



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE OF PRABHA IAS ACADEMY

The Magazine is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short

The first section is dedicated to Topic Wise Current Affairs with a short description to provide information about all major happenings this month.

Section 2: Practice Questions with Answers

The Second Section contains 150 Multiple Choice Questions based on daily current affairs.

Section 3: Detailed Analysis of important Event

The Third Section covers some major happenings in this month along with analysis. The content has been covered from various online & offline sources including reputed newspapers like The Hindu, Indian Express etc. All the news topics have been explained keeping in mind their underlying issues. Every issue has been covered comprehensively. Some of the information provided may not be directly relevant for the examination. As the content is very wide, we have only covered a limited set of issues. You can utilize it smartly along with Daily Study of News Papers as well as other sources.

SECTION 1 TOPICS

IMPORTANT DAYS, AGREEMENTS, APPOINTMENTS, AWARDS, BANKING,
BOOKS AND AUTHOR,
DEFENCE, ECONOMY, INTERNATIONAL, MISCELLANEOUS, NATIONAL,
OBITUARIES, RANKS AND REPORTS, SCHEMES AND COMMITTEES,
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SPORTS, STATE, SUMMITS AND CONFERENCES

SECTION 3 TOPICS

ECONOMICS, ENVIRONMENT AND DIVERSITY, HISTORY, INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS, POLITY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ART AND CULTURE, SECURITY
ISSUES, TRIVIA

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CURRENT AFFAIRS



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JANUARY 2025

**PRABHA IAS IPS
COACHING ACADEMY**

PREFACE

This is our special edition of Current Affairs Magazine for various Central & State level Competitive Examinations, covering content from the month of January 2025.

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Section 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs

Section 2

Question with Answers

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SECTION 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short



1: Important Days



Global Family Day : 01 January :-

Global Family Day is observed annually on January 1. In 1997, the United Nations General Assembly established the International Decade for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the World's Children. In 1999, members of the United Nations were formally invited to devote the first day of the year to brainstorming methods to promote peace to the globe. Since then, Global Family Day has been observed every year on the same day. On Global Family Day, we are reminded of the critical role families play in reducing feelings of isolation, promoting a sense of belonging, and offering emotional support.



World Braille Day : 04 January :-

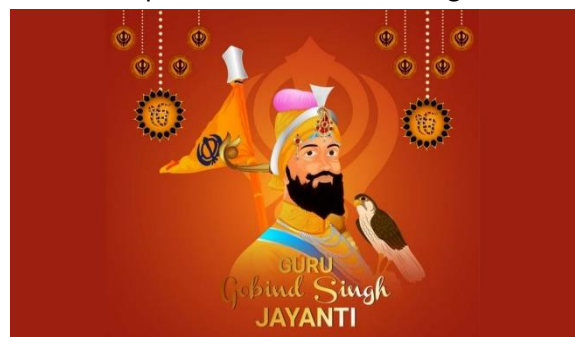
January 4 is World Braille Day, which commemorates the birth of Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille. The day also acknowledges that people with vision impairments should be entitled to the same human rights as everyone else. In November 2018, the United Nations General Assembly recognized January 4 as World Braille Day. The next year, the inaugural World Braille Day was honored and designated as a global holiday. Braille, a universal code rather than a language, serves as a tool to write and

read in various languages, including Sanskrit, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Spanish, and many others.



World Day of War Orphans Observed Globally : 06 January :-

World Day of War Orphans was observed on January 6, 2025, to highlight the plight of children who have lost their parents due to war and conflict. The day aims to raise awareness about the challenges faced by these vulnerable children, including displacement, lack of education, and access to healthcare. Various non-governmental organizations and international bodies organized campaigns and fundraisers to support orphaned children and provide them with better opportunities. In India, special programs were conducted in regions affected by conflict to extend support and ensure the protection of children's rights.



Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti Celebrated Across India : 06 January :-

Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti, marking the birth anniversary of the 10th Sikh Guru, was celebrated with devotion and enthusiasm across the country on January 6, 2025. Known for his spiritual wisdom and valor, Guru Gobind

Singh played a pivotal role in establishing the Khalsa Panth and promoting the principles of equality, justice, and righteousness. Devotees gathered at gurudwaras to participate in prayers, kirtans, and langars. The day is also an occasion to reflect on his teachings of courage, humility, and unwavering faith in the divine. Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended his greetings, urging citizens to draw inspiration from Guru Gobind Singh's life.



Earth's Rotations Day : 08 January :-

Every year, January 8 is honored as Earth Rotation Day. This day commemorates the anniversary of French physicist Leon Foucault's 1851 demonstration that the Earth revolves on its axis. We are all aware with the Earth's rotation. It occurs while our planet orbits the sun on a vertical axis. It took philosophers and scientists several years to understand how the Earth moved around the sun. The most prominent one was taken out in 1851 by a French physicist named Leon Foucault. He devised a pendulum to demonstrate the earth's rotation about a fixed axis.



Pravasi Bharatiya Divas : 10 January :-

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) has been observed on January 9th every year since 2003 to commemorate the

Overseas Indian community's contribution to India's growth. January 9 was chosen to commemorate this significant event because it was on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa, spearheaded India's freedom movement, and radically transformed the lives of Indians. The Indian diaspora is now over 35.4-million strong, with 19.5 million Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and 15.8 million NRIs. The US and the UAE are home to the largest groups of diaspora, with over 2 million PIOs in the US and more than 3.5 million NRIs in the UAE.



10 January : World Hindi Day :-

World Hindi Day is annually observed on January 10. With around 600 million speakers worldwide, Hindi is one of the most commonly spoken languages, alongside Mandarin, Chinese, and English. On this date in 1949, Hindi was spoken for the first time at the United Nations General Assembly. Vishwa Hindi Diwas was observed for the first time on January 10, 2006, on the orders of then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. It is an occasion to recognise Hindi as a universal language. The theme for World Hindi Day 2025 is "Hindi : The Global Voice of Unity and Cultural Pride."



Death Anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri : 11 January :-

will create direct and indirect employment for 5,000 persons and investment of about ₹10,000 crore.



IIT Madras collaborates with Agriculture Ministry on Project VISTAAR :-

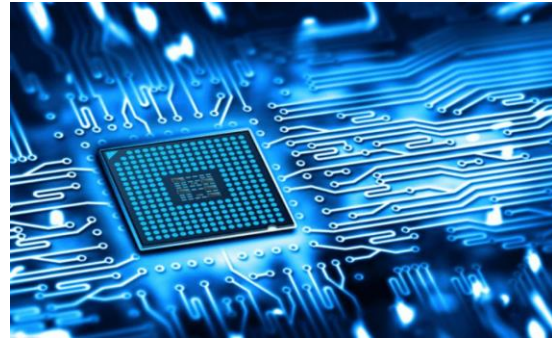
The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) is working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare of India on Project VISTAAR to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of agricultural extension systems through digitization. The pilot project VISTAAR (Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources) seeks to strengthen the agricultural extension system. This initiative will enable farmers and other stakeholders in agriculture and allied sectors to become aware of the capabilities and offerings that start-ups have and ease access to them.



India and Mongolia To Forge Mining Partnership :-

India is anticipated to execute a preliminary deal with Mongolia on geology and exploration soon, according to a senior Indian government official with firsthand knowledge of the situation. Mongolia is a landlocked country with abundant copper and coking coal deposits, and India relies heavily on imports to meet expanding demand for the red metal used in electricity, construction, and electrical vehicles, as well as coking coal for steelmaking. Companies such as Adani, Hindalco

and Vedanta have expressed an interest in sourcing copper from Mongolia, the source said.



C-DOT and IIT Mandi signs agreement to Develop Wideband Spectrum Sensor Chip :-

In an important move towards establishing Indigenous state-of-the-art next-generation telecommunications technology, the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), the leading Telecom R&D center of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India, has inked an agreement with the Indian Institute of Technology Mandi (IIT Mandi) in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology Jammu (IIT Jammu), for the development of "Wideband Spectrum-Sensor ASIC-Chip for Enhancing the Spectrum Utilization".



India-U.S. joint Sonobuoy production line expected to be ready by 2027 :-

According to the US company Ultra Maritime (UM), the final assembly of sonobuoys used to detect submarines underwater would take place in India, with an operational production line slated to be completed in 2027. The equipment will be co-produced in India in collaboration with Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), a defense public sector organization. India and the U.S. announced the "first-of-its-kind partnership on co-production" of U.S. sonobuoys for Undersea Domain Awareness for the Indian Navy, a high-end technology

that allows tracking of submarines in the deep seas and oceans.



NPCI and Magnati Partner to Boost UPI Use in UAE :-

NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) has established a cooperation with Magnati, a UAE-based payment service provider, to promote QR-based Unified Payments Interface (UPI) merchant payments using point-of-sale (POS) terminals across the Middle East. The collaboration intends to expand the UAE's QR-based merchant payment network by allowing more shops to accept UPI as a payment method from Indian tourists, according to NIPL, the international branch of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).



C-DOT and IIT Bombay Collaborate for Indigenous 6G Optical Chipset :-

The Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT Bombay) and the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), the top telecom R&D center under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India, have inked an agreement that is a major step towards developing next-generation telecommunications technology. The collaboration focuses on the development of an "Optical Transceiver Chipset for High-Bandwidth 6G Wireless Links" under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) 6G Call for Proposal initiative.



Odisha, Singapore sign MoU to establish FinTech hub in Bhubaneswar :-

The Government of Odisha's Electronics and IT Department and Singapore's Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN) inked a Memorandum of Understanding to create a Global Competency Centre in Bhubaneswar to promote FinTech collaboration, with the initial focus on developing inclusive and sustainable InsureTech and related areas. Commenting on the MoU, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi stated that Odisha intends to use GFTN's worldwide expertise and resources to foster innovation and produce bespoke Fintech solutions in the state. The initiative marks another positive step commemorating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Singapore in 2025.



Ashapura Minechem signs MoU with China Railway for bauxite project in Guinea :-

The exporter of bauxite, Ashapura Minechem Ltd., declared that China Railway and its foreign affiliate had signed a long-term memorandum of understanding (MoU). A strategic cooperation to jointly develop the bauxite resource in Guinea's Kindia region is outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding. As per the MoU, China Railway will be responsible for the production of

Understanding was inked on the outskirts of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos. Notably, Maharashtra government has so far signed over 50 MoUs with various business conglomerates at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos.



Tripura becomes first North East State to sign MoU with Bhashini for Multi-lingual Governance :-

The Government of Tripura has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Digital India Bhashini Division (DIBD) of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, under the able leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Prof. Dr. Manik Saha, marking a significant milestone in the state's efforts to increase the use of Tripura's rich regional languages and to facilitate citizen digital participation by using these languages in governance. The MOU signing ceremony was held at Pragna Bhavan in Agartala, during a State Level Workshop- 'Bhashini Rajyam'.

3: Appointments



Rajat Verma Appointed CEO of DBS Bank India :-

DBS has nominated Rajat Verma as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of DBS Bank India, effective March 1, 2025, following permission from the Reserve Bank of India. Verma, currently Head of the Institutional Banking Group (IBG) at DBS Bank India, will take over as CEO when Surojit Shome retires on February 28, 2025. Since becoming CEO of DBS Bank India in 2015, Shome has dramatically expanded the India business, including the establishment of digibank, India's first mobile-only bank, in 2016.



Bhuvnesh Kumar Appointed UIDAI CEO :-

Bhuvnesh Kumar, additional secretary in the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in responsibility of cyber legislation and UIDAI-related matters, has been appointed CEO of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). He is going to continue to hold the two offices. Kumar replaces Amit Agrawal, who was named as secretary of the Department of Pharmaceuticals in December. Bhuvnesh Kumar is an IAS officer from the 1995 batch of Uttar Pradesh cadre. He is a graduate of National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra.



Manish Singhal Appointed Secretary General of ASSOCHAM :-

The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), one of the country's oldest business chambers, has named Manish Singhal as its new Secretary General. Singhal has over 35 years of work experience in both corporate India and chambers of commerce, and previously worked as the Deputy Secretary General of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), according to the news release. His extensive career includes stints with major Indian transnational companies such as Tata Motors, Eicher (Volvo), Tata Auto Comp Systems, Moser Baer India, and BEML.



Faiz Ahmed Kidwai Appointed as DGCA Director General :-

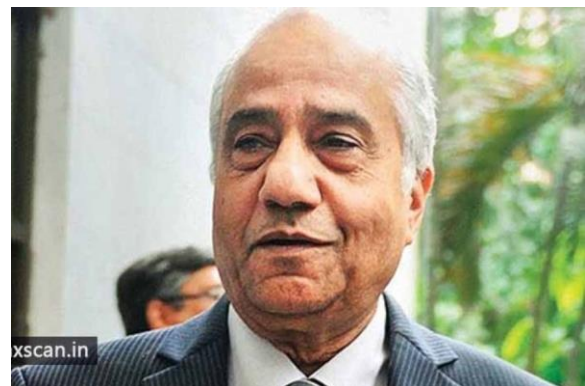
Faiz Ahmed Kidwai has been named the next director general of the DGCA. Kidwai is an IAS officer from Madhya Pradesh's 1996 batch, currently serving as additional secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. Other selections comprise Ashutosh Agnihotri as chairman and managing director of Food Corporation of India, Akash Tripathi as assistant

secretary in the Ministry of Power, and Kamal Kishore Soan as mission director of the Jal Jeevan Mission. Shubha Thakur, a Central Secretariat Service officer, was reassigned from agriculture ministry to serve as additional secretary in the Inter-State Council Secretariat under MHA.



Bahadur Singh Sagoo elected new president of Athletics Federation of India :-

Bahadur Singh Sagoo has been elected as the next president of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI). The Asian Games shot put medalist succeeded the outgoing president, Adille Sumariwalla, at the federation's Annual General Assembly Meeting in Chandigarh. With Sagoo's appointment, Sumariwalla's more than ten-year reign as AFI president comes to an end. The 67-year-old had been AFI president since 2012. Sagoo, a one-time Asian medallist and two-time national champion, won a gold medal in the shot put at the 2002 Busan Asian Games. He also competed in the 2000 and 2004 Olympics.



Justice B.N. Srikrishna to Lead Advisory Board of Equal and OneMoney :-

B. N. Srikrishna, a retired Supreme Court justice, will lead the newly formed Advisory Board of Equal, an ID

4: Awards



Southgate, Fry, and Athletes Recognized in 2024 New Year Honours :-

Former England football manager Gareth Southgate and actor Stephen Fry have both been knighted in the New Year Honours list, which also honours Olympic athletes. Keely Hodgkinson, the 800m champion, is one of numerous medalists to receive an MBE following the summer games in Paris. Sadiq Khan, mayor of London, and Andy Street, former mayor of the West Midlands, have also received knighthoods. Other notable names on the 2025 list include musician Myleene Klass, gardener Alan Titchmarsh, and actresses Carey Mulligan and Sarah Lancashire.



SAIL Earns Great Place to Work Recognition for Second Consecutive Year :-

Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), a Maharatna PSU, has yet again received the renowned 'Great Place to Work' award, this time from January 2025 to January 2026. The Great Place to Work Institute of India gave SAIL its second consecutive certification, following its first from December 2023 to December 2024. This award

recognizes SAIL's effort to creating a pleasant working culture through innovative HR initiatives. Key programs include the Work Other than Workplace (WoW) scheme, flexible timings for urban employees, and self-paced learning platforms like LinkedIn Learning Hub and E-Pathshala.



Manu Bhaker, Gukesh among four athletes to get Khel Ratna award :-

Manu Bhaker, a double Olympic medalist, has been picked for the Khel Ratna award, alongside chess World Champion D Gukesh, hockey captain Harmanpreet Singh, and Paralympic gold medalist Praveen Kumar, according to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. Swapnil Kusale, who won the rifle 3-position bronze, and Sarabjot Singh, who won the mixed air pistol bronze with Manu at the Paris Olympics, have both been selected for the Arjuna award. Aman Sehrawat, the wrestling bronze medallist from the Paris Games, was also picked for the Arjuna Award.



Odia Poet Pratiba Satpathy to Receive Gangadhar National Award :-

Sambalpur University will present the Gangadhar National Award for Poetry 2023 to renowned Odia poet Prativa Satpathy on the anniversary of its 58th foundation day on January 5. Satpathy, a Sahitya Akademi Award winner, rose to popularity in the 1960s alongside Sesha Janha. Her Odia writings have been translated into other Indian and foreign languages. Named after renowned Odisha poet Gangadhar Meher, the award, instituted by the university in 1989, is presented every year during its foundation day function.



Sai Paranjpye to Receive Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award :-

Sai Paranjpye, a veteran director-writer noted for slice-of-life films that include "Sparsh", "Chashme Buddoor", "Katha", and "Saaz", will be awarded the Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award at the Ajanta-Ellora International Film Festival (AIFF) 2025. The 10th edition of the film gala is set to take place in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar from January 15 to 19. AIFF chairman Nandkishor Kagliwal, chief mentor Ankushrao Kadam and honorary chairman of AIFF, director Ashutosh Gowariker made the announcement, according to a press release.



Golden Globes 2025 :-

The Golden Globes 2025 were underway in Beverly Hills, California, where the who's who of Hollywood gathered to honor the best of 2024. The 82nd Golden Globes, hosted by acclaimed comedian Nikki Glaser, marking the first time a woman has hosted the ceremony solo. The French musical criminal comedy Emilia Perez leads the race with a whopping ten nominations. The film won four awards: Best Picture, Best Supporting Actress (Zoe Saldana), Best Non-English Feature, and Best Original Song. While Jeremy Allen White won the Best Actor (Comedy or Musical) for The Bear, Jean Smart took home the Best Actress (Comedy or Musical) prize.



Lionel Messi Honoured with the US Presidential Medal of Freedom :-

Argentine football ace Lionel Messi became the first men's footballer to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom in the United States, although he did not attend the White House ceremony. The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the highest civilian honor bestowed to those "who have made exemplary contributions to the prosperity, values, or security of the United States, world peace, or other significant societal, public, or private endeavors." The White House statement said that Messi had been given the award as "the most decorated player in the history of professional soccer."



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha was presented with the Maharaja Hari Singh Award during a ceremony in Jammu. The LG accepted the Maharaja Hari Singh Peace and Harmony Award 2024-25 at the Satyam Resort in Jammu. Later in his remarks, LG Sinha paid tribute to the late Devender Singh Rana, who was also honored at the

ceremony. He praised Rana's efforts in promoting peace and harmony, stating that his contributions will always be remembered. LG Sinha highlighted the significant role of Maharaja Hari Singh in integrating Jammu and Kashmir with India.

5: Banking



RBI Introduces Name Lookup for NEFT and RTGS :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has requested that the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) develop a facility that will allow customers using online fund transfer systems, such as RTGS and NEFT, to validate the name of the bank account to which money is being transferred before starting the transaction in order to avoid errors and fraud. All banks that are direct members or sub-members of Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) System and National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) System are advised to offer this facility no later than April 1, 2025, the Reserve Bank said in a circular.



RBI Reports 98.12% of ₹2,000 Notes Returned :-

According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), by December 31, 2024, 98.12% of the ₹2,000 in circulation as of May 19, 2023, had been returned, while the remaining notes remained legal currency. In an update on the withdrawal of ₹2000 denomination banknotes, the central bank emphasized that as of the end of business on December 31, 2024, the total value of ₹2,000 banknotes in circulation had decreased to ₹6,691 crore, down from ₹3.56 lakh crore as of May 19, 2023, when the withdrawal was announced.



SBI unveils TAB-based digital onboarding for NRIs' account opening :-

To make it easier for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to open NRE (Non-Resident External) and NRO (Non-Resident Ordinary) accounts, State Bank of India (SBI) has introduced a TAB-based end-to-end digital onboarding process. The largest bank in India stated in a statement that this program, which uses digital tools to improve the effectiveness and simplicity of account opening, will be accessible at all SBI branches in India as well as a few overseas locations. It eliminates the need for physical paperwork, enabling faster account opening both at branches and during customer visits by digitally verifying documents, per the statement.



SBI Introduces 'Har Ghar Lakhpati' and 'SBI Patrons' Deposit Schemes :-

The State Bank of India (SBI) has unveiled two new deposit schemes, 'Har Ghar Lakhpati' and 'SBI Patrons', to give its clients more financial flexibility and better value. SBI has around a 23% market share in deposits. The bank stated that these services demonstrate its commitment to prioritising innovation and empowering individuals. 'Har Ghar Lakhpati' is a pre-calculated recurring deposit system created for consumers who deposit Rs 1,000,000 or its multiples. With this product, customers can focus on planning and saving to achieve their financial goals.



RBI adds 8 tons gold to its reserves in November 2024: WGC :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) purchased eight tonnes of gold in November 2024, while central banks around the world purchased a total of 53 tonnes of the precious metal throughout the month, based on the most recent World Gold Council (WGC) report. The RBI has, like other central banks, started purchasing gold as a safe-haven asset. The strategy of holding gold is primarily aimed at hedging against inflation and reducing foreign currency

risks, especially in times of uncertainty triggered by geopolitical tensions.



RBI Lifts Lending Restrictions on Asirvad Micro Finance and DMI Finance :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lifted the regulatory limitations placed on Asirvad Micro Finance Ltd, Chennai, and DMI Finance Private Ltd, New Delhi, with immediate effect. Asirvad Microfinance is Manappuram Finance's microlending arm. Additionally, restrictions on two other non-banking financial organizations (NBFCs), Navi Finserv Pvt Ltd and Arohan Financial Services Ltd, were eased following identical compliance procedures, with orders issued on December 2, 2024 and January 3, 2025, respectively.



PNB MetLife Joins Hands with Saraswat Bank for Financial Inclusion :-

One of India's biggest urban co-ops, Saraswat Co-operative Bank Ltd., and PNB MetLife India Insurance Company Ltd. (PNB MetLife) have established a strategic bancassurance cooperation. By providing a full range of life insurance options, such as savings, protection, retirement, and group plans, to Saraswat Bank's substantial clientele of almost 30 lakh people spread

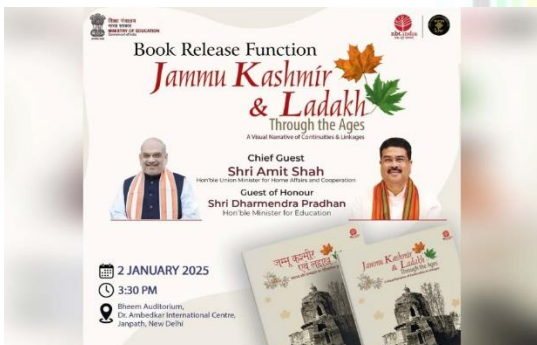
Director and Chief Executive Officer, Tata AIA said a marriage is not only a celebration of love and togetherness but also a testament to family aspirations and Shubh Muhurat intends to help families plan well in advance.



Skydo Receives RBI Nod as Cross-Border Payment Aggregator :-

Skydo Technologies has got in-principle approval from the RBI to function as a Payment Aggregator-Cross Border (PA-CB). The Bengaluru-based fintech, launched in 2022, services over 12,000 Indian exporters and processes over \$250 million in export payments yearly. The company works with prominent banks worldwide to provide solutions for invoicing, payments, and reconciliation with transparent pricing and no markups on real mid-market FX rates. Skydo's selling propositions are its ease of use with digital onboarding, instant KYC, dedicated customer support, fast settlements, and streamlined regulatory compliance through instant FIRA issuance.

6: Books and Author



Amit Shah, Dharmendra Pradhan launched book documenting story of Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan presented the book "Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh: Through the Ages" in New Delhi. "The book attempts to document the story of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh from a perspective and format that enables an overview for both the subject specialist and those less conversant," an official statement from the Education Ministry said. According to the announcement, the book is the outcome of a collaboration between the National Book Trust of India and the Indian Council of Historical Research. It was published in both Hindi and English.



Coffee table book on Chikankari launched :-

The Lucknow district administration, in partnership with the Indian Institute of Management (IIM)-Indore, has published a coffee table book that spotlights Chikankari goods, which are an important component of Lucknow's cultural history. "Building on recently submitted report, "Strategies for Strengthening Systems and Processes, Marketing and Branding of Chikankari Fabrics", the institute has prepared a coffee table book to further celebrate and document the craft," said Lucknow district magistrate Suryapal Gangwar addressing a press conference.



17-year-old writer's debut work 'Gasoline Rainbows' released:-

Joan Liz Joe's initial work, Gasoline Rainbows, a collection of short stories, was unveiled by an esteemed panel consisting of Ministers P Rajeeve and M B Rajesh, MP A A Rahim, and Padma Shri-awardee Dr Jose Chacko Periappuram at an exclusive gathering at the Reccaa Club in Kakkanad, Kochi. Meanwhile, Rajesh, who published the book, complimented Joan for taking such a significant step at such a young age. A close friend of the author's parents, the minister also hailed Jianna Bridget Joe, Joan's sister, for contributing artwork for the book.



Book on marathons organised in Karunanidhi's memory released :-

The book Guinness Kalaigal, authored by Health Minister Ma. Subramanian, was unveiled by Water Resources Minister and DMK general secretary Duraimurugan at the 48th Chennai Book Fair, which took place on the YMCA premises at Nandanam. Former Director-General of Police (DGP) C. Sylendra Babu was the first to receive a copy of the Tamil edition, while global chess champion D. Gukesh received the English version. Mr. Subramanian said his book detailed the marathon events he organised in the memory of late Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, and was also a handbook of the late DMK leader's life history.



Book on the lives and history of Indians in Fiji released on Pravasi Bharatiya Divas :-

Rekha Chaturvedi, an author and academic, launched her book "Fiji Mein Bhartiyaon Ka Itihas Tatha Unka Jeevan (1879-1947)" on Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. According to the author, the book provides a detailed account of the life and hardships of Indian indentured labourers. The book is a call to recognize and honor the sacrifices of the Indian diaspora, making sure that their tales be preserved for future generations, she said. This book, published by Sasta Sahitya Mandal, brings to the fore the indenture of these labour forces in services and their inhuman treatment and living conditions on the island nation of Fiji.



Hindu Group Released Book "Thiruvallikeni – Divine Abode Of Lord Parthasarathy" In Chennai :-

Nirmala Lakshman, Chairperson of The Hindu Group Publishing Private Limited, released a book on Triplicane's Sri Parthasarathy Perumal Temple as part of The Hindu Group's Shrine Series in Chennai. The book, titled Thiruvallikeni - Divine Abode of Lord Parthasarathy, includes well-researched pieces on the temple's history, puranic narratives, and magnificent photographs taken over the years by The Hindu's photographer. The temple is unique in many ways — it has five deities, all of whom have been praised in the Nalayira Divya Prabandham.

Punjabi and retired principal Urmil Khairah, who was one of her mentors during her graduation years at the book release event.



Book "Legal First Aid" By Legal Expert Sunil Kumar Pathak Launched :-

Sunil Kumar Pathak, a legal expert, launched his book "Legal First Aid" at the India International Centre (IIC)'s multipurpose hall in New Delhi. Dr. Lalit Bhasin, President of Indian Law Firms and past President of the Bar Association of India, was the event's Chief Guest. Dr. Pinky Anand underlined the common man's limited access to courts, which is exacerbated by a shortage of legal awareness. She stated that having a basic understanding of the law is crucial, and a book like this can be immensely helpful.

7: Defence



India's Defence Exports Cross Rs 21,000 Crore : Rajnath Singh :-

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh stated that India's defence exports had risen to a record Rs 21,000 crore from Rs 2,000 crore a decade earlier. Singh told commanders at the Army War College (AWC) in Mhow Cantonment, which is over two centuries old, that a target of Rs 50,000 crore in defence exports had been set for 2029. He stated that mastering frontier technology is essential in today's ever-changing world, and that military training facilities play an important role in equipping and preparing personnel to face future challenges.



Vitul Kumar Appointed Officiating DG of CRPF :-

Vitul Kumar, a senior IPS official, took over as Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) after former Anish Dayal Singh retired. Kumar, a 1993 batch IPS officer from the Uttar Pradesh cadre, is currently the CRPF's Special Director General. The competent authority has cleared Vitul Kumar to assume the officiating responsibility for the post of DG, CRPF, upon the retirement of Anish Dayal Singh, a 1988 batch Manipur cadre IPS officer, on December 31, 2024, till the appointment of a regular incumbent or until further order, whichever comes first.



Defence Ministry declares 2025 as 'year of reforms' :-

The Defence Ministry has designated 2025 as the year of reforms, with the goal of facilitating the development of integrated theater commands to strengthen collaboration across the three services. The reforms would be implemented to transform the armed forces into a technologically advanced combat force capable of multi-domain coordinated operations, according to the statement. The ministry said the focus in 2025 will be on new domains such as cyber and space, emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, hypersonic and robotics.



Defence Ministry Signs Rs 2,867 Crore Contracts to Strengthen Submarine Capabilities :-

In a key step toward boosting India's naval defence, the Ministry of Defence inked two large contracts totaling Rs 2,867 crore with Mumbai-based Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited and Naval Group, France. These agreements aim to improve the capabilities of the Indian Navy's submarines, particularly the Kalvari-Class, by utilizing sophisticated technology such as Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) and Electronic Heavy Weight Torpedo (EHWT) systems. The contracts were

signed in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh at a ceremony held in New Delhi.



Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra Assumes Command of IAF's Western Air Command :-

Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra assumed the coveted position of heading the Indian Air Force's (IAF) Western Air Command, which is responsible for the defense of India's western borders. Air Marshal Mishra joined the Indian Air Force as a fighter pilot in December 1986 and has earned over 3000 flight hours during his three-decade service. A graduate of the National Defence Academy in Pune, Mishra has also attended several esteemed institutions, including the Air Force Test Pilots School in Bangalore, the Air Command and Staff College in the USA, and the Royal College of Defence Studies in the UK.



Aero India 2025 : 10 TO 14 February 2025 :-

Aero India 2025 is one of the most anticipated airshows, not just in India, but around the world. The event will take held from February 10 to 14, 2025, at the Air Force Station Yelahanka in Bengaluru, Karnataka. It's a prominent biennial event that include both military and civilian aircraft. During the event, some ground-breaking

exchanges between their naval academies. This move aims to strengthen military ties and promote mutual understanding between the two nations. India has committed to supporting Indonesia's ongoing defense modernization programs by sharing expertise and experience. Both countries have affirmed their dedication to deepening cooperation in the defense industry, utilizing the Joint Defense Cooperation Committee (JDCC) as a platform for collaboration.



Indian Railways to Launch High-Speed Train Corridor Connecting Major Cities :-

On January 28, 2025, Indian Railways announced plans to launch a high-speed train corridor that will connect key metropolitan cities across the country, starting with Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata. The project, aimed at improving long-distance travel efficiency, will include trains capable of reaching speeds of up to 300 km/h, significantly reducing travel times between major urban centers. This initiative is part of the government's ongoing push to modernize India's infrastructure and make rail travel more convenient and sustainable. The new trains will feature state-of-the-art amenities, including Wi-Fi, luxury seating, and eco-friendly designs, ensuring a comfortable travel experience for passengers. The corridor is expected to be operational by the end of 2027, with additional routes planned to link other major cities in the future.

8: Economy



GST Growth Slows to 7.3% in December :-

The pace in monthly GST collection decreased further in December, with gross income rising 7.3% to Rs 1.77 lakh crore. In November, gross revenue rose by 8.5% to Rs 1.85 lakh crore. In the current fiscal year, gross monthly GST income increased by double digits in only three of the nine months. In December, gross revenue from domestic transactions increased by 8.4% to Rs 1.32 lakh crore, while import revenue increased by 3.9% to Rs 44,268 crore. Net GST collection (net of refunds) grew at an even slower pace of 3.3% to Rs 1.54 lakh crore in December.



Blinkit Launches 10-Minute Ambulance Service in Gurugram :-

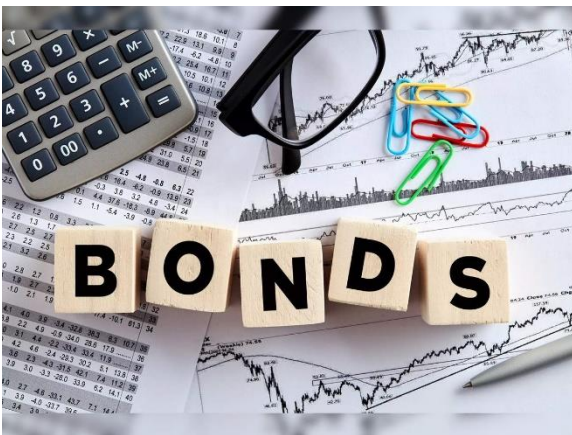
According to Blinkit CEO Albinder Dhindsa, the quick-commerce business has started a 10-minute ambulance service in Gurugram and intends to extend it to other Indian cities over the course of the next two years. Medical supplies like oxygen cylinders, AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators), stretchers, monitors, suction machines, emergency medications, and injections would be included in the ambulances, according to Dhindsa. A paramedic, an assistant, and a qualified driver will accompany the ambulance. While the first five

ambulances will immediately take to the roads of Gurugram, more users will be able to book a Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulance through the Blinkit app.



India Updates GDP Base Year to 2022-23 :-

The government decided in early December to shift the base year for GDP computation from 2011-12 to 2022-23. This step is significant because it seeks to provide a more realistic picture of the present economic framework and better policymaking. A base year is the first of a series of years in an economic or financial index. Typically, it is set to an arbitrary value of 100. Updating base year is important as it guarantees that GDP data reflects the most recent economic activity, consumption trends, and industry contributions.



Foreign Flows into Indian Bonds Expected to Decline in 2025 :-

After a record-breaking year in 2024, foreign inflows into Indian government bonds are expected to decline in 2025. This comes in the wake of India's inclusion in JPMorgan's emerging market debt index, which had initially attracted significant foreign investment. Analysts attribute the expected slowdown to a combination of

factors, including fluctuating interest rates in India and the US, as well as the movement of the Indian rupee. Market experts emphasize the need for policy measures to maintain the momentum of foreign investments in the bond market.



BharatPe to Sell 25% Stake in Unity Small Finance Bank

Resilient Innovations, BharatPe's parent company, is looking for investors to sell up to 25% of its 49% investment in Unity Small Finance Bank (Unity SFB). According to insiders familiar with the situation, the company hopes to raise roughly \$800 million. According to sources familiar with the matter, the action is consistent with regulatory requirements to cut its position in the bank to 10% by 2029, regardless of Unity SFB's IPO. BharatPe has appointed Rothschild & Co to facilitate the stake sale.



HDFC Bank Secures RBI Approval to Acquire Stakes in Peer Banks :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has authorized HDFC Bank, India's largest private financier, to purchase up to a 9.5 percent interest in AU Small Finance Bank within a year of the clearance date. If the transaction is not completed within this time range, the approval will be



Sell Calls: Top Stock Recommendations for January 28, 2025 :-

January 28, 2025, prominent stock analysts are suggesting specific stocks to sell, based on current market trends. Somil Mehta from Mirae Asset Sharekhan has recommended selling shares of Hindalco at Rs 586, with a target of Rs 540. Hindalco has experienced a breakdown from a key support level, and analysts expect further downward pressure. Similarly, he has also recommended selling Infosys at Rs 1,822, with a target of Rs 1,800. Infosys has faced a technical breakdown and is likely to see further declines in the near term. Investors are advised to carefully monitor their portfolios and consider these recommendations in light of the current market conditions, which are influenced by various

macroeconomic factors such as inflation and global market volatility.



India, Oman to amend tax treaty, speed up trade pact :-

India and Oman have inked a protocol to alter their Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) and agreed to expedite negotiations for the early signing of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). The pact to revise the DTAA to align it with international cross-border taxation norms, simplify tax procedures, and promote greater tax cooperation was signed during Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal's visit to Muscat. Both countries entered into DTAA way back in 1997.

9: International



US Announces Nearly \$6 Billion in Military and Budget Aid for Ukraine :-

The United States has announced over \$6 billion in military and budget help for Ukraine, as Washington works to deliver assistance before Donald Trump enters office. The impending return of Trump, who has consistently attacked Ukrainian aid, calls into question if American funding would remain at levels close to those

seen under departing President Joe Biden. The package comprises a \$1.25 billion military "drawdown," which allows the Pentagon to pull weapons from US inventories and immediately deploy them to the battlefield. An additional \$1.22 billion will be funded via the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative.



US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan Visits India :-

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan is on a high-profile visit to India to strengthen bilateral relations. The discussions are centered around enhancing cooperation in critical and emerging technologies, including defense, artificial intelligence, and space exploration. This visit is part of the ongoing efforts to solidify the strategic partnership between the two nations, focusing on shared regional and global priorities. Sullivan is also expected to meet key Indian officials and discuss collaborative strategies to counter security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.



Implications of China's Mega-Dam Project on Indian Water Resources :-

China's mega-dam project on the Brahmaputra River has raised significant concerns for India, particularly regarding water availability in northeastern states. Experts warn that the dam could potentially disrupt the flow of water, impacting agriculture, fisheries, and hydropower generation downstream. The project also has implications for regional stability, with fears of water being used as a geopolitical tool. India is exploring diplomatic channels to engage with China and address these challenges, emphasizing the need for transboundary water management frameworks to prevent future conflicts.



Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announces decision to step down :-

After nearly a decade in government, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has announced his resignation. Trudeau's career had begun promisingly, with his swift rise to prominence as the son of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. With a landslide win in 2015, he became the second-youngest prime minister in Canadian history. Some of his significant decisions included legalizing cannabis, enacting laws governing voluntary assisted dying, negotiating trade agreements with the United States, implementing climate change policies, and addressing historical injustices suffered by Indigenous people.



Indonesia becomes full member of BRICS, Brazil confirms :-

The Brazilian government declared that Indonesia is now a full member of the BRICS. Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and Indonesia are currently members of the alliance, which unites significant growing economies. At the BRICS conference in Johannesburg in 2023, member states unanimously confirmed Indonesia's membership, according to Brazil, which will serve as the organization's 2025 president. However, Indonesia chose to finalise its membership after its presidential election in 2024, which saw President Prabowo Subianto take office in October.



10: Miscellaneous



Banded Royal Butterfly Spotted in Tripura :-

In a remarkable discovery, the Banded Royal butterfly, a rare and exquisite species, has been spotted in the forests of Tripura. Known for its striking black and white patterns, this butterfly is rarely seen in India, making this sighting a significant event for biodiversity conservation. Environmentalists have highlighted the importance of preserving such species, which play a crucial role in pollination and maintaining ecological balance. Conservation efforts are expected to intensify in the region to ensure the butterfly's habitat remains protected.



Tamil Nadu CM Announces \$1 Million Prize for Deciphering Indus Valley Script :-

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has declared a \$1 million prize for specialists or organizations that successfully interpret the scripts of the Indus Valley Civilization for everyone to understand. The Chief Minister announced a ₹2-crore grant to establish a chair named after noted archaeologist and epigraphist Iravatham Mahadevan at the Chennai-based Roja Muthiah Library. The chair will continue research on the

Indus Valley Civilization by the State Department of Archaeology and the Indus Research Centre.



Centennial Recognition for Srinagar Meteorology Centre :-

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh announced the building of a Regional Meteorological Centre in Jammu at a historic event honoring the 150th anniversary of the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The Minister discussed the historical significance of the Srinagar Meteorology Centre, which was designated as a Centennial Centre by the World Meteorological Organization, and expressed optimism that the future Regional Meteorological Centre in Jammu would emulate its success. The announcement signifies a major step toward improving weather forecasting, disaster preparedness, and climate resilience in the Jammu & Kashmir region.



Kumbhvani FM Channel Launched for Maha Kumbh 2025 :-

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated Prasar Bharati's FM station 'Kumbhvani' at

the Circuit House on the final day of his two-day Prayagraj trip. Prasara Bharati has unveiled the OTT-based Kumbhvani FM station to provide detailed information about the Mahakumbh. 'Kumbhvani' will not only reach new heights of popularity but also extend the spirit of Mahakumbh to remote villages where many people, despite their desire, cannot physically attend the event, said the CM.



New Launchpad of ISRO Coming Up at Sriharikota :-

The Union Cabinet has approved the construction of a Third Launch Pad (TLP) at the Satish Dhawan Space Center in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. The new launch pad is intended to host the next generation of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launch vehicles and strengthen the nation's preparedness for human spaceflight missions. This new infrastructure will play a critical role in improving India's launch capabilities, paving the way for future space exploration, including the country's ambitious human spaceflight programs.



Govt Launches App to Boost Battlefield Tourism :-

Civilians will soon be able to tour battlefield spots within India's borders, courtesy to a newly launched app and website. The "Bharat Ranbhoomi Darshan" app, a joint

endeavor of the Ministries of Defence and Tourism, as well as the Army, was launched by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on the occasion of Army Day. Tourists will be able to visit the sites of the 1962, 1971, and 1999 (Kargil) clashes, as well as the Siachen base camp and the 2020 Galwan clash. The operational areas will be off-limits but the idea is to open up as much of the forward locations as possible.



U.S. Withdraws from WHO and Suspends Foreign Aid :-

The United Nations has withdrawn from the World Health Organization (WHO) on allegations that the main worldwide medical authority mishandled the Covid-19 outbreak, failed to reform, and was not independent of the "political influence" of certain member nations, a reference to China. Trump has also banned all US foreign aid for 90 days to assess its effectiveness and alignment with US foreign policy. The US, under Trump, had slammed the organisation for being too sympathetic to China's narrative when the pandemic broke out and withdrawn from WHO in 2020.



Indian IT Giants Lead 2025 Brand Finance IT Services Rankings :-

According to the Brand Finance 2025 rating, India has achieved a noteworthy feat by providing 36% of the

overall brand value, which was fueled by a 14% increase in brand value. With 40% of the overall brand value, the US continues to dominate the IT services market, and India comes in second. According to the Brand Finance IT services 2025 ranking report, this impressive growth not only demonstrates India's leading position in the global IT services market but also indicates that the country is prepared for continued growth in 2025, supported by its strong emphasis on workforce expansion, technological innovation, and adaptability to changing global trends.



Discovery of a Rare Umamaheshwara Sculpture in Karnataka :-

At Taggunje in Ajri village of Kundapura taluk in the Udupi district of Karnataka, a metal sculpture known as Umamaheshwara was discovered. It was most likely created in the 17th century in the style of the 12th century. T. Murugeshi, a retired Associate Professor of

Ancient History and Archaeology, says it is a rare fusion of Shaiva-Shaktha and Naga worship, and is made of five metals. The Umamaheshwara cult was founded by Soma Sharma of Gujarat in the 10th-11th century.



Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 Commences in Prayagraj :-

The 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela, one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, has begun in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. Held once every 144 years, this event attracts millions of devotees, sadhus, and spiritual leaders from across the globe. The key highlight of the festival is the Shahi Snan (royal bath) at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and mythical Saraswati rivers, believed to wash away sins and grant moksha (liberation). The Uttar Pradesh government has deployed over 50,000 police personnel, advanced sanitation facilities, and a dedicated healthcare system to ensure the safety and well-being of attendees. Special arrangements for foreign tourists and virtual darshan (online viewing) have also been made.

11: National



Ministry of Heavy Industries issues draft guidelines on EV charging under PM E-DRIVE :-

The Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) has released draft guidelines for establishing electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure under the Prime Minister's Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) Program. The proposal calls for the building of extensive public charging infrastructure for several vehicle categories, including over 22,000 chargers for electric four-wheelers (e-4Ws) and 1,800 chargers for e-buses. Besides this, the scheme has made a provision to set up charging infrastructure for light EVs, including electric two-wheelers (e-2Ws) and electric three-wheelers (e-3Ws).



Government Considers Honorary Senior Ranks for Retiring Paramilitary Personnel :-

Director General Anish Dayal Singh of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), who retired on December 31, stated that the government is considering honorary senior ranks for eligible Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) personnel one month prior to their retirement in an effort to "boost their morale" amid promotion delays. According to him, a person may use the rank of Head Constable (HC) if they were retiring on a Constable's rank and qualified for the promotion. Similarly, if an HC is eligible to be promoted as Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI), he or she may use the insignia for ASI.



PM Modi Flags Off Namo Bharat RRTS: 40-Min Delhi-Meerut Ride :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a 13-kilometer Rapid Rail Transit System (RRTS) link connecting New Ashok Nagar in Delhi with Sahibabad in Uttar Pradesh. The inauguration coincides with the Delhi Assembly election in February, and the model code of conduct is expected to go into effect soon. Travelers are able to onboard the Namo Bharat train on the RRTS corridor from New Ashok Nagar to Meerut South, and vice versa.

According to the government, the nearly 58 km distance can be covered in under 40 minutes.



Amit Shah Launched CBI's BHARATPOL Portal :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the 'Bharatpol' portal, which aims to improve international cooperation among law enforcement agencies. Bharatpol, broadcast hub for assistance and real-time action against transnational crimes via international police cooperation, was created by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). It will make it easier for federal and state agencies to communicate with Interpol, allowing them to conduct investigations faster. This portal integrates the CBI as the Interpol (NCB-New Delhi) with all law enforcement authorities in India, down to Superintendents of Police (SPs) and Commissioners of Police (CPs).



Centre approves site for Pranab Mukherjee's memorial at Raj Ghat :-

The BJP-led central government has given its approval to the establishment of a memorial for former Indian President Pranab Mukherjee at a specific location within the "Rashtriya Smriti" complex, which is a component of the Rajghat precinct. Mukherjee passed away on August 31, 2020. Sharmistha Mukherjee, daughter of Pranab Mukherjee, shared a post on X, "I met PM Narendra Modi

Tamil director and producer Jayamurugan passes away

Jayamurugan, a director and producer, died from a heart attack. Jayamurugan established the production company Manithan Cine Arts, which made him a well-known producer. Mansoor Ali Khan played the lead in his debut film, 'Sindhu Bhath', released in 1995.

Jayamurugan began his career as a producer before moving on to helm the film 'Roja Malaré'. Murali, Arun Pandian, and Anand Babu played major parts in this film, which was also his directorial debut. Although Roja Malaré received mixed reviews from critics, it showcased Jayamurugan's versatility within the industry.

13: Ranks & Reports

**GDP to Grow at 6.6% in FY25: RBI :-**

The Indian economy is exhibiting durability and strength, with GDP expected to increase by 6.6% in 2024-25. According to a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) assessment, this growth will be fueled by a resurgence in rural consumption, greater government expenditure and investment, and strong service exports. The RBI has released the December 2024 edition of its Financial Stability Report (FSR), which reflects the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) Sub-Committee's overall evaluation of India's financial system resilience and potential vulnerabilities to financial stability.

India gradually continued to decouple its economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions, reducing the emission rate of its GDP by 36% in 2020 compared to 2005. India shared the data with the UN climate change body earlier this week, stating in its 4th biennial submission that its share of non-fossil sources in installed electricity generation capacity would be 46.5% by October 2024, with a total installed capacity of 203.2 GW for renewable power, including large hydropower. India's cumulative renewable power installed capacity (excluding large hydro projects) has increased 4.5 times by 35 GW in March 2014 to 156.25 GW in 2024.

**Assam's Elephant Population Sees 7-Year Rise :-**

The state forest department's Elephant Population Estimation 2024 revealed an elephant population of 5,828 in Assam, up from 5,719 in the last census in 2017. The population consists of 3,044 adults, 1,042 subadults, 717 juveniles, and 1,025 calves. The estimation was carried out over all 43 forest divisions in Assam. According to the report, 82% of the entire population, or 4,777 elephants, live in the state's five elephant reserves, with the Chirang-Ripu Elephant Reserve having the highest density.

**India Achieves 36% Reduction in GDP Emission Intensity from 2005 to 2020 :-**



India Sees 37 Lakh Drop in School Enrolment in 2023-24

According to the Ministry of Education's UDISE data, enrollment in schools across India declined by 37 lakh in 2023-24 compared to the previous year. The Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) Plus is a data gathering platform run by the education ministry that collects school education data from across the country. The number of students enrolled in 2022-23 was 25.17 crore, while the figure for 2023-24 was 24.80 crore. The number of girl students dropped by 16 lakh during the period under review, while the number of boy students fell by 21 lakh.



Hanoi Declared World's Most Polluted City :-

According to AirVisual, a phone app that offers unbiased worldwide air pollution statistics, levels of harmful tiny particles, known as PM2.5, were detected at 266 micrograms per cubic metre in Hanoi, the greatest number among a list of most polluted cities. The Southeast Asian country, a regional production center with one of Asia's fastest-growing economies, has long suffered chronic air pollution in its major cities, particularly Hanoi. Speaking at a meeting with the transport ministry, Deputy Prime Minister Tran Hong Ha called for an accelerated transition to electric vehicles (EVs) as part of the efforts to reduce pollution, state media reported.



India's Metro Rail Network Surpasses 1,000 km, Becoming World's Third Largest :-

India now possesses the world's third largest metro rail network, covering 1,000 kilometers. With this extensive network, India now has the world's third-largest metro system, trailing only China and the United States. "1,000 km metro rail lines are operation now. Projects covering 998+ km are underway, reshaping urban mobility in India," according to Mygov.in, the Government of India's citizen participation platform. In 2022, India exceeded Japan in Metro train projects and is now ranked third in terms of operational Metro network length.



E-way bills in December at second highest level in two years, shows data :-

According to data released by the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) portal, the number of E-way bills, or electronic permits, produced by enterprises for transporting goods within and across states, reached its second-highest level in 24 months in December, increasing 17.6 percent year on year to 112 million. This represented a big improvement from November's five-month low of 101.8 million. E-way bills are mandatory for the movement of consignments worth more than Rs 50,000 and are, therefore, an early indicator of demand and supply trends in the economy. This often reflects in macroeconomic indicators with a lag.

14: Schemes & Committees



Chhattisgarh's Green GDP Initiative :-

In a first, the state of Chhattisgarh has implemented an innovative plan that links the ecosystem services of its forests to the Green Gross Domestic Product (Green GDP). The changes were intended to demonstrate the direct link between forests' major environmental contributions such as clean air, water conservation, biodiversity, and the state's economic success. The action plan is intended to promote economic development while protecting the environment for future generations. Chhattisgarh with 44 per cent of its land covered by forests, the state's natural resources are central to the livelihoods of millions of people.



Tamil Nadu government plans to borrow ₹45,000 crore in Q4 2024-25 :-

The Tamil Nadu government aims to raise ₹45,000 crore in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2024-2025, according to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) indicated market borrowing timetable for states. States, like Tamil Nadu,

raise finances by issuing bonds known as State Development Loans (SDLs). The RBI conducts the bond auctions. Bonds are issued for varying terms, and states are required to repay the principle as well as interest when they mature. Till the first half in 2024-2025, Tamil Nadu has raised ₹50,000 crore through issue of SDLs, as per RBI data.



Union Cabinet Approves Continuation of Crop Insurance Schemes :-

The Union Cabinet has greenlit the continuation of two major crop insurance schemes: the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and the Restructured Weather-Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS). These schemes aim to provide financial support to farmers, covering risks associated with natural disasters, pests, and diseases. By ensuring comprehensive risk coverage, the government seeks to enhance the resilience of the agriculture sector, which remains a backbone of the Indian economy. The schemes also aim to encourage farmers to adopt innovative practices without fear of financial loss.



Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0 :-

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has launched "Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0," an initiative aimed at providing over 500 women members from Panchayati Raj institutions around the country with an understanding of the Constitution and parliamentary procedures. The program, organized to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of tribal icon Birsa Munda, will include workshops and sessions, as well as a walking tour of the new Parliament House, Samvidhan Sadan, Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya, and Rashtrapati Bhavan, which will provide participants with a better understanding of India's legislative process and the functioning of democratic institutions.

**e-Shram Portal Expands to 22 Scheduled Languages :-**

The e-Shram platform, which assists unorganized workers in accessing several social sector initiatives, is now accessible in all 22 scheduled languages, the government announced. Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Labour and Employment, introduced the multilingual capability on the e-Shram webpage at a ceremony in the national capital. Dr. Mandaviya highlighted the growing trust in the e-Shram platform, sharing that the portal records an average of over 30,000 registrations per day by unorganised workers.

**INROAD project in North East secures ₹100 crore to enhance natural rubber quality :-**

The INROAD (Indian Natural Rubber Operations for Assisted Development) project in the North East has received ₹100 crore to improve the quality of natural rubber. With the NR plantation effort reaching significant scale after the fourth year of planting, the emphasis is now shifting to providing rubber growers with technical competence and developing a model infrastructure for quality improvement. INROAD is a first-of-its-kind project in the world in which the tyre industry is contributing directly to the development of rubber plantations.

**India joins UN panel on big data for official statistics :-**

India recently became part of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics (UN-CEBD), a forum set up to investigate the opportunities and difficulties of big data, as well as its possibilities for monitoring and reporting on sustainable development objectives. The milestone corresponds with India's recent membership in the United Nations Statistical Council, according to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).



who have similar pension schemes in place for Emergency detainees.



PM Distributes 6.5 Million SVAMITVA Property Cards :-

Through video conference, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given more than 65 lakh property cards under the "SVAMITVA Scheme" to landowners in more than 230 districts and 50,000 villages spread over 10 States and two Union territories. Speaking at the event, he greeted all of the recipients and the public, saying that it was a momentous day for India's villages and rural areas. Prime Minister also remarked that under the Swamitva Yojana, around 2.25 crore people in villages have received legal documents for their homes now.



Chhattisgarh CM Launches Rs 10,000 Annual Aid Scheme for Labourers :-

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai has proposed a policy to grant Rs 10,000 in annual financial help to landless farm labourers, claiming that the measure will increase their net income and safeguard their own future. The Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Bhoomihin Krishi Majdoor Kalyan Yojana would benefit around 562,000 people, including landless farm workers and a variety of financially disadvantaged social groups, according to the government. The scheme covers landless agricultural labourers along with landless families of forest produce collectors, shepherds, carpenters, blacksmiths, cobblers, barbers etc.

15: Science & Technology



ISRO Launches Historic SpaDeX Mission for Space Docking :-

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) launched its workhorse PSLV rocket, carrying numerous satellites, including two that will carry out an ambitious autonomous orbital rendezvous and docking operation, which only a few space organizations have accomplished. At 10 p.m., the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) lifted off on the PSLV-C60 rocket from Sriharikota's windswept launch pad, reaching its most crucial milestone precisely 910 seconds later. At that time, two spacecraft weighing 220kg were launched into an eastward orbit 476 kilometres above the Earth's surface.



China Unveils World's Fastest High-Speed Train Prototype :-

China has presented an improved variant of its high-speed bullet train, which the manufacturer claims achieved speeds of 450 kmph during test runs, making it the world's fastest high-speed train. As per the China State Railway Group Co (China Railway), the new model, known as the CR450 prototype, will reduce travel time and increase connection, making travel more convenient and efficient for the country's large passenger base. It is significantly faster than the CR400 Fuxing high-speed rail (HSR) currently in service, which operates at speeds of 350 kmph, a report by state-run Xinhua said.



Maharashtra gets its first Made-in-India surgical robot

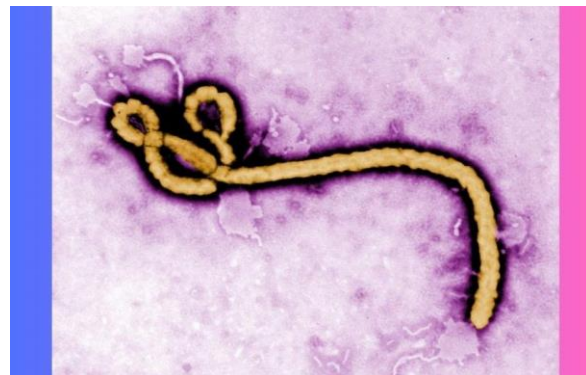
Maharashtra has acquired its first surgical robot developed in India, which has been placed at Noble Hospitals and Research Center in Pune. The SSI Mantra surgical robot, newly approved by India's regulatory agency, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), is a three-robot system for performing complicated procedures. The robotic system, which was inaugurated by Marathi actor Prasad Oak, is an advanced system that includes five lean robotic arms, an immersive

3D HD headset that provides surgeons with unparalleled optics, and a vision cart that provides 3D 4K imaging to the entire surgical team, ensuring increased precision and control.



Stellaria bengalensis: New Plant Species Discovered in West Bengal :-

Following the discovery of a *Stellaria* (family Caryophyllaceae) plant species in Kerala in 2024, researchers have located another member of the same genus in West Bengal's Kalimpong region. Arya S., PG and Research Department of Botany, PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, and Harsh Singh, Centre for Advanced Studies in Botany, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, who made the discovery, named the annual herb *Stellaria bengalensis* after the state of West Bengal. A paper on the finding was recently published in the journal *Phytotaxa*.



Ebola Virus Study Reveals Skin Transmission Route :-

Ebola, an uncommon but deadly viral disease, continues to represent a serious threat to human health. The virus spreads mostly through direct contact with infected animals, particularly during preparation, cooking, or eating. Recent outbreaks, such as the 2013-2016 Ebola

deep-sea ecosystems, and advance India's blue economy.



ISRO successfully launches NVS-02 satellite :-

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) achieved a new milestone by successfully launching a second-generation navigation satellite into orbit. For its 100th rocket launch from Sriharikota, Isro employed a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV). At 6.23 a.m., GSLV-F15, carrying the NVS-02 navigation satellite, lifted off from the second launch pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. Isro chairman V Narayanan said that the Isro has launched six generation of rockets placing 548 satellites weighing a total 120 tonnes including 23 tonnes of 433 foreign satellites.

16: Sports



Kerala Wins Senior National Men's Handball Championship :-

Kerala scored a historic first by capturing the Senior National Men's Handball Championship title. They defeated Chandigarh 34-31 in a dramatic final. Kerala, who had reached the final for the first time, put on an excellent effort throughout the encounter. The club's triumph was based on a great team effort, including exceptional performances from important players. Devendar was named the 'Best Player of the Championship,' while Rahul received the 'Best Goalkeeper' award for his exceptional performances between the posts.



Haryana Steelers Clinch Maiden PKL Title :-

Haryana Steelers made Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) history by winning their first title with a 32-23 triumph over Patna Pirates in the Season 11 decider. The high-stakes match was held in the Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex in Pune, and it was a watershed moment for the Steelers, who finished first in the league this season. Haryana Steelers cruised to victory in the final, thanks to show-stopper Mohammadreza Shadloui. For Haryana Steelers, Shivam Patare scored nine points, Shadloui seven and Vinay added six more. The champions were awarded Rs 3 crore, while the runners-up got Rs 1.8 crore.



Magnus Carlsen, Nepomniachtchi Share Blitz Title :-

In a rare and unprecedented conclusion, reigning World Blitz Champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway and Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi split the 2024 World Blitz Championship title on Wall Street, New York. The decision to share the title was determined after both players played three straight draws in the sudden-death round. Carlsen had began the final with back-to-back victories and needed only a draw to win, but Nepomniachtchi showed remarkable fighting spirit and perseverance. He achieved two must-win victories, forcing sudden death after the final score was tied at 2-2.



Devjit Saikia, Prabhtej Singh Bhatia set to assume top BCCI roles :-

Devjit Saikia and Prabhtej Singh Bhatia are set to take on crucial roles in the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) as secretary and treasurer, respectively, with their elections considered to be a formality. Both filed their nominations without opposition, and the polls slated for January 12 in Mumbai are expected to ratify their positions. Saikia, currently the joint secretary and interim secretary since December, will succeed Jay Shah, who

recently took over as independent chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC).



Indian pacer Varun Aaron retires from all representative cricket :-

Varun Aaron, a former Indian fast bowler, has declared the decision to retire from any type of cricket at the age of 35. After retiring from red-ball cricket at the end of the 2023-24 Indian domestic season, Aaron officially resigned from representative cricket following Jharkhand's elimination from the Vijay Hazare Trophy, when he appeared in four matches and took three wickets at an average of 53.33. Aaron burst onto the cricketing scene in the 2010-11 Vijay Hazare Trophy, clocking speeds over 150 km/h at the age of 21.



Mo Farah to Lead 20th Mumbai Marathon as International Ambassador :-

Mo Farah, the great distance runner, has been named International Event Ambassador for the 20th edition of the Tata Mumbai Marathon, which will take place on January 19 in south Mumbai. Farah's nomination was announced at a press conference, confirming a record-breaking 60,000 runners' participation in the annual gala. In ten days, Farah will be present to add to the

The Union Territory of Ladakh topped the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025, with the first phase held at the NDS Stadium. Leh, Ladakh's capital, held the games for the second time this year. The grand finale featured an exciting men's ice hockey final, with the Indian Army defeating ITBP 2-1 to retain the KIWG title. The second and final phase of KIWG 2025 will take place in Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir, from February 22 to 25. Overall, Ladakh topped the medal tally with seven medals, including four golds. Tamil Nadu followed with five medals.



Odisha Warriors Win First Women's Hockey India League Title :-

Odisha Warriors faced JSW Soorma Hockey Club in the final game of the inaugural season of the world's only commercial women's hockey league. Rutuja Dadaso Pisal, who was bought at auction for Rs. 4.9 lakh, scored both goals for the Warriors, helping them defeat Soorma Hockey Club 2-1 in front of a crowded stadium. Following a scoreless first quarter, Rutuja gave the Warriors the

lead in the 20th minute. The Warriors despite the pressure exerted by Soorma in offence and defence, managed to get two quality shots through and managed to keep it at that to win the title.



Smriti Mandhana Smashes India's Fastest Women's ODI Century :-

Smriti Mandhana, India's captain, continued her amazing form by slamming a century in the third Women's One-Day International versus Ireland at the Niranjan Shah Stadium in Rajkot. Mandhana's 70-ball century broke Harmanpreet Kaur's previous record of 87 balls against South Africa, becoming the fastest century by an Indian woman in one-day internationals. This stunning knock marked Mandhana's tenth ODI century, linking her with England's Tammy Beaumont for the third most centuries in women's ODIs. The list is led by Australian great Meg Lanning with 15 centuries, followed by New Zealand's Suzie Bates with 13.

17: State



Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar Sworn in as Kerala Governor :-

Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar took his oath as the 23rd Governor of Kerala in a ceremony conducted at Raj Bhavan in Thiruvantapuram. He replaced Arif Mohammed Khan, who had been sent to serve as Governor of Bihar. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Chief Secretary Sharada Muraleedharan, Chief Justice Jamdar, and Additional Chief Secretary for General

Administration K R Jyothilal greeted the newly installed Governor and his wife, Anagha Arlekar, on stage. Subsequently, the Chief Secretary read out the President's order appointing the Governor. The oath-taking ceremony followed thereafter.



Arif Mohammad Khan Takes Oath as Bihar's New Governor :-

Former Union Minister Arif Mohammad Khan took oath as Bihar's 42nd governor at a brief ceremony held at the Raj Bhavan. Justice K Vinod Chandran, Chief Justice of the Patna High Court, delivered the oath to Khan. Khan replaced Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, who was named Governor of Kerala. Khan was originally elected to the Lok Sabha from Kanpur in 1980 as a member of the Congress, but he left the party in 1986 due to disagreements over the Muslim Personal Law Bill. He later joined Janata Dal, Bahujan Samaj Party and finally BJP in 2004.



Maharashtra Reviews Beneficiaries of Ladki Bahin Scheme :-

The Maharashtra government is conducting a thorough review of the Ladki Bahin Scheme, an initiative launched in June 2024 to provide financial support to women from economically weaker sections. Under the scheme,

eligible beneficiaries receive ₹1,500 per month. However, concerns about its financial viability have been raised as the scheme's annual expenditure is estimated to be ₹46,000 crore. The government is now working to streamline the process and verify the beneficiaries to ensure the scheme's long-term sustainability.



Odisha government announces three-year sponsorship deal for Indian national kho-kho team :-

The Odisha Mining Corporation would fund an annual investment of ₹5 crore from January 2025 to December 2027, as declared by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi. The Rs 15 crore sponsorship package underlines Odisha's ongoing commitment to sports development, following its successful relationship with Indian hockey. This effort intends to raise Kho Kho's profile and provide crucial support to the national squad. The sponsorship will facilitate team development, training infrastructure, and participation in national and international competitions.



Goa govt launched 'Bima Sakhi Yojana' :-

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant introduced the 'Bima Sakhi Yojana' in the state with the goal of providing "insurance for all". According to a government statement, Goa has become the second state, after Haryana, to begin Prime Minister Narendra Modi's flagship project. According to the central government's

18: Summits & Conferences



India To Host First Waves Summit in February 2025 :-

India is set to host the World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) for the first time in February 2025, providing a global platform for its creative talents, promoting collaborations, and highlighting the country's potential as a powerhouse for world-class content development. Prime Minister Narendra Modi compared the WAVES to major gatherings such as the World Economic Forum in Davos, stating that leaders from the media and entertainment industries, as well as creative minds from around the world, will converge in Delhi for the Summit from February 5 to 9.



Andhra Pradesh CM Naidu to attend World Economic Forum Summit in Davos

A team from Andhra Pradesh, headed by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, will be attending the four-day World Economic Forum 2025 in Davos, Switzerland, commencing on January 20. The State government has authorized the requisite proposals for the delegation that includes Mr. Naidu, IT Minister N. Lokesh, Industries Minister T.G. Bharat, and officials from the Industries Department and Andhra Pradesh Economic

Development Board. During the summit, Mr. Naidu and Mr. Lokesh would highlight the resources and investment opportunities in Andhra Pradesh.



Revanth, Naidu took part in World Telugu Federation conference in Hyderabad :-

Following the assembly elections in both Telugu states, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu attended the same conference for the first time. This uncommon incident took place at the World Telugu Federation's (WTF) 12th Biennial International Conference. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu launched the three-day conference, which began on January 3rd at the HICC in Madhapur, in the evening. He also released the WTF's souvenir and launch the Telugu Angels programme.



Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025 :-

Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025 inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi is being held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The Grameen Bharat Mahotsav will take place from January 4 to 9, with the theme 'Building a Resilient Rural India for a Viksit Bharat 2047', according to a press release. PM Modi also engaged with

craftsmen at the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025, which is being held at Bharat Mandapam. The Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, was also present. PM Modi was also felicitated by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) chairperson Shaji KV.



World Telugu Conference in Rajamahendravaram on January 8, 9 :-

The World Telugu Conference is scheduled to be organized at Godavari Global University in Rajamahendravaram on January 8 and 9, 2025. The two-day event will include notable Telugu writers, literary giants, former Vice-President of India M Venkaiah Naidu, former Chief Justice of India NV Ramana, Governors from both Telugu states, Union and State ministers, MPs, artists, and actors. Organised to celebrate Telugu language, literature, and cultural heritage, the world conference will include poetry sessions, competitions, and cultural activities among others.



18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention in Odisha's Bhubaneswar :-

The 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention began on Wednesday (January 8, 2025) in Odisha's Bhubaneswar, with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar encouraging NRIs and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) to take part

actively in the search for a 'viksit Bharat'. The chief speaker for this event is Trinidad and Tobago President Christine Carla Kangaloo, which is being held on the theme 'Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat'. Ministry of External Affairs Secretary (CPV & OIA) Arun Kumar Chatterjee said the Indian diaspora is working as the "living bridge" between the country where they stayed or worked and their motherland.

INDUS FOOD™

08 09 10 January 2025

India Exposition Mart, Greater Noida, New Delhi, NCR, India

India to showcase transformative agricultural and food solutions at Indusfood 2025 :-

Chirag Paswan, Union Minister of Food Processing Industries, launched the 8th edition of Indusfood 2025 on January 8 at the India Exposition Mart Ltd in Greater Noida. Indusfood, coordinated by the Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) with backing from the Department of Commerce, is Asia's biggest yearly food and beverage (F&B) trade exhibition, and it is expected to take a significant step forward in 2025 by debuting as an integrated farm-to-fork trade show. The event expects to host 7,500 international buyers and 15,000 Indian buyers and trade visitors. It will run from January 8 to 10, at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida.



Indian Army to host 'Know Your Army Mela' in Bengaluru on January 11 :-

SECTION 3

Detailed Analysis of Important Events



Economics

QS World Future Skills Index



Why in the News?

PM has expressed his happiness as the QS World Future Skills Index ranks India 2nd for Digital Skills, ahead of Canada and Germany.

About the QS World Future Skills Index

The index is launched by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), a London-based higher education firm, the index evaluates countries on their readiness to meet evolving job market demands.

It assesses over 190 countries, analyzing:

280 million job postings

5 million employer skill demands

17.5 million research papers

4 Key Indicators:

Skills Fit: Alignment between workforce skills and employer demands.

Academic Readiness: Higher education's capability to prepare students for future skills.

Future of Work: Job market readiness for emerging skills in digital, AI, and green technologies.

Economic Transformation: Capacity for innovation and sustainable growth.

Countries are classified into 4 categories as:

Future Skills Pioneers

Practitioners

Contenders (India's category)

Aspirants

Key Observations

India demonstrates its leadership in technology and sustainability by ranking second in the world in digital, artificial intelligence, and green capabilities.

It demonstrated significant growth potential by earning a flawless score in economic capacity.

However, India's low scores in sustainability innovation (15.6) and skills fit (59.1) revealed weaknesses in the alignment of innovation and education.

As "future skills pioneers," developed countries like the USA, UK, and Germany take the lead.

Significance of the Index

The report acts as a global standard for preparedness in response to changing needs in the labour market.

It emphasises how crucial digital, artificial intelligence, and green skills will be for sectors of the future.

It offers practical advice for changing educational and workforce training policies.

It puts India in a position to fill up the gaps and play to its strengths in order to gain a competitive position in the world.

Environment & Diversity

In news: Similipal Tiger Reserve



Why in the News?

Tigress Zeenat, originally from Maharashtra's Tadoba, was relocated to Odisha's Similipal Tiger Reserve after straying through Jharkhand into West Bengal, complicating tracking efforts.

About Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR)

	Details
Geographical Features	Surrounded by hills and high plateaus in Northern Odisha's Mayurbhanj District.
	Standing at 1515 meters above mean sea level, Khairiburu and Meghashini are twin peaks.
Geographical Features	The topography is hilly and undulating, with woodland and open pastures dotted throughout.
	Tribes such as Kolha, Santhala, Bhumija, Gondas, Khadia, Mankadia, and Sahara call it home.
Flora and Fauna	incorporated into Project Tiger in 1973 after being designated a Tiger Reserve in 1956.
	2009 saw its inclusion in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
Flora and Fauna	Flora: Sal is the predominant tree species, and there are 1078 plant species there, including 94 orchid species.

Fauna: A diverse range of animals, such as sloth bears, mongoose, flying squirrels, porcupines, pythons, sambars, pangolins, elephants, spotted deer, leopards, gaurs, and langurs.

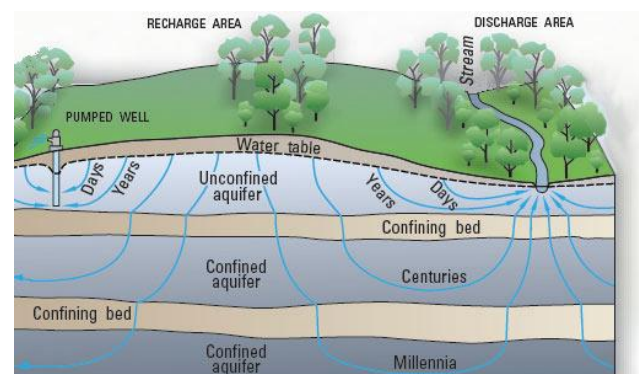
In addition to providing vital habitat for migratory birds like Bar-Headed Geese and Brahmini Ducks, its water bodies are also home to freshwater snails (*Radix* genus).

Melanistic Tigers:

Of the 30 tigers in Odisha (AOTE-2023-24), 27 live in Similipal, including 13 pseudo-melanistic tigers that have distinctive black stripes because of a Taqpep gene mutation.

It is the only natural environment where pseudo-melanistic tigers may be found worldwide.

Annual Ground Water Quality Report – 2024



Why in the News?

The Annual Groundwater Quality Report 2024 was released by the Union Minister of Jal Shakti. Conducted by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), the report

provides a scientific baseline for groundwater quality across India.

Annual Groundwater Quality Report, 2024: Key Highlights

Monitoring Scale

Data collected from 15,200 locations and 4,982 trend stations both before and after the monsoon.

Contamination Levels

Nitrate

20% of samples exceeded the safe limit of 45 mg/L.

Hotspots include Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra (>40% of samples), Telangana (27.48%), Andhra Pradesh (23.5%), and Madhya Pradesh (22.58%).

States such as Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland remain within safe limits.

Fluoride

9.04% of samples above permissible limits.

Affected states: Rajasthan, Haryana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana.

Arsenic

Detected in Ganga-Brahmaputra floodplains (West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh).

Linked to cancer and skin lesions.

Uranium

42% of Rajasthan and 30% of Punjab samples exceed 100 ppb.

Over-exploited zones in Gujarat, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh also show elevated levels, posing kidney damage risks.

Agricultural Suitability

SAR (Sodium Adsorption Ratio) & RSC (Residual Sodium Carbonate): 81% of samples suitable for irrigation; 100% suitability in North-Eastern states.

High Sodium: Elevated levels in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, risking soil degradation.

Salinity (as a measure of Electrical Conductivity (EC)): High in Rajasthan, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Karnataka.

Temporal Trends

Seasonal Improvements: Post-monsoon recharge improves EC (salinity) and fluoride levels.

Stable Nitrate since 2015 in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat.

Rising Nitrate (2017–2023) in Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana.

Hotspots of Contamination

Nitrate:

Rajasthan (Barmer, Jodhpur), Maharashtra (Wardha, Jalgaon), Andhra Pradesh (Palnadu), Tamil Nadu (Villupuram), Punjab (Bathinda).

Uranium:

Over-exploited aquifers in Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat.

Arsenic:

Ganga-Brahmaputra floodplains in West Bengal, Assam, Bihar.

What are the key factors contributing to decline in Groundwater quality?

Groundwater quality declines due to:

Agricultural operations, where overuse of pesticides and fertilisers causes nitrate contamination, and industrialisation, where untreated waste introduces chemicals and heavy metals into aquifers.

Landfill pollution, sewage leaks, and inappropriate waste disposal are some of the ways that urbanisation exacerbates the issue.

Water tables are lowered by excessive extraction for home and agricultural usage, exposing aquifers to contaminants like uranium and arsenic.

Aquifer recharging is decreased and contamination is made worse by climate change and inadequate management of livestock manure.

Chhattisgarh first state to link Forest Ecosystem with Green GDP



Why in the News?

Chhattisgarh has implemented a novel framework for the first time in India that incorporates the ecosystem services provided by its forests into the Green GDP calculation. This program emphasises how important forests are to maintaining environmental sustainability and fostering economic expansion.

Highlights of the Chhattisgarh's Plan

The state's economic planning will now formally quantify the benefits of forests, such as carbon absorption, climate management, and biodiversity preservation.

The program makes ensuring that forests are recognised for their wider ecological functions as well as their resources.

With 44% of its territory covered by forests, Chhattisgarh's natural resources are essential to millions of people's lives and help to slow down global warming.

The program, which emphasises long-term ecological and economic sustainability, is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Developed India 2047" goal.

About Green GDP

An alternate indicator of economic growth that takes into account the environmental consequences of economic activity is called "green GDP."

To give a more realistic view of economic well-being, it deducts the value of environmental

deterioration and the depletion of natural resources from traditional GDP.

introduced as part of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) framework in the 1993 United Nations Handbook of National Accounting: Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting.

Key Features:

Seeks to quantify how sustainable economic growth is.

emphasises the value of ecosystem services such as water resources, soil preservation, and carbon sequestration.

gives information about the compromises made between environmental preservation and economic progress.

Calculation:

Green GDP = Traditional GDP – Costs of Environmental Degradation – Costs of Resource Depletion.

Government Initiatives for Green GDP Accounting

Environmental factors are included into national accounting systems through the Green National Account Framework. It accounts for the advantages of ecosystem services like clean air and water, the costs of pollution, and the value of natural resources.

The 2012 SEEA (System of Environmental-Economic Accounting): India implemented it in accordance with UN principles to establish databases for the accounting of natural capital and well-informed policymaking.

RBI Predictions: A 10% adjustment from traditional GDP was reflected in the 2019 green GDP of ₹167 trillion. Organisations such as the Indian Statistical Institute and TERI encourage the improvement of valuation techniques.

Challenges in Implementing Green GDP

Absence of thorough and trustworthy data on ecosystem services and environmental costs.

Green GDP estimations are less accurate when they rely on arbitrary assumptions.

It can be difficult to put a monetary value on environmental services like climate management, biodiversity, and cultural legacy. Critics contend that these ideals might oversimplify or commercialise the inherent value of nature. There is no standard methodology for determining Green GDP.

What is Net-Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA)?



Why in the News?

Several major US banks have recently withdrawn from the Net-Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA), raising concerns about the banking sector's commitment to combating climate change.

What is Net-Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA)?

Founded as a UN-convened initiative driven by banks, the NZBA pledges its members to integrate their capital market, lending, and investment activities with reaching net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050.

As a climate accelerator, it is a component of the Principles for Responsible Banking of the UNEP Financial Initiative.

The majority of the \$64 trillion in assets held by the alliance's 142 members, who come from 44 different nations, are European banks.

This NZBA has no Indian banks as signatories.

Structural Mandate:

Overseen by a steering group that reflects a range of company strategies and geographical areas.

overseen by papers revised in August 2023 and March 2024, and supported by the UNEP FI Secretariat.

Commitments of Member Banks:

Adjust portfolio and operational emissions to conform to net-zero routes.

Within 18 months of joining, set 2030 goals (or earlier), and every five years, set intermediate goals.

Release yearly reports on emissions intensity and absolute emissions.

What is the Net-Zero Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Target by 2050?

The goal of reaching net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 is to balance the quantity of GHGs released into the environment with the amount that is eliminated or offset by technological or natural sources.

As stated in the Paris Agreement, this goal is essential to keeping global warming to 1.5°C over pre-industrial levels.

About the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ)

A worldwide alliance of top financial institutions, GFANZ is dedicated to hastening the shift to a net-zero economy and reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Prior to the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow in April 2021, it was founded.

More than 550 financial firms from 50 countries are members.

include financial institutions that collectively control \$150 trillion in assets, such as banks, insurers, asset managers, and others.

Mark Carney, the current UN Special Envoy for Climate Action and Finance and a former governor of the Bank of England, serves as its chair.

Global programs like the UN Race to Zero campaign and other funding partnerships assist it.

The Dam Safety Act of 2021



Why in the News?

The Supreme Court has criticized the Union government for its inaction in fully implementing the Dam Safety Act, 2021, nearly five years after its enactment.

What is the Dam Safety Act of 2021?

Details	Enacted to ensure the structural and operational safety of over 5,700 large dams in India. Objectives (Section 3) - Prevent dam-related disasters by ensuring dam safety. - Establish institutions for monitoring, maintenance, and emergency preparedness.
Structural Mandate	The Central Water Commission (CWC) chairperson chairs the National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS) (Sections 5–6), which is reorganised every three years to provide standards, guidelines, and regulations. Section 9: National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA): Regulates dam safety standards, implements NCDS guidelines, and settles conflicts between dam owners and State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs). Section 14: State Committees on Dam Safety (SCDS): Offer supervision at the state level.

	State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs) (Section 15): Report to NDSA on state-level dam monitoring and inspections.
Other Provisions:	Dam owners' duties (Section 38) include creating Dam Safety Units, creating and carrying out Emergency Action Plans (EAPs), and performing routine Comprehensive Safety Evaluations (CSEs). Section 39: Emergency Preparedness: EAPs are required for prompt emergency response. Penalties for Non-Compliance (Section 45): Failure to comply with Act provisions may result in penalties, imprisonment for up to two years, or both.

Why is Dam Safety a priority concern in India?

After China and the United States, India has the third-highest number of dams in the world, with around 4,407 major dams.

Ageing Dams: More than 1,115 dams will be older than 50 by 2025; 4,250 dams will be older than 50 by 2050, with 64 dams older than 150.

Decreased Storage Capacity: Sedimentation lowers reservoir efficiency, which impacts the amount of water available for hydropower, drinking, and irrigation. For example, the lifespan of Bhakra Dam has been shortened by siltation rates that are 139.86% higher than anticipated.

Structural Vulnerabilities: Over time, many dams become structurally weak due to poorly constructed sedimentation management systems. Floods and other extreme environmental events can make these vulnerabilities worse.

Absence of Data and Monitoring: A lack of readiness results from inadequate reporting of sedimentation rates, storage loss, and other important parameters.