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**CURRENT AFFAIRS**  
**FEBRUARY 2025**

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## UNION BUDGET 2025–26

- Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman, presented the Union Budget 2025–26 with the theme “Sabka Vikas”, aimed at stimulating balanced growth across all regions. She stated that democracy, demography and demand are key pillars of Viksit Bharat journey. She outlined the broad principles of Viksit Bharat to encompass the following:
  - I. Zero-poverty;
  - II. 100% good quality school education;
  - III. Access to high-quality, affordable and comprehensive healthcare;
  - IV. 100% skilled labour with meaningful employment;
  - V. 70% women in economic activities; and
  - VI. Farmers making our country the ‘food basket of the world’.
- The budget highlights four engines in the journey to Viksit Bharat – Agriculture, MSME, Investment and Exports.

### Agriculture

- The government will launch a six-year ‘Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses’ with a special focus on Tur, Urad and Masoor. Central agencies (NAFED and NCCF) will be prepared to procure these three pulses in whatever quantity is offered by farmers over the next four years.
- Under the modified interest subvention scheme, the loan limits have been increased from ₹3 lakh to ₹5 lakh for loans taken through Kisan Credit Cards.
- A Makhana Board will be established to improve the production, processing, value addition and marketing of makhana in Bihar.
- A comprehensive ‘Rural Prosperity and Resilience’ programme will be launched in partnership with states to address underemployment in agriculture through skilling, investment, technology and invigorating the rural economy.
- ‘Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana’ will be launched in partnership with states, covering 100 districts to increase productivity, adopt crop diversification, augment post-harvest storage, improve irrigation facilities and facilitate availability of both long-term and short-term credit.
- Government will bring a framework for sustainable harnessing of fisheries from the Indian Exclusive

Economic Zone and High Seas, with a special focus on the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands.

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

### Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

- To help MSMEs achieve higher efficiencies of scale, technological upgradation and better access to capital, the investment and turnover limits for classification of all MSMEs have been enhanced to 2.5 and 2 times, respectively. MSMEs constitute 45% of our exports.
- Customised Credit Cards with ₹5 lakh limit for micro-enterprises registered on Udyam portal; 10 lakh cards will be issued in the first year.
- A scheme to create high-quality, unique, innovative and sustainable toys, making India a global hub for toys, has been announced.
- A new scheme for 5 lakh women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes first-time entrepreneurs will be launched under which they will be provided term loans of up to ₹2 crore during the next five years.
- A National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management will be set up in Bihar.
- A National Manufacturing Mission covering small, medium and large industries to further the “Make in India” initiative has been announced.
- A new Fund of Funds, with expanded scope and a fresh contribution of ₹10,000 crore will be set up.

### Investment

- 50,000 Atal Tinkering Labs will be set up in government schools in the next five years.
- Broadband connectivity will be provided to all government secondary schools and primary health centres in rural areas under the Bharatnet project.
- Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Scheme will be implemented to provide Indian language books in digital-form for school and higher education.
- Five National Centres of Excellence for skills development will be set up with global expertise and partnerships to equip our youth with the skills required for “Make for India, Make for the World” manufacturing.
- A Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence for Education will be set up with a total outlay of ₹500 crore.

- 10,000 additional seats will be added in medical colleges and hospitals next year, bringing the total to 75,000 seats in the next five years.
- Government will set up Day Care Cancer Centres in all district hospitals in the next three years, 200 Centres in 2025–26.
- Government will arrange for identity cards, registration on e-Shram portal and healthcare under PM Jan Arogya Yojna, for gig-workers.
- Government will set up an Urban Challenge Fund of ₹1 lakh crore to implement the proposals for 'Cities as Growth Hubs', 'Creative Redevelopment of Cities' and 'Water and Sanitation'.
- National Geospatial Mission will be launched to develop foundational geospatial infrastructure and data that will benefit urban planning.
- The budget proposes Gyan Bharatam Mission, for survey, documentation and conservation of more than 1 crore manuscripts with academic institutions, museums, libraries and private collectors.
- An outlay of ₹1.5 lakh crore proposed for 50-year interest free loans to states for capital expenditure and incentives for reform sports.
- Jal Jeevan Mission will be extended until 2028 with an enhanced total outlay.
- An Urban Challenge Fund of ₹1 lakh crore was announced to implement the proposals for 'Cities as Growth Hubs', 'Creative Redevelopment of Cities' and 'Water and Sanitation', allocation of ₹10,000 crore proposed for 2025–26.
- A Maritime Development Fund with a corpus of ₹25,000 crore will be set up, with up to 49% contribution by the government, and the balance from ports and the private sector.
- A fund of ₹15,000 crore aimed at expeditious completion of another 1 lakh dwelling units, with contributions from the government, banks and private investors.
- A Second Gene Bank with 10 lakh germplasm lines is to be set up for future food and nutritional security.
- A National Geospatial Mission to develop foundational geospatial infrastructure and data.
- Deep Tech Fund of Funds will be explored to catalyse the next-generation startups.
- ₹20,000 crore will be allocated to implement the private sector-driven Research, Development and Innovation initiative announced in the July Budget.

### Exports

- An Export Promotion Mission, with sectoral and ministerial targets, driven jointly by the Ministries of Commerce, MSME and Finance to be set up.
- 'BharatTradeNet' (BTN) for international trade to be set-up as a unified platform for trade documentation and financing solutions.
- A national framework is to be formulated as guidance for states to promote Global Capability Centres in emerging Tier 2 cities.
- A mechanism will be set up under the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) to evaluate the impact of the current financial regulations and subsidiary instructions.
- For export promotion, the budget facilitates exports of handicrafts, fully exempts Basic Customs Duty (BCD) on Wet Blue leather for value addition and employment, reduces BCD from 30% to 5% on frozen fish paste and reduces BCD from 15% to 5% on fish hydrolysate for the manufacture of fish and shrimp feeds.

### Reforms as Fuel: Financial Sector Reforms and Development

- An Investment Friendliness Index of States will be launched in 2025 to further the spirit of competitive cooperative federalism.
- Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0 will be brought to decriminalise more than 100 provisions across various laws.
- A proposal to raise the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit for the insurance from 74% to 100% will be available for those companies that invest the entire premium in India.
- National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) will set up a 'Partial Credit Enhancement Facility' for corporate bonds for infrastructure.
- A High-Level Committee for Regulatory Reforms will be set up to review all non-financial sector regulations, certifications, licenses and permissions.

### Taxation

- The Union Budget 2025–26 lays down new direct tax slabs and rates under the new income tax regime so that no income tax needs to be paid on a total income of up to ₹12 Lakh per annum, i.e., average income of ₹1 Lakh per month, other than special rate income such as capital gain.

- Salaried individuals earning up to ₹12.75 Lakh per annum will pay no tax due to a standard deduction of ₹75,000.
- The budget doubles the limit for tax deduction on interest earned by senior citizens from the present ₹50,000 to ₹1 Lakh.
- Furthermore, the TDS threshold on rent has been increased from ₹2.4 lakh to ₹6 lakh per annum.
- The budget proposes a revised tax rate structure under the new tax regime as follows:

Total Income per Annum	Rate of Tax
₹0–4 Lakh	NIL
₹4–8 Lakh	5%
₹8–12 Lakh	10%
₹12–16 Lakh	15%
₹16–20 Lakh	20%
₹20–24 Lakh	25%
Above ₹24 Lakh	30%

- As part of rationalisation of customs tariffs of industrial goods, Budget proposes to remove seven tariffs, apply appropriate cess to maintain effective duty incidence, and levy not more than one cess or surcharge.
  - As relief on import of drugs/medicines, 36 lifesaving drugs and medicines for treating cancer, rare diseases and chronic diseases have been fully exempted from Basic Customs Duty (BCD).
  - The Budget 2025–26 fully exempts cobalt powder and waste, scrap from lithium-ion battery, lead, zinc and 12 more critical minerals.
  - The revised estimate for the 2024–25 fiscal deficit is 4.8% of GDP, while the Budget Estimates for 2025–26 is estimated to be 4.4% of GDP. The revised estimate for total receipts, other than borrowings, is ₹31.47 lakh crore, of which the net tax receipts are ₹25.57 lakh crore. The revised estimate for the total expenditure is ₹47.16 lakh crore, of which the capital expenditure is about ₹10.18 lakh crore.
- For FY 2025–26, the total receipts, other than borrowings, and the total expenditure are estimated at ₹34.96 lakh crore and ₹50.65 lakh crore, respectively. The net tax receipts are estimated at ₹28.37 lakh crore.
  - The fiscal deficit is estimated to be 4.4% of GDP. The gross market borrowings are estimated at ₹14.82 lakh crore. Capex expenditure of ₹11.21 lakh crore (3.1% of GDP) earmarked in FY 2025–26.

### Economic Survey 2024–25

- The Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman, tabled Economic Survey 2024–25 in the Parliament. The Economic Survey is prepared by the Division of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance under the guidance of the Chief Economic Adviser of India.
- It is presented a day before the Union Budget.
- India's real GDP growth is estimated at 6.4% in FY25 (as per first advance estimates of national income), which equates nearly to its decadal average.
- Real Gross Value Added (GVA) is also estimated to grow by 6.4% FY25.
- The real GDP growth in FY26 is expected to grow between 6.3% and 6.8%, keeping in mind the upsides and downsides to growth.
- India accounts for the seventh-largest share in global services exports, underscoring India's global competitiveness in the sector.
- Retail inflation in India saw a reduction from 5.4% in FY24 to 4.9% in FY25 (April–December 2024).
- The Union Government's capital expenditure on key infrastructure sectors has grown at a rate of 38.8% from FY20 to FY24.
- The industrial sector is expected to grow by 6.2% in FY25 (first advance estimates), driven by robust growth in electricity and construction.
- Indian labour market indicators have improved with the unemployment rate declining to 3.2% in 2023–24 (July–June) from 6.0% in 2017–18 (July–June).

## NATIONAL NEWS

### India achieves 100 GW solar power capacity

- The total installed renewable energy capacity in India, excluding large hydro, crossed the milestone of 100 GW.
- India stands at the fourth position in the world in terms of installed RE capacity, fifth in solar and fourth in wind in terms of installed capacity.

- India has set a target to install 450 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030.

### Key Points

Union Minister for Power and New and Renewable Energy – R.K. Singh

### Government adds ten new commodities to e-Nam

- The Agriculture Ministry has allowed the trading of ten additional commodities on the electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM), taking the total number of tradable items on the platform to 231.
- The newly added commodities include dried Tulsi leaves, Besant (chickpea flour), wheat flour, chana sattu (roasted chickpea flour), water chestnut flour, asafoetida, dried fenugreek leaves, baby corn, dragon fruit and water chestnut.
- e-NAM is a pan-India electronic trading portal that connects existing Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandis to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities. It was launched in 2016.

#### Key Points

Union Agriculture Minister – Shivraj Singh Chouhan

### India's first wildlife biobank was inaugurated at the Darjeeling Zoo

- India's first 'biobank' was inaugurated at Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, better known as Darjeeling Zoo. The biobank is also known as 'frozen zoo'.
- It was established in collaboration with the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), under the Ministry of Science and Technology.
- The facility collects and preserves cell and tissue samples from endangered animals, as well as reproductive cells from deceased animals. These can be used for future research and potentially even bring back critically endangered species that have gone extinct or are on the verge of extinction.

### India is the second country after China to introduce digital pilot licenses

- Union Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu launched an Electronic Personnel License (EPL) for pilots, a significant step towards digital transformation and enhancing the safety, security and efficiency of civil aviation in India.
- With the launch, India has become the second country after China to implement EPL for the flight crew.
- The initiative will enhance convenience, transparency and efficiency for pilots while ensuring that India stays at the forefront of technological advancements in aviation.

### Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology in association with IIT Indore launches AgriHub

- IIT Indore inaugurated AgriHub, a Center of Excellence (CoE) for sustainable agriculture leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and Deep Learning (DL).
- AgriHub is a transdisciplinary, multi-institutional collaborative initiative aimed at fostering innovation and transforming Indian agriculture while empowering researchers, breeders and farmers.
- It will serve as a collaborative platform, bringing together stakeholders from diverse sectors to develop innovative solutions for Indian agriculture.
- The key deliverables include startup incubation, job creation, patents, publications, industry collaborations, student mentorship and entrepreneurship workshops.

### India's first "Open-Air Art Wall Museum" inaugurated at Mausam Bhawan

- India's first 'Open Air Art Wall Museum', a unique open-air art museum was inaugurated at 'Mausam Bhawan', New Delhi.
- It depicts and celebrates 150 years of milestone journeys of the India Meteorological Department (IMD).
- The initiative, developed in collaboration with "Delhi Street Art", transforms the walls of IMD's headquarters on Lodhi Road into a vibrant visual narrative of India's meteorological advancements, history and the impact of weather science on society.

#### Key Points

IMD's Headquarters – New Delhi  
 Director General of Meteorology – Mrutyunjay Mohapatra

### IIT Madras launches Bharat Cancer Genome Atlas

- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras launched the Bharat cancer genome atlas.
- Bharat cancer genome atlas will "help identify cancer-specific biomarkers in India to enable early detection of breast cancers and identify novel drug targets for developing better treatment strategies specific to the Indian population."
- The cancer genome programme was initiated by IIT Madras in 2020. Under this programme, the 960 whole exome sequencing from 480 breast cancer patient tissue samples collected across the country has been completed.

- The institute has made this database publicly accessible at [bcga.iitm.ac.in](http://bcga.iitm.ac.in) to researchers and clinicians in India and abroad.

### ISRO successfully tests CE20 cryogenic engine ignition

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully conducted the ignition trial of the indigenous CE20 cryogenic engine that will power the upper stage of its mighty Launch Vehicle Mark-III (LVM-III).
- This test was carried out in the High Altitude Test Facility at ISRO Propulsion Complex, Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu.
- Cryogenic engines are highly complex as they use supercooled fuels (liquid hydrogen and oxygen). By successfully igniting the engine in a vacuum, ISRO demonstrates its growing mastery over advanced propulsion systems, putting it on par with global space agencies like NASA, ESA and Roscosmos.
- The ignition will pave the way for the deployment of satellites in multiple orbits, enable complex interplanetary missions that require trajectory corrections and improve efficiency in human spaceflight missions like Gaganyaan.

#### Key Points

ISRO's headquarters	—	Bengaluru, Karnataka
Chairman	—	V Narayanan

### IIT Madras and ISRO develop IRIS Chip

- ISRO and IIT Madras scientists have jointly developed the Indigenous RISC-V Controller for Space Applications (IRIS) to strengthen the indigenous semiconductors development for the country's various space-based applications.
- IRIS has been built on the SHAKTI processor baseline, enabling wide deployment across diverse domains, from the Internet of Things (IoT) to computing systems used in various strategic areas.
- The SHAKTI microprocessor project is led by Professor V Kamakoti at the Prathap Subrahmanyam Centre for Digital Intelligence and Secure Hardware Architecture (PSCDISHA), Department of Computer Science and Engineering, IIT Madras.
- SHAKTI systems use RISC-V, an open-source processor technology, and are supported by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology under the 'Digital India RISC-V' (DIRV) initiative.

### Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) 2024

- As part of the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) 2024, India uploaded the second-highest number of checklists (after the USA) and the third-highest number of species of any country after Colombia and Ecuador. Birdwatchers from all states and UTs documented 1,036 species, and uploaded over 61,000 bird checklists on an e-platform titled 'ebird'.
- Kerala recorded the highest number of checklists, while West Bengal reported the maximum number of species.
- The GBBC is an annual citizen science event that engages bird enthusiasts of all skill levels in counting birds and contributing to bird conservation. It was first launched in 1998 as a way to gather information on bird populations and distribution.

### India adds four new Ramsar Wetlands

- In a significant step for environmental conservation, the Indian government has announced the addition of four more wetlands to the prestigious Ramsar Convention list, bringing the total number of Ramsar sites in India to 89.
- The newly designated sites are – Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu, Therthangal Bird Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu, Khecheopalri Wetland, Sikkim and Udhwa Lake, Jharkhand.
- For Sikkim and Jharkhand, this is their first Ramsar site. Tamil Nadu has the highest number of Ramsar sites in India, with a total of 20.
- India now has the most Ramsar wetlands in Asia and ranks third globally, following the UK (which has 176 Ramsar sites) and Mexico (with 144 Ramsar sites).
- A Ramsar Site is a wetland of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which was signed in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran.

### Bathouism recognised as an official religion in Assam's BTR

- The Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) government has approved the inclusion of "Bathouism" as an official option in the religion column of various application forms, marking a significant step for the recognition of the indigenous Bodo faith.
- This applies to admission forms for educational institutions and key documents like birth and death certificates under the Health & Family Welfare Department.

- Bathouism, the traditional faith of the Bodo community, revolves around the worship of Bathou Bwrai, regarded as the supreme deity. The move is seen as a crucial step in preserving the cultural and religious identity of the Bodo people. Bodos are Assam's largest plains tribe and they inhabit areas along the north bank of the Brahmaputra River.

#### Key Points

Assam's Chief Minister	— Himanta Biswa Sarma
Capital	— Dispur

#### Chandrayaan 3 landing site Shiv Shakti Point on the Moon dates back 3.7 billion years

- Scientists from a team from ISRO's Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad has now estimated the age of the Shiv Shakti point, the landing site, to be 3.7 billion years.
- This period coincides with when primitive life first emerged on Earth.
- The Shiv Shakti point is surrounded by large craters, including Manzinus, Boguslawsky and Schomberger. These ancient craters likely ejected debris that formed the area around the landing site.

#### News in Shorts

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Government of India celebrated the 75th anniversary of the National Sample Surveys (NSS) with a special event at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. This milestone marks the start of a series of initiatives across the country, aimed at highlighting the vital role NSS data plays in evidence-based policymaking, raising awareness about the importance of data for nation-building, and engaging stakeholders from all walks of life.
- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla announced the extension of translation services in the House to six additional languages—Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, Manipuri, Sanskrit and Urdu.
- ISRO unveiled the latest version of Finite Element Analysis of Structures (FEAST) software. FEAST is essential for the design and structural analysis of

future projects, including the Gaganyaan, the human spaceflight mission, Bharatiya Antariksh Station and the next generation of rockets.

- According to the research paper, 'The State of the States: Federal Finance in India' released by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), states should create their independent fiscal councils, comprising academics, financial market participants and other experts as their members, to strengthen their institutional capacity. The paper was authored by NCAER Director General Poonam Gupta and Visiting Distinguished Professor Barry Eichengreen.
- To mark the birth centenary of legendary playback singer late Mohammed Rafi, the Government has decided to issue a commemorative coin with the denomination of ₹100.
- Indian astronaut Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla will be the pilot of the upcoming Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station (ISS).
- The Central Zoo Authority (CZA) has approved India's first white tiger breeding centre in Govindgarh, Rewa, Madhya Pradesh. The Govindgarh fort in Rewa was where Mohan, the first captured white tiger, was kept by the erstwhile ruler of Rewa.
- Maharashtra will establish the first Artificial Intelligence (AI) university in India, and a task force has been formed for the planning and implementation of the project.
- The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) celebrated its 22nd Foundation Day on 19 February 2025.
- India's Ministry of Power has mandated all renewable energy implementing agencies and state utilities must incorporate a minimum of two-hour co-located Energy Storage Systems (ESS), equivalent to 10% of the installed solar project capacity, in future solar tenders.
- A High-Level Committee (HLC), chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, has approved ₹3027.86 crore for disaster mitigation initiatives across various states. These efforts are part of the government's broader strategy to strengthen disaster risk management and enhance resilience across the country.

## GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

#### NAKSHA scheme launched

- Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the Central government's new initiative—'NAtional geospatial Knowledge-based land Survey of urban HAbitations' (NAKSHA) urban

HAbitations' (NAKSHA) from Raisen in Madhya Pradesh.

- NAKSHA is a city survey initiative under the existing Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP). It is spearheaded by the Department of



Land Resources (DoLR), under the Ministry of Rural Development.

- Under the new initiative, maps of towns and cities will be prepared. The programme has been launched as a pilot across 152 urban local bodies in 26 states. The cities selected meet two criteria: area less than 35 sq km, and population less than 2 lakhs. The pilot will be completed in a year.
- It aims to create a comprehensive and accurate geospatial database for urban land records. It will address the issue of updation of land records in urban areas – while land records have improved in rural areas, several cities lack maps even today.

#### **Shatavari For Wellness: Nationwide Campaign launched**

- In a bid to raise awareness about the health benefits of medicinal plants, a species-specific campaign titled “Shatavari – For Better Health” was launched.
- Shatavari, known for its numerous health benefits, particularly in supporting women’s health and enhancing immunity, will now receive focused attention through this campaign, ensuring it reaches wider audiences across the nation.

#### **Indian Railways launches ‘Swarail’ Superapp for seamless travel**

- The Ministry of Railways has introduced the SuperApp ‘SwaRail’, a one-stop solution offering comprehensive railway services to the public. It integrates various railway services, eliminating the need for multiple applications and reducing space consumption on user devices.
- The Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) developed the application.
- The App allows users to onboard using their existing RailConnect or UTS on Mobile credentials. Once registered, the same credentials apply across these platforms.

#### **DoT and CDRI unveil roadmap to strengthen India’s telecom resilience**

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), in collaboration with the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), launched a comprehensive report on the Disaster Risk and Resilience Assessment Framework (DRRAF), marking a major step towards strengthening India’s telecom sector against disasters.
- The report is part of a comprehensive study on National and Sub-national Disaster Risk & Resilience Assessment for the Telecommunication Sector by CDRI.

- The study was conducted across five states—Assam, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and Gujarat—focusing on disaster risks and resilience strategies specific to the telecom sector.

#### **Government launches Aadhaar Good Governance portal**

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) launched the Aadhaar Good Governance portal to streamline the approval process for Aadhaar authentication requests. This is in sync with an effort to make Aadhaar more people-friendly, enable ease of living and enable better access to services for people.
- The online platform (<http://swik.meity.gov.in>) came into effect, after Aadhaar Authentication for Good Governance (Social Welfare, Innovation, Knowledge) Amendment Rules, 2025 under the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 was notified in late January 2025.
- This amendment has been done to help improve transparency and inclusivity in the decision-making process.
- It enables both government and non-government entities to avail Aadhaar authentication service for providing various services in the public interest for related specific purposes like enablement of innovation, spread of knowledge, promoting ease of living of residents and enabling better access to services for them.
- The fresh amendment enables Aadhaar number holders to avail hassle-free services from several sectors including hospitality, healthcare, credit rating bureau, e-commerce players, educational institutions and aggregator service providers.

#### **Union Health Ministry launches Intensified Special NCD Screening Drive**

- In view of the escalating burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the country, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has launched an Intensified Special NCD Screening Campaign to achieve 100% screening of all individuals aged 30 years and above for prevalent NCDs, including diabetes, hypertension and three common cancers—oral, breast and cervical.
- The campaign will be executed across Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs) and various healthcare facilities nationwide, under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD).

- The screening drive has equipped healthcare workers with the necessary training to provide screening services directly to individuals in their homes. This is done through door-to-door campaigns, allowing them to reach and assist more people effectively.

### Nationwide Campaign for Lymphatic Filariasis elimination

- The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Jagat Prakash Nadda launched the Annual Nationwide Mass Drug Administration (MDA) Campaign for Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) elimination.
- The campaign covers 111 endemic districts across 13 States with door-to-door administration of filaria prevention medications.
- The MDA campaign is a core component of India's LF elimination strategy, led by the National Center for Vector Borne Diseases Control (NCVBDC) under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- The programme focuses on the door-to-door administration of anti-filarial medication, ensuring that every eligible individual consumes the prescribed medicine to stop the transmission of the disease. LF, commonly known as "Hathi Paon", is a parasitic disease transmitted by infected mosquitoes. It can lead to physical disabilities such as lymphoedema (swelling of the limbs) and hydrocele (scrotal swelling) and impose long-term burdens on affected individuals and families.

### Madhya Pradesh unveils India's first Global Capability Centre Policy

- The Madhya Pradesh Global Capability Centers (GCC) Policy 2025 is India's first dedicated policy for GCCs, aimed at driving technological advancement in tier-2 cities like Bhopal, Indore and Gwalior.
- It is a significant step towards attracting multinational companies and establishing Madhya Pradesh as a digital and technological hub.

#### Key Points

Chief Minister — Mohan Yadav

### Kerala government launches Nayanamritham 2.0.

- The government of Kerala (India), in partnership with Remidio (Bangalore, India), launched Nayanamritham 2.0, the world's first government-led AI-assisted screening programme for three chronic eye diseases: Diabetic Retinopathy (DR), glaucoma and Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD).

- This initiative aims to enhance early detection and improve access to eye care across the state.
- With this, Kerala became the first government public health system in the world to adopt AI for chronic eye disease screening.

#### Key Points

Remidio CEO — Anand Sivaraman

### 'Bikashita Gaon, Bikashita Odisha' scheme launched for rural development

- Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi launched 'Bikashita Gaon Bikashita Odisha' for rural infrastructure development projects in the state.
- The programme will have a ₹5,000 crore budget for five years. The government has provisioned ₹1,000 crore for 2024-25. The scheme focuses on critical areas such as road connectivity, civic amenities, educational facilities and micro-tourism development.

### Odisha launches various initiatives under "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" (BBBP) scheme

- The different schemes launched under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) schemes by the Odisha government include "Nirbhaya Kadhi" (Fearless Bud), "Mo Gelha Jiya" (My Dear Daughter) in Ganjam, "Kalpana Avijan" in Dhenkanal, "Swarna Kalika" in Keonjhar and "Veerangana Yojana" in Deogarh district.
- These schemes have been launched for adolescent girls to empower them to say "no" to child marriage", combat sex selection and female foeticide, continue their study with higher education and boost self-esteem and confidence through martial arts and self-defence techniques.
- BBBP scheme was launched on 22 January 2015 to address the alarming gender imbalance and declining child sex ratio in India.

### IN-SPACE launches a ₹500-crore Technology Adoption Fund (TAF)

- Space regulator Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACE) launched the Technology Adoption Fund (TAF), a ₹500 crore initiative to boost innovation and commercialisation in the space sector.
- The scheme offers partial funding of up to ₹25 crore per project.
- It is aimed to help private players advance space technologies from early development stages to commercially viable products.

- The fund will support startups and MSMEs with up to 60% funding of their project cost, while large industries can receive up to 40% support.

### Key Points

Chairman, IN-SPACE — Pawan K Goenka

### News in Short

- The Andhra Pradesh government launched WhatsApp governance service, Mana Mitra to extend various civic services to the people through WhatsApp. The state government has allotted an official WhatsApp number 9552300009 for this service.
- The West Bengal government launched 'Nodi Bandhan' scheme to promote riverine development and curb erosion along the Ganga-Padma.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has warned that the Morand-Ganjal Irrigation Project in Madhya Pradesh will submerge crucial tiger habitats in the Satpura Wildlife Sanctuary and Melghat Tiger Reserves.
- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has initiated the process of development of an ingenious human vaccine candidate against highly-pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1). The avian influenza, H5N1, a highly pathogenic strain of bird flu, continues to pose a significant threat to animal and human health in India.
- India's Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has withdrawn its Track and Trace System for pharmaceutical exports under the Foreign Trade Policy effective 1 February 2025.
- The Indian Railways has identified 61 railway stations in Karnataka for redevelopment under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, aiming to modernise and upgrade infrastructure at these stations.
- Gujarat government launched G-SAFAL (Gujarat Scheme for Antyodaya Families for Augmenting Livelihoods) initiative to empower underprivileged families by helping them develop additional income sources for a sustainable livelihood.
- Kerala government launched the 'nPROUD' (New Programme for Removal of Unused Drugs) scheme in which unused medicines will be collected from homes or facilities and will be provided for their disposal at designated places.
- The government-backed National Investment & Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) is planning to raise a \$2 billion private credit fund, which would be India's largest such vehicle. The fund will focus on performing credit, aiming to channel international capital into the Indian economy.
- Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the "Watershed Yatra" to increase people's participation and create awareness in watershed development activities under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (WDC-PMKSY 2.0).
- The Union Cabinet has approved the extension of the tenure of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) for three years beyond 31.03.2025.
- The Gujarat government announced a five-member committee headed by retired Supreme Court judge Ranjana Desai to prepare the draft for the Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### New Zealand grants legal personhood to Mount Taranaki Maunga

- Taranaki Maunga, the second-highest mountain on New Zealand's North Island, along with its surrounding peaks, has been granted legal personhood.
- The mountain, formally known as Taranaki Maunga, will now be referred to officially by its Māori name, shedding its former colonial designation, Mount Egmont.
- The legal personhood status extends to the surrounding peaks and environment, collectively named Te Kāhui Tupua. The mountain is a dormant volcano, standing at 2,518 metres.

- With this, it has become the third natural feature in the country to receive the same rights, duties and protections as an individual. In 2014, the Te Urewera forest was the first to receive such recognition. This was followed by the Whanganui River in 2017.

### US President Donald Trump sanctions on the International Criminal Court

- U.S. President Donald Trump has authorised economic and travel sanctions targeting people who work on International Criminal Court investigations of U.S. citizens or U.S. allies such as Israel, drawing condemnation.

- The ICC is a permanent court that can prosecute individuals for war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and crimes of aggression against the territory of member states or by their nationals.

#### Key Points

ICC's seat	—	Hague, Netherlands
President	—	Tomoko Akane

#### Microsoft unveils Majorana 1

- Microsoft unveiled Majorana 1, the world's first quantum processor powered by topological qubits.
- Majorana 1 chip integrates eight qubits — the essential units of quantum computing — onto a compact, sticky-note-sized piece of hardware. Its current functionality is limited to solving mathematical problems.

#### Key Points

Microsoft's CEO	—	Satya Nadella
Founders	—	Bill Gates and Paul Allen
Headquarters	—	Washington DC, US

#### Nvidia develops Evo 2

- Nvidia, in collaboration with the Arc Institute and Stanford University, has developed Evo 2, the most powerful Artificial Intelligence (AI) system for genetic research.
- It provides insights into DNA, RNA and proteins across diverse species. Evo 2 was trained on a dataset of nearly 9 trillion nucleotides—the building blocks of DNA and RNA.

#### U.S. President Donald Trump orders the creation of U.S. Sovereign wealth fund

- U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order to establish the first-ever sovereign wealth fund in the United States to invest in the future of the country. The fund could include major acquisitions like TikTok and play a key role in funding infrastructure and research.
- A sovereign wealth fund is a government-owned investment fund that manages national savings, typically invested in assets like stocks, bonds, or real estate. It helps to grow the country's wealth for future generations or to support the economy.

#### Australian scientists successfully created first-ever kangaroo embryo using IVF

- In a historic scientific breakthrough, Australian researchers have successfully created the first-ever kangaroo embryos using In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF).

- This achievement marks the first time a kangaroo embryo has been produced through IntraCytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI), a technique widely used in human fertility treatments.
- Scientists from the University of Queensland employed ICSI to create eastern grey kangaroo embryos by injecting a single sperm cell into a mature egg, setting the stage for potential conservation applications for endangered marsupial species.

#### NASA to launch SPHEREx (Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionisation and Ices Explorer) Telescope

- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is tentatively scheduled to launch its new megaphone-shaped space telescope aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California.
- During its short two-year mission, the observatory will help better understand things about the formation of the universe, the growth of all galaxies across cosmic history and the location of water and life-forming molecules in the Milky Way galaxy.
- It is a megaphone-shaped telescope and the observatory will look to answer questions about the origin of the universe while mapping the distribution of galaxies.
- The telescope will provide an all-sky spectral survey over a two-year planned mission.
- The SPHEREx Observatory will collect data on more than 450 million galaxies along with more than 100 million stars in the Milky Way to explore the origins of the universe.

#### Uganda launches the first clinical trial for Ebola vaccine

- In a global first, Uganda's Ministry of Health, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other partners launched a first-ever clinical efficacy trial for a vaccine from Ebola from the Sudan species of the virus, and at an unprecedented speed for a randomised vaccine trial, in an emergency.
- This is the first trial to assess the clinical efficacy of a vaccine against Ebola Sudan virus disease. IAVI, the provider of the vaccine, conducted trials for safety and immunogenicity.
- It is also the first clinical trial of the vaccine during an outbreak.

**Key Points**

WHO's headquarters	—	Geneva, Switzerland
Director General	—	Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

**WHO releases 2025 edition of ICD-11 classification**

- The World Health Organisation released the 2025 edition of the International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision (ICD-11) – a tool that standardises the language used by health professionals worldwide in diagnosing, reporting and monitoring diseases, injuries and causes of death.
- The ICD is a flagship WHO product that serves as the basis for identifying health trends and statistics at a country level and worldwide.
- ICD-11 enhances global health communication by providing a standardised classification and terminology for seamless integration across health information systems, languages and settings.

**China's Shenzhou-19 demonstrates artificial photosynthesis**

- China's Shenzhou-19 crew aboard the Tiangong space station has created oxygen and ingredients for rocket fuel for the first time with the help of "artificial photosynthesis" technology.
- The researchers were able to produce hydrocarbon ethylene, which could be used as a rocket fuel.
- The crew has successfully conducted maiden in-orbit demonstration of the technology, thereby paving the way for future exploration of space, including crewed moon landing before 2030.
- The "artificial photosynthesis" technology significantly reduces energy consumption as it is capable of working efficiently at room temperature and standard atmospheric pressure.

**Brazil joins OPEC+ as an observer for global energy influence**

- Brazil has joined OPEC+ as an observer, allowing it to engage in global oil discussions without committing to production cuts.
- This decision was approved by the National Council for Energy Policy.
- It allows Brazil to participate in discussions without committing to policies like production cuts or price controls.

- As the world's seventh-largest oil producer, Brazil pumps 4.3 million barrels of crude daily, contributing 4% of global output. In 2024, crude oil became the country's top export, accounting for 13.3% of total sales and surpassing soybeans.

**Pakistan joins China's Chang'e-8 Lunar Mission**

- Pakistan's space agency Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) has joined hands with China for its upcoming Chang'e-8 moon mission in 2028.
- SUPARCO will provide a 35-kilogram rover to explore the moon's south pole, a region known for its challenging terrain and potential scientific discoveries.
- It will join the Chang'e 8 mission, which is part of the larger International Lunar Research Station (ILRS) project. The mission has offered 200 kg (440lb) of payload capacity for interested countries. These payloads could be instruments fixed to the lander or items such as robots, rovers and flight vehicles that can work independently after landing.

**UNESCO launches "Imagine a world with more women in science" campaign**

- UNESCO, along with Canada's International Development Centre (IDRC), launched an 'Imagine a world with more women in science' campaign.
- This campaign demonstrates the essential role women play in driving progress in science and calls on the global community not only to envision but also to work towards a more gender-balanced scientific community where every voice is heard.
- This was done to mark the 10th anniversary of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

**Key Points**

Headquarters	—	Paris, France
Director General	—	Audrey Azoulay

**Gravehawk hybrid surface-to-air missile system**

- Ukraine has reportedly acquired the Gravehawk hybrid surface-to-air missile system to defend itself against Russia. It is a short-range surface-to-air missile system that addresses short-range threats, particularly those posed by fast-moving airborne objects.
- It is mounted on an all-terrain vehicle chassis, allowing for rapid deployment and mobility on the ground.
- It uses RM-73 air-to-air missiles and can be operated by a five-person crew.

### News in Shorts

- Russia is reportedly poised to begin serial production of a new derivative of the Iskander-M tactical ballistic missile with a range of 1,000 km.
- China will send a smart robotic “flyer detector” to Moon’s south pole in a bid to search for water. The flying robot will be part of China’s Chang’e-7 mission, which is scheduled for launch in 2026.
- The Argentine government led by Javier Milei plans to pull out of the World Health Organisation (WHO) due to deep differences.
- India has once again been included in the ‘Honour Roll’ of the United Nations (UN) for paying its regular budget assessments in full within the 30 days.
- Niger has achieved a historic milestone as the first African country to eliminate onchocerciasis, also known as river blindness, as a public health problem.
- Bangladesh has launched a large-scale security operation, “Operation Devil Hunt,” targeting loyalists of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.
- U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order formally withdrawing the United States from the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and prohibiting future funding for the UN relief agency UNRWA. UNRWA is a relief and human development agency.
- Panama has formally pulled out of China’s massive Belt and Road infrastructure programme, following pressure from the United States to reduce China’s influence on the Panama Canal.
- The United Kingdom is set to become the first country in the world to introduce new laws making it illegal to use Artificial Intelligence tools to create sexualised images of children.
- U.S. President Donald Trump has officially renamed the Gulf of Mexico as the “Gulf of America” and designated 9 February as “Gulf of America Day” through an executive order.
- U.S. President Donald Trump has signed an executive order that prevents transgender women from competing in female categories of sports.
- China has released the first details of an ambitious new plan to develop a deep-sea research facility “with the potential to transform marine exploration” which will be situated some 6,000 feet below the surface of the South China Sea.

## INDIA AND THE WORLD

### In a rare gesture, PM Narendra Modi receives Emir of Qatar

- The Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani received a warm welcome in India from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who broke the established protocol by personally receiving him at the airport. This gesture signifies the historical and close ties between India and Qatar which continued to deepen in recent years.
- His visit follows an invitation from PM Modi and marks his second state visit to India. He previously visited in March 2015.
- The Emir of Qatar received the Guard of Honour and a ceremonial welcome in the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- India and Qatar share longstanding ties based on friendship, trust and mutual respect. In recent years, relations have grown in areas such as trade, investment, energy, technology, culture and people-to-people exchanges.
- Qatar has also been the largest supplier of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to India and exports around 70% of its needs for natural gas.

### PM Narendra Modi on a three-day visit to France

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in France on a three-day visit during which he co-chaired an AI (Artificial Intelligence) Action Summit with French President Emmanuel Macron and held bilateral talks with him. This was Prime Minister Modi’s sixth visit to France, and follows President Macron’s visit to India in January 2024 as the Chief Guest for the 75th Republic Day of India.
- PM Modi gifted French President Emmanuel Macron a traditional Dokra artwork of musicians playing Indian instruments. He gifted an exquisite silver hand-engraved table mirror with floral and peacock motifs to the First Lady Brigitte Macron.
- He attended a dinner hosted by President Macron at the Elyse Palace in honour of visiting Heads of Government and State.
- PM Modi and Macron had discussions in both restricted and delegation formats and addressed the India–France CEO’s Forum.
- The two leaders visited Mazargues War Cemetery, maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves

Commission in Marseille, to pay tribute to the sacrifices made by Indian soldiers in World War I. Both the leaders jointly inaugurated a new Indian consulate in Marseille.

- President Macron and Prime Minister Modi reaffirmed their shared vision for bilateral cooperation and international partnership. The two leaders underlined their common commitment to a free, open, inclusive, secure and peaceful Indo-Pacific region.

#### **India–Russia signs a deal on Klub-S Missile System**

- India signed a contract with Russia to acquire anti-ship cruise missiles to boost the Indian Navy’s submarine fleet’s combat capabilities.
- The Indian Navy’s Russian submarine fleet included INS Sindhughosh, INS Sindhudhvaj, INS Sindhuraj, INS Sindhuvir, INS Sindhuratna, INS Sindhukesari, INS Sindhukirti, INS Sindhuvijay, INS Sindhurakshak and INS Sindhushastra.
- Now, INS Sindhudhvaj, INS Sindhurakshak and INS Sindhuvir are no longer in service, and two more submarines are expected to retire in the next two to three years.

#### **India becomes IALA Vice President**

- India has been elected to the vice presidency of the International Organisation of Aids to Marine Navigation (IALA).
- The first General Assembly of IALA also marks its transition from a non-governmental organisation (NGO) to an inter-governmental organisation (IGO), where India was elected to its Vice Presidency.
- IALA, established in 1957 as an NGO, transitioned to an IGO to enhance its role in shaping international standards and best practices for safe and efficient navigation.

#### **PM Narendra Modi visits the United States**

- The President of the United States of America, Donald J. Trump hosted the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, for an official working visit in Washington, DC, US.
- They set a bold new goal for bilateral trade – “Mission 500” – aiming to more than double total bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030.
- President Trump and Prime Minister Modi pledged to sustain high-level engagement between both governments, industries and academic institutions and to realise their ambitious vision for an enduring India–U.S. partnership that advances the aspirations of

their people for a bright and prosperous future, serves the global good, and contributes to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

#### **India–U.S. COMPACT**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump unveiled an ambitious new plan — the U.S.–India COMPACT for the 21st century.
- COMPACT stands for Catalysing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce & Technology.
- COMAPCT will serve as the basis of India’s ties with the second Donald Trump administration and is a clear and interconnected blueprint that ties together a relationship based on deeper defence, energy, trade, investment, technology, innovation and people-to-people ties.
- It also envisages stronger regional partnerships in India’s neighbourhood across the Indo-Pacific, West Asia and Western Indian Ocean. It has clear timelines and lays out clear outcome-oriented expectations from both partners.

#### **India–U.S. TRUST initiative**

- India and the United States have launched a bilateral initiative for cooperation in the recovery and processing of critical minerals, including lithium and Rare Earth Elements (REEs).
- Under the Transforming Relationship Utilising Strategic Technology (TRUST) initiative, the two countries will reduce barriers to technology transfer, address export controls and enhance high-tech commerce.
- The emphasis will be laid on creating a strong supply chains of critical minerals, advanced materials and pharmaceuticals.

#### **PM Modi receives Starship heatshield tile from Musk**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Elon Musk, the Head of the U.S. Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and CEO of Tesla and SpaceX.
- Musk gifted PM Modi with a heatshield tile from his behemoth Starship spacecraft that went to space.
- Starship’s heatshield tiles are hexagonal ceramic tiles designed to protect SpaceX’s Starship during atmospheric reentry when the spacecraft faces extreme temperatures as it returns to Earth.

#### **India and the United States intensify their collaboration in Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA)**

- India and the United States are scaling up their cooperation in UDA, a key focus for both countries,

with a new initiative, the Autonomous Systems Industry Alliance (ASIA).

- The alliance is aimed at scaling up industry partnerships and production in the Indo-Pacific region and has identified a range of UDA technologies for co-production in India.
- India is the first country with whom the U.S. defence industry has offered to work with technologies such as sonobuoys, surveillance systems, unmanned surface and underwater vehicles.

#### **Philippines to acquire \$200 million Akash Missile System**

- The Philippines will place an order worth \$200 million for the Akash missile system, India's indigenously developed short-range missiles in the upcoming financial year. Akash is a surface-to-air missile system with a range of up to 25 km (16 miles).
- The expected deal would follow India's \$375-million sale of the mid-range BrahMos supersonic cruise missile to the Philippines in 2022.
- The purchase comes at a time when the Philippines is building its military strength as tension escalates with China on overlapping claims in the busy waterway of the South China Sea, where the two have clashed in recent years.

#### **DPIIT and Korea Transport Institute sign MoU to boost collaboration in logistics and infrastructure development**

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Government of India (GoI) and the Korea Transport Institute (KoTI), Republic of Korea (RoK) signed an MoU on cooperation in logistics and infrastructure development.
- It will enhance cooperation in logistics and infrastructure development, leveraging KOTI's expertise to support India's ambitious infrastructure initiatives.
- This will help in the development of infrastructure and logistics master plans under the aegis of the prestigious programme – PM GatiShakti National Master Plan.

#### **UK strengthens India defence ties with new initiative, dedicated MoD office**

- In a significant boost to the government's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) initiative, the India-United Kingdom (UK) strategic partnership took another major step forward with the formal launch of Defence Partnership-India (DP-I).
- Under this, a dedicated programme office within the UK's Ministry of Defence will be established. This

office will act as a one-stop hub for enhancing bilateral defence collaboration between the two nations.

- A major contract between aerospace and defence major Thales UK and defence public sector undertaking (DPSU) Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) was signed to deliver Laser Beam Riding MANPADs (LBRM), with an initial supply of High Velocity Missiles (STARStreak) and launchers.

#### **PM Modi to attend Mauritius' National Day celebrations as the Guest of Honour**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be the guest of honour at Mauritius' National Day celebrations, his Mauritian counterpart Navin Ramgoolam has announced, calling it a testimony of the close bilateral ties.
- Mauritius commemorates its National Day on March 12 every year. The day marks the anniversary of Mauritius's independence from British rule in 1968.
- President Droupadi Murmu attended Mauritius' National Day celebrations last year as the chief guest.

#### **News in Short**

- In a historic move, India assumed the Chairmanship of the Bay of Bengal (BOB) Inter-Governmental Organisation from Bangladesh at the 13th Governing Council Meeting at Malé, Maldives.
- A statue of Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar was unveiled in Cebu, Philippines, marking the 75th anniversary of India-Philippines diplomatic relations.
- Marking a significant milestone in Science and Technology (S&T) cooperation between India and Nepal, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), India, and the Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) formalised an MoU at CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL), New Delhi.
- Russian lawmaker Vyacheslav Volodin arrived in India for an official visit aimed at bolstering bilateral relations between the two nations.
- India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) – comprising Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein – have taken a significant step towards deeper economic collaboration with the inauguration of the India-EFTA Desk. This initiative follows the recently concluded India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA), which positions EFTA as the first European bloc to formalise a trade pact with India. This desk will serve as the bridge between businesses on both sides, ensuring transparency, trust and ease of doing business.



## FINANCE, ECONOMY & BANKING

### NPCI implements stricter UPI rules from 1 February 2025

- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has announced that UPI transactions containing special characters in their transaction ID will be declined starting 1 February 2025.
- This directive aims to enforce compliance with UPI technical specifications implemented back in March 2024.
- NPCI has advised all UPI members to take necessary action and inform relevant stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition.

#### Key Points

NPCI Headquarters — Mumbai, Maharashtra  
MD & CEO — Dilip Asbe

### L&T Finance Unveils AI-Powered Home Loan Advisor 'Kai'

- L & T Finance Limited (LTF), a leading Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) launched Knowledgeable AI (KAI), an AI-powered virtual advisor, on its newly redesigned corporate website ([www.ltfinance.com/home-loan](http://www.ltfinance.com/home-loan)).
- KAI utilises advanced AI technology, including a specialised Large Language Model (LLM), to understand the unique needs of each user.
- This allows KAI to provide instant EMI calculations and loan estimates, expert answers to home loan questions and context and guidance, acting as a home loan guide rather than a mere chatbot.

#### Key Points

Sudipta Roy — Managing Director & CEO, LTF

### Finvasia and Yes Bank Unveil 'Jumpp'

- Fintech firm Finvasia, in collaboration with YES Bank, has launched Jumpp, an AI-powered financial super app aimed at simplifying digital finance.
- Jumpp integrates banking, payments, savings, investing and borrowing into a single platform. The app supports account aggregation, allowing users to consolidate financial accounts into one dashboard. It also enables instant YES Bank savings account openings.

#### Key Points

Yes Bank's headquarters — Mumbai, Maharashtra  
CEO — Prashant Kumar

### Ministry of Labour & Employment signs MoU with APNA to boost job opportunities

- In a major step towards enhancing employment prospects for young job seekers, the Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoLE) has signed an MoU with APNA, one of India's leading job recruitment platforms.
- This partnership will bring over 10 lakh job opportunities annually to the National Career Service (NCS) Portal, strengthening domestic employment avenues.
- The NCS Portal serves as a vital bridge between job seekers and employers, with 40 lakh+ registered employers and 4.40 crore vacancies mobilised since its launch. At any given time, nearly 10 lakh vacancies are available, ensuring a steady flow of opportunities.

#### Key Points

Union Minister of Labour — Mansukh Mandaviya  
and Employment

### Axis Bank Pledges ₹104 Crore to Ashoka University

- Axis Bank has committed ₹104 crore to Ashoka University over the next four years. The funding aims to strengthen the university's PhD and Post-Doctoral programmes while enhancing its research capabilities in Neurosciences, Behavioral Studies and Physics.
- This partnership is expected to create new opportunities for students and researchers while addressing critical global challenges.
- The establishment of research facilities will enable a deeper understanding of critical global issues such as climate change, public health and economic sustainability while driving the discovery of transformative solutions to such issues

#### Key Points

Axis Bank Headquarters — Mumbai, Maharashtra  
MD & CEO — Amitabh Chaudhry

### RBI launches 'Bank.In' & 'Fin.In' for secure digital banking

- In order to bolster trust in digital banking and reduce fraud risks, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said it is

launching exclusive internet domains—‘bank.in’ and ‘fin.in’—for Indian financial institutions.

- The ‘bank.in’ domain will be available exclusively to Indian banks, thereby providing a secure and easily identifiable online presence for these institutions. This move is expected to streamline access to secure financial services and enhance customer confidence in digital banking.
- The Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT) has been designated as the exclusive registrar for these domains, and the actual registrations are set to begin in April 2025.

#### Key Points

RBI's governor	—	Sanjay Malhotra
Headquarters	—	Mumbai, Maharashtra

#### RBI launches ‘RBIDATA’ app to offer access to economic and financial data

- RBI launched a mobile application ‘RBIDATA’ which will provide access to more than 11,000 different series of economic data related to the Indian economy.
- The mobile app offers macroeconomic and financial statistics relating to the Indian economy in a user-friendly and visually engaging format.
- Users will be able to view time series data in graphs/charts and download data for analysis. There will also be details such as data source, unit of measurement, frequency and recent updates.
- Further, the app’s ‘Banking Outlet’ section will help users find banking facilities within 20 kilometres of their location and they can also access data about SAARC countries through the ‘SAARC Finance’.

#### RBI introduces AFA for international transactions

- In a significant move aimed at enhancing the safety of online payments, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced plans to introduce an Additional Factor of Authentication (AFA) for cross-border “Card Not Present” (CNP) transactions.
- This decision will bring international digital transactions using Indian-issued cards under the same security standards that have been applied to domestic transactions.

#### Negotiated Dealing System-Order Matching (NDS-OM) platform launched

- RBI will allow non-bank brokers registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to access the Negotiated Dealing System-Order Matching (NDS-OM) platform.

- The NDS-OM platform, operated by the RBI, is an anonymous order-matching system for secondary market trading in government securities (G-Secs).
- RBI updated the master directions to include details for the stock market connection. Eligible stock brokers wishing to provide access to their clients will need to apply to the RBI. These stock brokers will also need to ensure they have an agreement with a member of the securities settlement segment of the Clearing Corporation of India (CCIL) for transaction settlements.

#### SEBI Launches MITRA Platform

- SEBI has introduced a digital platform that assists investors in tracking inactive and unclaimed mutual fund folios.
- Mutual Fund Investment Tracing and Retrieval Assistant (MITRA) will help with investments that may have been overlooked, lost, or left unclaimed due to outdated Know Your Customer (KYC) details or the demise of the original investor.
- The Registrar and Transfer Agents (RTAs) developed MITRA.

#### Key Points

SEBI's Chairperson	—	Tuhin Kanta Pandey
Headquarters	—	Mumbai, Maharashtra

#### SEBI proposes new guidelines for ESG rating providers

- SEBI proposed new measures to strengthen the regulatory framework for ESG Rating Providers (ERPs), aiming to enhance transparency and accountability.
- The proposals focus on key areas such as the withdrawal of ESG ratings and disclosure of rating rationale.
- ERPs are entities providing environment, social and governance (ESG) ratings. Last year, the market regulator made it mandatory for such entities to register and obtain an ERP license.
- Under the subscriber-pays model, SEBI has proposed that ERPs can withdraw a rating if there are no subscribers for the rating. However, if the rated entity or instrument is part of a rating package (such as the Nifty 50 index) with subscribers, the rating may not be withdrawn. Also, if any rating is withdrawn, the rating has to be withdrawn for all subscribers.

#### Sharan Hegde's 1% Club secures SEBI RIA License

- Sharan Hegde's financial edtech platform, The 1% Club, has secured a Registered Investment Advisor (RIA) licence from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

- With this, The 1% Club has become one of the first influencer-led platforms to secure SEBI's RIA license.
- An RIA licence will give him and his team the right to give investment advice and financial planning services to clients. The startup is managing ₹750 Cr in Assets Under Advisory (AUA).

### **CheQ unveils Wisor: India's first AI-powered credit card expert**

- Indian fintech leader CheQ has unveiled Wisor, India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered credit card expert, designed to turn credit card chaos into clarity.
- Wisor is built on cutting-edge AI, it simplifies the way users handle their credit cards, saving time, maximising value and removing all guesswork.

#### **Key Points**

Founder of CheQ — Aditya Soni

### **Tata Steel develops India's first hydrogen-transport pipes**

- Tata Steel has become the first Indian company to develop pipes designed for transporting hydrogen, marking an important step in India's clean energy efforts.
- The company's hydrogen-compliant API X65 pipes were processed at Tata Steel's Khopoli plant using steel produced at its Kalanganagar facility. The newly developed pipes can transport 100% pure gaseous hydrogen under high pressure (100 bar).
- The hydrogen qualification tests were conducted at RINA-CSM S.p.A in Italy, a recognised agency for hydrogen-related testing and certification.

### **IRDAI introduces Bima-ASBA for UPI-based insurance payments**

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has introduced Bima-ASBA (Applications Supported by Blocked Amount), a payment mechanism to ease premium payments for life and health insurance policies.
- It will allow policyholders to block funds in their bank accounts via the Unified Payments Interface (UPI),

ensuring a smoother transaction process without immediate debits.

- All insurance companies are supposed to offer Bima-ASBA facilities to their prospective and current customers on or before 1 March 2025.
- Bajaj Allianz Life has become the first insurer to go live with the Bima-Application supported by Blocked Amount facility (Bima-ASBA).

#### **Key Points**

IRDAI's Headquarters — Hyderabad, Telangana  
Chairperson — Debasish Panda

### **News in Short**

- Reliance Industries is planning to build the world's largest Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven data centre in Jamnagar, Gujarat to fray into the AI landscape in India.
- Reliance through its FMCG arm, Reliance Consumer Products Ltd (RCPL), has entered into the sports hydration drink segment with the brand 'Spinner', co-created with Sri Lankan cricket icon Muttiah Muralitharan.
- PNB MetLife's life insurance products will become accessible to the public through IPPB's 650 banking outlets, serving more than 110 million customers. The partnership aims to boost life insurance adoption and awareness while offering protection to families in India.
- Tata Elxsi partnered with Garuda Aerospace to develop indigenous drone technologies for Indian defence, agriculture and smart cities.
- RBI will soon issue ₹50 denomination banknotes bearing the signature of Governor Sanjay Malhotra.
- Food aggregator Zomato's board of directors had approved a resolution to officially change the name of the parent company to Eternal Ltd.
- GMR Airports Ltd. has become a member of the United Nations Global Compact, a corporate sustainability initiative.

## **DEFENCE NEWS**

### **Indian Navy Women officers cross Point Nemo**

- Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini, with two women Navy officers, Lt Cdr Dilna K and Lt Cdr Roopa A on board, crossed Point Nemo during its global circumnavigation. The voyage is part of Navika Sagar Parikrama II, an Indian Navy expedition aiming

to complete a double-handed circumnavigation of the world via the three Great Capes.

- Tarini began its journey from Goa on 2 October 2024. It reached Lyttelton Port in New Zealand on 22 December, completing the second leg of the expedition. The crew departed from Lyttelton earlier this month for the

longest stretch of the journey, heading to Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands. The distance of this leg is about 5,600 nautical miles.

- Point Nemo, located in the Pacific Ocean, is the most isolated spot on Earth, over 1,600 miles from the nearest land. The point is positioned between New Zealand and Antarctica and is officially known as the Oceanic Pole of Inaccessibility, Point Nemo was identified in 1992 by Hrvoje Lukatela, a Canadian-Russian engineer. It is so remote that astronauts on the International Space Station are often the closest humans.

#### Key Points

Chief of Naval Staff — Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi

#### MoD, BEL sign contract for software-defined radios

- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed a contract with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Bengaluru for the procurement of 149 Software Defined Radios for the Indian Coast Guard at a total cost of ₹1220.12 crore under Buy (Indian-IDD) category
- These state-of-the-art radios will enable secure and reliable information sharing, collaboration and situational awareness through high-speed data and secure voice communication. The project is a strategic step towards bolstering the Coast Guard's operational capabilities and supporting the Government of India's Blue Economy objectives by reinforcing maritime security.

#### Key Points

Union Defence Minister — Rajnath Singh  
Chief of Defence Staff — General Anil Chauhan  
BEL's headquarters — Bengaluru

#### India successfully tests Very Short-Range Air Defence missile System (VSHORADS)

- India successfully conducted three consecutive flight trials of the Very Short-Range Air Defence missile System (VSHORADS) from Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.
- VSHORADS is an indigenously designed and developed man-portable air defence system. It is intended to meet the air defence requirements of all three branches of the Indian Armed Forces: the Army, Navy and Air Force.
- The tests validated VSHORADS' ability to effectively neutralise drones and other aerial threats.

- It was developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

#### Key Points

DRDO's headquarters — New Delhi  
Chairman — Samir V. Kamat

#### DRDO and MIDHANI sign MoU for special-grade steel for aeronautical applications

- Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), a leading lab of DRDO, and public sector undertaking MIDHANI have entered into an MoU for indigenous development of high strength high toughness special grade steel "MDN100" for aeronautical applications including in the development of fifth-generation Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA).
- The steel has good forgeability and could be used for highly stressed aircraft parts for weight-saving benefits. ADA, the nodal organisation for combat aircraft development in the country, is developing AMCA.

#### Key Points

MIDHANI's Chairman — Gowri Sankara Rao  
and MD — Naramsetti  
Headquarters — Hyderabad

#### Fort William renamed 'Vijay Durg'

- In a major move to remove colonial imprints, the Army has renamed Kolkata's Fort William, the headquarters of its Eastern Command, as 'Vijay Durg'.
- The historic Fort William was built by the British in 1781 and was named after King William III of England.
- The renaming to 'Vijay Durg' pays homage to the oldest fort on Maharashtra's Sindhudurg coast, which served as a naval base of the Marathas during Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's reign.

#### Key Points

Chief of the Army Staff — General Upendra Dwivedi

#### ITBP establishes a new Company Operative Base in Chhattisgarh

- The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has established a new Company Operative Base (COB) in Kutul, located in Chhattisgarh's Abhujmahad region, known as the capital of Naxals.

- The establishment of the new COB aims to reduce and control Naxalite activities in the highly Naxal-prone Abhujmad—also referred to as Abujmarh or Abujmarh—a hilly and forested region in Chhattisgarh. This remote and largely unexplored area covers parts of Narayanpur, Bijapur and Dantewada districts.

#### Key Points

Director General ITBP — Rahul Rasgotra  
Headquarters — New Delhi

#### Ministry of Defence signs contracts worth ₹10,147 crore to enhance Indian Army's firepower with PINAKA system

- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed defence contracts aimed at modernising the Indian Army's firepower.
- These contracts, totalling a value of ₹10,147 crore, involve Economic Explosive Limited (EEL), Munitions India Limited (MIL) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL). The deals cover the procurement of advanced rockets for the PINAKA Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) and upgrades to the SHAKTI Software, reinforcing India's defence capabilities and self-reliance.
- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) developed the PINAKA rocket system and it was initially deployed during the 1999 Kargil War. The guided version of the PINAKA further enhances its precision, allowing for accurate targeting of enemy positions.
- DRDO's future plans include increasing its range beyond 120 km, with projections reaching up to 200 km.

#### News in Short

- In FY 2023–24, India's domestic defence production reached ₹1.27 lakh crore, marking a record high, with an impressive increase of approximately 174% from ₹46,429 crore in 2014–15.

#### Successful test of Matsya-6000

- Matsya-6000, the submersible vehicle set to transport three Indians into the deep sea in 2026, has completed wet tests and facilitated multiple manned dives in the Bay of Bengal.
- Matsya-6000 has been designed and developed by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai, under Samudrayaan. Samudrayaan is India's manned deep ocean mission envisioned for deep sea mineral exploration.
- This submersible will be equipped with high-end instruments, oceanographic sensors and equipment essential for performing exploration of rare earth minerals, nickel, cobalt, manganese and a host of other under-sea minerals off the Indian coasts.

#### MOD releases first edition of bi-annual Hindi magazine 'Sashakt Bharat'

- Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh released the first edition of Ministry of Defence's bi-annual Hindi magazine 'Sashakt Bharat'.
- The magazine comprises poems on the valour, patriotism and sacrifices of the Armed Forces personnel as well as articles on the policies of the government written by the personnel of the Ministry, irrespective of their ranks, showcasing inclusivity and unity in diversity.
- The objective of 'Sashakt Bharat' magazine is to highlight the creative talent of the employees of MoD and encourage them to carry out their day-to-day activities in Hindi.

Name of the Exercise	Countries/Entities	Region/Place
TROPEX-25 (Theatre Level Operational Exercise)	Indian Navy along with the substantial participation of Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Coast Guard assets	Indian Ocean Region (IOR)
CYCLONE 2025	India and Egypt Joint Military Exercise	Mahajan Field Firing Range, Rajasthan
Exercise Komodo	Multilateral exercise with more than 15 countries. Russia, China, India and the US	Theme – Maritime Partnership for Peace and Stability
Ekuverin	India and Maldives Joint military Exercise	Maafilaafushi, Maldives
Winged Raider	Indian Army and Indian Air Force	Eastern Theater, India

### APPOINTMENTS

Name	Designation
Salila Pande	MD & CEO, SBI Cards
Dr. Madhavankutty G	Chief Economist, Canara Bank
Maimun Alam	Director in the Ministry of Steel under the Central Staffing Scheme
K Balasubramanian	Sub-Cluster and Banking Head for Citibank, India Subcontinent
Gopal Vittal	Acting Chair of the GSMA Board
Gyanesh Kumar	Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), India
Prabdev (P.D.) Singh	CEO of India and South Asia, Standard Chartered Bank
Vivek Joshi	Election Commissioner of India
V Anantha Nageswaran	Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) of India
Rekha Gupta	Ninth Chief Minister of Delhi
Shaktikanta Das	Principal Secretary-2 to Prime Minister Narendra Modi
Sabyasachi Kar	Director of Institute of Economic Growth
Justin Hotard	CEO of Nokia
Bart De Wever	Prime Minister of Belgium
Jotham Napat	Prime Minister of Vanuatu
Tshego Gaelae	First black woman to be crowned Mrs World 2025
Tulsi Gabbard	Director of National Intelligence (DNI)
Ilie Bolojan	Interim President of Romania
Kash Patel	Ninth Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
Constantine Tassoulas	President of Greece

### BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Books	Authors
Soumitra Chatterjee and His World	Sanghamitra Chakraborty
Indian Renaissance: The Modi Decade	Edited by Dr Aishwarya Pandit
The New Icon: Savarkar and the Facts	Arun Shourie
Life on Mars: Collected Stories	Namita Gokhale
I Am?	Gopichand P Hinduja
I Am a Soldier's Wife	Geetika Lidder

### OBITUARIES (NATIONAL)

Name	Occupation
Latika Katt	Sculptor
Sukri Bommagowda	Renowned folk singer of Karnataka's Halakki Vokkaliga community
Milind Rege	Former Mumbai cricket captain

Navin Chawla	Former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India
Shyam Benegal	Indian film director, screenwriter and documentary filmmaker
C Krishnaveni	Renowned Telugu actor and producer
Mayadhar Raut	Odissi Dancer
Pratul Mukhopadhyay	Noted Bengali Vocalist
Acharya Satyendra Das	Chief Priest of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple

### OBITUARIES (INTERNATIONAL)

Sam Nujoma	First President, Namibia
Greg Bell	Oldest living Olympic gold medallist in athletics
Gyalo Thondup	Elder brother of the Dalai Lama and a key figure in Tibetan politics
Horst Koehler	Ex-President of Germany and chief of IMF (International Monetary Fund)
Aga Khan	Spiritual Leader
Brian Murphy	British Actor

### DAYS AND THEMES

Date	Day	Theme
February 1	Indian Coast Guard Day	
February 2	World Wetlands Day	Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future
February 2	Rheumatoid Arthritis Awareness Day	
February 2–8	International Development Week	Building a Better World Together
February 4	World Cancer Day	United by Unique
February 6	International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	Stepping Up the Pace: Strengthening Alliances and Building Movements to End FGM
February 10	International Epilepsy Day	My Epilepsy Journey
February 10	International Day of the Arabian Leopard	
February 10	World Pulses Day	Theme – Pulses: Bringing diversity to agrifood system Slogan – Love pulses for a healthy diet and plane
February 11	Safer Internet Day	
February 11	International Day of Women and Girls in Science	Unpacking STEM Careers: Her Voice in Science
February 12	International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and When Conducive to Terrorism	
February 12	National Productivity Day	From Ideas to Impact: Protecting Intellectual Property for Competitive Startups

February 13	World Radio Day	Radio and Climate Change
February 15	International Childhood Cancer Day	Inspiring Action
February 15	World Pangolin Day	
February 20	World Anthropology Day	
February 20	World Day of Social Justice	
February 21	International Mother Language Day	Silver Jubilee Celebration of International Mother Language Day
February 22	World Thinking Day	Our Story
February 23	World Peace and Understanding Day	
February 24	Central Excise Day	Streamlining Tax Administration for a Vibrant Economy
February 27	World Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Day	Empowering Grassroots Movements for a Sustainable Future
February 28	National Science Day	Empowering Indian Youth for Global Leadership in Science and Innovation for VIKSIT Bharat
February 28	Rare Science Day	More than you can imagine; an anthology of rare experiences

## REPORTS, RANKINGS AND INDEX

### Devolution Index Report

- Union Minister of State, Prof S. P. Singh Baghel, Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying unveiled the report titled "Status of Devolution to Panchayats in States – An Indicative Evidence Based Ranking".
- States/UTs were ranked according to the overall Panchayat devolution index. The index presents the overall scores and ranks for States/UTs on six identified dimensions – Framework, Functions, Finances, Functionaries, Capacity Enhancement and Accountability.
- The devolution has increased from 39.9% to 43.9% between the period 2013–14 and 2021–22.
- The top three states in the Panchayat Devolution Index are Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

### Corruption Perceptions Index 2024

- India ranked 96 out of 180 countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2024 as its overall score dropped a point to 38.

- For the seventh year in a row, Denmark obtains the highest score on the index (90) and is closely followed by Finland (88) and Singapore (84).
- The CPI ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). Transparency International released CPI.
- The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and business people, uses a scale of zero to 100, where "zero" is highly corrupt and "100" is very clean.

### World Reputation Rankings 2025

- The Times Higher Education released the World Reputation Rankings, which evaluate universities based on their global academic prestige.
- This year's ranking uses a methodology that includes six key measures, namely research vote count, teaching vote count, research pairwise comparison, teaching pairwise comparison, research voter diversity and teaching voter diversity.



- This marks the 14th consecutive year that Harvard University continues to hold the top spot in the World Reputation Rankings 2025. The University of Oxford and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) jointly share the second spot. Oxford University is the highest-ranked UK institution in the top seven list, while the rest are US universities.
- Bengaluru's Indian Institute of Science (IISc) slipped to the 201-300 band from 101-125 ranking in 2023.
- IIT Delhi and IIT Madras also slipped ranks, joining IISc's 201-300 band. IIT Delhi slipped from 151-175 band to 201-300, while IIT Madras dropped to 201-300 band from 176-200.
- IIT Bombay did not find a place in the list while in the previous year it appeared in 151-175 rankings.
- Shiksha 'O' Anusandhan, which is a private deemed-to-be university located in Odisha's Bhubaneswar, is the new entrant in the list, securing a spot in the 201-300 band.

#### India Gas Market Report: Outlook to 203

- Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) released the report titled "India Gas Market Report: Outlook to 203".
- The report stated that India's natural gas consumption is expected to see a significant jump by the end of this decade, which in turn is set to lead to a surge in the country's Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) imports.
- According to IEA's estimates, India's gas consumption is seen rising nearly 60% over to 2023 levels to 103 billion cubic metres (bcm), while LNG imports are set to more than double between 2023 and 2030 to 65 bcm a year, driven by steady demand growth and a much slower rise in domestic production.

#### Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2025

- The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) released the 2025 SDG Progress Report.
- The region recorded progress in some areas, such as in Goal 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and Goal 3 (health and well-being), with progress driven by expanded access to mobile networks and remarkable improvements in maternal, infant and child health.
- The report states that responsible consumption and production (Goal 12), quality education (Goal 4) and decent work and economic growth (Goal 8) are severely off track.
- Of most concern, climate action (Goal 13) witnessed an "alarming regression", driven by the region's

vulnerability to disasters and continued GreenHouse Gas (GHG) emissions, which account for half of global pollution.

- Environmental sustainability remained a major roadblock, with land degradation and declining economic benefits from sustainable fisheries hampering progress on life below water (Goal 14) and life on land (Goal 15).

#### Super Swachh League

- Indore has distinguished itself by winning the overall cleanest city award for seven consecutive years and is featured in this edition as well, along with Surat and Navi Mumbai, in the 'Million Plus Cities (10 Lakh population)' category.
- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) introduced a separate category for the annual Swachh Survekshan Awards—"Super Swachh League". The cities that have claimed the title will now compete with each other in the newly launched category. The aim is to encourage other cities to make efforts to achieve the coveted recognition.
- The cities have been classified into five different groups based on their population for the first time. Each category—"Very Small (populations of less than 20,000)", "Small (populations ranging from 20,000 to 50,000)", "Medium (populations ranging from 50,000 to 3 lakh)", "Big (populations ranging from 3 lakh to 10 lakh)", and "Million-Plus (populations of 10 lakh or more)"—will be assessed based on population and parameters tailored to each city's specific size and needs. Awards will be given to the cleanest cities in each category. This makes the new Swachh Survekshan more inclusive.

#### India's suicide death rate drops 30% from 1990 to 2021

- According to the findings of a study published in The Lancet Public Health, there has been a notable 30% decline in India's suicide death rate from 1990 to 2021.
- In 1990, India's suicide death rate was recorded at 18.9 per 1,00,000 population. By 2019, this figure had decreased to 13.1 per 1,00,000 and by 2021, it further dropped to 13 per 1,00,000 population. This represents an overall reduction of 31.5% over three decades.
- In 1990, the suicide death rate among females was 16.8 per 1,00,000 population, which fell to 10.3 per 1,00,000 by 2021. Meanwhile, the male suicide death rate was higher at 20.9 per 1,00,000 in 1990, decreasing to 15.7 per 1,00,000 in 2021.

## EVENTS

### **BIMSTEC Youth Summit 2025**

- The first-ever Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Youth Summit 2025 was inaugurated in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- It was organised on the theme 'Youth as a Bridge for Intra-BIMSTEC Exchange.'
- BIMSTEC countries include India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan.

### **BHARAT TEX 2025**

- Bharat Tex 2025, India's largest global textile event, was successfully organised from 14 to 17 February 2025, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- The event spanned 2.2 million square feet and featured over 5,000 exhibitors, providing a comprehensive showcase of India's textile ecosystem. More than 1,20,000 trade visitors, from 120+ countries including global CEOs, policymakers and industry leaders, attended the event.
- Bharat Tex 2025 served as a platform to accelerate the government's "Farm to Fibre, Fabric, Fashion, and Foreign Markets" vision.

### **SILKTECH 2025**

- SILKTECH 2025 was organised as a part of the mega textile event – Bharat Tex 2025, and was held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- It was organised by the CSB-Central Tasar Research & Training Institute, Ranchi & CSB-Central Silk Technological Research Institute (CSTRI) under the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.

### **Indian Ocean Conference 2025**

- The eighth Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) was held in Muscat, Oman with the theme 'Voyage to New Horizons of Maritime Partnership'.
- India Foundation organised the event in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Oman.
- India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar represented India in the conference.

### **Mising tribe celebrates Ali Ai Ligang festival**

- The Mising tribe, Assam's largest tribal community, celebrated Ali Ai Ligang in Shankarpur, Jorhat, on the first Wednesday of the Fagun month.

- It marks the beginning of the sowing season and is deeply rooted in the agricultural traditions of the Mising people.

### **14th Asian Fisheries and Aquaculture Forum**

- India hosted the 14th Asian Fisheries and Aquaculture Forum (14AFAP) in New Delhi. It is a scientific forum organised by the Asian Fisheries Society (AFS) once every three years to understand global trends and address issues and challenges faced by the fisheries and aquaculture sector.
- The forum provides an international platform for eminent scientists, young researchers and other stakeholders across the globe to share their research experiences and innovative ideas.
- It was organised on the theme 'Greening the Blue Growth in Asia-Pacific' and aimed to address key issues towards developing sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.

### **World Government Summit 2025**

- The World Governments Summit 2025 was held in Dubai, UAE and was convened under the theme 'Shaping Future Governments.'
- This Summit brought together governments, international organisations, thought leaders and private sector leaders from around the globe to foster international cooperation and identify innovative solutions for future challenges, ultimately inspiring and empowering the next generation of governments.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Summit 2025**

- On 10 and 11 February 2025, Paris became the artificial intelligence (AI) capital of the world on the occasion of the AI Action Summit.
- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi co-chaired the AI Action Summit along with the President of France, H.E. Mr. Emmanuel Macron in Paris.
- This event brought together heads of State and Government, international organisations and companies of all sizes, representatives from academia, researchers, non-governmental organisations, artists and other members of civil society from across the globe.
- The summit featured discussions on critical themes, including greater access to AI infrastructure to ensure

inclusion, the responsible use of AI, AI for public interest, making AI more diverse and sustainable and ensuring safe and trusted governance of AI.

### Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs hosts “Culinary, Crafts & Clicks – Moods & Magic” Festival

- The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) hosted the “Culinary, Crafts & Clicks – Moods & Magic”, a Festival of Street Food & Handicraft at Amrit Udyan, Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.
- This initiative celebrated India’s diverse street food and handicraft, offering self-help groups (SHGs) from across India and street food vendors, a platform to enhance their reach and integrate into mainstream markets.

### News in Short

- The first Raisina Middle East Conference was held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) capital city, Abu Dhabi.
- Droupadi Murmu, the President of India, inaugurated the National Tribal Festival ‘Aadi Mahotsav’ at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi.
- NITI Aayog organised a conclave titled “Towards Viksit Bharat @ 2047: Strengthening Economy, National Security, Global Partnerships, and Law” at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan, New Delhi.
- India hosted the first-ever Regional Dialogue on Social Justice on 24–25 February 2025 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.
- The third edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS 3.0), a cultural confluence between Tamil Nadu and Kashi, is being held in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

## AWARDS

### 67th Grammy Awards 2025

- The 67th Annual Grammy Awards was held in Los Angeles, United States and was hosted by Trevor Noah. These awards were organised by the Recording Academy.
- Beyoncé took home a total of three Grammys out of 11 nominations. She also made history as the first Black artist to win Best Country Album, further solidifying her influence across multiple genres.
- Indian–American vocalist and entrepreneur Chandrika Tandon has won the Grammy award for the album Triveni in the Best New Age, Ambient or Chant Album category.

The awards are as follows:

- Best Rap Album – Alligator Bites Never Heal by DoeChii
- Best Pop Vocal Album – Sabrina Carpenter, Short and Sweet
- Best Country Album – Cowboy Carter, Beyonce
- Best New Artist – Chappelle Roan
- Best Latin Pop Album – ‘Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran’ by Shakira
- Best Pop Duo/ Group Performance – Bruno Mars and Lady Gaga for Die With A Smile
- Record of the Year – Not Like Us, Kendrick Lamar
- Song of the Year – Kendrick Lamar’s Not Like Us
- Album of the Year – Cowboy Carter, Beyonce
- Best Pop Solo Performance – “Espresso”, Sabrina Carpenter

- Best Dance/Electronic Recording – “Neverender”, Justice and Tame Impala
- Best Pop Dance Recording – “Von dutch”, Charli xcx
- Best Rap Song – “Not Like Us”, Kendrick Lamar, songwriter (Kendrick Lamar)
- Best Rap Performance – “Not Like Us”, Kendrick Lamar
- Best Melodic Rap Performance – “3” Rapsody featuring Erykah Badu
- Best R&B Performance – “Made For Me (Live on BET)” Muni Long
- Best R&B Album – “11:11 (Deluxe)”, Chris Brown
- Best Traditional R&B Performance – “That’s You”, Lucky Daye
- Best R&B Song – “Saturn”, Rob Bisel, Carter Lang, Solana Rowe, Jared Solomon and Scott Zhang, songwriters (SZA)
- Best Progressive R&B Album – “Why Lawd?”, NxWorries (Anderson, Paak & Knowledge)
- Best Dance Electronic Album – “BRAT”, Charli xcx
- Best Rock Performance – “Now and Then”, the Beatles
- Best Rock Album – “Hackney Diamonds”, the Rolling Stones
- Best Remixed Recording – “Espresso (Mark Ronson x FNZ Working Late Remix)”, FNZ and Mark Ronson, remixers (Sabrina Carpenter)
- Best Americana Performance – “American Dreaming”, Sierra Ferrell

- Best American Roots Song – “American Dreaming”, Sierra Ferrell and Melody Walker, songwriters
  - Best Americana Album – “Trail of Flowers”, Sierra Ferrell
  - Best Bluegrass Album – “Live Vol 1”, Billy Strings
  - Best Folk Album – “Woodland”, Gillian Welch and David Rawlings
  - Best Regional Roots Music Album – “Kuini”, Kalani Pe’a
  - Best Gospel Performance/Song – “One Hallelujah”, Tasha Cobbs Leonard, Erica Campbell and Israel Houghton, featuring Jonathan McReynolds and Jekalyn Carr. G. Morris Coleman, Israel Houghton, Kenneth Leonard Jr., Tasha Cobbs Leonard and Naomi Raine, songwriters.
  - Best Contemporary Christian Music Performance/Song – “That’s My King”, CeCe Winans, Taylor Agan, Kellie Gamble, Lloyd Nicks and Jess Russ, songwriters
  - Best Gospel Album – “More Than This”, CeCe Winans
  - Best Contemporary Christian Music Artist – “Heart of a Human”, DOE
  - Best Roots Gospel Album – “Church”, Cory Henry
  - Best Country Solo Performance – “It Takes A Woman”, Chris Stapleton
  - Best Country Duo/Group Performance – “II MOST WANTED”, Beyoncé, featuring Miley Cyrus
  - Best Country Song – “The Architect”, Shane McAnally, Kacey Musgraves and Josh Osborne, songwriters (Kacey Musgraves)
  - Best Music Video – “American Symphony”
  - Best American Roots Performance – “Lighthouse”, Sierra Ferrell
  - Best Traditional Blues Album – “Swingin’ Live at The Church in Tulsa”, The Taj Mahal Sextet
  - Best Contemporary Blues Album – “Mileage”, Ruthie Foster
  - Best Música Urbana Album – “Las Letras Ya No Importan”, Residente
  - Best Latin Rock or Alternative Album – “Quien Trae las Cornetas?”, Rawayana
  - Best Música Mexicana Album (including Tejano) – “Boca Chueca, Vol. 1”, Carin León
  - Best Tropical Latin Album – “Alma, Corazon y Salsa (Live at Gran Teatro Nacional)”, Tony Succar, Mimy Succar
  - Best Reggae Album – “Bob Marley: One Love – Music Inspired By The Film (Deluxe)”, Various Artists
  - Best Global Music Performance – “Bemba Colora”, Sheila E. featuring Gloria Estefan and Mimy Succar
  - Best African Music Performance – “Love Me JeJe”, Tems
  - Best Jazz Vocal Album – “A Joyful Holiday”, Samara Joy
  - Songwriter Of The Year, non-classical – Amy Allen
  - Producer of the year, non-classical – Daniel Nigro
  - Producer of the year, classical – Elaine Martone
  - Best Score Soundtrack for Visual Media – Hans Zimmer, “Dune: Part II”
  - BEST COMEDY ALBUM – “Dreamer”, Dave Chappelle
- 78th BAFTA (British Academy Film Awards) 2025**
- The 2025 BAFTA Film Awards, the UK’s top movie honours, were presented at a ceremony in London, United Kingdom. It was hosted by David Tennant.
  - The movie Conclave had the maximum nominations of 12, and most of the awards were won by the Brutalist and Conclave, with four each.
  - Best Film: Conclave
  - Best Director: Brady Corbet (The Brutalist)
  - Best Actor in a Leading Role: Adrien Brody (The Brutalist)
  - Best Actress in a Leading Role: Mikey Madison (Anora)
  - Best Actor in a Supporting Role: Kieran Culkin (A Real Pain)
  - Best Actress in a Supporting Role: Zoe Saldaña (Emilia Pérez)
  - Best Original Screenplay: Jesse Eisenberg (A Real Pain)
  - Best Adapted Screenplay: Peter Straughan (Conclave)
  - Best Animated Film: Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl
  - Best Documentary: Super/Man: The Christopher Reeve Story
  - Best Film Not in the English Language: Emilia Pérez
  - Best Casting: Anora
  - Best Cinematography: The Brutalist
  - Best Costume Design: Wicked
  - Best Editing: Conclave
  - Best Make Up & Hair: The Substance
  - Best Original Score: The Brutalist
  - Best Production Design: Wicked
  - Best Sound: Dune: Part Two
  - Best Special Visual Effects: Dune: Part Two
  - Outstanding British Film: Conclave
  - Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or

Producer: Kneecap

- Best British Short Animation: Wander to Wonder
- Best British Short Film: Rock, Paper, Scissors

### **Chaman Arora awarded Sahitya Akademi Award 2024 in Dogri**

- Late Chaman Arora will be awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award 2024 in Dogri for 'Ik Hor Ashwthama' (Short Stories) posthumously.
- The award will be in the form of a casket containing an engraved copper plaque and a payment of ₹1,00,000 will be presented to the family member/nominee of the awardee.

### **Manohar International Airport, Mopa wins the prestigious 'Sarvashrestha Suraksha Puraskar'**

- Manohar International Airport (GOX), developed and operated by GMR Goa International Airport Ltd. (GGIAL) became the first airport ever in India to receive the prestigious "Sarvashrestha Suraksha Puraskar (GOLDEN TROPHY)" at National Safety Council of India (NSCI) Safety Awards 2024 under 'Service Sector'.
- The airport was evaluated on its safety performance, safety statistics, safety commitments, safety awareness, training & promotional activities and innovations on the ground.
- NSCI works under the Ministry of Labour.

### **Aero club of France honours Tom Cruise**

- Hollywood star Tom Cruise was honoured with the Grande Medaille of the Aero-Club de France for his "significant contribution to aviation history".
- The medal is the highest distinction from the institution. The Grande Medaille was created in 1898.
- Tom Cruise was awarded the US Navy's highest civilian honour for his "outstanding contributions to the Navy and the Marine Corps" through the Top Gun series and other films.

### **Varsha Bharath's movie 'Bad Girl' wins NETPAC Award at IFFR**

- 'Bad Girl' has won the NETPAC Award (Network for the promotion of Asian Cinema) at the IFFR 2025. Incidentally, the last Tamil film to win this prestigious honour was Arun Karthick's Nasir (2019).
- Other Indian films that have received this honour include Mani Kaul's Naukar ki Kameez (1999) and Adoor Gopalakrishnan's Vidheyan (1995).

### **Purnima Devi Barman named in Time's Women of the year list**

- Purnima Devi Barman, a renowned biologist and wildlife conservationist, has been named among Time Magazine's Women of the Year 2025.
- Barman was featured as a conservationist for saving one of the world's most endangered storks.
- She is the only Indian woman to feature in this year's list that honours 'extraordinary leaders' working towards a better, more equal world, alongside 12 other global honorees.
- Barman is also the Director of Women in Nature Network (WiNN) India and a member of the IUCN Stork, Ibis and Spoonbill Specialist Group.

### **Indian students win bronze at Global M-Gov Awards 2025**

- Sagar Teotia (team lead), Abhinav Mishra and Anushka Singh from the Maharaja Agrasen Institute of Technology, New Delhi won the Bronze Award at the Global Best M-Gov Award 2025 during the World Government Summit (WGS) in Dubai.
- They were recognised for their application AccessWay, an AI-powered platform that integrates augmented reality (AR), artificial intelligence and crowdsourced data to provide accessible navigation, social connections and emergency tools for individuals with disabilities.
- The award, along with a cash prize of \$10,000, was presented by Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President of the United Arab Emirates, during the opening day of the summit.

### **News in Short**

- Sunil Bharti Mittal, founder and chairman of Bharti Enterprises, received the insignia of the Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE) medal.
- Chairperson and founder of Reliance Foundation, Nita Mukesh Ambani, was conferred with the prestigious Governor's Citation by the honourable Maura Healey, Governor of Massachusetts, recognising her as a compassionate philanthropist, visionary leader and true global changemaker.
- NTPC Ltd., India's largest integrated power utility, has received the prestigious Forward Faster Sustainability Award 2025 in the Water Resilience category.
- The Nagaland Forest Management Project (NFMP) was honoured with the SKOCH Award 2024 at the 100th SKOCH Summit, held at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

## SPORTS NEWS

### BCCI Annual Awards 2025

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced its annual Naman Awards in a ceremony in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Award for Highest Wickets in One Day Internationals (Women) – Deepti Sharma
- Award for Highest Runs in One Day Internationals (Women) – Smriti Mandhana
- Best International Debut (Women) – Asha Sobhna
- Best International Debut (Men) – Sarfaraz Khan
- Best International Cricketer (Women) – Smriti Mandhana
- Polly Umrigar Award for Best International Cricketer (Men) – Jasprit Bumrah
- BCCI Special Award – Ravichandran Ashwin
- Col. CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award – Sachin Tendulkar
- Best Performance in BCCI Domestic Tournaments – Mumbai Cricket Association
- Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy for Best Woman Cricketer (Junior Domestic) – Ishwari Awasare (Maharashtra)
- Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy for Best Woman Cricketer (Senior Domestic) – Priya Mishra (Delhi)
- Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy for Highest Wicket-Taker in U16 Vijay Merchant Trophy – Hemchudeshan Jeganathan (Tamil Nadu)
- Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy for Highest Run Getter in U16 Vijay Merchant Trophy – Lakshya Raichandani (Uttarakhand)
- M.A. Chidambaram Trophy for Highest Wicket-Taker in U19 Cooch Behar Trophy – Vishnu Bhardwaj (Madhya Pradesh)
- M.A. Chidambaram Trophy for Highest Run Getter in U19 Cooch Behar Trophy – Kavya Teotia (Uttar Pradesh)
- M.A. Chidambaram Trophy for Highest Wicket-Taker in U23 CK Nayudu Trophy (Plate Group) – Neizekho Rupreo (Nagaland)
- M.A. Chidambaram Trophy for Highest Run Getter in U23 CK Nayudu Trophy (Plate Group) – Hem Chetri (Nagaland)
- M.A. Chidambaram Trophy for Highest Wicket-Taker in U23 CK Nayudu Trophy (Elite Group) – P. Vidyuth (Tamil Nadu)

- M.A. Chidambaram Trophy for Highest Run Getter in U23 CK Nayudu Trophy (Elite Group) – Aneesh KV (Karnataka)
- Madhavrao Scindia Award for Highest Wicket-Taker in Ranji Trophy (Plate Group) – Mohit Jangra (Mizoram)
- Madhavrao Scindia Award for Highest Wicket-Taker in Ranji Trophy (Elite Group) – Tanay Thyagarajan (Hyderabad)
- Madhavrao Scindia Award for Highest Run Getter in Ranji Trophy (Plate Group) – Agni Chopra (Mizoram)
- Madhavrao Scindia Award for Highest Run Getter in Ranji Trophy (Elite Group) – Ricky Bhui (Andhra Pradesh)
- Lala Amarnath Award for The Best All-Rounder in Domestic Limited-Overs Competitions – Shashank Singh (Chhattisgarh)
- Lala Amarnath Award for The Best All-Rounder in Ranji Trophy – Tanush Kotian (Mumbai)
- Best Umpire in Domestic Cricket – Akshay Totre

### Sportstar Aces Awards 2025

- The seventh edition of the prestigious Sportstar Aces Awards was held in Mumbai at the Taj Mahal Palace.
- Sportstar of the Year (Male) – PR Sreejesh
- Sportstar of the Year (Female) – Manu Bhaker
- Sportsman of the Year (Olympic Sports) – Aman Sehrawat, Swapnil Kusale and Sarabjot Singh
- Sportswoman of the Year (Olympic Sports) – Manu Bhaker
- National Team of the Year – Indian Chess Men's and Women's Teams
- Club/State Team of the Year – Mumbai Ranji Team
- Coach of the Year – Jaspal Rana
- Paralympic Gold Medallists Tribute – Avani Lekhra, Navdeep Singh and Harvinder Singh
- Inspiration Icon Award – PV Sindhu
- Lifetime Achievement Awards – Gurbux Singh and Mary D'Souza Sequeira
- Sportswoman of the Year (Non-Olympic Sport) – Divya Deshmukh
- Sportswoman of the Year (Para Sport) – Avani Lekhra
- Young Achiever Award (Male) – Parth Mane
- Young Achiever Award (Female) – Neha Sangwan
- Special Recognition Game Changer Award – Jay Shah

- Chairperson's Choice (Sports for social good) – Downtown Heroes FC
- Best University for promotion of Sport – Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology
- Best PSU for promotion of Sport – Railway Sports Promotion Board
- Best Corporate for promotion of Sport – Reliance Industries
- Best State for promotion of Sport – Madhya Pradesh
- Moment of the Year: Suryakumar Yadav's T20 World Cup final catch

#### **Mohammed Shami joins the list of bowlers with 200 ODI wickets**

- Indian pacer Mohammed Shami etched his name in history by becoming the fastest Indian bowler to reach 200 ODI wickets in 104 matches. He achieved this feat during the India vs Bangladesh clash in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 in Dubai.
- Shami is the eighth Indian player to reach this milestone. Ravindra Jadeja, with 224 wickets under his belt, is the only active Indian cricketer ahead of him on the list.
- Shami is 43rd on the list of players with the most ODI wickets overall. Sri Lankan legend M Muralidaran leads the list with 534 wickets, while Anil Kumble, with 334 wickets, is the highest-ranked Indian player.

#### **Rohit Sharma becomes the second fastest player to reach 11,000 ODI runs**

- Rohit Sharma became the second-fastest player in the world after Virat Kohli to reach 11000 ODI runs.
- He also became the fourth Indian after Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and Virat Kohli to reach this coveted milestone.
- While Virat Kohli had reached the milestone in 222 innings, Rohit Sharma took 261 innings, followed by Sachin Tendulkar (276), Ricky Ponting (286) and Sourav Ganguly (288).
- Notably, Rohit Sharma's 11000 runs came in 11868 balls. Only Virat Kohli (11831) has reached 11k runs quicker than Rohit Sharma.
- Rohit Sharma is also second in the list of hitting most sixes with 338 hits over the fence behind Pakistan's Shahid Afridi (351).

#### **Mumbai Open 2025**

- Jil Teichmann defeated Mananchaya Sawangkaew to claim the coveted Mumbai Open 2025 WTA 125 series singles title in fine style.

- In the doubles final, Amina Anshba and Elena Pridankina of Russia won over Prarthana Thombare and Arianne Hartono of India.
- The winner of the singles title won 125 ranking points and a reward of USD 15,500 while the doubles champions have won 125 ranking points and a reward of USD 5,700.

#### **Kyrian Jacquet clinches Chennai Open Title 2025**

- French tennis player Kyrian Jacquet beat Elias Ymer of Sweden in the final to clinch the 2025 Chennai Open ATP Challenger title.
- The Chennai Open was an ATP 100 Challenger event held at the SDAT Tennis Stadium, Nungambakkam, Tamil Nadu.

#### **Manu Bhaker wins BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2024**

- Indian shooter Manu Bhaker was honoured as the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year following a remarkable campaign at the Paris Olympics 2024, where she secured two historic bronze medals.
- She is the first Indian female shooter to win multiple medals at a single Olympic Games.

#### **Indian Super League (ISL)**

- Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG) etched their name in Indian Super League (ISL) history by becoming the first team to retain the League Shield.
- They defeated Odisha FC 1-0 to win the ISL shield for the second successive season.

#### **ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup Final**

- India won the Women's ICC U19 T20 World Cup by defeating South Africa by nine wickets.
- This is also the second time India became U-19 World Cup champions against South Africa in Malaysia.
- The final was held at the Bayuemas Oval in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

#### **Virat Kohli becomes the fastest to reach 14,000 runs in ODIs**

- Virat Kohli has become the fastest batter to breach the 14,000-run milestone in ODIs. He achieved this feat during the India vs Pakistan match in the Champions Trophy.
- He surpassed Sachin Tendulkar (350 innings), by achieving the feat in only 287 innings.

- Kohli is only the third batter ever to reach the milestone after Tendulkar and Sri Lanka's Kumar Sangakkara who crossed the milestone in 378 innings in 2015.
- In September 2023, Kohli reached his 13,000th ODI run, incidentally while playing Pakistan in the Asia Cup in Colombo.

#### **Varun Chakravarthy becomes the second oldest cricketer to make an ODI debut**

- Varun, 33 years and 164 days old, became India's second-oldest debutant in ODIs behind legendary wicketkeeper Farokh Engineer, who had made his debut in 1974 at the age of 36 years and 138 days.
- Varun has steadily risen in the 50-over format and was the best spinner in the recently concluded Vijay Hazare Trophy, India's premier 50-over competition.

#### **Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers clinch the title of Hockey India League**

- The Shrarchi Rarh Bengal Tigers were crowned as the champions of the Men's Hockey India League 2024-25 season as they defeated Hyderabad Toofans 4-3.
- Jugraj Singh scored a hat-trick in the finals.

#### **Rohit Sharma becomes the second-highest six-hitter in ODI history**

- India skipper Rohit Sharma became the second most prolific six-hitter in the history of One-Day International cricket during the second ODI against England in Cuttack.
- Shahid Afridi is currently the top six-hitter in ODI cricket, having smashed 351 sixes in 398 innings in the format. However, Rohit holds the record for most sixes across formats, having hit 624 maximums across T20Is, ODIs and Test matches.
- Rohit also leads the six-hitting charts in T20 Internationals, with 205 sixes to his name in 151 innings.

#### **Tata Steel Masters 2025**

- Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa won the Tata Steel Masters 2025, beating world champion D Gukesh in a thrilling tiebreak in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands.
- Praggnanandhaa became the first Indian since Viswanathan Anand in 2006 to win the top prize at the Tata Steel Masters.

#### **Carlos Alcaraz claims first indoor Hardcourt Title at Rotterdam Open**

- Carlos Alcaraz defeated Alex de Minaur in the final of the Rotterdam Open, claiming a first indoor trophy of

his career alongside titles on grass, clay and hardcourt.

- The victory made Alcaraz the first Spanish champion in the tournament's 52-year history, while he also surpassed compatriot and coach Juan Carlos Ferrero with his 17th ATP Tour title.

#### **Cristiano Ronaldo tops 2025's Highest-Paid Athletes List**

- Footballer Cristiano Ronaldo emerged as the highest paid athlete of 2024 as his earnings were reported at \$260 million.
- Ronaldo was followed by Golden State Warriors' Stephen Curry, who stood second in the list.
- Most of Ronaldo's income came from his salary and winnings for Al-Nassr and the Portugal national team.

#### **News in Short**

- Australian all-rounder Marcus Stoinis retired from One Day Internationals (ODIs) to focus on T20s.
- ICC has banned Bangladesh's Shohely Akhter for five years on corruption charges. She has become the first female cricketer to be banned for corruption.
- India's most accomplished player Pankaj Advani secured his 36th overall national title and 10th men's snooker crown at the Yashwant Club.
- Former world No. 1 and two-time Grand Slam champion Simona Halep announced her retirement from professional tennis at age 33.
- Babar Azam became the joint-fastest to score 6,000 runs in ODI cricket.
- Vishvaa Rajakumar, a 20-year-old Indian student, has won the Memory League World Championship by recalling the order of cards, numbers, names, images and words. He was able to remember the order of 80 random digits in just 13.50 seconds.
- The 38th National Games of India were held from 28 January to 14 February 2025, across various venues in Uttarakhand. Meghalaya will host the 39th Edition of the National Games in 2027.
- The Indonesia team defeated two-time champion China 3-1 in the final to lift their maiden Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championship title.
- Former India wicket keeper-batter Wriddhiman Saha, known for his stellar wicket keeping skills, has retired from all formats of cricket at 40.
- Former Sri Lankan captain Dimuth Karunaratne retired after his 100th Test against Australia in Galle.
- Star batter Travis Head was named the winner of the Allan Border Medal for the top Australian men's cricketer, while young all-rounder Annabel Sutherland



- was awarded the Belinda Clark Medal at the Australian Cricket Awards.
- Kevin Durant became the eighth player in the National Basketball Association (NBA) history to score 30,000 points, hitting the mark against the Memphis Grizzlies.
  - Brazilian football legend Marcelo has retired at 36, ending a decorated career.
  - The first edition of the Olympic Esports Games, a landmark event both in the world of esports and within the Olympic Movement, will be held in 2027 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
  - Jacob Kiplimo of Uganda broke the world half-marathon record in Barcelona, finishing the 21.0975 km race in 56 minutes and 42 seconds. He is the first athlete to register a sub-57-minute timing. He improved the previous record by 48 seconds, surpassing Ethiopia's Yomif Kejelcha's time from November 2024.
  - The official song of Champions Trophy 2025 'Jeeto Baazi Khel Ke' features Atif Aslam.
  - Mumbai Indians (MI) owner Reliance Industries via its subsidiary RISE Worldwide has announced its successful bid to buy a 49% stake in London-based Oval Invincibles, a franchise in England and Wales Cricket Board's (ECB) 'The Hundred'.
  - Former India opener Shikhar Dhawan was named as one of the four event ambassadors for the ICC Champions Trophy to be held in Pakistan and Dubai from 19 February to 9 March. The other three ambassadors are Sarfaraz Ahmed (Pakistan), Shane Watson (former Australia all-rounder), and New Zealand's legendary fast bowler, Tim Southee.