a crucial role in deepening defence cooperation and improving joint operational capabilities between the two nations. It contributes to the development of a unified command-and-control structure and strengthens strategic engagement in Central Asia. Additionally, it reinforces India's broader geopolitical outreach in the region, while enhancing preparedness for counter-terrorism operations and complex terrain-based missions.

65. Samudra Sahas Expedition (Indian Army sailing)

The Samudra Sahas Sailing Expedition has been flagged off from Mumbai as part of the bicentenary celebrations of the Regiment of Artillery.



About the Expedition:

The Samudra Sahas Sailing Expedition, undertaken by the Indian Army's Regiment of Artillery, was flagged off from Marve, Mumbai. It marks the regiment's first blue-water sailing venture and aims to cover approximately 520 nautical miles along the Konkan Coast using Seabird-class sailing boats. The expedition is being conducted in four phases: Mumbai–Vijaydurg, Vijaydurg–Goa, Goa–Vijaydurg, and Vijaydurg–Mumbai, requiring navigation through varying maritime conditions and demonstrating high standards of seamanship and endurance.

Objective & Support:

The expedition is conducted as a tribute to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and India's maritime legacy, while promoting leadership, resilience, and teamwork within the armed forces. It is led by Captain Kshitij Nair and Subedar Prakash Funde, with prior training undertaken at the Heavy Bridge Training Centre, Marve. The initiative is supported operationally and administratively by the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard, reflecting inter-service coordination and capability building.

66. Diving Exercise (DIVEX) 2026

The India–Sri Lanka Diving Exercise (DIVEX) 2026 marks the fourth edition of this bilateral naval engagement, with the deployment of INS Nireekshak to Colombo. The exercise reflects the growing maritime cooperation between the two countries and aligns with India's strategic vision of MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions), as well as its broader *Neighbourhood First* policy.

Objectives and Scope of DIVEX 2026

DIVEX 2026 focuses on enhancing underwater operational capabilities and strengthening coordination between the Indian and Sri Lankan navies.

Key objectives include:

- Improving interoperability and operational cohesion in diving operations
- Enhancing maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region
- Showcasing India's deep-sea operational readiness

The participation of INS Nireekshak, a specialized vessel for diving support and submarine rescue, highlights India's technical capabilities in complex underwater missions.

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9. AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

67. Balakrishna Honoured at IFFD 2026



Nandamuri Balakrishna received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the International Film Festival of Delhi 2026 held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The honour recognises his over 50-year contribution to Indian cinema, especially Telugu film industry.

Career Highlights

Balakrishna is known for his versatility and long-standing popularity, delivering both commercial hits and strong character-driven performances. His film *Bhagavanth Kesari* was screened at the event and had earlier won the Best Telugu Film at the 71st National Film Awards, further strengthening his legacy.

Legacy and Significance

He acknowledged the influence of his father, N. T. Rama Rao, whose legacy continues to inspire him. Balakrishna, also a recipient of the Padma Bhushan (2025), is regarded as a key figure in shaping modern Telugu cinema, with a lasting impact on storytelling and cultural representation.

68. Kalpana Soren Receives BRICS CCI Award

About the News

Kalpana Soren was honoured with the Women Empowerment Trailblazer Award at the 6th BRICS CCI WE Annual Women Summit 2026 held in New Delhi. She represents the Gandey constituency and is known for her work in women's empowerment and social inclusion.



About the Summit

The event was organised by the BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry Women Empowerment Vertical (BRICS CCI WE) from 21–23 March 2026. The theme was “WISE – Women in Innovation, Science Leadership & Entrepreneurship”, focusing on promoting women-led innovation and global collaboration.

Other Highlights and BRICS Facts

Shabana Azmi received the Trailblazer: Living Legend award, while Debjani Ghosh was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

BRICS was formed with Brazil, Russia, India, and China (2009), later joined by South Africa (2010). It expanded in 2024 with Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the UAE, and Indonesia joined in 2025. The New Development Bank (NDB) was established in 2014 to support development projects.

The recognition highlights growing efforts toward women empowerment, leadership, and entrepreneurship, and reinforces India's role in global platforms promoting inclusive development.

69. Rituparna Sengupta Honoured in UK



About the Recognition

Rituparna Sengupta received the Women Empowerment Award for Art and Culture at the House of Commons, London. The award was presented during an event marking International Women's Day (8 March), organised by GloWomen CiC, with UK MPs Seema Malhotra and Virendra Sharma.

Contribution and Significance

She was honoured for her significant contributions to Indian cinema and cultural promotion, both at regional and national levels. The recognition highlights the role of art and culture in empowering women and fostering global cultural exchange.

Key Takeaways

The event underscores the global importance of women's achievements across sectors and reflects the growing international recognition of Indian artists in promoting gender equality and cultural diplomacy.

70. Stuti Pradhan at World Youth Parliament 2026

Stuti Pradhan has been selected to represent India at the World Youth Parliament 2026, highlighting youth participation in global policy discussions.

About World Youth Parliament

The World Youth Parliament is an international platform where young leaders from different countries come together to discuss global challenges, exchange ideas, and propose policy

solutions. It promotes cross-cultural dialogue and prepares youth for roles in governance and diplomacy.

Achievements and Significance

Stuti Pradhan previously won the Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament 2025 (state level) and was invited to Lok Bhawan during Republic Day 2026 celebrations. Her selection reflects the growing role of Indian youth in global leadership and policy engagement.



71. Samridhh Gram Initiative Nominated for WSIS Prizes 2026

The Samridhh Gram Initiative, launched by the Department of Telecommunications under the BharatNet project, has been nominated for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Prizes 2026 in the *Enabling Environment* category.

The initiative aims to strengthen rural digital infrastructure by delivering integrated “phygital” services, which combine physical infrastructure with digital platforms. These services are provided through Samridhhi Kendras, established as one-stop service centres in villages.

Key Features and Services

Samridhhi Kendras offer a wide range of essential services, including:

- Healthcare: Telemedicine and remote consultations
- Education: Digital classrooms and e-learning facilities
- Agriculture Support: Access to advisory and market information
- Governance: Online government services and documentation
- Financial Inclusion: Banking and digital payment services
- E-commerce: Access to online marketplaces

These centres are supported by high-speed broadband, Fibre-to-the-Home (FTTH) connectivity, and public Wi-Fi, enabling seamless digital access in rural areas.

Impact on Rural Development

According to the Ministry of Communications, the initiative has already demonstrated early positive outcomes:

- Improved access to essential services
- Reduced travel time for rural residents
- Enhanced digital literacy
- Increased livelihood and economic opportunities

Recent Developments

Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia inaugurated the first Samridhhi Kendra in Umri village, Madhya Pradesh, marking a significant milestone in expanding grassroots digital infrastructure.

WSIS Prizes 2026

Public voting for the WSIS Prizes is currently open and will continue until 3rd of the upcoming month. The winners will be announced at the WSIS Forum 2026, scheduled to be held in Geneva in July 2026.

72. Harvard South Asian “Person of the Year”

Sayani Gupta has been honoured with the Harvard South Asian “Person of the Year” Award 2026 by the Harvard South Asian Association. The recognition acknowledges her impactful contributions to storytelling and her role in shaping the global representation of South Asian identities through bold and diverse performances.



10. SCIENCE AND TECH

73. Artemis II Mission

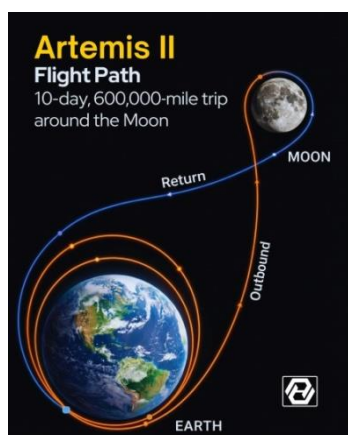


NASA’s Artemis II Mission, launched on 1 April 2026, is the first crewed mission of the Artemis program and the first human journey beyond low-Earth orbit since Apollo 17. It is a 10-day lunar flyby mission in which four astronauts travel aboard the Orion spacecraft to test deep-space systems, especially life support.

Key Features and Significance

The crew includes Reid Wiseman (Commander), Victor Glover (first person of color beyond low-Earth orbit), Christina Koch (first woman near the Moon), and Jeremy Hansen (first non-American beyond Earth’s orbit). The mission follows a free-return trajectory, flying about 7,400 km beyond the Moon and returning using gravity assist. It uses the Space Launch System, the most powerful rocket, generating 8.8 million pounds of thrust. It will also test laser communication for high-speed data transfer and conduct the AVATAR experiment to study space radiation effects on human cells, while deploying international CubeSats for global scientific collaboration.

74. Artemis II: Humanity's Return to Deep Space



NASA launched the Artemis II mission on 1 April 2026, marking the first crewed mission beyond low-Earth orbit in over 50 years.

Mission Overview

Artemis II is the first crewed flight of the Artemis program since Apollo 17. It is a 10-day lunar flyby mission, where four astronauts travel aboard the Orion spacecraft to test deep-space systems.

The mission will not land on the Moon but will use a free-return trajectory, flying around the Moon and returning to Earth using a gravity assist.

Crew and Key Firsts

- Reid Wiseman – Commander
- Victor Glover – First person of color beyond low-Earth orbit
- Christina Koch – First woman to travel to the Moon's vicinity
- Jeremy Hansen – First non-American beyond Earth's orbit



Technology and Innovations

- **Launch System:** Uses the Space Launch System (SLS), more powerful than Saturn V
- **Laser Communication:** Infrared-based system enabling high-speed data (up to 260 Mbps)
- **Biological Research:** AVATAR experiment studies effects of radiation using human cells
- **Global Collaboration:** CubeSats from multiple countries for space research

Significance

Artemis II is a crucial step toward future lunar landings under the Artemis program, paving the way for sustained human presence on the Moon and eventual missions to Mars.

75. Keytruda (Pembrolizumab – cancer drug)



The high cost and limited accessibility of the cancer drug Keytruda (pembrolizumab) in India have raised concerns, particularly due to ongoing patent protection.

About Keytruda (Pembrolizumab):

Pembrolizumab, marketed as Keytruda by Merck & Co., is a leading immunotherapy drug used in the treatment of over 20 types of cancers, including lung, cervical, and colorectal cancers. It works by targeting the PD-1 protein on T-cells,

thereby enhancing the body's immune response against cancer cells. The drug has been included in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines and represents a major advancement in oncology treatment.

Access Issues in India:

Despite its clinical effectiveness, access to Keytruda in India remains severely limited due to high costs and patent protection valid until 2028. Treatment can cost up to ₹1 crore annually, making it unaffordable for most patients, especially in a largely out-of-pocket healthcare system. The drug is not included in public health schemes like Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, and insurance coverage is often inadequate, restricting access to a small proportion of patients.

Future Outlook:

The patent expiry in 2028 is expected to enable the entry of biosimilars, potentially reducing prices significantly. However, regulatory complexities and high development costs for biosimilars may delay substantial price reductions. Policy measures such as easing approval norms and exploring compulsory licensing could further improve affordability and access to advanced cancer therapies in India.

76. UAE – First “10 Giga Nation” (U6GHz network)

The United Arab Emirates has launched the world's first commercial upper 6GHz (U6GHz) internet network, becoming the first “10 giga” nation.

Key Features of U6GHz Network:

The U6GHz spectrum operates within the 6425–7125 MHz frequency range and is regarded as a high-capacity band capable of supporting both wide coverage and enhanced data throughput. The newly deployed network delivers speeds of up to 10 Gbps for downloads and 1 Gbps for uploads under advanced 5G architecture, ensuring low latency and high reliability. This enables seamless support for high-definition streaming, real-time applications, and data-intensive services such as artificial intelligence and cloud computing.

Deployment & Significance:

The rollout, led by the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority, follows a phased development process, including spectrum allocation in 2024 and successful trials in 2025. Its commercial deployment in 2026 marks a major advancement in digital infrastructure. The initiative strengthens the foundation for next-generation technologies, including smart cities, autonomous systems, and future 6G networks, positioning the UAE at the forefront of global digital transformation.

77. Meta AI Model – Muse Spark

Meta has launched a new AI model, Muse Spark, to power its AI assistant.

About Muse Spark:

Muse Spark is the first artificial intelligence model developed under Meta's Superintelligence Labs and forms part of its Muse series. It is designed to support the Meta AI assistant in performing everyday tasks such as estimating calories from food images, visualising object placement, and answering queries related to science, mathematics, and health. The model is currently accessible through the Meta AI app and web platform, with plans for integration across services like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook, along with Meta's smart devices.

Concerns & Future Outlook:

The model has received mixed responses from experts, with criticism focusing on its emphasis on benchmark performance over real-world applicability, notably highlighted by François Chollet. In response, Meta's AI head Alexandr Wang acknowledged existing limitations while emphasising strengths in areas such as reasoning, writing, and visual coding. Positioned as a compact and efficient model, Muse Spark represents an initial step in Meta's broader AI roadmap, with further, more advanced iterations expected in the near future.

78. Neuromorphic Computing (frog-inspired sensor)

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has classified the Emperor Penguin as an endangered species.

Key Features of Emperor Penguin:

The Emperor Penguin is the largest and heaviest penguin species, identified by its distinctive golden-orange markings on the neck and chest. It demonstrates advanced navigational abilities using the sun's position, Earth's magnetic field, and spatial memory. The species breeds during the Antarctic winter, with males incubating eggs on their feet for nearly two months without feeding, relying on stored body fat. Their unique thermoregulation behaviour involves forming tightly packed huddles to survive extreme cold conditions below -40°C .

Climate Concern & Sentinel Role:

Emperor Penguins are highly dependent on sea ice for breeding, feeding, and survival, making them particularly vulnerable to climate change. Rising global temperatures and melting sea ice are projected to significantly reduce their population in the coming decades. As a sentinel species, their declining numbers provide early warning signals of environmental degradation, highlighting the broader impacts of climate change on Antarctic ecosystems.

79. G20 Satellite Likely to be Launched in 2027

The Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), V. Narayanan, has announced that the proposed G20 satellite is expected to be launched in 2027. The satellite will focus on monitoring climate change, air pollution, and weather patterns, contributing to global environmental assessment.

India's Leadership in the G20 Satellite Mission

India is set to play a leading role in the development and launch of the G20 satellite on behalf of member nations. This initiative reflects India's growing prominence in the global space sector and its commitment to collaborative scientific efforts.

India's Space Achievements

Dr. Narayanan highlighted a significant milestone, noting that India is the first country to successfully deploy more than 100 satellites using a single rocket without collision, demonstrating advanced launch capabilities and mission precision.

80. Atlas Drone Swarm System

China has recently unveiled the Atlas Drone Swarm System, an advanced military platform capable of launching and controlling nearly 100 drones through a single operator, marking a major advancement in autonomous warfare systems.

The Atlas system is a mobile, self-contained drone swarm operations unit that functions as a compact battlefield network. It integrates mass-launch capability with artificial intelligence, enabling the execution of complex, coordinated military operations.

- **Developed by:** China Electronics Technology Group Corporation (CETC)
- **Nature:** Independent, mobile, AI-enabled swarm warfare system
- **Objective:** To enable reconnaissance, communication, deception, and precision strikes across wide operational areas

Strategic Implications

- **Air Defence Saturation:**
The system can overwhelm enemy air defence systems by deploying a large number of low-cost drones, forcing adversaries to expend expensive interceptor missiles.
- **Operational Advantage in Border Areas:**
Potential deployment in regions like the Tibet Military District could enable rapid strikes on logistics and infrastructure, particularly along sensitive border areas.
- **Shift in Warfare Doctrine:**
Represents a transition toward AI-driven, swarm-based warfare, reducing reliance on traditional large-scale platforms.

11. SPORTS NEWS

81. Hockey India 8th Annual Awards 2025

The Hockey India Annual Awards celebrated excellence in Indian hockey. Hardik Singh and Navneet Kaur were named Men's and Women's Players of the Year, while Zafar Iqbal received the Major Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award. The awards were held on March 28, 2026, recognizing performances from the 2025 season.



82. Sheetal Devi Wins Para Archer of the Year

Sheetal Devi has been named Para Archer of the Year 2025. The 19-year-old para archer from Jammu and Kashmir is the first armless female archer to win gold at the World Para Archery Championships. She was honoured by World Archery, marking a significant achievement in para sports.



83. Khelo India Tribal Games 2026

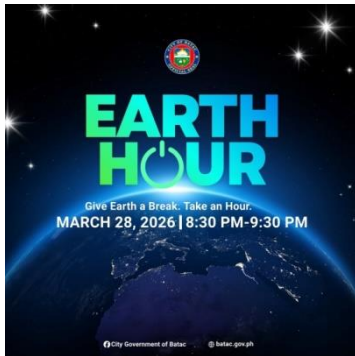


The Khelo India Tribal Games 2026 concluded recently with impressive participation from tribal athletes across the country.

Karnataka emerged as the overall champion, winning 23 gold medals in Chhattisgarh. It was followed by Odisha and Jharkhand. The event also saw the presence of prominent sportspersons like Mary Kom and Bhaichung Bhutia as special guests.

12. IMPORTANT DAYS

84. Earth Hour 2026



Earth Hour is a global environmental campaign organised by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), where individuals and institutions switch off non-essential lights for one hour to raise awareness about climate change and sustainability. In 2026, it was observed on 28 March (8:30–9:30 pm), marking 20 years of the movement since its start in Sydney in 2007.

Theme and Participation

The theme for 2026, “Give An Hour For Earth,” encourages people to go beyond just switching off lights by spending time reconnecting with and protecting nature. In India, major landmarks like India Gate, Qutub Minar, and Red Fort participated, along with widespread involvement across cities under WWF-India.

Earth Hour has evolved into one of the largest global grassroots environmental movements, engaging millions across 190+ countries. In India, it promotes activities like clean-up drives, nature walks, and awareness campaigns, encouraging long-term environmental action beyond the symbolic switch-off.

85. World Health Day

World Health Day was observed on April 7, 2026, highlighting the importance of global health and collective action.

World Health Day is observed annually on April 7 and is organized by the World Health Organization (WHO). The theme for 2026 is “Together for health. Stand with science.”, emphasizing the need for scientific collaboration and evidence-based approaches to healthcare. The day also promotes the concept of One Health, which recognizes the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health, and encourages coordinated global efforts to address health challenges.

86. World Earth Day

World Earth Day, also known as International Mother Earth Day, is observed annually on 22nd April to promote awareness and collective action on critical environmental issues such as climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. Recognized globally, it serves as a unifying platform for governments, organizations, and individuals to reaffirm their commitment to protecting the planet.

Theme and Historical Background

The theme for 2026, “Our Power, Our Planet,” emphasizes the importance of community-driven action, accelerating the transition to renewable energy, and ensuring accountability for environmental degradation. The origins of Earth Day trace back to 1970, when it was initiated by U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson in response to the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill, marking the beginning of the modern environmental movement. The movement led to the establishment of key environmental regulations and institutions, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the United States. Later, in 2009, the United Nations General Assembly officially designated 22nd April as International Mother Earth Day.

13. GOVT. SCHEMES

87. Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)

The Regional Passport Office in Bhopal has introduced Braille and sign language services for passport applicants.

Key Features:

The initiative aims to enhance accessibility for visually impaired, hearing-impaired, and speech-impaired individuals. Braille booklets have been introduced to explain the passport application process, including documentation for ECR and Non-ECR categories, application types (Normal and Tatkal), and key guidelines. Additionally, sign language videos linked through QR codes provide easy access to digital information on passport procedures.

Objective & Significance:

Inaugurated by B. S. Mubarak, the initiative promotes inclusive governance by making public services more accessible. The establishment of a grievance redressal cell further strengthens service delivery by ensuring timely resolution of applicant concerns, particularly for differently-abled citizens.

88. Womaniya Initiative (GeM platform)

The Womaniya initiative on the Government e-Marketplace has enabled over 2.1 lakh women entrepreneurs to secure orders worth ₹28,000 crore.

About Womaniya Initiative:

Launched in 2019 under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Womaniya is an inclusion-focused programme on GeM that provides a dedicated digital platform for women-led micro and small enterprises (MSEs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs). It facilitates direct procurement by government departments and public sector undertakings, covering products such as handicrafts, handloom items, and office supplies.

Key Features:

The initiative supports seamless digital onboarding through Udyam verification and training workshops, along with standardized product cataloguing for better visibility. It ensures a fully paperless and contactless procurement process, from bidding to payment, with time-bound digital payments critical for micro-entrepreneurs. Capacity-building efforts include vernacular training and buyer-seller interactions to enhance participation.

Impact & Significance:

Womaniya has significantly strengthened financial inclusion and market access for women entrepreneurs, with over 2.1 lakh registered enterprises securing 13.7 lakh orders and exceeding the mandated procurement target. By enabling direct access to government buyers, it reduces dependence on intermediaries, enhances supplier diversity, and promotes sustainable enterprise growth. It also contributes to grassroots economic empowerment and aligns with broader goals of inclusive development and women-led growth.

89. Integrated Infrastructure Monitoring Dashboard (MoSPI)

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has launched a revamped Integrated Performance Monitoring Dashboard for infrastructure sectors.

About the Dashboard:

It is a centralized digital platform designed to track real-time progress and performance of India's infrastructure sectors. The system replaces the earlier OCMS-2006 framework and is based on the PAIMANA (Project Assessment, Infrastructure Monitoring & Analytics for Nation-building) framework. It covers 11 key sectors and uses 116 indicators to provide a comprehensive assessment of infrastructure development.

Key Features:

The dashboard adopts a multi-dimensional evaluation approach, focusing on access, quality, utilization, affordability, and fiscal aspects. It includes sector-specific indicators across areas such as ports, aviation, power, roads, railways, and telecommunications. The platform enables dynamic analytics, automated assessments, and is updated quarterly to ensure real-time insights into infrastructure performance.

Significance:

The initiative strengthens data-driven governance by enabling evidence-based policymaking and improving transparency and accountability in infrastructure projects. By moving beyond basic output metrics, it helps identify bottlenecks related to quality, affordability, and efficiency, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of infrastructure development in India.

90. e-SafeHER Programme (cybersecurity for women)

The e-SafeHER Cyber Security Awareness Programme has been launched to promote safe digital participation among rural women in India.

About the Initiative:

e-SafeHER is a cybersecurity awareness and training programme aimed at building a gender-responsive, community-led model of digital safety. It is anchored under the Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA) Programme of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and implemented by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing in partnership with Reliance Foundation. The initiative focuses on developing “Cyber Sakhis”—trained women who disseminate cybersecurity awareness and promote safe online practices within their communities.

Objectives & Significance:

The programme aims to empower one million women over three years through a community-based, peer-led approach leveraging Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Beginning in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, it will expand nationwide in phases. By integrating cybersecurity awareness into existing digital literacy and women empowerment initiatives, e-SafeHER enhances digital confidence, encourages safe online transactions, and strengthens inclusive digital access in rural areas.

91. Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (11 years)

The Prime Minister of India commended the success of the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana on its 11th anniversary.

About PMMY:

Launched in 2015, PMMY is a flagship scheme aimed at providing collateral-free credit to non-corporate, non-farm micro and small enterprises. It promotes self-employment and financial inclusion by integrating grassroots entrepreneurs into the formal financial system. The scheme operates through various financial institutions, with refinance support provided by MUDRA under Small Industries Development Bank of India.

Loan Categories under PMMY:

Category	Loan Amount Range	Share in Total Loans	Purpose
Shishu	Up to ₹50,000	74%	Starting a business (basic, small-scale setup)
Kishor	₹50,000 – ₹5 lakh	24%	Expanding early-stage business (tools, inventory)
Tarun	₹5 lakh – ₹10 lakh	2%	Scaling established business (production, hiring)
Tarun Plus	₹10 lakh – ₹20 lakh	0.004%	Expansion of successful businesses (post Tarun repayment)

Key Achievements & Issues:

The scheme has significantly expanded financial inclusion by providing collateral-free loans,

promoting women entrepreneurship, and supporting marginalized communities. However, challenges persist, including dominance of small-ticket loans (Shishu category), rising NPAs, limited private sector participation, and a gap in translating credit into sustainable enterprise growth. Strengthening the scheme through a “credit-plus” approach, improved monitoring, and enhanced focus on scaling enterprises is essential for long-term impact.

92. NAMASTE Scheme

The National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) Scheme is a significant government initiative aimed at addressing the severe challenges faced by Sewer and Septic Tank Sanitation Workers (SSWs) in India. The scheme focuses on improving occupational safety, health, and dignity through structured and systemic interventions.

Latest Developments

Recently, the Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment highlighted that the NAMASTE Scheme has shown measurable progress. This has been achieved through targeted interventions and a focused strategy to eliminate hazardous manual cleaning practices in sanitation work.

About the NAMASTE Scheme

The NAMASTE Scheme seeks to transform sanitation work in India by promoting mechanisation and reducing human exposure to unsafe conditions.

Key Features:

- **Full Form:** National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)
- **Objective:** To ensure safe, dignified, and mechanised sanitation practices
- **Duration:** Implemented for three years from FY 2023–24 to FY 2025–26

Institutional Framework

- **Nodal Ministries:**
 - Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE)
 - Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)
- **Implementing Agency:**
 - National Safai Karmacharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC), under MoSJE

Key Objectives of the Scheme

The scheme is designed with a comprehensive set of targets:

- Achieve zero fatalities in sanitation-related work
- Eliminate direct human contact with faecal matter
- Ensure sanitation activities are carried out using mechanised equipment and safety gear
- Strengthen Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs)
- Promote skill development, self-help groups (SHGs), and entrepreneurship among sanitation workers

14. ENVIRONMENT

93. A humpback whales



A humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) was recently stranded in the Baltic Sea near Germany but managed to return towards deeper waters, raising hope for its survival. The Baltic Sea poses serious risks due to its low salinity, shallow depth, and limited food availability, making it unsuitable for such whales. Experts believe the whale may have entered the region accidentally while following prey or due to navigational disorientation. Its return to the Atlantic Ocean is crucial for long-term survival.

Features and Significance

Humpback whales are baleen whales from the rorqual family (Balaenopteridae), identified by their hump and long pectoral fins. They use bubble-net feeding to trap prey like krill and small fish. Found across all major oceans, they migrate long distances and reproduce slowly, with one calf every 2–3 years. Although classified as Least Concern by the IUCN, this incident highlights the vulnerability of marine mammals in unsuitable habitats and the need for effective monitoring and conservation efforts.

94. Snowy Owl

The snowy owl (*Bubo scandiacus*) is a large white bird of the true owl family, primarily found in the Arctic tundra of North America and Eurasia. It inhabits open, treeless landscapes but can also be seen in coastal dunes, prairies, marshes, and agricultural fields during migration or winter. Its distribution depends on prey availability and seasonal conditions, often moving southwards in harsh winters.



Behaviour and Conservation

Unlike most owls, the snowy owl is active both during day and night and is highly nomadic, sometimes skipping breeding if food is scarce. It mainly feeds on small mammals like lemmings and voles, using a swift “wallop” hunting technique. The species is listed as Vulnerable by the IUCN, facing threats from climate change, habitat disruption, and declining prey populations. Its recent inclusion under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) aims to enhance global cooperation for its protection across migratory routes.

95. Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*)



The jungle cat, also called the reed cat or swamp cat, is a medium-sized wild cat found across the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, and southern China. Despite its name, it prefers open habitats such as wetlands, grasslands, and semi-arid regions rather than dense forests. It is also commonly seen in agricultural landscapes, adapting well to human presence. In India, major populations occur in Madhya Pradesh,

Rajasthan, and Odisha.

Features and Behaviour

Jungle cats have a white muzzle, yellow eyes, long legs, and large tufted ears that help detect prey. They are generally nocturnal and secretive, though they may hunt during the day in less disturbed areas. They are adaptable hunters, feeding mainly on rodents and birds, and are also capable swimmers, sometimes catching fish.

Status and Significance

The species is listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List and is protected under Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 in India. Ecologically, jungle cats play a crucial role by controlling rodent populations in farms, benefiting agriculture. Their presence also indicates the health of open natural ecosystems, which are often underrepresented in conservation efforts.

96. Great Indian Bustard (*Ghorad*)

The Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*), locally known as Ghorad, is one of the heaviest flying birds and a flagship species of India's grasslands. It is classified as Critically Endangered (IUCN), with fewer than 150 individuals remaining globally, most of them in Rajasthan's Desert National Park. It is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Habitat and Features

This species inhabits dry grasslands and scrublands and is now restricted to pockets in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. It has an ostrich-like appearance, long legs, and a black cap. It is a slow breeder, laying only one egg per year, and nests on the ground, making it highly vulnerable. It feeds on insects, small animals, and seeds, acting as a natural pest controller.

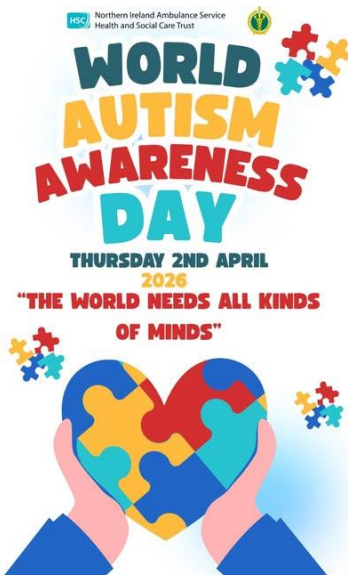


Operation Egg Transfer

A major conservation breakthrough came through Operation Egg Transfer, led by forest departments of Gujarat and Rajasthan with support from the Wildlife Institute of India (WII). In this method, a lab-fertilized egg was transported under controlled conditions and placed in a wild nest to ensure successful hatching in areas lacking male birds. This effort recently resulted in the birth of a chick in Gujarat after a decade.

The species is known as the “Guardian of the Grasslands” and is vital for maintaining ecosystem balance. The success of such conservation techniques offers hope for reviving its critically low population.

97. World Autism Awareness Day 2026



World Autism Awareness Day is observed on 2 April each year to promote understanding, dignity, and inclusion of people with autism. World Health Organization (WHO) marked the occasion by emphasizing the need for neuroinclusive environments across health, education, workplaces, and society.

Key Facts and Challenges

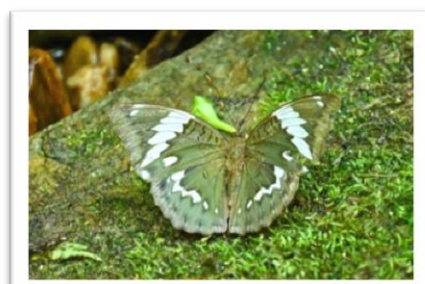
Globally, about 1 in 127 people is diagnosed with autism, a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition affecting communication, behaviour, and social interaction. It is among the top 10 brain health conditions contributing to global health loss. Despite awareness, autistic individuals

continue to face stigma, discrimination, and limited access to quality care and support services.

Way Forward and Significance

WHO highlights the importance of early identification, inclusive education, and community support to improve outcomes. It also focuses on strengthening policies, data-driven decision-making, and caregiver support systems. The day underscores the need for sustained efforts to ensure equal rights, inclusion, and improved quality of life for autistic people worldwide.

98. Euthalia zubeengargi



A new butterfly species, *Euthalia zubeengargi*, has recently been discovered in Arunachal Pradesh, adding to India's rich biodiversity, especially in the Northeast.

Habitat and Distribution

This species is found in semi-evergreen forests at elevations of 600–750 metres. It prefers cool, shaded forest interiors, typically staying close to vegetation and streamside environments.

Features and Behaviour

- Belongs to the genus *Euthalia*, widely distributed in South and Southeast Asia
- Characterised by earthy brown wings with pale spots
- Often rests on low vegetation
- Feeds on tree sap and minerals from damp surfaces near streams
- Shows activity mainly from late morning to early afternoon
- Exhibits slow, short flights between nearby plants

Ecological Importance

Butterflies like *Euthalia zubeengargi* act as indicator species, meaning their presence and diversity reflect the health of ecosystems. Their sensitivity to environmental changes makes them crucial for monitoring biodiversity and forest health.

Significance

The discovery highlights the ecological richness of Arunachal Pradesh and reinforces the importance of conserving forest habitats in Northeast India, which host a large number of butterfly species.

99. Red-Crowned Roofed Turtle: Return to the Ganga



The Red-Crowned Roofed Turtle has been reintroduced into the Ganga River after 30 years under the Namami Gange Mission and Turtle Survival Alliance India. It was released at Haiderpur Wetland.

Key Features

A freshwater turtle with a keeled shell; males have bright red and yellow markings. Herbivorous and lays

eggs during March–April.

Habitat & Threats

Earlier found in rivers like the Ganga River, its decline was due to pollution, sand mining, dams, and poaching.

Protection Status

- IUCN: Critically Endangered
- WPA, 1972: Schedule I
- CITES: Appendix II

Significance

Its return signals successful conservation and improving river ecology.

100. National Chambal Sanctuary

The Supreme Court of India has taken suo motu cognisance to protect the National Chambal Sanctuary from illegal sand mining.

About the Sanctuary

Also called the National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary, it is India's only tri-state protected area spanning Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. It covers about 5,400 sq km along the Chambal River.

Biodiversity

It supports nearly 90% of the world's gharial population, along with Ganges River Dolphin, mugger crocodile, Red-Crowned Roofed Turtle, smooth-coated otter, and over 330 bird species like the Indian skimmer.

Ecological Importance

The Chambal River is among India's cleanest rivers, forming a unique lotic ecosystem with deep channels, sandbanks, and ravines.

Threats

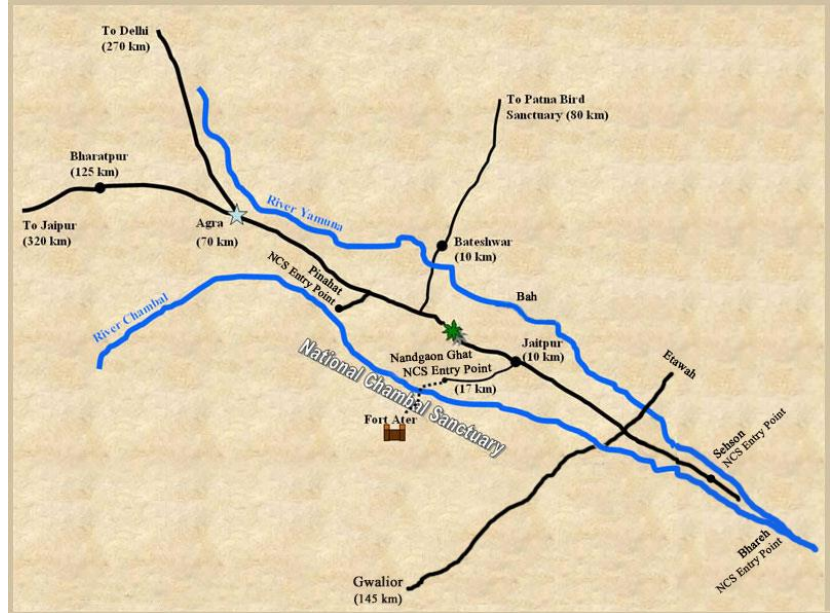
Major threats include illegal sand mining, water extraction, and illegal fishing, which damage habitats and nesting sites.

Conservation Status

- Important Bird Area (IBA)
- Proposed Ramsar Site
- IUCN Category IV protected area
- Part of Project Crocodile

Significance

The sanctuary is a critical habitat for endangered riverine species and plays a key role in conserving India's freshwater biodiversity.



101. Tar Balls



The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has released the draft Tar Balls Management Rules, 2026 to tackle oil pollution and protect India's coastline, especially in vulnerable western coastal regions.

Nature and Formation of Tar Balls

Tar balls are small, dark, sticky lumps of weathered crude oil found in the ocean or on beaches. They form when spilled oil loses its lighter components through evaporation and dissolution, leaving behind heavier hydrocarbons that thicken, break into pieces, and harden. They contain asphaltenes, impurities like sand and microplastics, and traces of metals such as

nickel and vanadium.

Environmental Impact and Concerns

Tar balls harm marine life when animals mistake them for food or get coated in oil. They also damage coral reefs and seagrass, and reduce beach quality, affecting tourism along India's west coast, especially from April to September.

102. Indian Crested Porcupine

The Indian Crested Porcupine has recently been reported damaging saffron crops in Kashmir by feeding on underground corms, affecting yields before flowering.



Habitat and Distribution

The Indian Crested Porcupine is a large rodent belonging to the Old World porcupine family Hystricidae. It is commonly found on rocky hillsides, but also inhabits scrublands, grasslands, and forests. It is widely distributed across South and Central Asia and parts of the Middle East, including India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. In India, it is also present in the Himalayan region up to elevations of about 2400 meters.

Features and Behaviour

This species has a lifespan of around 18–20 years and is easily recognized by its sharp quills, which act as a defense mechanism. Contrary to popular belief, it cannot throw its quills but uses them for backward attacks when threatened. It has strong claws for burrowing and is nocturnal, resting in caves or burrows during the day. Its diet is mainly herbivorous, consisting of roots, fruits, grains, and other plant material. According to the IUCN Red List, it is currently classified as Least Concern.

103. Ganges River Dolphin



A recent study highlighted efforts to rescue Ganges river dolphins from irrigation canals in Uttar Pradesh.

Key Findings:

The study reported that dams and barrages have disrupted natural habitats, forcing dolphins into irrigation canals where they face risks of injury or death. Between 2013 and 2020, 19 dolphins were successfully rescued from the Ganga-Ghagra basin. Most entrapments occurred post-monsoon and during winter due to changing water levels, while some cases were reported in summer when flow levels

decline.

About Ganges River Dolphin:

The Ganges River Dolphin is a freshwater mammal found in river systems such as the Ganga, Brahmaputra, and their tributaries across India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. It is largely blind and uses echolocation (ultrasonic sounds) to navigate and hunt. Commonly known as “Susu,” it surfaces frequently to breathe and is usually found alone or in small groups. It was declared the National Aquatic Animal of India in 2009.

Threats & Protection:

Major threats include habitat fragmentation due to dams, pollution, fishing net entanglement, and poaching. The species is listed as Endangered by the IUCN and is protected under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, as well as under CITES Appendix I and CMS Appendix I. Conservation initiatives include Project Dolphin and protected areas such as the Vikramshila Ganges Dolphin Sanctuary.

104. Emperor Penguin (Endangered – IUCN)



The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has classified the Emperor Penguin as an endangered species.

Overview:

The Emperor Penguin, the largest and heaviest among penguin species, is uniquely adapted to the extreme conditions of Antarctica. It is distinguished by its characteristic golden-orange markings on the neck and chest and exhibits remarkable behavioural adaptations

such as navigating using solar position, Earth's magnetic field, and spatial memory. The species breeds during the harsh Antarctic winter, with males incubating eggs for nearly two months without feeding, while females undertake long-distance foraging.

Additionally, their thermoregulation strategy of forming huddles enables survival in temperatures below -40°C . The classification highlights the severe impact of climate change on Antarctic ecosystems, as Emperor Penguins are highly dependent on sea ice for breeding, feeding, and survival. Their status as a sentinel species underscores their role in indicating broader environmental changes, with declining populations serving as early warnings of ecological stress. This development reinforces the urgency of global climate action and conservation measures to protect vulnerable species and fragile polar ecosystems.

105. State of India's Bats (SoIBats) 2024–25 Report

The State of India's Bats (SoIBats) 2024–25 Report represents the first comprehensive national-level assessment of bat species in India. Conducted by the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) in collaboration with Bat Conservation International (BCI), the report highlights a significant gap in research and data despite bats being one of the largest orders of mammals in the country. It aims to establish a baseline for understanding bat diversity, distribution, and conservation needs to inform future environmental policy.

Key Findings of the Report

The report reveals important insights into bat diversity and conservation challenges across India:

- **High Diversity Regions:** West Bengal (68 species) and Meghalaya (66 species) emerge as biodiversity hotspots for bats.
- **Research Deficit:** Around **35 species remain unassessed or data deficient**, indicating inadequate scientific attention and limited research infrastructure.
- **Roosting Patterns:** While caves and trees continue to serve as natural habitats, bats are increasingly adapting to **man-made structures** such as abandoned buildings and monuments.
- **Ecological Importance:** Bats play a crucial role in **pollination, seed dispersal, and pest control**, thereby supporting agriculture and maintaining ecosystem balance.

Bat Diversity in India

India hosts approximately **135 bat species**, including **16 endemic** and **7 threatened species**, reflecting both richness and conservation concerns:

- **Critically Endangered:** Kolar Leaf-nosed Bat (restricted to a single cave in Karnataka)
 - **Endangered Species:** Nicobar Flying Fox, Salim Ali's Fruit Bat, Andaman Horseshoe Bat
 - **Regional Endemism:**
 - Himalayas/Northeast: Sombre Bat, Meghalaya Thick-thumbed Bat
 - Western Ghats: Salim Ali's Fruit Bat, Srimi's Long-fingered Bat
 - Andaman & Nicobar Islands: Nicobar Flying Fox, Homfray's Horseshoe Bat
- Gangetic Plains: Durga Das's Leaf-nosed Bat

106. Dolphin Friends Initiative

The Dolphin Friends Initiative has been launched by the forest department in Prayagraj to strengthen the conservation of the endangered Gangetic river dolphin through community participation and continuous river monitoring. It represents a localized, people-driven approach to protecting freshwater biodiversity and river ecosystems.

Objectives and Rationale

The initiative aims to ensure the protection, monitoring, and conservation of Gangetic dolphins, particularly during sensitive breeding periods such as the monsoon. It also seeks to promote awareness among local communities and develop a sustainable, participatory conservation model that integrates local knowledge with institutional efforts for long-term ecological preservation.

Key Features and Implementation

The programme is designed as a **community-based volunteer network** involving multiple stakeholders.

Major features include:

- **Community Participation:** Active involvement of fishermen and boatmen, who regularly interact with river ecosystems
- **Seasonal Monitoring:** Intensified surveillance during the **monsoon breeding season**
- **Scientific Support:** Engagement of researchers and educators for data collection, documentation, and awareness
- **Hotspot Surveillance:** Focused monitoring in key habitats such as:
 - Phaphamau
 - Chhatnag
 - Meja
 - Prayagraj
 - Patna
 - Fatehpur
- **Regular Reporting Mechanism** for tracking dolphin movement and habitat conditions

107. India's 99th Ramsar Site

Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh has been designated as India's 99th Ramsar Site on 22nd April 2026. Located in the Aligarh district, this recognition increases the total number of Ramsar sites in Uttar Pradesh to 12, highlighting the state's growing importance in wetland conservation.

Location and Background

Shekha Jheel is situated about 17 km from Aligarh city and has historical origins dating back to 1852, when it was formed following the construction of the Upper Ganga Canal. Over time, it has evolved into a significant freshwater wetland ecosystem supporting diverse flora and fauna.

Biodiversity and Ecological Importance

The sanctuary is a freshwater lake ecosystem that supports rich biodiversity.

Key highlights include:

- Habitat for 249 bird species
- Around 62 species are strictly wetland-dependent
- Serves as an important stopover on the Central Asian Flyway

Notable migratory birds:

- Bar-headed Goose
- Painted Stork

This makes it a crucial site for both resident and migratory avifauna.

15. OBITUARY

108. Col. Sonam Wangchuk



Mahavir Chakra awardee Sonam Wangchuk passed away in Leh at the age of 61.

About Col. Sonam Wangchuk:

Colonel Sonam Wangchuk, popularly known as the “Lion of Ladakh,” was a distinguished officer of the Ladakh Scouts, known for expertise in high-altitude warfare. He played a crucial role during the

Kargil War, particularly in operations along the Chorbat La axis in the Batalik sector, helping secure the Line of Control (LoC) in Ladakh.

Honours & Legacy:

He was awarded the Mahavir Chakra in 1999 for his exceptional bravery and leadership. In recognition of his contributions, the Government of India named two military posts “Sonam 1” and “Sonam 2” in his honour, reflecting his enduring legacy in India’s military history.

109. C.D. Gopinath

Former Indian cricketer C. D. Gopinath, India’s oldest Test player, has passed away at the age of 96.

Career & Contributions:

C. D. Gopinath was part of the historic Indian team that secured its first-ever Test victory against England in 1952 at Chennai. He played 8 Test matches between 1951 and 1960, scoring 242 runs, with an unbeaten 50 on debut. In first-class cricket, he featured in 83



matches, amassing over 4,200 runs at an impressive average of 42.16. His contribution in India's maiden Test win remains a significant milestone in the country's cricketing history.

Legacy & Recognition:

Beyond his playing career, Gopinath served Indian cricket in key administrative roles, including as a national selector, chairman of selectors, and team manager during the 1979 tour of England. He is remembered as a pioneer who contributed to laying the foundation of Indian cricket, both on and off the

field.

110. Asha Bhosle

Asha Bhosle was conferred with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF).

Key Highlights:

Asha Bhosle received the honour at the 11th edition of the Dubai International Film Festival in recognition of her exceptional contribution to music. She is regarded as one of the most versatile playback singers, having performed across genres such as classical, folk, ghazals, pop, and bhajans.

Career & Achievements:

Beginning her career in 1943 at the age of 10, she has recorded over 12,000 songs in multiple languages. She was recognised by the World Record Academy as the most recorded artist in history. Over her career, she has won seven Filmfare Best Female Playback Awards and was honoured with the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award in 2001, reflecting her enduring legacy in Indian music.



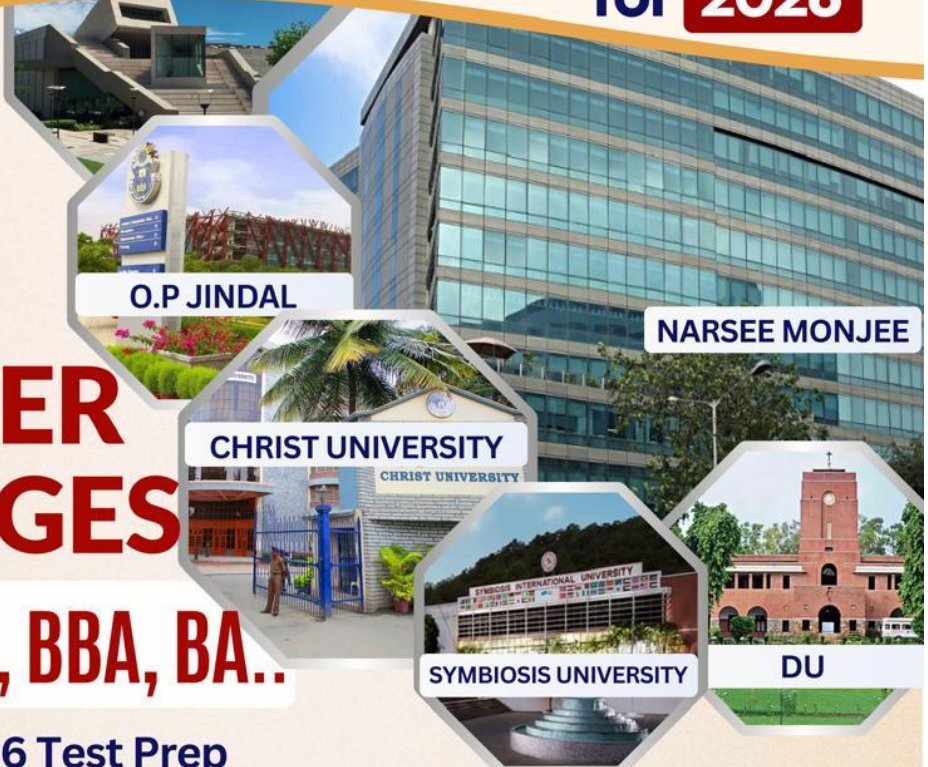
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