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CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Olive Greens Institute

TILL 1 NOVEMBER 2026

PREFACE

This is our special edition of Current Affairs Magazine for various Central & State level Competitive Examinations, covering content from the month of October 2026.

The Magazine is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short

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

Section 2: Practice Questions with Answers

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

Section 3: Detailed Analysis of important Event

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



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Topic Wise Current Affairs

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SECTION 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short



1: Important Days



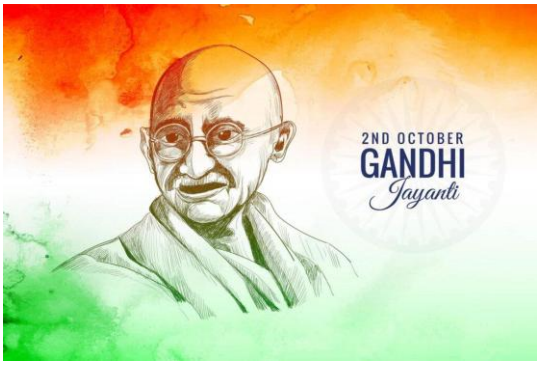
International Day of the Older Persons : 01 October :-

International Day of Older Persons is observed every year on 1 October to recognize the contributions, rights, dignity and well-being of older people and to draw attention to the challenges associated with population ageing. The United Nations General Assembly designated 1 October as the International Day of Older Persons on 14 December 1990 through Resolution 45/106. The UN's 2026 observance focuses on "The Age of Longevity: Rethinking Systems for Longer Lives," highlighting the need to adapt healthcare, pensions, employment, housing and lifelong-learning systems to longer lives.



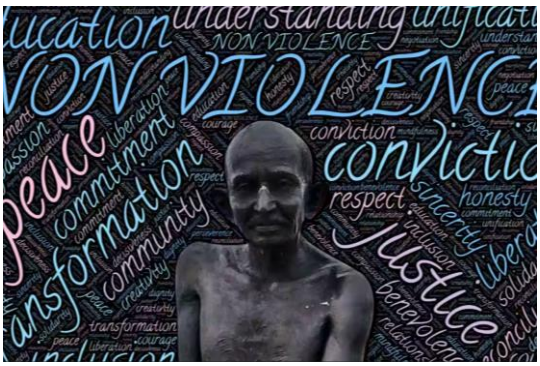
International Coffee Day : 01 October :-

International Coffee Day is celebrated annually on 1 October to recognize coffee as a globally important agricultural product and to highlight the contribution of millions of people involved in producing, processing and serving coffee. The International Coffee Organization (ICO) agreed in March 2014 to establish a common International Coffee Day on 1 October, and the first official observance was held on 1 October 2015 in connection with the International Coffee Council's session and the Global Coffee Forum in Milan, Italy. The ICO's 2026 global campaign is titled "Coffee is Part of the Solution," reflecting the sector's continuing focus on sustainable development and the role of coffee communities.



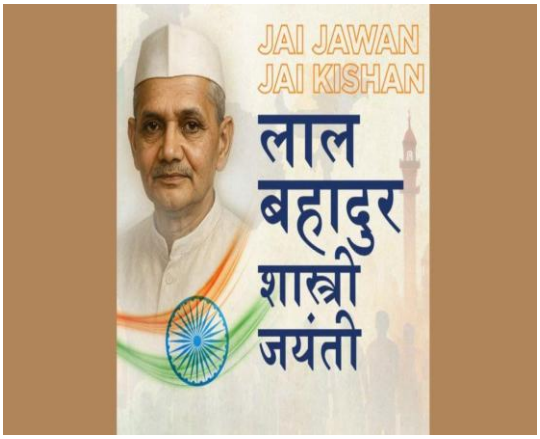
Gandhi Jayanti : 02 October :-

Gandhi Jayanti is observed every year on 2 October to commemorate the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, who was born on 2 October 1869 in Porbandar, Gujarat. Gandhi played a central role in India's freedom movement and became internationally associated with truth, non-violence, civil disobedience and peaceful resistance. His methods influenced several movements for civil rights and social change around the world. In India, the day is marked through commemorative programmes, cleanliness and awareness activities, and tributes at Raj Ghat in New Delhi. The day also provides an opportunity to reflect on Gandhi's ideas of social harmony, dignity, self-reliance and peaceful resolution of conflicts.



International Day of Non-Violence : 02 October :-

The International Day of Non-Violence is observed globally on 2 October, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, to promote the principle of resolving conflicts and social differences through peaceful means. The United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 61/271 on 15 June 2007, establishing 2 October as the International Day of Non-Violence. The resolution called for spreading the message of non-violence through education and public awareness and emphasized its universal relevance in building a culture of peace, tolerance and understanding. The first observance followed in 2007. The choice of Gandhi's birthday reflects his pioneering use of non-violent resistance during India's independence movement.



Lal Bahadur Shastri Jayanti : 02 October :-

Lal Bahadur Shastri Jayanti is observed on 02 October to commemorate the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, who was born on 2 October 1904 at Mughalsarai in Uttar Pradesh. Coming from a modest background, Shastri became involved in India's freedom struggle and was strongly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's ideas. After independence, he held several important responsibilities before becoming India's second Prime Minister in June 1964, serving until January 1966. He is particularly remembered for providing leadership during the 1965 India-Pakistan War and for emphasizing national unity, discipline and self-reliance. His famous slogan "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan" highlighted the importance of both soldiers and farmers to the country.



World Animal Welfare Day : 04 October :-

World Animal Welfare Day is observed annually on 4 October to raise awareness about animal welfare, protection and the need to prevent cruelty, neglect and exploitation. The observance is closely associated with Saint Francis of Assisi, regarded as the patron saint of animals, whose feast day falls on 4 October. The movement was initiated by Heinrich Zimmermann, who organized the first celebration in Berlin on 24 March 1925, attended by more than 5,000 people. The observance was shifted to 4 October in 1929, and in May 1931, animal-protection organizations meeting in Florence endorsed October 4 as the universal date. The official theme for World Animal Day (World Animal Welfare Day) 2026 is "See the World Through Their Eyes".



World Space Week : 04 to 10 October :-

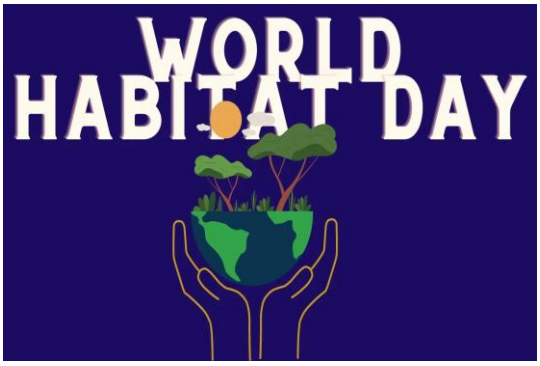
World Space Week is observed every year from 4 to 10 October as an international celebration of space science, technology and their contribution to human development. The United Nations General Assembly officially proclaimed the week through Resolution 54/68 on 6 December 1999. The dates commemorate two major milestones in the history of space exploration: the

launch of Sputnik 1 on 4 October 1957, the first human-made satellite to orbit Earth, and the entry into force of the Outer Space Treaty on 10 October 1967, which established important principles for the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. For 2026, the theme is “Rocket Revolution.”



World Teachers’ Day : 05 October :-

World Teachers’ Day is observed every year on 5 October to recognize the contribution of teachers to education and society. The day commemorates the adoption of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, an international framework that established standards concerning teachers’ rights and responsibilities, professional preparation, recruitment, employment and working conditions. World Teachers’ Day has been celebrated since 1994. The 2026 theme is “Standing with teachers: 60 years of protecting the profession, advancing its status and shaping our futures.”



World Habitat Day 2026 : 05 October :-

World Habitat Day is observed annually on the first Monday of October to draw attention to the condition of human settlements, urban development and the basic right of everyone to adequate shelter. The United Nations established the observance in 1985, and the first World Habitat Day was celebrated in 1986 in Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme “Shelter is my right.” The day also emphasizes that governments, communities and individuals share responsibility for shaping sustainable towns and cities. In 2026, World Habitat Day falls on 5 October, and its global focus is “Adequate Housing for All.”



World Cerebral Palsy Day : 06 October :-

World Cerebral Palsy Day is observed every year on 6 October to raise awareness about cerebral palsy (CP), promote inclusion, and advocate for equal rights, opportunities and access to healthcare, education, employment and assistive technologies for people living with the condition. The day was first observed in 2012 and was founded by Cerebral Palsy Alliance (Australia) and United Cerebral Palsy (USA), bringing together organisations and communities from more than 100 countries. The theme for World Cerebral Palsy Day 2026 is "Unique and United".



World Cotton Day : 07 October :-

World Cotton Day is observed every year on 7 October to highlight the economic, social and developmental importance of cotton and the millions of people whose livelihoods depend on it. The United Nations General

Assembly proclaimed 7 October as World Cotton Day in August 2021, following an initiative led by the Cotton-4 countries—Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali. The first official celebration was held on 7 October 2022. Cotton is one of the world's most important natural fibres and has been associated with human civilization for thousands of years, including the Indus Valley and Nile Valley regions. The official theme for World Cotton Day 2026 is “Cotton for Good: Building Prosperity Through Trade, Transformation and Partnership”.



Indian Air Force Day : 08 October :-

Indian Air Force Day is observed every year on 8 October to commemorate the establishment of the Indian Air Force (IAF) on 8 October 1932. The IAF was initially established as an auxiliary air force of the Royal Air Force, and its first operational flight took place on 1 April 1933 with six RAF-trained officers, 19 airmen and four Westland Wapiti IIA aircraft at Drigh Road in Karachi. After independence, the force played a crucial role in the 1947–48, 1965 and 1971 wars, as well as in later military and humanitarian missions. The theme for Indian Air Force Day 2026 is “Indian Air Force – Infallible, Impervious and Precise.”



World Post Day : 09 October :-

World Post Day is observed every year on 9 October to highlight the importance of postal services in connecting people, businesses and communities across the world. The day commemorates the establishment of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) on 9 October 1874, when representatives of 22 countries signed the Treaty of Bern and created the then General Postal Union. The observance was officially declared by the 1969 Universal Postal Congress in Tokyo. The UPU later became a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1948. The theme for World Post Day 2026 is “One postal network, infinite possibilities.”



World Mental Health Day : 10 October :-

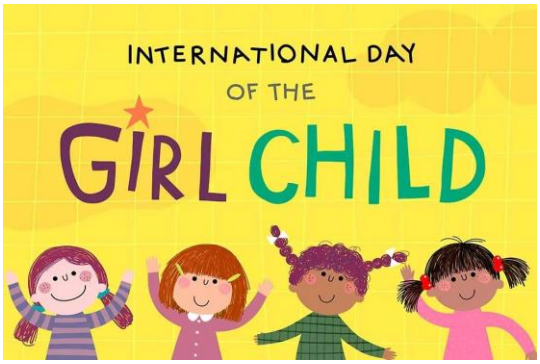
World Mental Health Day is observed every year on 10 October to raise awareness about mental health, reduce stigma and discrimination, and encourage efforts to make mental-health services accessible to everyone. The day was first observed in 1992 on the initiative of the World Federation for Mental Health and subsequently became a major international platform for mental-health awareness and action. In 2026, World Mental Health Day will be observed on 10 October, with the theme “Lived experiences heard: real voices, real change.”



World Migratory Bird Day 2026 : 10 October :-

World Migratory Bird Day is observed twice every year, traditionally on the second Saturday in May and the

second Saturday in October, to highlight the ecological importance of migratory birds and the need to protect their habitats along migration routes. In 2026, the October observance falls on 10 October. The campaign originated in 2006 as an international awareness initiative associated with the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement and later developed into a global campaign supported by the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). The theme for World Migratory Bird Day 2026 is "Every Bird Counts – Your Observations Matter!."



International Day of the Girl Child : 11 October :-

The International Day of the Girl Child is observed every year on 11 October to promote the rights, empowerment and well-being of girls worldwide. The United Nations General Assembly declared this day on 19 December 2011 through Resolution 66/170, and the first observance took place on 11 October 2012. The day highlights the challenges faced by girls, including gender discrimination, child marriage, gender-based violence, unequal access to education and limited opportunities for participation in decision-making. The theme for 2026 is “End child marriage and invest in girls’ rights!”.



World Arthritis day : 12 October :-

World Arthritis Day is observed every year on 12 October to raise awareness about arthritis and other rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs), which affect the joints, muscles, bones and connective tissues. World Arthritis Day was first established in 1996 by Arthritis and Rheumatism International (ARI). The observance encourages people to recognise early warning signs, including persistent joint pain, swelling, stiffness and restricted movement, and to seek medical advice. The 2026 campaign theme is “Achieve Your Dreams,” continuing the 2025–2026 campaign focus on the aspirations of people living with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases.



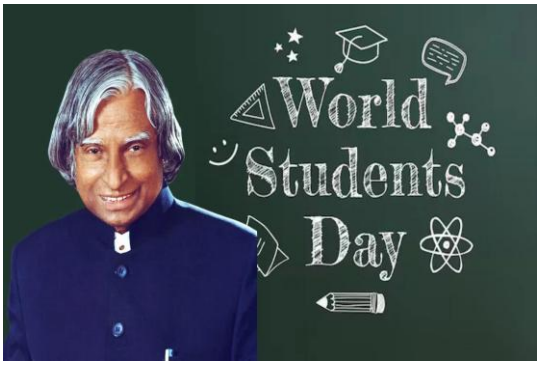
International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction : 13 October :-

The International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDRR) is observed annually on 13 Octobe. The United Nations General Assembly initiated this observance in 1989 to promote a global culture of disaster prevention, preparedness and risk awareness. In 2009, the United Nations formally designated 13 October as the annual observance date. The day highlights the importance of preparing for disasters such as earthquakes, floods, cyclones, droughts and tsunamis, whose impacts can be intensified by climate change, unsafe construction and poor planning. The theme for 2026 is “Resilience Starts at Home.”



World Standards Day : 14 October :-

World Standards Day is observed every year on 14 October to recognize the contributions of experts who develop international standards for the safety, quality, reliability and compatibility of products, services and technologies. It is jointly celebrated by three major international organizations: the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The date commemorates 14 October 1946, when delegates from 25 countries gathered in London to discuss the creation of an international organization dedicated to standardization. ISO was formally established in 1947, and the first World Standards Day was celebrated in 1970. The official global theme for World Standards Day 2026 is "Shared vision for a better world," with a specific spotlight on SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy.



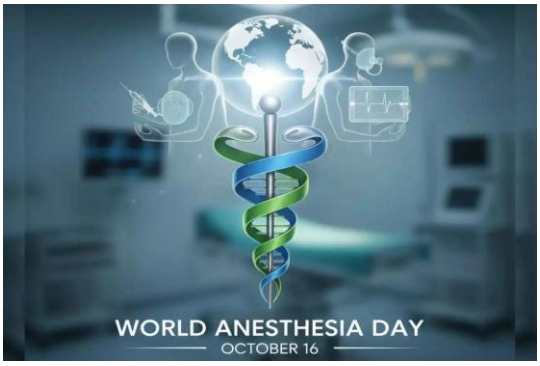
World Students' Day : 15 October :-

World Students' Day is observed in India on 15 October, the birth anniversary of Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, the former President of India, renowned aerospace scientist and educator. Born on 15 October 1931 in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu, Dr. Kalam rose from a modest background to become one of India's most respected scientific and educational figures. He served as India's 11th President from 2002 to 2007 and was popularly known as the People's President. His life demonstrated the importance of education, discipline, curiosity and perseverance in achieving personal and national progress. The day encourages students to pursue scientific thinking, innovation, creativity and lifelong learning.



International Day of Rural Women : 15 October :-

The International Day of Rural Women is observed annually on 15 October to recognise the vital contribution of rural women, including Indigenous women, to agriculture, food security, rural development and poverty reduction. The idea of dedicating a special day to rural women gained international attention at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, in 1995. Subsequently, the United Nations General Assembly officially established the observance through Resolution 62/136 on 18 December 2007, and the first official UN observance took place on 15 October 2008. The theme for the International Day of Rural Women 2026 is "Rural Women Farmers Caring for Mother Nature."



World Anesthesia Day : 16 October :-

World Anesthesia Day is observed annually on 16 October to recognise the importance of anaesthesia in modern medicine and acknowledge the contributions of anaesthesiologists to patient safety and healthcare. The day commemorates a historic medical event that took place on 16 October 1846, at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, United States. On that day, American dentist William Thomas Green Morton publicly demonstrated the use of ether anaesthesia during a surgical operation performed by surgeon John Collins Warren. The World Anaesthesia Day 2026 theme is "Before, During and Beyond Surgery," which aligns with the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA) presidential theme for 2026–2028: "Anaesthesiology Along the Patient Pathway."



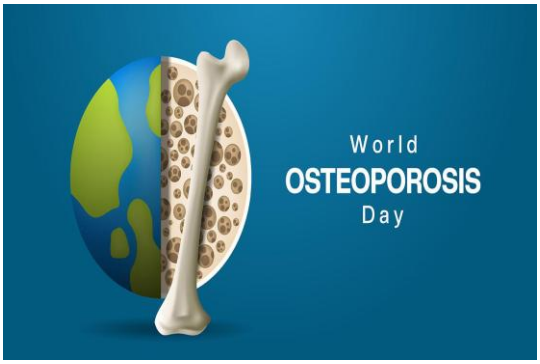
World Food Day : 16 October :-

World Food Day is observed every year on 16 October to raise awareness about hunger, malnutrition, food security and the importance of ensuring that everyone has access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. The day commemorates the establishment of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on 16 October 1945, in Quebec City, Canada. The proposal to establish World Food Day was adopted at the FAO Conference in November 1979, and the first observance took place in 1981 under the theme "Food Comes First." The United Nations General Assembly subsequently endorsed the observance in 1984. The World Food Day 2026 theme is "Innovate today. Nourish tomorrow."



International Day for the Eradication of Poverty : 17 October :-

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is observed every year on 17 October to raise awareness about the global challenge of poverty and strengthen efforts to ensure dignity, equality and a better quality of life for everyone. The observance originated on 17 October 1987, when more than 100,000 people gathered at the Trocadéro in Paris, France, to honour victims of extreme poverty, hunger and violence. They declared that poverty was a violation of human rights and called for collective action to protect human dignity. In 2026, the theme is "United for Peace and Human Rights," with a special focus on "Safe Homes for All."



World Osteoporosis Day : 20 October :-

World Osteoporosis Day is observed annually on 20 October to raise global awareness about osteoporosis, a disease that weakens bones, reduces bone density and increases the risk of fractures. The International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) leads this international awareness campaign, encouraging people to understand their risk, seek timely diagnosis and take preventive measures to protect their bone health. Osteoporosis is often called a "silent disease" because bone loss can

occur without noticeable symptoms until a fracture happens. The theme for World Osteoporosis Day 2026 is "Build, Protect, Strengthen Your Bones for Life."



Police Commemoration Day : 21 October :-

Police Commemoration Day is observed every year on 21 October in India to honour police personnel who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. The day commemorates the bravery of ten Indian police personnel who were killed in an ambush by Chinese troops at Hot Springs in Ladakh on 21 October 1959. It also pays tribute to police officers and personnel across the country who have lost their lives while protecting citizens, maintaining law and order, and safeguarding national security.



International Day of the Snow Leopard : 23 October :-

The International Day of the Snow Leopard is observed annually on 23 October to raise awareness about the conservation of snow leopards and the protection of their fragile mountain ecosystems. The United Nations General Assembly officially proclaimed the day on 12 December 2024 through Resolution A/RES/79/143, encouraging international and regional cooperation to safeguard this rare wild cat. The date commemorates the adoption of the Bishkek Declaration on 23 October 2013, during the Global Forum on the Conservation of the Snow Leopard held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.



United Nations Day : 24 October :-

United Nations Day is observed annually on 24 October to commemorate the establishment of the United Nations (UN), the international organisation created to promote peace, security, cooperation and friendly relations among nations. The date marks the anniversary of the entry into force of the UN Charter on 24 October 1945, following its ratification by the required majority of signatory countries, including the five permanent members of the Security Council. The organisation emerged from the devastation of the Second World War, when world leaders recognised the need for an international institution to help prevent future conflicts and encourage collective action.



ITBP Raising Day : 24 October :-

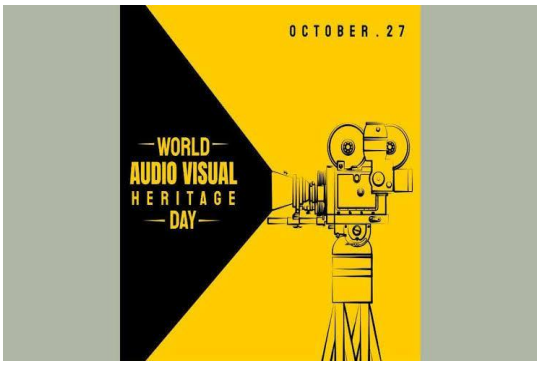
The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) Raising Day is observed every year on 24 October to commemorate the establishment of the force on 24 October 1962, following the India-China conflict. The force was created to strengthen border security and improve the protection of India's frontier along the Himalayan region. Initially, only four battalions were sanctioned, but its

responsibilities and organisational strength subsequently expanded. The ITBP is one of India's Central Armed Police Forces under the Ministry of Home Affairs and plays a crucial role in guarding the India-China border, particularly in difficult high-altitude areas characterised by extreme cold, rugged mountains and challenging weather conditions.



World Polio Day : 24 October :-

World Polio Day is observed every year on 24 October to raise awareness about poliomyelitis, commonly known as polio, and strengthen global efforts to eradicate the disease through vaccination and public-health programmes. Polio is a highly infectious viral disease that primarily affects children under five and can cause irreversible paralysis or, in severe cases, death. The observance was established by Rotary International to commemorate the birth of Dr Jonas Salk, the American medical researcher who led the team that developed the first successful polio vaccine. The official theme for World Polio Day 2026 is "One Day, One Focus: Ending Polio for Good".



World Day for Audiovisual Heritage : 27 October :-

World Day for Audiovisual Heritage is observed annually on 27 October to raise global awareness about the importance of preserving audiovisual materials, including films, sound recordings, photographs, radio broadcasts, television programmes and videos. UNESCO proclaimed the observance in 2005, and the date commemorates the adoption of the Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images by UNESCO's General Conference on 27 October 1980. The theme for 2026 is "Your Window to the World."



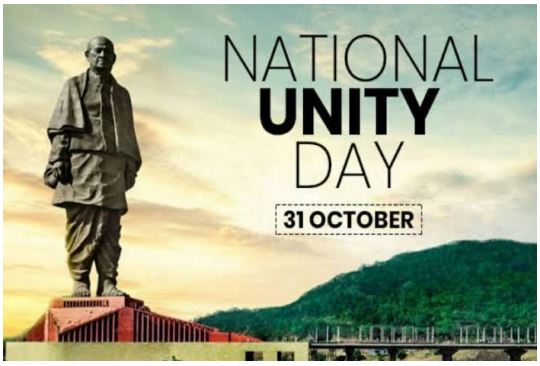
World Animation Day : 28 October :-

World Animation Day, also known as International Animation Day, is celebrated every year on 28 October to recognise the art of animation and appreciate the contributions of animators, filmmakers, artists and technicians to the entertainment and creative industries. The day was established in 2002 by the International Animated Film Association (ASIFA) to promote animation as an important form of artistic expression and communication. The date commemorates the first public presentation of projected animated images by French inventor Charles-Émile Reynaud on 28 October 1892 at the Musée Grévin in Paris, France, using his invention called the Théâtre Optique (Optical Theatre).



International Day of Care and Support : 29 October :-

The International Day of Care and Support is observed annually on 29 October to recognize the importance of paid and unpaid care work and the essential contribution of caregivers to society and the economy. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed this international observance through Resolution A/RES/77/317 on 24 July 2023, and the first observance took place on 29 October 2023. The day highlights the importance of caring for children, older persons, persons with disabilities and people affected by illness, as well as recognizing the contributions of nurses, domestic workers, healthcare professionals and family caregivers. The theme for the International Day of Care and Support 2026 is “Building sustainable care and support systems through decent work.”



National Unity Day : 31 October :-

National Unity Day, also known as Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, is observed every year on 31 October in India to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, one of the principal leaders of India's freedom struggle and the country's first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister. Born on 31 October 1875, Patel played a crucial role in integrating more than 560 princely states into the Indian Union after independence in 1947. Because of this historic contribution, he is widely remembered as the Iron Man of India. The Government of India introduced National Unity Day in 2014, and it was first observed on 31 October that year.



World Cities Day : 31 October :-

World Cities Day is observed every year on 31 October to raise awareness about urbanization and encourage international cooperation in addressing the challenges faced by cities. The United Nations General Assembly designated this observance through Resolution 68/239 on 27 December 2013, and it was first celebrated in 2014. The day is coordinated within the United Nations system by UN-Habitat and marks the conclusion of Urban October, a month dedicated to sustainable urban development. In 2026, the theme is “Regenerating the City: Adequate Housing for All,” with the global observance taking place in Fuzhou, China.

2: Agreements



Delhi Govt and ICCR Sign MoU to Promote Culture and Tourism :-

The Delhi government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) to enhance cooperation in cultural and academic sectors. This agreement aims to provide Delhi's artists with international exposure and promote the city's culture, tourism, and economy. Under the MoU, Delhi-based artists will participate in ICCR's

Horizon Series and international cultural festivals. The partnership will also facilitate performances by foreign artists in Delhi and organize joint art exhibitions, workshops, and seminars. A joint committee will oversee the MoU's implementation.



ICAR and FCI Sign MoU for Safer Pest Management Alternatives :-

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the Food Corporation of India (FCI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to develop safer, sustainable alternatives to chemical fumigation for managing storage pests in wheat and rice. The two-year Phase-I project, supported by the Department of Food & Public Distribution, will be implemented by ICAR-Central Institute of Post-Harvest Engineering and Technology. Trials will focus on using nitrogen gas, carbon dioxide, and a combination of CO2 and phosphine. This initiative aims to address pest resistance and environmental concerns associated with conventional fumigation methods.



NRIDA and IIM Kolkata Sign MoU for Rural Roads Impact Study :-

NRIDA and IIM Kolkata have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding for a four-year impact study of PMGSY-IV and PM-JANMAN. The study will cover 10 states/UTs, 50 districts, 150 blocks, and 250 roads, surveying approximately 5,000 households on aspects like mobility, livelihoods, education, health, and women's empowerment. The study will follow a longitudinal design with three phases: Baseline, Transition, and Endline. The MoU was signed by DG NRIDA Aditi Singh and IIM Kolkata Director Alok Kumar Rai, aiming to generate evidence for policy and program improvements.



India and Ghana Sign MoUs on Research and Agriculture :-

During a visit to Ghana, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar witnessed the exchange of two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). The first MoU was between the Zoological Survey of India and the University of Ghana to enhance academic cooperation and scientific research. The second MoU involved ICAR and Ghana's CSIR-Crops Research Institute, focusing on agricultural research and education. These agreements aim to strengthen South-South cooperation and deepen the India-Ghana Comprehensive Partnership across various sectors.



India-Russia Temporary Employment Agreement Ratified :-

Russian President Vladimir Putin ratified the India-Russia Temporary Employment Agreement. Initially signed in New Delhi on 4 December 2025, this agreement facilitates the temporary employment of Indian citizens in Russia and vice versa, under regulated frameworks. It mandates work permits and ensures wages and conditions match host-country standards. The agreement aims to address Russia's labor shortages, particularly in the construction and textiles sectors. Currently, about 71,000 Indians are employed in Russia, with a target to increase this number to nearly 100,000 by 2026.



Haryana Signs Rs 4,000-Crore LoIs with Swedish Firms :-

Haryana has signed letters of intent (LoIs) worth Rs 4,000 crore with Swedish companies during Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini's visit to Sweden. The agreements include Rs 3,000 crore in major investments and Rs 1,000 crore in retail and warehousing sectors. The collaboration aims to boost trade, economic cooperation, and employment opportunities for Haryana's youth. A city-to-city collaboration agreement was also signed between Gurugram and Stockholm to enhance technological innovation and sustainable urban development.



Pakistan, Turkey, Qatar, Indonesia sign new defence deal :-

Pakistan, Turkey (Türkiye), Qatar and Indonesia signed the Badr Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Doha, the capital of Qatar, to strengthen defence cooperation and expand their military-industrial capabilities. The agreement was signed by representatives of the four countries, including Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Turkish Defence Minister Yaşar Güler, Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, and Indonesia's Deputy Defence Minister Yusuf Jauhari. The agreement aims to promote joint defence production, technology development, technical military training, research and development, and closer cooperation between their defence industries.



Honda and Mitsubishi Motors Sign First-ever MOU on Complementary Automobile Product Supply :-

The agreement between Honda Motor Co. and Mitsubishi Motors Corporation marks a step towards cooperation between two major Japanese automobile manufacturers. The term "complementary automobile product supply" indicates an arrangement in which the companies can supply vehicles or automobile products that complement each other's existing line-ups, helping address different customer needs without relying entirely on developing every product independently. Such cooperation can potentially improve production efficiency, expand product choices and reduce development or supply-chain costs.



Canara Bank Signs MoU with BHEL for Premium Payroll Package Salary Accounts :-

The Canara Bank has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) to extend its Canara Premium Payroll Package to eligible BHEL employees through salary accounts. The initiative aims to provide employees with convenient banking services and additional financial benefits tailored to salaried individuals. Depending on the applicable salary category and account variant, the package may include zero-balance salary accounts, life and accident insurance, free electronic fund transfers, debit-card benefits, concessions on loan-processing charges and an instant overdraft facility.



NLC India Limited signs MoU with Odisha for establishment of 3200 MW ultra super-critical coal-based power plant :-

NLC India Limited, a public-sector enterprise under the Ministry of Coal, is expanding its role in India's electricity generation sector through a proposed large-scale coal-based power project in Odisha. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed with the Odisha government represents an important step towards establishing a 3,200-megawatt (MW) ultra-supercritical thermal power plant. Once developed, the project is expected to contribute to electricity availability, support industrial growth and strengthen the state's power infrastructure.



MoU Signed to Support ST Youth Entrepreneurship in Rourkela :-

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, through NSTFDC, has signed a tripartite MoU with NSIC and SAIL-Rourkela Steel Plant to support ST youth entrepreneurship. The Livelihood Business Incubation Centre in Rourkela, established in 2018 and recognized as a Centre of Excellence, offers skill development courses in areas such as beautician, tailoring, computer operation, electrician work, bakery, and mushroom farming. The initiative focuses on training, hand-holding, and sustainable livelihood creation for tribal youth.



CCI Approves Integrace's Acquisition of Universal Nutriscience :-

The Competition Commission of India has approved the acquisition of Universal Nutriscience by Integrace Private Limited. Integrace, a company focused on orthopaedics and gynaecology formulations, is a subsidiary of Morning Waves, an affiliate of Warburg Pincus. Universal Nutriscience specializes in nutraceutical and lifestyle

products. The acquisition involves the share capital of Universal Nutriscience and related transactions, marking a significant move in the healthcare and lifestyle sector.



Karmayogi Bharat and OpenAI Sign MoU for AI Training

Karmayogi Bharat has signed an MoU with OpenAI to provide AI training for civil servants. OpenAI Academy resources will be accessible on the iGOT Karmayogi platform, which has over 1.7 crore registered government employees. The initiative aims to develop practical AI skills and promote responsible AI usage, supporting capacity building across the Centre, States, and Union Territories. This collaboration is a step towards integrating AI in public administration.



India and Mexico Begin Preferential Trade Agreement Talks :-

India and Mexico have initiated negotiations for a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) by signing the Terms of Reference. This agreement aims to enhance bilateral trade and investment ties. Key areas of focus include market access for goods, customs procedures, and trade facilitation. The negotiations follow an understanding between Prime Minister Modi and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum. Sectors with potential for cooperation include automobiles, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals. A Mexican business mission to India is planned for early 2027 to strengthen trade relations.

3: Appointments



Mandeep K Bhandari Appointed as CBSE Chairman :-

IAS officer Mandeep K Bhandari, from the 2001 AGMUT cadre, was appointed as the Chairman of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The appointment was made by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary, with the post temporarily upgraded. This follows recent administrative changes, including the transfer of the previous chairman and an inquiry into the OSM evaluation system. CBSE is responsible for conducting school exams and affiliations in India and abroad.



Morocco Appoints First Woman Prime Minister :-

Fatima Zahra El Mansouri has been appointed as Morocco's first woman Prime Minister by King Mohammed VI. Her appointment follows the victory of

her party, PAM, which won 97 out of 395 seats in the elections held on September 23, 2026. Despite being the first woman to hold this position in Morocco, El Mansouri must form a coalition government as her party lacks the required majority of 198 seats. She previously served as the mayor of Marrakech and the Housing Minister. El Mansouri becomes the second woman Prime Minister in the Arab world, after Tunisia's Najla Bouden.



Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit Appointed Next Chief of Air Staff :-

Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit has been appointed as the next Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) of the Indian Air Force, effective 31 October 2026. He will succeed Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh. As the head of the IAF, Dixit will be responsible for operational readiness, modernization, administration, and strategic direction. His appointment comes at a time when the IAF is focusing on fleet modernization and inter-service coordination. The IAF, established in 1932, celebrates Air Force Day on 8 October annually.



Pidilite Industries appoints Amit Agarwal as CFO-designate :-

Pidilite Industries has appointed Amit Agarwal as Chief Financial Officer-designate and Senior Management Personnel. The company's board approved the appointment following a recommendation from its Nomination and Remuneration Committee. Agarwal brings more than 22 years of experience in finance, accounting, reporting, auditing and financial controls. His previous employers include Pfizer, Hindustan Unilever and Vedanta Resources. He is also a Chartered Accountant, Cost Accountant and Company Secretary, giving him experience across financial management and corporate compliance.



Tukaram Mundhe appointed secretary of Maharashtra MPSC inquiry committee :-

The Maharashtra government has appointed senior IAS officer Tukaram Mundhe as secretary of a five-member inquiry committee investigating alleged irregularities and paper leaks in examinations conducted by the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC). The decision followed an 11-day protest by examination candidates demanding accountability and improvements in the recruitment process. The committee will operate under the chairmanship of retired judge Dilip Bhosale and has been given 60 days to submit its report.



Pargat Singh formally takes charge as Punjab Congress president :-

Former Indian hockey captain and Jalandhar Cantonment MLA Pargat Singh formally assumed charge as president of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. He was appointed to the position on 2 October, replacing Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, who resigned amid internal disagreements within the state party organisation. Singh brings a combination of sporting recognition and political experience to the role. He represented India at three Olympic Games and subsequently built a political career in Punjab, serving as an MLA and previously holding ministerial responsibilities in the state government.



Prakash Rajpurohit Appointed Deputy Election Commissioner :-

Prakash Rajpurohit, a 2010-batch IAS officer from the Rajasthan cadre, has been appointed as the Deputy Election Commissioner of the Election Commission of India (ECI). His tenure will last until April 8, 2030. Rajpurohit previously served as Joint Secretary in the Department of Defence Production. This appointment is part of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet's selection of 27 joint-secretary-level officials.



NIIT appoints Anish Sarkar as Chief Executive Officer :-

NIIT Limited has appointed Anish Sarkar as its Chief Executive Officer, effective 14 October 2026. He succeeds Pankaj Jathar, who is stepping down after approximately two years in the position to relocate to Bengaluru for personal reasons. Sarkar brings experience spanning technology, digital services, human-capital consulting and business development. His professional background includes business expansion, portfolio development and strategic acquisitions. These capabilities are relevant as NIIT works to strengthen its learning and talent-development offerings while exploring opportunities for AI-led services and inorganic growth.



Hindustan Oil Exploration Company appoints Debabrata Das as CFO :-

Hindustan Oil Exploration Company (HOEC) has appointed Debabrata Das as its new Chief Financial Officer. He will replace Allen Joseph Andrade. Andrade will continue to assist the company as a financial adviser. Das is a Chartered Accountant with more than 20 years of experience across energy, city-gas distribution and infrastructure. His previous positions include Group CFO at Haryana City Gas, Head of Corporate Finance at Adani Total Gas and project-finance leadership at GMR Energy.



Dr. Sudha Yadav Sworn in as Karnataka Governor :-

Dr. Sudha Yadav took oath as the Governor of Karnataka at Raj Bhavan, Bengaluru. Appointed by President Droupadi Murmu, her oath was administered by Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru. She succeeds Thaawarchand Gehlot and becomes the second woman Governor of Karnataka. Dr. Yadav is a former Lok Sabha MP from Mahendragarh, Haryana, with an MSc and PhD in Chemistry from IIT Roorkee. She entered politics following the death of her husband in the 1999 Kargil War.



SCL Das Appointed Chairman of Reconstituted FSIB :-

The Union government has reconstituted the Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) with retired IAS officer SCL Das as its chairman for a three-year term starting from the notification date. Das, a former MSME Secretary and current DERC chairperson, will lead the FSIB under the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance. The FSIB, which succeeded the Banks Board Bureau in 2022, is responsible for recommending candidates for senior positions in public sector banks, financial institutions, and insurers. Six part-time members have also been appointed to the bureau.



Sunil Kumar Appointed as ONGC Chairman :-

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) approved Sunil Kumar as the next Chairman of ONGC. Currently serving as Executive Director, Kumar will assume charge on or after 7 December 2026, succeeding Arun Kumar Singh. His tenure will last until superannuation on 31 December 2028, with a possible contract extension of up to three years. Kumar's pay scale is set between ₹2,00,000 and ₹3,70,000 (IDA). Previously, he was an Asset Manager in Mehsana and a board nominee director.

4: Awards



V. Shantaram Posthumously Receives the Dr Kotnis Humanity Award :-

Legendary Indian filmmaker V. Shantaram has been honoured posthumously with the Dr Kotnis Humanity Award, a recognition that connects cinema with the enduring story of India-China humanitarian friendship. The award was given around eight decades after Shantaram's 1946 film Dr Kotnis Ki Amar Kahani brought the life of Indian physician Dr Dwarakanath Kotnis to a much wider audience. Kotnis had travelled to China as part of an Indian medical mission and became a symbol of selfless service. Shantaram's son and former Sheriff of Mumbai, Kiran Shantaram, received the honour on his behalf.



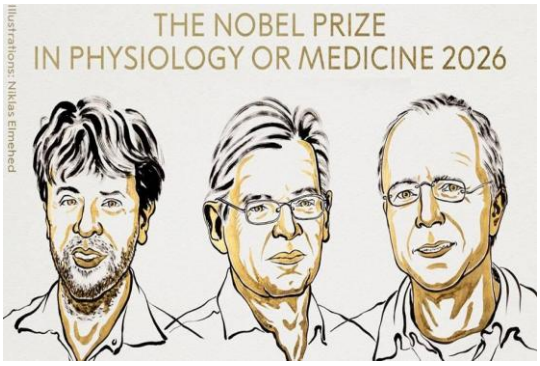
Bharat Life Sciences Awards 2026 Honour Scientists and Health Innovators :-

The inaugural Bharat Life Sciences Awards 2026 have recognised scientists, innovators, institutions and ecosystem builders contributing to India's life-sciences and public-health landscape. Held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, the awards were organised by FICCI with support from Eli Lilly and were accompanied by an innovation summit involving industry and government stakeholders. Six awards were presented across two broad categories, with winners in the Samman category receiving ₹1.5 crore grants each, taking the total grants distributed to ₹7 crore. Among the recognised individuals was Dr Vamsee Mallajosyula of the National Centre for Biological Sciences, honoured under the young-scientist excellence category.



Indian Animation, VFX and Gaming Talent Recognised at FICCI BAF Awards 2026 :-

The FICCI BAF Awards 2026 have recognised a broad range of Indian and international work across animation, visual effects, gaming, comics, extended reality and artificial intelligence. The latest winners list covers 32 animation awards, 10 VFX awards, six gaming awards, five comics awards, three XR awards and four AI awards. Among the recognised projects are Stitch Head for Animated Feature Film, DUCK for Professional Animated Short Film, Little Singham: Katha Chor Ki Dastaan as Animated Show of the Year, and Tere Ishk Mein for Indian VFX in Film.



Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2026 Awarded :-

The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2026 has been awarded to Karl Deisseroth, Peter Hegemann, and Georg Nagel for their discoveries concerning light-gated ion channels and optogenetics. Optogenetics, which uses light-sensitive proteins to control nerve-cell activity, is pivotal for studying brain functions. Hegemann and Nagel discovered channelrhodopsin in algae, while Deisseroth adapted it for living tissue. The prize includes 12 million Swedish kronor and will be presented at the ceremony on 10 December 2026 in Stockholm.



IOA Introduces Jaspal Rana and Raja Randhir Singh Awards :-

The Indian Olympic Association has instituted the Jaspal Rana Award for the best female athlete and the Raja Randhir Singh Award for the best male athlete, recognizing outstanding performances at the Asian Games. The inaugural recipients are archer Kumkum Anil Mohod and wrestler Sujeet Kalkal. Kumkum, aged 17,

secured two gold medals in individual and team recurve events, while Sujeet, aged 23, won gold in the men's 65 kg freestyle wrestling. These awards highlight India's achievements and contributions to the Asian Games.



Francis Halzen Wins 2026 Nobel Prize in Physics :-

Physicist Francis Halzen has been awarded the 2026 Nobel Prize in Physics by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. He was recognized for his decisive contributions to the IceCube Neutrino Observatory and the discovery of high-energy astrophysical neutrinos. Halzen pioneered the use of Antarctic ice to detect neutrinos, often referred to as 'ghost particles,' which act as cosmic messengers. The IceCube detector, located at the South Pole, uses thousands of sensors to record Cherenkov radiation, helping determine the direction, energy, and source of neutrinos.



Indian Captain Smit Machchhar to Receive Israel's Highest Civilian Bravery Award :-

Indian Captain Smit Machchhar, who thwarted an attack by his co-pilot on a flydubai flight, will be awarded Israel's highest civilian bravery honor, the Presidential Award for Civilian Heroism. President Isaac Herzog announced the award, recognizing Machchhar's courage in averting a potential catastrophe during the flight from Dubai to Tel Aviv on September 30, 2026. The award ceremony took place at the President's Residence in Jerusalem, where other individuals involved in the incident were also honored. Machchhar is recovering in a UAE hospital after being stabbed during the incident.



Anne Carson Wins 2026 Nobel Prize in Literature :-

Canadian writer Anne Carson has been awarded the 2026 Nobel Prize in Literature. The Nobel Committee recognized her for a pioneering body of work that playfully interweaves classical traditions with new literary forms. Born in Toronto in 1950, Carson is known for her poetry, essays, and translations that reimagine Greek literature. Her notable works include 'Eros the Bittersweet' and 'Autobiography of Red'. Carson's contributions have significantly influenced contemporary literature, blending diverse genres and themes.



Mahesh Kakde Wins 2026 Ramanujan Prize :-

Professor Mahesh Kakde from IISc Bengaluru has been awarded the 2026 Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians from Developing Countries. This prestigious award, jointly presented by ICTP and IMU, includes a cash prize of USD 10,000 and is given to mathematicians under 45. Kakde is recognized for his

contributions to algebraic number theory, particularly in Iwasawa theory and the Gross-Stark and Brumer-Stark conjectures. His academic journey includes a PhD from Cambridge and positions at Princeton and UCL before joining IISc in 2019.



Kannada Writer Vaidehi Receives the Karanth Award 2026 :-

Renowned Kannada writer and novelist Vaidehi received the Karanth Award 2026, instituted by Kalkura Prathishtana, at a ceremony in Mangaluru. The honour recognises her contribution to Kannada literature and her influence on the region's literary and cultural life. The event coincided with celebrations marking the birth anniversary of celebrated writer Kota Shivaram Karanth and brought together writers, academics and representatives of cultural organisations. During the ceremony, former Kannada University vice-chancellor B. A. Vivek Rai spoke about the close relationship between Vaidehi's life and literary work, while Mangalore University vice-chancellor P. L. Dharma highlighted the importance of senior writers in shaping intellectual life.



Navi Pillay Wins the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize for Work on International Justice :-

South African jurist Navanethem “Navi” Pillay has been awarded the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her work supporting international justice, human rights and the rule of law. Pillay previously served as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and as a judge at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Court. Her work has included efforts to hold perpetrators of serious international crimes accountable and to strengthen legal protections for vulnerable communities. She has also chaired a UN commission investigating the war in Gaza, whose findings have drawn strong objections from Israeli officials.



Sunil Bharti Mittal to Receive French Legion of Honour

Sunil Bharti Mittal, Founder-Chairman of Bharti Enterprises, will be conferred the Knight (Chevalier) of the National Order of the Legion of Honour by French President Emmanuel Macron. The ceremony will take place on October 28, 2026, at the French Embassy in New Delhi. Mittal is recognized for his contributions to India-France economic ties in telecom and satellite communications over three decades. He is also the co-chairman of Paris-based Eutelsat. The Legion of Honour is France’s highest civilian award, established by Napoleon in 1802.



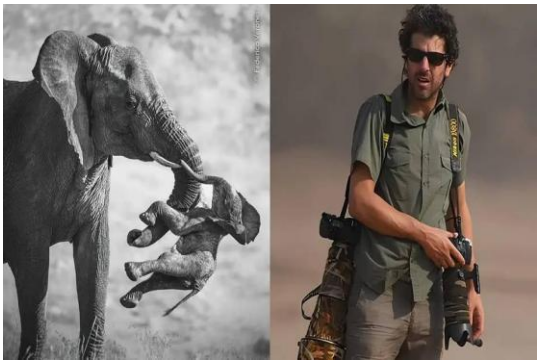
Indian Filmmaker Tribeny Rai Wins Two Awards at Busan's Asian Project Market :-

Indian filmmaker Tribeny Rai, an alumna of the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI), has secured two major honours for her upcoming feature-film project, A Chronicle of Minor Things, at South Korea's Asian Project Market. The project received the APM Busan Award, which carries a cash prize of US$15,000, and the Sørfond Award, which provides an invitation to Norway's Sørfond Pitching Forum. The awards were presented during the Asian Contents & Film Market. The film remains in development and follows an investigation into the death of a 15-year-old girl in a village where competing claims over jurisdiction expose deeper questions about power, money and local politics.



Delhi Technological University Student Kush Garg Wins IET India Scholarship Award 2026 :-

Kush Garg, a student at Delhi Technological University, has won the 10th IET India Scholarship Award for developing an artificial-intelligence-enabled device intended to help neurodivergent children navigate everyday situations more independently. The technology is designed to provide context-aware assistance in activities such as ordering food, shopping, travelling on public transport and following classroom conversations. Garg emerged as the national winner from a pool of 48,761 engineering students who applied for the 2026 scholarship programme.



Oscar Whitfield Wins Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2026 :-

Oscar Whitfield, a 14-year-old British photographer, won the Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2026 award for his black-and-white image titled “Labour of Love.” The photograph, capturing a dung beetle rolling a dung ball, was taken at ground level in Zimbabwe. This year marks the 62nd edition of the competition organized by the Natural History Museum, London, which received a record 65,403 entries from 121 countries. Notably, this is the first time both the adult and young overall winners featured black-and-white images.



Mari ZT Lalrithangi Honored as FAO Women Hero :-

Mari ZT Lalrithangi, a farmer from Sangau village in Mizoram, has been named among FAO’s 100 Women Heroes in Agrifood Systems during the International Year of Women Farmers 2026. She is the first Mizo woman to receive this honor, chosen from 600 nominations across 131 countries. Lalrithangi began strawberry farming in 2024 and expanded her cultivation significantly by 2025. Her income increased from ₹1.5 lakh to over ₹10 lakh within a year. The award was presented at the World Food Forum in Rome on 15 October 2026.



President Murmu Presents National Art Awards 2026 :-

President Droupadi Murmu presented the awards at the 65th National Exhibition of Art and the 3rd Print Biennale India. The ceremony, organized by the Lalit Kala Akademi, took place at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre. Out of 6,175 artworks submitted by 2,495 artists, 270 were selected for display, and 20 artists received awards. The event highlighted technical skill and experimentation in printmaking. President Murmu emphasized art's connection to culture and traditions and the importance of supporting rural artists.



NCRTC Wins UMI Awards for Delhi–Meerut Corridor :-

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) received the 'Metro Rail with Best Passenger Service and Satisfaction' award for the Delhi–Meerut Namo Bharat corridor at the 19th Urban Mobility India Conference held in Bhubaneswar. NCRTC also won the Best Exhibitor award for the second consecutive year. The 82-km corridor, including the 23-km Meerut Metro, is India's first operational Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) with trains reaching speeds up to 160 km/h and achieving near-99.9% punctuality.



Earthshot Prize 2026 to be Held in Mumbai :-

The Earthshot Prize 2026 will take place in Mumbai on November 16-17, marking the first time the event is held in India. Established by Prince William in 2020, the prize awards £1 million annually to five winners across categories such as Protect & Restore Nature and Clean Our Air. India has had seven finalists and four winners since the prize's inception. The event highlights India's growing role in global environmental initiatives.

5: Banking



Anup Kumar Saha appointed Kotak Mahindra Bank MD & CEO from January 2027 :-

Kotak Mahindra Bank has named Anup Kumar Saha as its next Managing Director and CEO, effective January 1, 2027. The appointment received approval from the Reserve Bank of India, and Saha will succeed Ashok Vaswani, whose current term ends on December 31, 2026. Saha is already an executive director at Kotak and oversees areas including consumer banking, government business, data analytics and marketing. He previously

spent more than eight years at Bajaj Finance, including serving as MD & CEO, and about 14 years at ICICI Bank.



UBS faces tougher proposed Swiss capital requirements

UBS is facing continued debate over proposed Swiss rules that would require the bank to hold substantially more Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) capital against its foreign subsidiaries. Reuters reported that U.S. asset manager Artisan Partners, which holds more than 60 million UBS shares, has urged the bank's board to consider leaving Switzerland, arguing that the proposed requirements could impose significant costs without generating corresponding returns. UBS has opposed the proposed framework, while Swiss authorities have linked stronger requirements to lessons from the 2023 Credit Suisse collapse.



Bank of India Introduces Programmable Digital Rupee :-

The Bank of India has launched a user-level programmable digital rupee (e₹) with an auto-issuance feature. This new digital currency allows account holders to schedule fixed-amount automatic transfers to beneficiaries' CBDC wallets, supporting purpose-based spending restrictions. It is particularly useful for recurring payments such as allowances and education expenses. The platform was developed by Montran India and aligns with guidelines from the RBI and NPCI, enhancing programmability within India's retail CBDC framework.



Bank of Baroda Ventures into Pension Fund Business :-

Bank of Baroda has entered the pension fund business, becoming the second public sector bank to do so after receiving a PFRDA Certificate of Appointment as Sponsor. The bank established BoB Pension Fund Management Company Limited with an authorized capital of ₹100 crore, where it holds an 80.10% share and Baroda BNP AMC holds 19.90%. This follows SBI's entry into the sector in 2008. Additionally, BoB has integrated the Tatkal NPS with the BHIM App to facilitate paperless onboarding.



Public-sector banks increase lending rates following the RBI's repo-rate hike :-

Several Indian banks have revised their repo-linked lending benchmarks following the RBI's decision to raise the policy repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.50% on October 7. Punjab National Bank increased its repo-rate-linked rate from 8.10% to 8.35%, effective October 8. Bank of Baroda raised its applicable retail repo-based lending rate from 7.90% to 8.15%. Bank of India also increased its corresponding benchmark from 8.10% to

8.35%, while Indian Bank revised its rate from 7.95% to 8.20%.



RBI introduces new measures to support the Indian rupee :-

The Reserve Bank of India has announced a fresh set of measures to reduce pressure on the rupee, which has been trading close to its record low against the US dollar. The central bank will supply dollars directly to three state-owned oil marketing companies—Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum—from October 12. This is intended to shift a significant source of dollar demand away from the regular foreign-exchange market. The RBI has also tightened rules governing rupee-linked foreign-exchange derivatives. The threshold for certain transactions undertaken without establishing underlying exposure has been reduced from $100 million to $5 million.



Fairfax's $5.56 billion acquisition of IDBI Bank advances

India's government has approved the sale of a controlling stake in IDBI Bank to a subsidiary of Canadian investment group Fairfax Financial Holdings. The transaction is valued at approximately ₹52,878 crore, or $5.56 billion, and involves a 60.72% stake held by the government and Life Insurance Corporation of India. Following the transaction, the government is expected to retain 15% of the bank, while LIC will retain 19%. The deal represents a major development in India's banking-sector privatisation programme, which has sought to reduce government ownership while attracting private capital and expertise.



RBI's 'Samvad 2026' Seminar Focuses on AI and Financial Stability :-

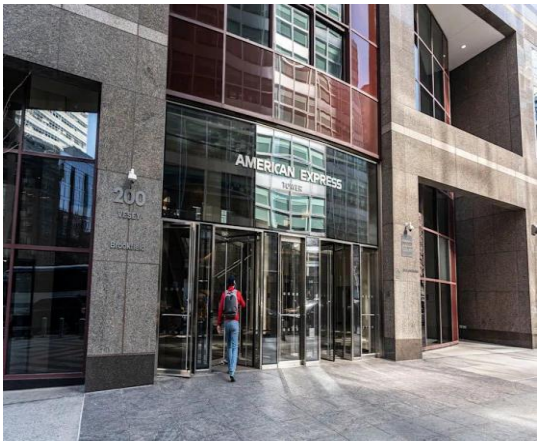
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) inaugurated 'Samvad 2026', an international seminar for central banks, in New Delhi. The two-day event brings together Central Bank Governors, policymakers, and experts to discuss challenges and opportunities in the global financial system. Key topics include monetary policy, the role of Artificial Intelligence in finance, financial inclusion, and payment systems. The seminar aims to foster dialogue and cooperation among central banks and policymakers to navigate the evolving economic and technological landscape, sharing experiences and best practices.



Central Bank of India reports ₹13.97 crore in unauthorised transactions :-

Central Bank of India has reported unauthorised transactions amounting to approximately ₹13.97 crore and filed a police complaint, according to a report. The

transactions reportedly involved 187 transfers from the bank's Reserve Bank of India settlement account to accounts held at 36 other banks. The incident is linked to an alleged breach involving the Centralised SFMS server operated by IFTAS, an organisation providing financial technology infrastructure to Indian banks.



American Express plans to cut approximately 3,500 jobs despite rising profits :-

American Express has announced plans to eliminate approximately 3,500 jobs, representing around 5% of its global workforce, as part of a restructuring programme intended to improve efficiency and accelerate decision-making. The announcement accompanied strong third-quarter financial results: net profit increased 28% to $3.71 billion, supported by spending from cardholders and higher card fees. The company has said that streamlining its organisational structure will help it become more efficient and prepare for greater use of artificial intelligence.



PhonePe Launches Tatkal NPS for Digital NPS Account Opening :-

PhonePe introduced Tatkal NPS, enabling users to open a National Pension System (NPS) account digitally with an initial contribution of just ₹250. The process utilizes existing bank KYC verified via OTP, eliminating the need for fresh documents. The NPS is a defined-contribution retirement scheme regulated by the PFRDA, offering Tier I and Tier II accounts. This facility was earlier announced by PFRDA for PhonePe and BHIM on 6 October 2026, enhancing accessibility to retirement planning.

6: Books and Author



"Toxic: Stories, Science, and Remedies for a Cleaner Mind, Body and Spirit" — Dr Mukesh Batra & Swami Shailendra Saraswati :-

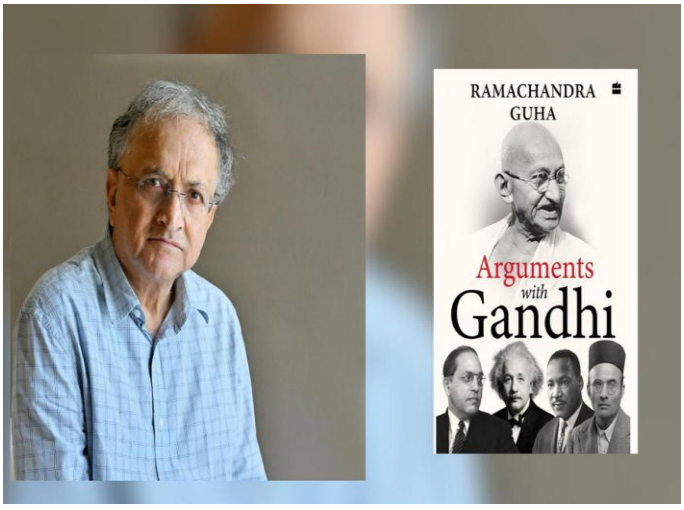
Toxic: Stories, Science, and Remedies for a Cleaner Mind, Body and Spirit, written by Dr Mukesh Batra with Swami Shailendra Saraswati and published by Bloomsbury India, was unveiled in New Delhi. The book uses the idea of "toxicity" much more broadly than chemical pollution. It examines environmental pollution alongside stress, unhealthy relationships, digital dependence, emotional strain and patterns of thinking that can affect wellbeing. At the launch at The Lalit, Batra explained that his

interest came from observing how modern life can place pressure on both physical and psychological health.



A book "Van Upvan" by Prakash Prabhakar launched :-

Van Upvan, an edited collection of poems by late Punjabi poet Prakash Prabhakar, was formally launched at Panjab University, Chandigarh. The launch was organised by the university's School of Punjabi Studies along with Naad Pargaasu, Sri Amritsar, and was accompanied by a literary symposium devoted to Prabhakar's poetic consciousness. Rather than presenting the book merely as a posthumous collection, the event placed his poetry within a wider discussion of Punjabi literary traditions and the evolution of poetic expression.



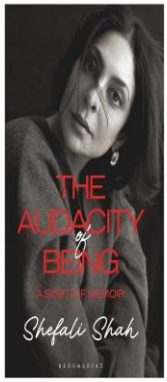
A book "Arguments with Gandhi" by Ramachandra Guha launched :-

Historian Ramachandra Guha launched Arguments with Gandhi at the Bangalore International Centre deliberately coinciding with Gandhi Jayanti. Published by Fourth Estate India, the 432-page book moves away from conventional biography and instead examines Mahatma Gandhi through the arguments, criticisms and intellectual disagreements surrounding his ideas. Guha brings together debates involving Marxists, Ambedkarite thinkers, religious nationalists and other critics, while also examining arguments supporting Gandhi's positions on non-violence, pluralism and limits on excessive consumption.



A book titled "Creator's Messages for The Light Within" by Dr. Harpreet A. De. Singh launched :-

Creator's Messages for The Light Within, the debut book by Dr. Harpreet A. De. Singh, was launched at the ICA Conclave 2026 in Goa. A former airline CEO and pilot, Dr. Singh draws on more than three decades of aviation and corporate leadership alongside her practice of meditation and spiritual reflection. The book brings together spirituality, consciousness, mindfulness, self-awareness, purpose and personal transformation. One of its distinctive ideas is to use flight and navigation as metaphors for life: just as pilots need awareness, discipline, decision-making and course correction, individuals can consciously navigate their inner lives.



A book "The Audacity of Being: A Sort of Memoir" by Shefali Shah launched :-

Actor Shefali Shah's debut book, The Audacity of Being: A Sort of Memoir, was launched by Bloomsbury India. Rather than presenting a conventional chronological autobiography, Shah describes the book as a collection of reflections on her life, career, relationships, failures and evolution as an actor. Her approach is deliberately personal and conversational, covering the uncertainty of building a career without established industry connections and the lessons she drew from professional setbacks. Recent interviews around the release have also highlighted her discussion of body image, therapy, family background and the end of her first marriage.



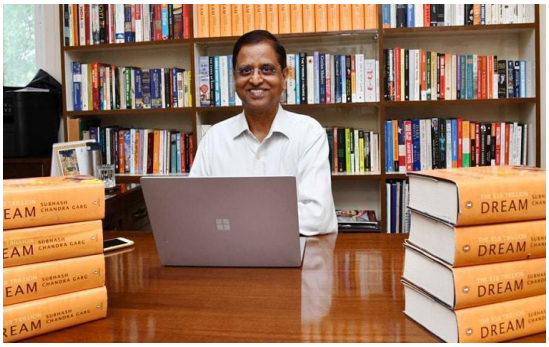
A book titled "Life Skills to Reach the Top" by Ashok Kumar and O. P. Manocha launched :-

Former Uttarakhand Director General of Police Ashok Kumar and former DRDO scientist O. P. Manocha have co-authored Life Skills to Reach the Top, launched at IIT Delhi. Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya attended the event, alongside boAt co-founder Aman Gupta. Published by S. Chand Publishing, the 248-page book addresses the practical abilities that complement academic qualifications, including career planning, goal-setting, communication, emotional intelligence, resilience, time management and decision-making.



A book titled "India-China: The Calculus of Power" by Shishir Priyadarshi and Bhavna Singh launched :-

The Chintan Research Foundation launched India-China: The Calculus of Power in New Delhi followed by a discussion on India–China relations and the changing international order. Edited by Shishir Priyadarshi and Bhavna Singh, the volume examines the complicated relationship between two neighbouring Asian powers whose economic connections coexist with strategic rivalry. Its subject encompasses the wider calculations influencing bilateral relations, including security, geopolitical competition, economic interests and the changing distribution of global influence.



A book titled "The Great Indian Budget: How the Government of India Spends Your Money" by Subhash Chandra Garg launched :-

Former Finance Secretary of India Subhash Chandra Garg published The Great Indian Budget: How the Government of India Spends Your Money through

Hachette India. The 376-page book explains the processes behind preparing the Union Budget, drawing on Garg's experience in government finance and economic policymaking. It explores how fiscal priorities are negotiated, how spending decisions are made and why apparently small adjustments in taxation or public expenditure can affect millions of people. Rather than treating the Budget as a collection of technical tables, Garg seeks to explain the relationship between government decisions and everyday concerns such as household expenses, business conditions, employment and public services.



A book titled "The Evolution of TV News in India" by Harsaran Bir Kaur Pandey launched :-

Veteran broadcaster and former Doordarshan producer Harsaran Bir Kaur Pandey has documented nearly five decades of Indian television journalism in this new book, published by Om Books International. Former Prasar Bharati chairman Surya Prakash launched the publication at the India International Centre in New Delhi. Drawing on her professional experience, Pandey describes the early years of television news, when limited technical resources and film-based reporting made producing a bulletin very different from today's digital workflows.



A Book titled Vidyarthi Prerna launched in Mumbai :-

A new educational publication celebrating the life and legacy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was launched in Mumbai. Titled Vidyarthi Prerna, or Student Inspiration, the book is intended to introduce students to Ambedkar's life, achievements and contribution to Indian society. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and former Chief Justice of India Bhushan Gavai participated in the launch. The initiative places particular emphasis on making constitutional values accessible to younger generations. By presenting the experiences of a leader who fought against caste discrimination and helped shape India's Constitution, the publication seeks to connect historical knowledge with contemporary questions of equality, justice and educational opportunity.



A new book "Royal Witch" by Philippa Gregory launched :-

Royal Witch is the latest historical novel from bestselling British author Philippa Gregory, released. The story begins in 1420, when Eleanor Cobham arrives at the court of Henry V with little social standing and hopes initially to secure a respectable marriage. Her circumstances change after she becomes lady-in-waiting to Jacqueline, an exiled countess whose position is increasingly precarious. As Eleanor gains responsibility and influence, her ambitions expand dramatically. The novel follows her rise through a dangerous world of court politics, prophecy, power and alleged sorcery.

7: Defence



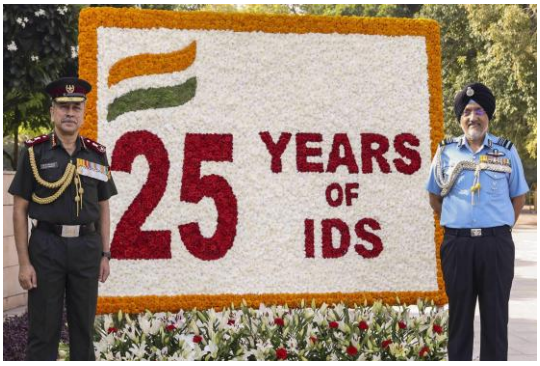
AFSPA Extended in Parts of Three Northeastern States :-

The central government extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in parts of Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh from October 1, 2026, to March 31, 2027. In Manipur, AFSPA continues except in 13 police station areas across five districts. In Nagaland, nine districts are fully covered, along with 21 police stations in five other districts. In Arunachal Pradesh, the act applies to Tirap, Changlang, Longding districts, and three police stations in Namsai. This decision follows a review of the law-and-order situation.



IAF Hosts Multinational Exercise at AFS Jodhpur :-

The Indian Air Force is hosting the second edition of the multinational exercise 'Power in Partnership' at AFS Jodhpur from September 26 to October 12, 2026. The exercise includes participation from seven nations: Australia, USA, UAE, France, Germany, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. Notably, it marks the debut of the F-35 aircraft with the IAF. Other participating aircraft include the Rafale, F-16, and A400M. The exercise aims to enhance interoperability and includes seminars, industry tours, and cultural events.



HQ IDS Celebrates 25 Years of Tri-Service Synergy in India :-

The Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS), which plays a crucial role in promoting jointness and integration among India's armed forces, celebrated its 25th anniversary. Established on October 1, 2001, HQ IDS has been pivotal in enhancing operational preparedness through joint doctrines and training. The silver jubilee was marked by the event 'Trishakti Manthan', featuring speeches by key defence leaders. A commemorative coffee-table book and a film on HQ IDS's achievements were released. The occasion highlighted the institution's contributions to emerging domains like cyber and space.



India and South Korea Hold 10th Defence Joint Committee Meeting :-

The 10th India-Republic of Korea Joint Committee Meeting on Defence Industries & Logistics took place in New Delhi. Co-chaired by Dinesh Mahur from India and Kim Il Dong from South Korea, the meeting reviewed

bilateral cooperation in the defence industry and logistics. Indian companies like L&T and BEML, along with Korean firms such as Hanwha Aerospace, participated. The meeting reaffirmed the commitment to deepen ties in defence production and logistics. Kim Il Dong also met with Raksha Rajya Mantri Sanjay Seth during the event.



INS Sahyadri and Kulish Complete ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise :-

Indian Naval Ships Sahyadri and Kulish have concluded their participation in the ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise 2026 in the Philippines. The exercise, themed 'Anchored in Trust, United at Sea', included Harbour and Sea Phases, featuring professional interactions, operational coordination, and maritime training. Key activities included Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Visit-Board-Search-Seizure (VBSS), and Underway Replenishment drills. The exercise enhanced maritime cooperation and interoperability, reinforcing India's commitment to its Act East Policy and closer maritime partnerships with ASEAN countries.



Naval Commanders' Conference 2026 Concludes in New Delhi :-

The second edition of the Naval Commanders' Conference 2026 was held at Nausena Bhawan in New Delhi. This apex forum of the Indian Navy included senior operational and area commanders. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the Chief of Defence Staff, and the Army Chief participated to enhance tri-service coordination. The conference agenda covered operations, logistics, force modernization, artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, cyber security, maritime security, and Operation Urja Suraksha, focusing on strategic and operational readiness.



Indian Army Conducts Training for NCC Cadets in Mizoram :-

The Indian Army's Counter Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School in Mizoram conducted a two-week training programme for 83 NCC cadets. This initiative aimed to expose cadets to military discipline, field skills, and teamwork. The training included drills, physical fitness, map reading, and survival skills, along with an introduction to jungle warfare and modern military technology. The programme is part of efforts to strengthen ties between the Army and local communities, promoting national integration and encouraging participation in nation-building activities.



India-UAE Conducting Exercise MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN 2026 :-

The India-UAE joint military exercise, MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN 2026, commenced on 5 October 2026 at the Foreign Training Node in Chaubatia, Uttarakhand, and will continue until 18 October. The exercise aims to enhance interoperability, mutual understanding, and military cooperation, focusing on mountain warfare. Both armies have deployed 92 personnel each, including women officers and combatants in specialist roles. Activities include tactical drills, firing, surveillance grids, drone operations, rock climbing, obstacle and endurance training, and technology-enabled operations.



23 Indian Seafarers Safe After Drone Attack on Oil Tanker :-

A Ukrainian drone strike set fire to a Liberian-registered oil tanker manned by an Indian crew off the Russian Black Sea coast. All 23 crew members were safely evacuated. The incident, near Sochi, occurred a day after another vessel sank off the Romanian coast, injuring three Indian nationals. India condemned the attack and stressed the importance of dialogue to resolve conflicts, while expressing gratitude to Romanian authorities for their swift assistance. The Ministry of External Affairs highlighted the threats to global commerce posed by such attacks.



India Launches First Indigenous Fleet Support Ship 'Surya' :-

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh launched India's first indigenous Fleet Support Ship, FSS-1 'Surya', at Hindustan Shipyard Limited in Visakhapatnam. The ship enhances the Indian Navy's operational capabilities in the Indian Ocean Region with features like increased cargo capacity, at-sea replenishment, maintenance workshops, a helicopter deck, and self-defence systems. The launch is a significant step in strengthening indigenous shipbuilding under the Make in India initiative. Singh also laid the keel for FSS-5 and inaugurated upgraded infrastructure at the shipyard.



Indian Navy Launches Offshore Patrol Vessel 'Shreyas' in Kolkata :-

The Indian Navy launched its next-generation offshore patrol vessel 'Shreyas' at Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) in Kolkata. The vessel, designated Yard

3040, was launched by Reyman Kochhar with Vice Admiral Ajay Kochhar in attendance. This launch marks a significant milestone in India's indigenous shipbuilding efforts, aligning with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India initiatives. The vessel will enhance the Navy's capabilities in maritime surveillance, search and rescue, and anti-piracy missions. The name 'Shreyas' means 'best' or 'most excellent' in Sanskrit, reflecting India's heritage.



Indian Coast Guard Conducts SAREX-2026 off Paradip :-

The Indian Coast Guard recently conducted the 12th National Maritime Search & Rescue Exercise (SAREX-2026) off Paradip, Odisha. The exercise, themed 'Leveraging Technology to Strengthen SAR Preparedness and Maritime Safety,' involved participation from the Coast Guard, Navy, Air Force, Shipping Corporation, DG Shipping, Fisheries, Customs, Marine Police, Paradip Port, and the Odisha administration. Additionally, 32 observers from 30 countries attended. The assets deployed included 15 ICG ships, 3 Dorniers, 3 ALHs, 1 Chetak, IAF C-130J & Mi-17, and 2 Navy ships, alongside civil and state resources.



North Korea Launches Missiles After South Korea's Hypersonic Test :-

North Korea launched multiple ballistic missiles towards the sea off its east coast, following South Korea's recent hypersonic missile test. The missiles, fired from near Pyongyang, included different types, with one flying over 900 km. South Korea condemned the launches as violations of UN Security Council resolutions. The incident adds to rising tensions between the Koreas, with North Korea conducting over 10 missile tests this year. The launches are seen as a show of force and a response to South Korea's hypersonic missile test, amid ongoing regional tensions.



INS Mangrol Commissioned by Indian Navy :-

The Indian Navy commissioned the third ASW Shallow Water Craft, INS Mangrol, at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai. Built by Cochin Shipyard Limited with over 80% indigenous components, the craft is equipped with Abhay Hull Mounted Sonar, lightweight torpedoes, an anti-submarine rocket launcher, and the Maareech Torpedo Decoy System. Designed for detecting and neutralizing submarines in shallow coastal waters, it supports Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat goals for naval self-reliance.



INDRA-2026 Naval Exercise Begins in Vladivostok :-

The bilateral naval exercise INDRA-2026 between India and Russia commenced recently in Vladivostok. The Indian Navy's INS Sahyadri, a Shivalik-class stealth frigate, is participating in the exercise, which runs until October 18. The exercise consists of two stages: Harbour, focusing on professional exchanges, and Sea, emphasizing maritime operations. INDRA-2026 aims to enhance interoperability, coordination, and professional ties between the Indian and Russian navies, aligning with India's MAHASAGAR vision.



India-Australia Joint Military Exercise AUSTRAHIND 2026 Begins :-

The fifth edition of the India-Australia Joint Military Exercise AUSTRAHIND 2026 started in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, involving around 120 personnel each from the Indian and Australian armies. Scheduled until November 1, the exercise aims to enhance interoperability and operational coordination, focusing on joint operations in island and coastal environments. The Indian contingent includes troops from the Garhwal Rifles, while the Australian contingent comprises troops from the 13 Brigade.



Indian Navy to Host 'Swavlamban' 2026 for Defence Innovations :-

The Indian Navy will organize the fifth edition of its Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Seminar, 'Swavlamban' 2026, on October 26-27 in New Delhi. The seminar aims to promote indigenous technological innovations and strengthen 'Aatmanirbharta' by bringing together innovators, industry partners, startups, MSMEs, academia, and the Defence Forces. It will focus on emerging maritime security challenges and explore collaborative solutions to enhance naval operations. The event will also feature discussions on funding opportunities and the release of key documents to support India's maritime capabilities.



INS Sudarshini Concludes Salalah Port Call During Lokayan-2026 :-

The Indian Navy's sail training ship, INS Sudarshini, completed its second visit to Salalah, Oman as part of the 10-month Lokayan-2026 transoceanic deployment. The deployment, associated with the MAHASAGAR vision

and “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,” aims to train personnel in seamanship, resilience, and leadership. The visit included professional interactions and sports events with the Royal Navy of Oman, and attracted over 500 visitors from the Indian diaspora, including students from Indian School Salalah.



India and Uzbekistan Enhance Counter-Terrorism Cooperation :-

India and Uzbekistan reaffirmed their commitment to counter-terrorism cooperation during the 10th meeting of their Joint Working Group in New Delhi. The meeting, co-chaired by officials from both countries, addressed global and regional terrorist threats, extremism, and terrorism financing. Both sides agreed to enhance information sharing and capacity building. They also discussed cooperation in multilateral forums like the UN and SCO-RATS. The next meeting will be held in Uzbekistan, further strengthening bilateral security efforts.



Indian Navy to Commission Indigenous Warship Samarthak :-

The Indian Navy is set to commission Samarthak, the first of four Multi-Purpose Vessels, on October 16 at Naval Base Karwar. Built by Larsen & Toubro under the Make in India initiative, Samarthak supports maritime surveillance, patrol, and low-intensity operations. It can serve as a platform for unmanned systems, humanitarian aid, and disaster relief, and convert into a limited hospital ship. The vessel features an integrated combat suite with indigenous sensors and weapons. Samarthak's crest, depicting an Indian elephant, symbolizes strength and agility, while its motto emphasizes victory.



Keen Sword 27: Largest Japan-US Military Drills Near Taiwan :-

The largest joint military exercise between the U.S. and Japan, 'Keen Sword 27', is taking place in southern Japan, involving 45,000 Japanese and 11,000 American troops. The drills focus on defending Japan's southwestern island chain near Taiwan and include advanced anti-ship missile systems. China's military is closely monitoring the exercises, deploying spy drones and reconnaissance ships. These drills underscore the strategic importance of the region amid tensions over Taiwan, with both sides preparing for potential conflicts while emphasizing their desire for peace.



DAC Approves Defence Acquisitions Worth Rs 2.12 Lakh Crore :-

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, approved capital acquisition proposals worth approximately ₹2.12 lakh crore for the armed forces. Notably, 82% of the procurement will be from Indian industry. The approvals include High Mobility Vehicles, Self-Propelled Tracked Gun Systems, and Light Multi Role Helicopters for the Army, Active Offboard Decoy Systems for the Navy, and helicopters and air defence systems for the Air Force. These acquisitions aim to enhance operational mobility, surveillance, and combat capabilities across the armed forces.



Rajnath Singh to Attend ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting in Philippines :-

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will lead the Indian delegation at the 13th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) – Plus in Cebu, Philippines, on October 28 and 29. The meeting will address regional and international security issues. Singh will also hold bilateral meetings with counterparts from participating countries to review defence ties and explore strategic partnerships. The ADMM-Plus forum, chaired by the Philippines in 2026, includes ASEAN member states and eight dialogue partners, including India, to strengthen security and defence cooperation. India is co-chairing the ADMM-Plus Experts Working Group on Counter-Terrorism with Malaysia for the 2024–2027 cycle.



UK and Poland Sign Warsaw Defence Plan :-

The UK and Poland signed a three-year Warsaw Defence Plan in Warsaw. This plan implements the Northolt Treaty signed in May 2026 and covers cooperation in land, sea, air, cyber, and defence industries. Key focus areas include AI, drones, anti-drone systems, joint exercises, Baltic Sea activities, and ammunition production. The plan supports the Miecznik frigate programme and Poland's Narew air-defence systems, aiming to counter Russian hybrid threats and strengthen European defence within NATO.



INS Srishti NGOPV Floated Off at Goa Shipyard :-

Goa Shipyard Limited floated off the INS Srishti, a Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NGOPV), at Vaddem Yard, Goa. This vessel is under construction for the Indian Navy and marks a significant milestone in its development. The NGOPVs are crucial for maritime surveillance, protection of offshore assets, anti-piracy operations, search and rescue, and humanitarian assistance. This project is aligned with the Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiatives, emphasizing self-reliance in defense shipbuilding.

8: Economy



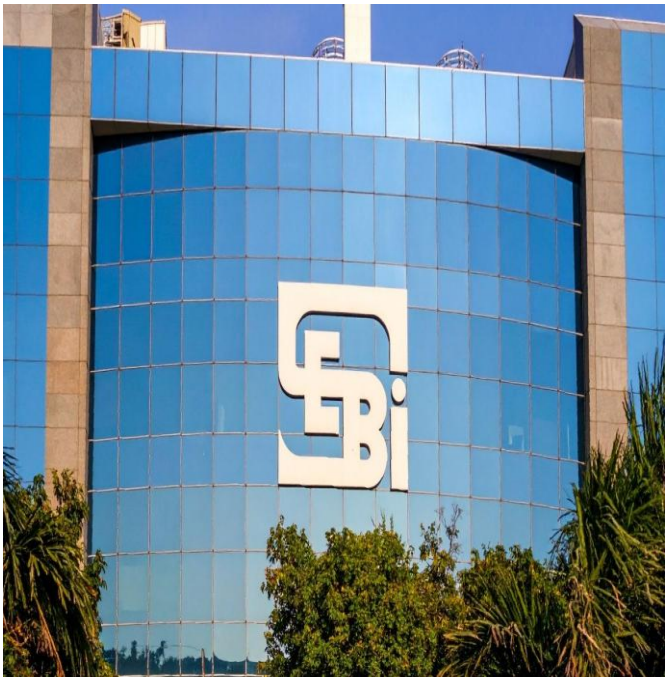
India Raises Concerns Over SRIA's Impact on Energy Market :-

India expressed concerns about the Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act (SRIA) during a meeting with a US Congressional delegation. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri highlighted the potential implications of SRIA on bilateral ties and the global energy market. The legislation authorises the US President to impose tariffs on countries purchasing Russian oil and gas, affecting nations like India and China. The meeting also discussed the timeline for the next India-Russia summit. The SRIA's impact on international relations and energy supplies remains a key concern for India.



Union Cabinet Approves Integrated Transport and Logistics Authority :-

The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of the Integrated Transport and Logistics Authority (ITLA) as a Special Purpose Vehicle. ITLA is tasked with research, planning, appraisal, monitoring, and impact assessment of transport and logistics projects. It will prepare a National Transport Master Plan with a horizon of over 10 years, covering roads, railways, ports, aviation, waterways, urban mobility, and logistics. The authority will also build a National Transport Data Repository and provide technical appraisal for government projects valued at ₹500 crore or more.



SEBI Revises Settlement Rules, Introduces Fast-Track Route :-

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has implemented the Settlement Regulations, 2026, which revise the calculation of settlement amounts and introduce a fast-track mechanism for cases involving amounts up to ₹10 lakh. The new framework aims to simplify and make settlement procedures more transparent. It includes a formula linking the settlement amount to a base amount based on minimum penalties for violations. The regulations also introduce fast-track settlements for certain violations and monetary thresholds, with eligibility depending on the nature of the violation.



Canada's Largest Trade Delegation to India in Over 30 Years :-

Canada has sent its largest trade delegation to India in over 30 years, focusing on sectors like aerospace, clean energy, and technology. The mission aims to deepen economic ties and advance negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Canadian International Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu highlighted the goal of doubling bilateral trade to 70 billion US dollars by 2030. The delegation seeks to build partnerships and explore investment opportunities. Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand will also visit India to discuss trade, energy, and security cooperation.



India-UK Genomics Centre of Excellence Inaugurated :-

The BRIC-CDFD–ONT India Genomics Centre of Excellence was inaugurated in New Delhi by Dr. Jitendra Singh and UK Secretary Jonathan Reynolds. This collaboration between BRIC-CDFD and Oxford Nanopore Technologies focuses on genomics research in areas such as rare diseases, cancer, infectious disease surveillance, newborn screening, and oral cancer. The centre supports technology translation and commercialization under the India–UK Science & Innovation cooperation, marking a significant step in the 8th India–UK Science and Innovation Council meeting.



Government Revises Windfall Tax on Petrol and Diesel Exports :-

The Central Government has revised the windfall tax on fuel exports, increasing the levy on petrol exports to ₹2.5 per litre and reducing it on diesel exports to ₹8.5 per litre, effective October 16. The export duty on aviation turbine fuel remains unchanged at ₹10.5 per litre. This adjustment aims to enhance domestic petroleum availability and prevent exporters from exploiting international price differences. The windfall tax, introduced amid West Asia tensions, is reviewed fortnightly to address fluctuations in global crude oil prices and ensure stability in the energy market.



NPPA Caps Trade Margins on 137 Anti-Cancer Drugs to Reduce Prices :-

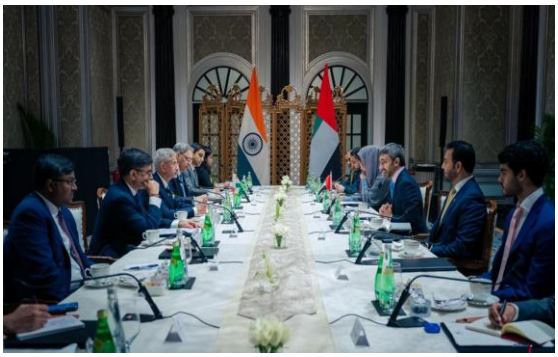
The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has capped trade margins on 137 anti-cancer drugs at 30% of their maximum retail price, effective November 9. This move is expected to reduce prices by up to 70%, easing the financial burden on patients. The drugs covered include immunotherapies and widely used

medicines like pembrolizumab. The decision follows a 2019 pilot that capped margins on 42 drugs, reducing prices significantly. The NPPA aims to ensure equitable access to cancer treatment while maintaining manufacturer revenues.



India–New Zealand FTA Comes into Force :-

The India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement came into force on 20 October 2026. New Zealand has eliminated tariffs on all Indian goods immediately, while India grants concessions on 70% of tariff lines, covering approximately 95% of bilateral trade value. The agreement aims to increase goods-and-services trade from ~2.4 billion to NZ$ 7 billion (~₹35,000 crore) by 2030. It includes a $20 billion FDI commitment, temporary skilled visas, extended PhD post-study work rights, and a working-holiday scheme starting 16 November.



India-UAE Review Strategic Partnership in Bilateral Talks :-

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and UAE Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan reviewed the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and the UAE during talks in India. The discussions covered trade, investment, energy, and technology, with both sides expressing satisfaction over the partnership's progress. The ministers agreed to maintain close consultations on regional and global issues, reaffirming their commitment to broadening bilateral cooperation and sustaining the momentum of their strategic partnership.



7th AgriVoltaics World Conference Opens in New Delhi

The 7th AgriVoltaics World Conference began at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, marking its first hosting in the Global South. Organized by the MNRE with support from Germany's BMUV and Conexio-PSE, the conference focuses on integrating agriculture and renewable energy. The theme, “Powering the Global South”, aims to transform farmers into both Annadatas and Urjadatas. Union Ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Pralhad Joshi addressed the conference, which seeks to scale precision agrivoltaics solutions for increased farmer incomes and accelerated clean energy transition.



DCGI Approves Zytorvi for Esophageal Cancer Treatment :-

The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) approved Zytorvi (toripalimab) in combination with cisplatin and paclitaxel for first-line treatment of unresectable advanced, recurrent, or metastatic esophageal squamous cell carcinoma (ESCC) in adults. Toripalimab, a

PD-1 inhibitor immunotherapy, does not require PD-L1 selection. The approval is based on the Phase 3 JUPITER-06 trial, which showed a median overall survival of 17.7 months compared to 12.9 months with chemotherapy alone, reducing the relative risk of disease progression or death by 42%.



India Ranks 3rd in Ipsos Quality of Care Index 2026 :-

India has been ranked third in the Ipsos Quality of Care Perception Index 2026, following Malaysia and Singapore. The survey, conducted among 22,528 adults across 32 countries, revealed that 68% of Indians are satisfied with healthcare quality, and 64% trust the system to deliver the best care. Furthermore, 73% found doctor appointments easy, and 81% found pharmacy access convenient. Despite this, 74% felt that many cannot afford care, with 42% citing high costs as the biggest issue. The survey was conducted between July and August 2026.



US Seeks India's Help to Address Diesel Crisis :-

The U.S. is engaging with India to address rising diesel prices, as U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited Reliance Industries' Jamnagar refinery in Gujarat. The refinery, the world's largest single-site oil-refining complex, is being leveraged to process heavy Venezuelan crude, aiming to reduce global fuel costs. This initiative is part of energy diplomacy efforts to diversify India's energy supply chains and address the U.S. diesel crisis ahead of its mid-term elections. The collaboration highlights the strategic importance of India's refining capabilities in global energy markets.



Kerala Approves India's First Cooperative Airline :-

The Kerala government has approved the establishment of India's first cooperative-sector airline by the Kerala Civil Aviation Development Cooperative Society. Announced by Chief Minister V. D. Satheesan, the project is led by C. N. Vijayakrishnan of MVR Cancer Centre. Proposed to be named 'Co-Keralam', the airline plans to lease two 72-seater aircraft to operate routes from Kochi to cities like Kozhikode, Kannur, and Bengaluru. This initiative marks a significant step in Kerala's aviation sector.



Jio Platforms Surges 21% on Stock Market Debut :-

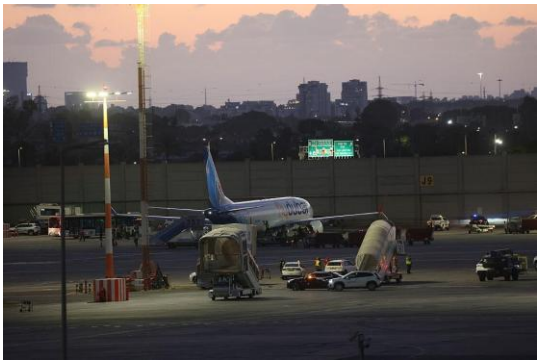
Jio Platforms made a strong debut in the stock market, with its stock price soaring 21.4% above the initial public offering (IPO) price on the first day of trading. The stock closed at ₹1,417.35, surpassing Bharti Airtel in market capitalization. The IPO was oversubscribed 22 times, drawing significant institutional interest. Anant Ambani, executive director, acknowledged the support from subscribers during the launch event.

9: International



FBI Adds Goldy Brar to Ten Most Wanted Fugitives List

The FBI has added gangster Satinderjeet Singh, alias Goldy Brar, to its Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list, offering a USD one million reward for information leading to his arrest. Brar is allegedly involved in the Lawrence Bishnoi Organised Crime Group, linked to violent acts across the US and Canada. The FBI warns that Brar is armed and dangerous, involved in assassinations, shootings, kidnappings, extortions, and drug trafficking. His inclusion on the list highlights efforts to combat transnational criminal gangs, with cooperation from law enforcement in Canada, Europe, and Asia.



Flydubai Co-pilot Transferred to UAE After Incident :-

The co-pilot involved in an altercation with Captain Smit Machchhar on a flydubai flight has been transferred to Abu Dhabi. The Saudi Ministry of Interior confirmed that both pilots left for Abu Dhabi after medical clearance. The incident occurred on a flight that safely landed in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia, with all passengers and crew receiving necessary assistance. Following medical evaluations, the pilots departed Saudi Arabia accompanied by a UAE security team. Preliminary investigations revealed that the co-pilot assaulted the captain, leading to injuries for both.



Spanish PM Calls Snap Election Amid Housing Crisis Protests :-

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has announced an early election for November 29, following nationwide protests over a housing crisis. The election aims to bolster his parliamentary support after recent legislative setbacks. Sanchez's Socialist Party is trailing in polls, and an electoral defeat could end one of Europe's last left-leaning governments. The opposition, led by Alberto Nuñez Feijoo of the People's Party, has pledged to double homebuilding and cut taxes. The election comes amid a surge in far-right support across Europe, with potential implications for Spain's political landscape.



India-Ethiopia Enhance Strategic Partnership with Jaishankar's Visit :-

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar arrived in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to advance the strategic partnership between India and Ethiopia. The visit, part of a three-

nation African tour, aims to elevate bilateral ties through high-level discussions. Jaishankar was welcomed by Ethiopian State Minister Berhanu Tsegaye. The talks are expected to focus on enhancing the multifaceted partnership between the two countries. Jaishankar will also chair the Regional Heads of Mission conference, attended by Indian envoys in the region, further strengthening India's diplomatic presence in Africa.



Houthi Attack on Saudi Airport Kills 12, Injures Over 300

A Houthi attack on Riyadh's international airport resulted in 12 fatalities and over 300 injuries, marking the deadliest strike in Saudi Arabia in over a decade. The attack, part of an escalating campaign by the Iran-backed Houthis, targeted King Khalid International Airport. Among the deceased were nationals from Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, the US, and several other countries. The incident has exposed vulnerabilities in Saudi defense capabilities, prompting a Saudi-led coalition to vow a response. The attack follows the unraveling of a ceasefire and highlights ongoing regional tensions.



India Urges CICA Members to Unite Against Terrorism :-

India has called on the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) members to unite against all forms of terrorism, including cross-border terrorism. At the 7th CICA Summit in Baku, Azerbaijan, Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh emphasized regional connectivity respecting sovereignty. The summit adopted the Baku Declaration, focusing on connectivity, digitalisation, and sustainable growth. India, a founding member, reaffirmed its commitment to CICA as a platform for dialogue and cooperation. The initiative, proposed by Kazakhstan in 1992, aims to promote peace and security in Asia.



World Bank Aims to Quintuple Critical Minerals Financing by 2030 :-

World Bank President Ajay Banga announced a goal to quintuple the bank's critical minerals business over five years, aiming for $19 billion in financing from 2026 to 2030. This initiative, revealed at the IMF and World Bank annual meetings in Bangkok, involves partnerships with 20 countries to boost local industries and job creation. The plan aligns with US calls for increased World Bank investment in critical minerals, emphasizing project de-risking and infrastructure investment. The bank's Metals and Minerals plan advocates a cautious approach to deep-sea mining, ensuring consistency with bank policies.



India and Brunei Discuss Trade Expansion :-

The 3rd meeting of the India–Brunei Joint Trade Committee was co-chaired by India's Joint Secretary Amit Verma and Brunei's Permanent Secretary Dr. May Fa'ezah. The discussions focused on expanding trade, enhancing market access, and boosting exports of agricultural and animal products, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, and energy. The meeting also emphasized the importance of tourism, trade fairs, and B2B exchanges. The next meeting is scheduled to be held in Brunei.



Iran Labels Starlink a 'Tool of War' :-

Iran has officially designated Elon Musk's Starlink satellite network as a 'tool of war', citing national security threats. The Iranian government is implementing measures such as electronic jamming and surveillance to counter the network, which bypasses state-controlled internet gateways. The move highlights the geopolitical risks of reliance on private corporations for wartime communications. Iran is also advancing its National Information Network to maintain domestic connectivity amidst global internet disruptions.



ASEAN Faces Diplomatic Tensions Due to Indonesia's Wildfire Crisis :-

A severe wildfire crisis in Indonesia has led to a diplomatic showdown among ASEAN nations, as toxic haze blankets at least eight countries, including Singapore and Malaysia. The crisis has pushed air-quality indices to hazardous levels, causing school closures and overwhelming hospitals with respiratory cases. The fires, driven by commercial land-clearing and exacerbated by the 2026 El Nino cycle, have scorched 900,000 hectares. As regional patience wears thin, countries like Singapore are investigating those responsible for the burning, highlighting the urgent need for cross-border cooperation to address the environmental disaster.



Trump Endorses Netanyahu in Israeli Election :-

US President Donald Trump endorsed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the upcoming Israeli parliamentary election. Trump praised Netanyahu as a "great warrior prime minister" and a peace partner. The endorsement comes amid Israeli-US disagreements over Iran, and polls suggest no candidate has a clear path to power. The election follows the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack and could determine Netanyahu's political future. Netanyahu expressed gratitude for Trump's support, highlighting their close but sometimes fractious relationship.



Piyush Goyal Strengthens India-Germany Economic Ties in Berlin :-

Union Minister Piyush Goyal concluded a two-day visit to Germany, focusing on enhancing bilateral trade and investment. He met with German officials and business leaders, including Siemens Healthineers and Volkswagen, to explore industrial cooperation. Discussions also centered on advanced manufacturing and research collaboration. Goyal engaged with Indian researchers in Germany and participated in a roundtable with Fraunhofer Institutes, emphasizing microelectronics and smart manufacturing.



SAMHiTA Project Launched to Preserve India-Sri Lanka Buddhist Heritage :-

India and Sri Lanka have launched the SAMHiTA Project to digitize ancient manuscripts at Colombo's Gangaramaya Temple, preserving shared Buddhist heritage. The initiative, supported by the Indian government, aims to safeguard historical, religious, and cultural knowledge. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in July, and local experts are digitizing 100 manuscripts, expected to be completed by November. This project reflects the longstanding cultural ties between the two nations and highlights the role of cultural cooperation in preserving South Asia's shared heritage.



US Resolution Proposes July as 'Indian American Heritage Month' :-

US Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi has introduced a bipartisan resolution to designate July as 'Indian American Heritage Month', supported by 256 cosponsors. The resolution honors the contributions of over 5.2 million Indian Americans in various fields, including science, technology, and public service. It highlights the community's historical and cultural roots and their significant role in the US economy and society. The resolution, submitted in the US House of Representatives, is under committee consideration. It commemorates the Luce-Celler Act of 1946, which allowed Indian descent individuals to become US citizens.



Indian AI Firms Showcase Innovations at Dubai AI Festival 2026 :-

At the Dubai AI Festival 2026, India is showcasing its advancements in AI, including enterprise automation and cybersecurity. The event, held at the Dubai World Trade Centre, focuses on AI development and adoption.

The Bharat Pavilion features 23 Indian companies presenting AI solutions across sectors. Organized by Dubai AI Campus and UAE's AI Minister, the festival highlights AI governance and investment. The Telecom Equipment and Services Export Promotion Council facilitates the pavilion, aiming to expand India's AI reach globally.



Ukraine Joins NATO Procurement Partnership :-

Ukraine has joined the NATO Support and Procurement Agency's Security Cooperation Support Partnership as the first non-NATO country with a separate partnership. This agreement allows Ukrainian firms to bid for NATO contracts and procure equipment through the NSPA. Approved by the NAC in April and Ukraine's Cabinet in August, this partnership complements existing support like the CAP Trust Fund and IT Capability Coalition, enhancing Ukraine's access to NATO resources and procurement opportunities.



India-US Defence Framework Reviewed at Cebu Meeting :-

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth in Cebu, Philippines, to review the 10-year India-US Defence Framework. The meeting, held on the sidelines of the 13th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus, marked the first anniversary of the framework, which aims to deepen defence cooperation. Discussions focused on military technology, information sharing, and co-production. Singh emphasized the partnership's role in ensuring a free and secure Indo-Pacific. The framework, signed in 2025, provides policy direction for bilateral defence cooperation over the next decade.



India Seeks Maritime Partnerships with South Korea and Cyprus :-

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal engaged with South Korean maritime firms in Busan to explore investment and technology partnerships. Concurrently, Cyprus backed India's bid for EU recognition of ship-recycling facilities. The discussions covered shipbuilding, marine equipment, and green technologies. Cyprus plans to send a delegation to India for potential partnerships in shipping and maritime technology. The Indian delegation explored collaborations in shipbuilding and marine equipment manufacturing with Korean companies, aiming to enhance India's maritime capabilities by 2047.

10: Miscellaneous



Quarantine in Siberia After Plague Lab Worker Dies :-

A laboratory worker at a Siberian plague research institute has died under undisclosed circumstances, leading to the quarantine of dozens in the Irkutsk region. The World Health Organization has stated that the public health risk is low, but further assessments are ongoing. The deceased, Darya Shipilova, was an employee at the Irkutsk Anti-Plague Research Institute. Authorities have ruled out any accidents involving pathogens, and no new cases have been reported. The situation is being closely monitored by Russian health officials and international bodies.



Varanasi Prepares for IAF Air Show with Safety Measures :-

Ahead of the Indian Air Force's Aerial Display-2026 at Namo Ghat, Varanasi, authorities have implemented strict safety and sanitation measures. A temporary ban on the sale of meat, fish, and poultry within a 20-30 km radius aims to minimize bird strike risks. The event, marking the 94th anniversary of the IAF, is scheduled for October 22, 23, and 25, with October 26 as a standby. Extensive administrative and security arrangements are in place, including cleanliness drives and mobile toilets, to ensure a safe and successful event.



Indian Teams Win Robotics Challenge, Head to Geneva

Teams Singularity and Ferrum Incubators emerged victorious in the Robotics for Good Youth Challenge India 2026-2027, held in New Delhi. They will represent India at the AI for Good Global Summit in Geneva in June 2027. The competition, organized by the ITU and the Department of Telecommunications, saw participation from 57 teams across 14 states. The challenge focused on designing autonomous robots for public health emergency response missions. The event emphasized teamwork, problem-solving, and sustainable robot design, promoting inclusive participation through accessible resources.



India Announces Flag Bearers for Asian Para Games 2026 :-

India has named Pramod Bhagat, a para-badminton athlete, and Bhavina Patel, a para table tennis player, as the country's flag bearers for the Asian Para Games 2026.

The event is scheduled to take place in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, from October 18 to 24. The official send-off was organized by the Paralympic Committee of India in New Delhi. Bhagat has previously won six medals, including two golds, in Games from 2014 to 2023, while Patel has earned two medals, including a silver at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics.



Rajnath Singh Highlights Modern Warfare Needs at Tarang Shakti Exercise :-

During the second edition of Exercise Tarang Shakti 2026 at Air Force Station Jodhpur, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh emphasized self-reliance in defence manufacturing and international partnerships. The exercise, hosted by the Indian Air Force, involves air forces from seven countries, including the USA and France. Singh highlighted the importance of speed, precision, and integration in modern warfare, noting the growing role of unmanned systems and AI. He also stressed India's commitment to Atmanirbharta in defence under Prime Minister Modi's leadership.



IIT Ropar Awards MTech in Defence Technology :-

IIT Ropar awarded its first MTech (Defence Technology) degrees to 59 Armoured Corps officers at the Armoured Corps Centre & School, Ahilyanagar. This joint programme by IIT Ropar and the Armoured Corps Centre & School is the first IIT course tailored for military applications. The curriculum focuses on applied research, armoured vehicle technologies, advanced armaments, and new materials, supporting defence indigenisation and the Viksit Bharat 2047 goals. Captain Abhishek Kumar received the Commandant's Gold Medal and Rolling Trophy.



Lakshadweep Achieves 100% Literacy :-

Lakshadweep was declared fully literate under the ULLAS–Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram. All 1,113 identified adult non-literates successfully passed the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test. The initiative involved home-based teaching and doorstep assessments. ULLAS aims to enhance literacy, numeracy, life skills, basic education, vocational skills, and continuing education. Administrator Praful Patel officially announced the achievement, marking a significant milestone in the territory's educational development.



FSSAI Proposes New Pesticide Residue Limits for Tea :-

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has proposed revised maximum residue limits for pesticides Acetamiprid and Imidacloprid in tea, aiming to

strengthen food safety standards. The proposed limits are 20 mg/kg for Acetamiprid and 50 mg/kg for Imidacloprid. These standards are developed considering scientific assessments and international practices. The proposal is part of FSSAI's efforts to periodically review pesticide residue standards, balancing effective crop protection with consumer safety.



Sankoo Becomes Ladakh's Eighth District :-

Sankoo officially declared as Ladakh's eighth district by LG Vinai Kumar Saxena recently. Located in the Suru Valley, formerly part of Kargil district, the creation of Sankoo aims to decentralise administration and improve service delivery in remote areas. Earlier in April 2026, five new districts were approved, namely Sham, Nubra, Changthang, Zanskar, and Drass. This development aligns with the 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' vision, enhancing governance in the region.



Agri Welfare Portal Launched for Farmers' Single-Window Access :-

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the upgraded Agri Welfare Portal to provide farmers with single-window access to government schemes, financial assistance, and agricultural information. The portal aims to simplify access to services and reduce procedural hurdles. It will connect Farmer Producer Organisations, agricultural scientists, and startups on a digital platform. A special training campaign will be conducted to help farmers use the portal effectively. The portal offers a secure, mobile-friendly interface, including features for weather updates, scientific farming practices, and market prices.



Bastar Dussehra Sees First-Time Participation from Former Naxal Areas :-

For the first time, deities from 50 villages previously affected by Naxalism participated in the Bastar Dussehra festival in Chhattisgarh. This follows the reported eradication of Naxalism in the region as of March 31, 2026. The festival saw increased participation from remote areas, marking a significant cultural milestone. Improved accessibility has allowed residents from formerly inaccessible villages to partake in the festival, reflecting the region's newfound peace and security.



NDA Secures All Karnataka Legislative Council Seats :-

The BJP-Janata Dal (Secular) NDA alliance won all four seats in the Karnataka Legislative Council elections. The results saw NDA candidates triumph in both Graduates' and Teachers' constituencies across the state. Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy attributed the victory to Prime Minister Modi's development work, describing it

as a historic win. The victory is seen as a mandate for the alliance ahead of the 2028 Assembly elections. The elections were held on October 23, with counting completed on October 27.



Concessional Local Pass for Toll Plazas Available from November :-

Starting 1 November 2026, eligible non-commercial vehicle owners residing within 20 km of a National Highway fee plaza can purchase an annual Concessional Local Pass. The pass costs ₹1,500 for those outside municipal limits and ₹3,000 for those within. A valid FASTag is required, and the pass is valid only for a specific plaza and is non-transferable. It will be available at plazas from 1 November and via the Rajmargyatra app from 1 December 2026. The pass is not applicable on closed-system highways or where alternative routes exist.

11: National



Launch of Livestock Insurance Portal in India :-

The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) launched a Livestock Insurance Portal in New Delhi. Introduced by Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh, the portal offers a single digital platform available in Hindi, English, and 11 regional languages for policy issuance, claims, and monitoring. Part of the National Livestock Mission, the scheme covers various livestock, with the government subsidizing 85% of the premium cost. Beneficiaries can insure up to 10 cattle units, with a limit of 5 for pigs and rabbits.



India Secures Deportation of Alleged Drug Kingpin from Türkiye :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced the deportation of alleged narco-trafficker Navpreet Singh from Türkiye, calling it a 'historic milestone'. Singh, who had obtained Turkish citizenship under a fake identity, is accused of smuggling heroin and methamphetamine from Afghanistan to India. Indian agencies tracked and unmasked his true identity, leading to his deportation. Shah reiterated the government's commitment to dismantling narco-cartels by December 2029. This operation follows previous extraditions of alleged narcotics fugitives, highlighting India's efforts to combat international drug trafficking networks.

सत्यमेव जयते
Ministry of Education
Goverment of India

Five Centres of Excellence for Classical Language Studies Approved :-

The Ministry of Education's Department of Higher Education has approved the establishment of five

Centres of Excellence (CoEs) for Classical Assamese, Bengali, Marathi, Pali, and Prakrit studies. These CoEs aim to support advanced research, preservation, and digitisation of India's linguistic and literary heritage. The centres will be located at Tezpur University (Assam), Visva-Bharati University (West Bengal), Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute (Maharashtra), Central University of Odisha, and Central University of Gujarat. This initiative strengthens regional academic ecosystems and promotes the conservation of India's classical languages.



Jawahar Dweep Declared Plastic-Free :-

Jawahar Dweep Marine Oil Terminal at Mumbai Port has been declared plastic-free as part of the Swachhata Abhiyan 2026. The initiative, led by Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, follows the port's ban on single-use plastics since September 2021. The terminal, which handles crude oil via five jetties, continues year-round clean-up operations in docks and coastal areas. This move is part of broader efforts to enhance environmental sustainability at the port.



Jewar Airport Renamed After PM Narendra Modi :-

The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet approved renaming Noida International Airport (Jewar) to 'Honourable Narendra Modi International Airport'. Announced by CM Yogi Adityanath, the decision acknowledges PM Modi's contributions, including his 25 consecutive years in government since 7 October 2001. The airport, a greenfield project in Gautam Buddha Nagar district, aims to alleviate pressure on Delhi's IGI Airport and serve the National Capital Region, Noida, Greater Noida, and western Uttar Pradesh. This renaming recognizes the project's significance in enhancing regional connectivity.



Ambaji Mohanthal Receives GI Tag :-

Ambaji Mohanthal Prasad, a traditional sweet made from gram flour, ghee, and sugar, received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag under Class 30. The application was filed by the Shree Arasuri Ambaji Mata Devsthan Trust. A certificate handover ceremony was held on 11 October 2026 at Ambaji Devasthan. The GI tag protects products linked to specific geography and traditional reputation under the 1999 Act. Other temple prasads with GI tags include Tirupati Laddu and Palani Panchamirtham.



Delhi to Install 250 Idol Collection Kiosks to Reduce Pollution :-

The Delhi government, in collaboration with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), is set to establish

250 collection kiosks across municipal wards to ensure the proper disposal of damaged idols and religious materials, aiming to reduce environmental pollution. The initiative, led by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, follows an MoU with Plastindia Foundation. Residents can deposit damaged idols at these centres for recycling or appropriate disposal. The MCD will maintain the kiosks, while Plastindia Foundation has developed and installed them free of cost. This initiative seeks to balance religious traditions with environmental protection.



Census Rules Amended to Broaden Enumerator Eligibility :-

The Home Ministry has amended the Census Rules, 2026, expanding the eligibility for enumerators to include teachers, government officials, and local authority staff. The revised rules also allow clerks and officials from public sector undertakings, statutory bodies, and other suitable individuals to serve as enumerators. This aims to enhance the representation and ensure a broader pool of qualified individuals for Census operations. Enumerators are crucial for collecting accurate demographic, social, and economic information during the Census of India, conducted every 10 years.



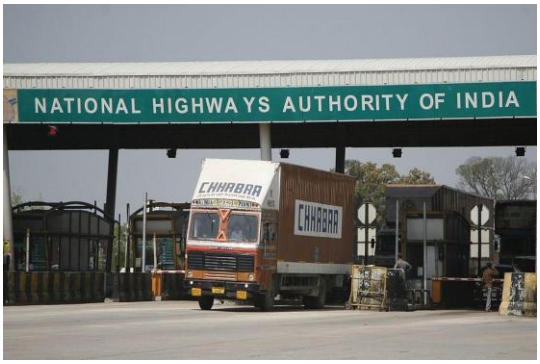
18,093 Villages Declared Adarsh Grams Under PM-AJAY

Under the Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY), 18,093 villages have been declared Adarsh Grams, focusing on improving infrastructure and services in Scheduled Caste-majority areas. The scheme has covered over 47,200 villages, benefiting 47.79 lakh citizens. It includes development of model villages, socio-economic projects, and hostel construction. ₹1,730 crore has been released for Grants-in-Aid projects, enhancing infrastructure and promoting education among Scheduled Caste communities. As of September 2026, 785 student hostels have been completed under the scheme.



FSSAI Proposes Ban on Added Sugars in Infant Nutrition Products :-

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has proposed a ban on adding sucrose and fructose to nutrition products for infants up to six months old. This proposal, part of the draft Food Safety and Standards (Foods for Infant Nutrition) Amendment Regulations, 2026, aims to strengthen nutritional standards and reduce early exposure to added sugars. The amendment seeks to ensure infant nutrition products meet age-appropriate nutritional requirements without unnecessary added sugars, aligning with public health recommendations for exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months. The draft notification is open for public consultation.



NHAI Introduces Toll Plaza Feedback Feature on Rajmargyatra App :-

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has launched a 'Toll Plaza Feedback' feature on the Rajmargyatra app, allowing users to rate their toll plaza experience and suggest improvements. This initiative aims to enhance service delivery and make highway journeys smoother. Users will receive notifications to provide feedback after crossing toll plazas. The feature will help NHAI monitor service delivery and address commuter concerns. The authority encourages active participation from National Highway users to improve toll plaza services across the network.



IITM Pune Hosts First CSSIF Consultation on Climate Science :-

The Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) Pune hosted the first CSSIF Stakeholder Consultation with over 150 participants from more than 80 institutions. The event focused on connecting climate science with practical services for policy and decision-making. Discussions included the development of a national Climate Services Information System (CSIS) and thematic areas such as health, energy, water, agriculture, and disaster risk. The consultation aimed to enhance the science-to-service interface, providing user-oriented climate services in India.



Task Force Formed Over eMudhra Digital Certificate Key Breach :-

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has established a task force following an alert from CERT-In about compromised private keys of eight eMudhra intermediate CA certificates. The breach, attributed to poor cryptographic entropy in key generation, poses a risk of attackers forging TLS certificates, leading to potential man-in-the-middle attacks. Notably, seven of the eight intermediates were never used in production, and no end-entity certificates were issued. Importantly, eSign and CCA-regulated digital signature services remain unaffected.



Jaipur in National Geographic's Best of the World 2027

Jaipur has been featured in National Geographic's 'Best of the World 2027' list in celebration of its 300th foundation anniversary in 2027. The city, founded in 1727 by Sawai Jai Singh II, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2019. The upcoming Jaipur Literature Festival, marking its 20th edition from January 14-18, 2027, is expected to attract around 400,000 attendees. Known for its historic landmarks like the City Palace and Hawa Mahal, Jaipur continues to be a significant cultural destination.



Tuticorin Terminal Achieves Green Status with 100% Electrification :-

The Tuticorin International Container Terminal (TICT) at VOC Port has been designated a green terminal following the complete electrification of its operational equipment. The terminal began operations on September 16, 2024, with all-electric cranes and reach stackers, and recently introduced 13 electric Internal Transfer Vehicles. VOC Port, with a capacity of 82 MTPA, is pursuing projects worth over ₹18,400 crore, including methanol bunkering and green hydrogen initiatives. It is recognized as India's first major port to be Scope 2 emission-free.



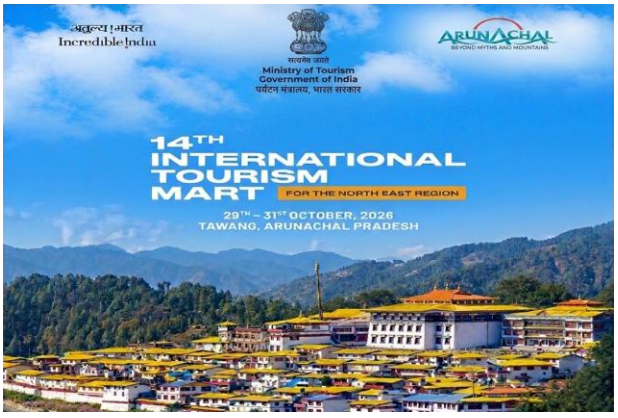
Launch of National Strategic Trade Command Centre :-

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal inaugurated the National Strategic Trade Command Centre (NSTCC) in New Delhi. The centre provides integrated dashboards for DGFT functions, including IEC, Advance Authorisation, EPCG, Certificate of Origin, and SCOMET. It aims to enhance data-driven monitoring of trade performance and regulatory processes, supporting evidence-based policymaking and expediting the clearance of pending applications. This initiative is expected to strengthen the governance of India's international trade ecosystem.



ESTIC 2026 Focuses on Synthetic Biology and AI :-

The International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) in New Delhi hosted the curtain-raiser for ESTIC 2026, focusing on Systems and Synthetic Biology. The event, held at Bharat Mandapam, includes 12 themes such as AI, semiconductors, and advanced manufacturing. The conference aims to translate research into scalable solutions for healthcare, agriculture, and biomanufacturing, aligning with India's BioE3 Policy and the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision. Key speakers included Prof. Gobardhan Das from NITI Aayog and DBT Secretary Dr. Rajesh Gokhale.



Tawang Hosts 14th International Tourism Mart :-

Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh will host the 14th International Tourism Mart from October 29 to 31. The event, organized by the Union Ministry of Tourism, aims to promote the North East's tourism potential. Over 200 participants, including 43 international buyers from 22 countries, are expected. The event will feature business-to-business sessions, cultural performances, and technical discussions on tourism development. The mart returns to Tawang after 13 years, highlighting the region's cultural and adventure tourism offerings.

12: Obituaries



George Fenton, Five-Time Oscar-Nominated Composer Behind Gandhi and Blue Planet, Dies at 76 :-

British composer George Fenton died unexpectedly in London at the age of 76. Fenton was one of Britain's most versatile screen composers, moving comfortably between major films, television dramas, documentaries and broadcast themes. His film work included Gandhi, Cry Freedom, The Fisher King, Groundhog Day and The Remains of the Day, earning him five Academy Award nominations. He became especially associated with the natural-history documentaries of Sir David Attenborough, including Blue Planet and Planet Earth, where his music helped give large-scale wildlife imagery much of its emotional character.



Veteran Rabindra Sangeet Singer Biva Sengupta Dies at 94 in Kolkata :-

Veteran Rabindra Sangeet singer Biva Sengupta died in a Kolkata hospital at the age of 94, after experiencing age-related health complications. Her death was confirmed by fellow singer Shrabani Sen, with Indian and Bengali cultural circles paying tribute to her distinctive interpretation of Rabindranath Tagore's songs. Originally from Tripura, Sengupta moved to Kolkata in 1959 and underwent extensive musical training under Maya Sen, who later introduced her to the celebrated singer Debabrata Biswas. Biswas became an important influence on her musical development, but Sengupta developed her own performance style rather than simply reproducing her teacher's approach.



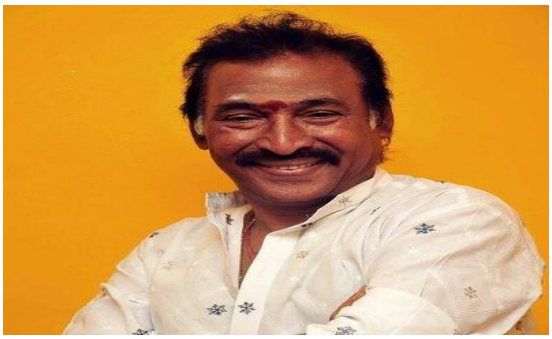
Nana Patekar, One of Indian Cinema's Most Powerful Actors, Dies at 75 :-

Veteran actor Nana Patekar died in Goa at the age of 75 after suffering a severe cardiac arrest at his residence. He was found unconscious at his Dona Paula home and taken to Manipal Hospital, where doctors attempted CPR for around 45 minutes before declaring him dead at approximately 5:20 a.m. A medico-legal case has been registered and a post-mortem is expected, so the final medical determination remains subject to that process. Patekar, born Vishwanath Patekar, built a career spanning more than four decades across Hindi and Marathi cinema, theatre and directing. His acclaimed work included Parinda, Krantiveer, Agni Sakshi, Ab Tak Chhappan, Natsamrat and Welcome. He won multiple National Film Awards and received the Padma Shri in 2013.



Cheruvayal Raman, Kerala's 'Living Paddy Gene Bank,' Dies at 74 :-

Cheruvayal Raman, the celebrated tribal farmer from Wayanad, Kerala, died while receiving treatment at Kozhikode Government Medical College Hospital. He was 74. He cultivated and preserved more than 45 indigenous varieties, with some reports documenting over 50, on his modest farm in Kammana. His work demonstrated how traditional farming knowledge could protect agricultural biodiversity and sustain locally adapted crops. India honoured him with the Padma Shri in 2023, while he had previously received the National Plant Genome Saviour Award.



Deva, Veteran Tamil Composer Who Took Gaana Music to the Mainstream, Dies at 75 :-

Veteran Tamil composer and singer Devanesan Chokkalingam, popularly known as Deva, died in Chennai. His death has prompted an immediate wave of tributes from leading figures of Tamil cinema, including Rajinikanth, Kamal Haasan and A.R. Rahman. Deva's career extended across nearly four decades and more than 400 films in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. He became particularly influential for taking Chennai's gaana, a street-rooted musical tradition, into mainstream film music. His work on films such as Annamalai, Baashha, Aasai, Vaali, Kushi and Panchathanthiram created enduring songs and memorable themes.



Chiaki Ishii, Brazil's First Olympic Judo Medallist, Dies at 85 :-

Chiaki Ishii, the Japanese-born Brazilian judoka who became the first Brazilian to win an Olympic and world judo medal, died at 85. Ishii was born in Japan and moved to Brazil after failing to qualify for the 1964 Olympics. He eventually became a Brazilian citizen in 1969 and built the foundation of an extraordinary sporting legacy. In 1971, he won bronze at the World Championships in Ludwigshafen, giving Brazil its first world judo medal. One year later at the Munich Olympics, he won another bronze, becoming Brazil's first Olympic medallist in judo.



Belraj Kalarickal, Young Malayalam Filmmaker, Dies Days After Directorial Debut :-

Belraj Kalarickal, a young Malayalam filmmaker who had just made his independent directorial debut, died in Kochi at the age of 27/28, according to differing reports. His death came only days after the release of Kaapi Squad, a JioHotstar web series that marked his first major directing project. Kalarickal had previously worked as an associate or assistant director on Malayalam productions

including Nizhal, Madhuram and Dakini. He was also associated with First Print Studios, the production house behind projects such as Ottamuri Velicham and Kerala Crime Files.



Antonio Grimau, Veteran Argentine Actor, Dies at 82 :-

Argentine actor Antonio Grimau died at the age of 82, with the news confirmed by the Argentine Actors and Actresses Association and reported by the national newspaper La Nación. Born Antonio Rebolini in Lanús, Buenos Aires Province, on 10 March 1944, he began pursuing acting professionally at approximately 16. His career subsequently developed across theatre, television and film, making him a familiar presence in Argentine entertainment over several decades. Grimau worked in a range of productions and became known for his ability to portray characters across different dramatic styles.



Krishnaraj Ramasamy, Veteran Tamil Playback Singer Behind Award-Winning Film Songs, Dies :-

Veteran Tamil playback singer Krishnaraj Ramasamy died in Chennai following a period of illness. News of his death prompted tributes from musicians, actors and political leaders across Tamil Nadu. Krishnaraj was particularly associated with composer Deva, with whom he created several memorable songs during the 1990s and subsequent years. His best-known recordings include Thanjavooru Mannu Eduthu from Porkkaalam, Vellarikka from Kadhal Kottai and Meesakkara Nanba from Natpukkaga. His rendition of Thanjavooru Mannu Eduthu won a Tamil Nadu State Film Award and became one of the defining songs of his career.



Makar Singh Bhumij, Folk Artist Who Preserved Jahali Geet Tradition, Dies in Assam :-

Makar Singh Bhumij, an Assam-based folk artist known for preserving the traditional musical form called Jahali Geet, died after being taken to Tinsukia Medical College and Hospital. His death was reported the following day, when community representatives and local political leaders paid tribute to his cultural contribution. Bhumij led a specialised troupe that performed Jahali Geet, a musical tradition associated with the Sohrai harvest festival and Adivasi communities including the Bhumij, Santhal and Munda. The songs preserve memories of agricultural life, community celebrations and ancestral connections.

13: Ranks & Reports



Four Indian Ports Declared as Mega Ports :-

The Ministry of Ports declared four ports as mega ports under the Indian Ports Act, 2025. The ports include Deendayal (Kandla), Jawaharlal Nehru (Nhava Sheva), Paradip, and Mundra, with Mundra being the only non-major port. The classification is based on criteria from the previous fiscal year, requiring either 150 million metric tonnes of bulk cargo or 7.5 million TEUs of container throughput. This new classification is an additional status, and the ports' original status remains unchanged.



FASTag Annual Pass Surpasses One Crore Milestone :-

The FASTag Annual Pass, launched on August 15, 2025, has issued over one crore passes, according to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. The pass offers a seamless travel option on National Highways and Expressways, available for non-commercial vehicles with a valid FASTag. It allows up to 200 toll plaza crossings or one year of validity for a one-time fee of ₹3,075. The pass is activated via the Rajmargyatra App. The milestone reflects its growing acceptance among private vehicle owners, promoting economical and hassle-free travel across India's highways.



India's Manufacturing Sector Growth Peaks in September :-

India's manufacturing sector growth reached a seven-month high in September, driven by strong domestic and export demand, according to the HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI). The PMI rose to 55.1 from 52.8 in August, indicating robust expansion. The sector saw increased hiring and optimism, with job growth at its fastest since May. Despite quicker increases in input costs and selling prices, inflation rates remained mild. Manufacturers built up inventories in anticipation of sustained demand, contributing to the sector's positive outlook.



ASI 2024-25: Manufacturing Sector Grows 7.81% :-

The Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) 2024-25, released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, reports a 7.81% growth in India's registered manufacturing sector. The sector saw increases in industrial output, employment, wages,

invested capital, and Gross Value Added (GVA). The number of registered manufacturing establishments rose by 2.64%, with Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Maharashtra leading. The sector's GVA increased by 9.59%, with Maharashtra contributing the highest share. Employment grew by 7.19%, and total emoluments increased by 12.08%. Basic metals, motor vehicles, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and food products were key industries.



Govt Recognizes 28 Features in Ladakh on Official Map

The Indian government has identified 28 geographical features in Ladakh on the official Survey of India map. These include peaks such as Atisha Giri and Kanishka Peak, passes like Chapchingal Pass, and other features including the Skamri Glacier and Shkorga Valley. This identification aims to bring clarity and official recognition to these features in the region. The move is part of ongoing efforts to enhance geographical documentation and understanding of the strategically important Ladakh region.



Northeast Frontier Railway Saves 255 Elephants from Train Collisions :-

The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has implemented measures to save 255 elephants from train collisions between January and September 2026. Using AI-based Intrusion Detection Systems and other preventive strategies, NFR has enhanced monitoring and coordination with the Forest Department. Speed restrictions, patrolling, and real-time communication have been key in preventing accidents. The 'Plan Bee' system, which uses amplified honeybee sounds, deters elephants from tracks. These efforts aim to protect wildlife while ensuring safe train operations in the northeastern region.



RBI Revises FY27 GDP Growth Projection to 7.1% :-

The Reserve Bank of India has increased its GDP growth projection for the financial year 2026-27 by 40 basis points to 7.1%. This revision reflects the resilience of India's domestic economic activity despite global challenges such as geopolitical tensions and elevated international commodity prices. The RBI Governor highlighted that strong private consumption and investment activity are key drivers of this growth. However, concerns remain about global economic uncertainties and potential impacts on the Rabi season due to climate conditions.



Spain Tops FIFA Rankings; Portugal Moves to Fifth :-

Spain has maintained its lead in the FIFA world rankings, followed by Argentina, France, and England. Portugal has risen to fifth place, pushing Brazil and Morocco to sixth and seventh, respectively. Under new coach Jorge Jesus, Portugal won all four of their recent UEFA Nations League games. Switzerland also climbed to 12th place after a series of victories. Several other nations, including Australia, Canada, and Côte d'Ivoire, made significant progress in the rankings. The latest rankings reflect the outcomes of 338 international matches played since the 2026 FIFA World Cup.



IMF Highlights AI Investment's Impact on Global Growth :-

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reported that strong investment in artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure is maintaining global growth at around 3%. This investment is particularly benefiting Asian economies that supply the necessary hardware, such as Thailand. IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva noted that AI is causing a 'demand shock' that could boost growth in advanced Asian economies by up to one percentage point and in emerging economies by up to 0.8 percentage point. The IMF estimates that AI could significantly alter job markets, with 40% of jobs potentially being affected.



FII Holdings in India Reach $783 Billion Despite Decline in Share :-

Foreign institutional investor (FII) holdings in India have grown 3.6 times to $783 billion since 2012, despite a decline in their ownership share of Indian equities to 15.1%. The report by OmniScience Capital highlights the increasing contribution of domestic investors. While FII holdings peaked at $930 billion in 2024, domestic participation has grown faster, diluting FII ownership percentage. The financialisation of Indian household wealth contributes to this trend. Despite a $50 billion FII outflow since 2024, strong domestic flows provide market stability, with stock-level opportunities remaining significant.



Automobile Sales Surge 18.2% in Q2 FY27, Reports SIAM :-

The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) reported an 18.2% year-on-year increase in domestic automobile sales, reaching 83.88 lakh units in Q2 FY27. All major vehicle segments, including passenger vehicles, two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and commercial vehicles, recorded their highest-ever second-quarter sales. SIAM attributed the growth to improved affordability post-GST 2.0, strong rural and urban demand, and infrastructure-led economic activity. While exports of two-wheelers and commercial vehicles grew, passenger vehicle exports saw a decline due to logistics constraints. The industry remains optimistic about sustaining growth despite potential risks.



Oman Becomes Top LNG Supplier to India in September 2026 :-

In September 2026, Oman emerged as India's largest supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG), surpassing the United States. India imported a total of 2.17 million tonnes of LNG, marking a 14% decrease from August's 2.5 million tonnes. Oman supplied 585,000 tonnes, an 11.6% increase month-on-month, accounting for 27% of India's total LNG imports. Nigeria ranked second with 351,000 tonnes, while the United States fell to third place following a 59% decline in its exports to India. Qatar was sixth, with about 94,000 tonnes.



India Ranks 84th in 2026 Henley Passport Index :-

The October 2026 Henley Passport Index ranks India 84th among 199 passports, with Indian passport holders able to access 55 destinations without a prior visa. This marks a decrease from 57 destinations in 2025. India shares its rank with Algeria and Mauritania. The index, which uses IATA data covering 227 destinations, places Singapore at the top with access to 193 destinations. India's ranking fluctuated throughout 2026, previously ranking 80th in January, 75th in February, and 81st in July.



India Begins National Red List Assessment of Birds :-

India has initiated the assessment of 1,211 bird species under the IUCN Red List framework. As of 19 October 2026, preliminary assessments for 107 species have been completed, with all preliminaries targeted by end-2026 and final assessments by end-2027. The Zoological Survey of India, IUCN SSC Center for Species Survival India–WTI, and State of India's Birds are conducting this assessment. Preliminary proposals include the Great Indian Bustard as Critically Endangered and the Indian Roller as Vulnerable. Citizen-science inputs aid in assessing common species.



India's First Snow Leopard Survey Records 718 Across Himalayas :-

India's first Snow Leopard Population Assessment recorded 718 snow leopards across the Himalayas, with 477 in Ladakh. Union Minister Kirti Vardhan Singh announced the findings on International Snow Leopard Day, emphasizing India's commitment to conserving high-altitude wildlife. The government aims to protect the species through habitat conservation and community participation. Additionally, privileges were extended to the International Big Cat Alliance under the UN Act, reinforcing India's dedication to international conservation efforts.



Ladakh Becomes India's First Organic Union Territory :-

Ladakh has been declared India's first fully organic Union Territory by Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena. Since June, chemical fertilizers have been banned, and the Mission Organic Development Initiative (MODI) launched in 2020 covers all 666 villages. With 207 villages already certified organic, the initiative focuses on crops like barley, wheat, and apricots, allocating ₹500 crore for bio-fertilizers, seeds, and marketing. This move follows Sikkim's model and aims to promote sustainable farming and better prices for farmers.

14: Schemes & Committees



First PRAMAAN Certificates Issued in India :-

India issued its first PRAMAAN certificates under the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme. The Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation and an Odisha bamboo farmer were the initial recipients. The scheme, launched in December 2023, encompasses Forest Management, Trees Outside Forests, and Chain of Custody. Andhra Pradesh certified approximately 33,000 hectares of eucalyptus plantations. This initiative aligns with the National Working Plan Code 2023 and the EU Deforestation Regulation.



National PNG Drive 3.0 Launched to Boost Natural Gas Adoption :-

The Indian government launched National PNG Drive 3.0 to increase the share of natural gas in the country's energy mix. The initiative aims to encourage the shift from LPG to piped natural gas (PNG) and expand its use

in semi-urban and rural areas. The drive targets 50 lakh new domestic PNG connections and 40 lakh conversions to active users. With significant pipeline infrastructure already in place, the campaign seeks to provide cleaner, reliable energy to households and industries, supporting the 'One Nation, One Gas Grid' vision.



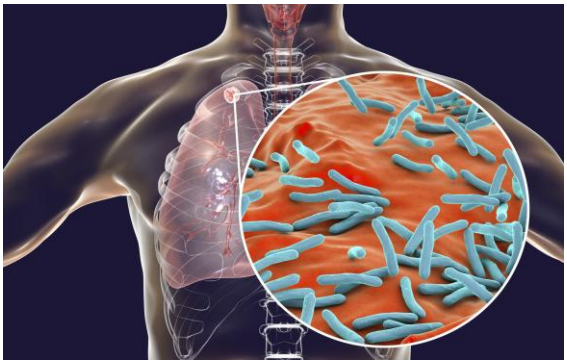
UIDAI Launches Five New Initiatives at Aadhaar Samvaad in Kolkata :-

On the 17th Aadhaar Day, UIDAI organized Aadhaar Samvaad in Kolkata, attended by over 600 participants. The event featured the launch of five new initiatives aimed at enhancing convenience, authentication, security, and governance. Key initiatives include Face Authentication for ePDS, SWIK Portal 2.0 for faster Aadhaar authentication proposal approvals, and Sub-AUA/Sub-KUA (LITE) for easier access for low-volume entities. Additionally, a Token Management System and a new UIDAI website were unveiled. The event was graced by MoS Jitin Prasada as the Guest of Honour.



West Bengal Approves 14,454 Govt Posts and Scheme for Unmarried Women :-

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari announced the recruitment for 14,454 government posts and the approval of the Bhagini Nivedita Scheme, providing Rs 50,000 assistance to unmarried women pursuing higher education. The recruitment process will be completed in six to eight months by the Public Service Commission and the State Police Recruitment Board. The scheme offers financial support over three years, starting January next year. Additionally, the monthly remuneration for 'Karmabandhus' has been increased, and food allowances for SC and ST hostel students have been raised.



JOSH Teams to Boost TB Awareness in 11 Indian States

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, alongside other ministries launched JOSH Teams on October 8 to enhance TB awareness in 55 districts across 11 states. The initiative aims to mobilize youth-led community action for TB elimination. The launch event in New Delhi featured senior officials, elected representatives, and volunteers. JOSH Teams will work at the grassroots level to spread information on TB symptoms, prevention, and treatment, aiming to reduce stigma and encourage community participation in the national TB elimination campaign.



Odisha Launches India's First MICE Incentive Portal :-

Odisha has launched India's first dedicated MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) Incentive Portal during the Odisha Travel Bazaar 2026.

The portal aims to promote business tourism by simplifying applications for financial incentives and attracting corporate events and investments. Key focus areas include destination weddings, sports, and cultural events, with Bhubaneswar being promoted as a key heritage destination. This initiative is expected to boost Odisha's profile as a prime location for MICE activities in India.



PM Modi Unveiled ₹13,000 Crore Projects in Chennai :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation for development projects worth over ₹13,000 crore. The projects span sectors like metro rail, highways, railways, ports, petroleum, and education. Key highlights include the inauguration of the Poonamallee–Vadapalani stretch of Phase II of the Chennai Metro Rail Project and several National Highway projects. The visit also included the dedication of railway infrastructure projects and the inauguration of facilities at Chennai Port, aimed at enhancing connectivity and logistics in Tamil Nadu.



PM Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana Marks One Year of Progress :-

The Pradhan Mantri Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY) has completed its first year, showing significant progress across its six key objectives. Launched on October 11, 2025, the initiative targets 100 agricultural districts to improve productivity, irrigation, and credit access. The average score for these objectives rose from 18.85 in April 2026 to 46.89 in August 2026. The scheme integrates 36 central government schemes and involves private-sector participation to address local agricultural challenges. It employs a district-level approach, with progress tracked through 121 indicators.



Maharashtra Forms MPSC Reforms Committee :-

The Maharashtra government constituted a committee to investigate exam irregularities and paper leaks in the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC). Headed by retired judge Dilip Bhosale, the committee includes members like IPS Laxmi Gautam and ex-IAS Ganesh Patil. The inquiry follows a 10-day protest by aspirants demanding reforms and the filling of 70,000 vacancies. The committee will provide recommendations for systemic reforms in the recruitment process. MPSC Chairman Vivek Bhimnawar will go on leave during the inquiry.



Karnataka Launches Anna Seve App for Ration Card e-KYC :-

Karnataka launched the Anna Seve app statewide, enabling Public Distribution System beneficiaries to complete ration card e-KYC from home. Initially launched on October 1, 2026, by Minister Rizwan Arshad, the app was developed with the National Informatics Centre and the e-Governance Department. Available on the Google Play Store, it requires the Anna Seve, AadhaarFaceRD, and CSC apps. Beneficiaries who completed e-KYC over a year ago must re-verify. A pilot conducted from October 1 to 12 in eight districts saw 160,267 completions.



Renaming and Continuation of National Social Assistance Programme :-

The Union Cabinet has approved ₹53,428 crore for the continuation of the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) from 2026–27 to 2030–31, which will be renamed as Pradhan Mantri Samajik Sahayata Yojana. This scheme is expected to benefit 3.20 crore people. Significant changes include lowering the disability pension eligibility from 80% to 40% disability and removing the age limit. Monthly pension rates have been revised to ₹375 for those aged 0–79 years and ₹625 for those aged 80 and above. The components of the scheme are also being renamed.



Gujarat CM Launches Shramik Annapurna Meal Centres in Ahmedabad :-

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel inaugurated 101 new food distribution centres under the Shramik Annapurna Yojana across 28 districts. The event, part of the BJP's Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, aims to extend food distribution to workers. The Seva Sankalp Yatra, commemorating PM Modi's 25 years of public service, spreads messages of service and social responsibility. Additionally, BJP MP Sambit Patra distributed 20 Modi Scooties to persons with disabilities in Puri, Odisha. These initiatives highlight welfare efforts supporting various societal sections, emphasizing public service as a governance component.



1.93 Lakh Houses Approved Under PMAY-U 2.0, Total Sanctions Reach 20.80 Lakh :-

The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban 2.0 (PMAY-U 2.0) has sanctioned an additional 1.93 lakh houses, bringing the total to 20.80 lakh. The 10th Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee meeting approved these under the Beneficiary Led Construction and Affordable Housing in Partnership verticals. The approvals benefit urban families in 11 states, including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal. The scheme, launched in September 2024, targets Economically Weaker Section, Low Income Group, and Middle Income Group families, emphasizing women-led development with 97% of houses allotted to women.



India Achieves Target of 11 Crore Farmer IDs Ahead of Schedule :-

India has successfully created 11 crore Farmer IDs under the Digital Agriculture Mission, five months before the March 31, 2027 deadline. This initiative aims to provide farmers with a unique digital identity, facilitating access to government schemes, bank loans, and crop insurance. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare announced that the coordinated efforts of the Centre, State Governments, and field officials led to this achievement. The Farmer ID system is expected to simplify access to agricultural services and improve the transparency and efficiency of benefit delivery to eligible farmers.



Khet Bachao Abhiyan Launched for Rabi 2026 :-

The Ministry of Agriculture launched the Khet Bachao Abhiyan in Karnal, Haryana. The campaign will run until 30 November 2026, focusing on soil health, balanced fertilisers, crop diversification, residue management, and natural farming. It targets Rabi season crops such as wheat, mustard, and gram. Activities will be conducted through Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), ICAR institutes, and state agriculture departments. Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the campaign.

15: Science & Technology



India Launches First LNG-Powered Train :-

India's first LNG-powered train was flagged off from Sabarmati, Ahmedabad by Amit Shah. The dual-fuel LNG-diesel DEMU features two 1,400 HP DPCs converted to LNG, potentially replacing approximately 40% of diesel usage. The train has undergone trials over 2,000 km and is expected to save around ₹11.9 lakh annually per DPC. This initiative is part of Indian Railways' push towards alternative fuels, aiming to reduce CO_2, NOx, and particulate matter emissions.



India Demonstrates First 5.56-km Quantum Key Distribution Link :-

India has successfully demonstrated its first free-space Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) link over 5.56 km, a significant advancement in secure communication networks. The trial, conducted by QNu Labs with BISAG-N and IIT Gandhinagar, achieved a stable Quantum Bit Error Rate below 5% and generated secure keys at 230-260 bps. The integration of QNu Labs' QKD technology with BISAG-N's Vedic Kavach platform marks a step towards quantum-resilient communication systems, paving the way for future quantum-secure networks and satellite-based communication.



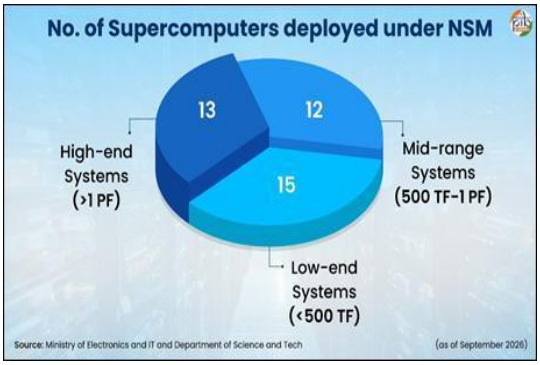
Uttarakhand Installs Glacial Lake Early-Warning System

Uttarakhand has initiated the installation of the first glacial-lake early-warning system at Vasundhara Tal, Chamoli. This project, which began on September 29, 2026, is led by a 22-scientist team from the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology under the USDMA and the National GLOF Risk Mitigation Programme. The system includes sensors to monitor water level, weather, snow depth, temperature, ground movement, and flow, with data transmitted via satellite. Vasundhara Tal is one of 13 high-risk lakes identified by the NRSC. The installation expedition is set to continue until October 15.



SatLeo Labs Launched India's First Thermal-Imaging CubeSat :-

Ahmedabad-based spacetech startup SatLeo Labs has launched TAPAS-1, India's first dedicated commercial CubeSat with a thermal-imaging payload. The 3 kg CubeSat was launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Vandenberg via Dhruva Space's LEAP-2. It will enter a sun-synchronous orbit approximately 500 km above Earth. The satellite is equipped with a long-wave infrared sensor for monitoring climate, agriculture, urban heat, water stress, disasters, and forest fires. SatLeo Labs plans to expand its satellite constellation to 10-15 by 2029.



India's Supercomputing Mission Expands with PARAM Rudra :-

India's National Supercomputing Mission (NSM) is advancing the country's supercomputing capabilities, aiming to establish 50 supercomputers with over 123 petaflops capacity. As of September 2026, 40 supercomputers with 68 petaflops capacity have been deployed. The PARAM Rudra series, using indigenously designed Rudra servers, supports research in various scientific fields. The mission focuses on developing indigenous hardware, software, and high-speed interconnect technology. The initiative aims to bolster

India's computational power for scientific research and national applications.



Mistral Unveils AI Model Outperforming Chinese Rivals :-

French AI startup Mistral has launched a new AI model, Mistral Large 4, claiming it surpasses several Chinese models in various aspects, including cybersecurity. The model is set to be publicly available on October 27, with early access granted to cybersecurity experts and government authorities. Mistral positions itself as a safer European alternative to US and Chinese AI giants, having raised €3 billion in its latest funding round. The company aims to partner deeply with backers like ASML and Samsung, with the model capable of designing computer chips.



IIT Madras Team Achieves Third Place at Sasol Solar Challenge :-

Team AgniRath from IIT Madras secured third place at the Sasol Solar Challenge 2026 in South Africa, marking a significant achievement for Indian solar racing. The team drove their solar-powered vehicle, Aagneya, over 1,192.6 km across challenging terrains. This is the first time an Indian team participated and won a trophy at the event. The competition tests technology and innovation, with teams designing solar vehicles to traverse South Africa. Team AgniRath, founded in 2021, now comprises over 45 engineers focused on sustainable mobility through engineering innovation.



IIT Ropar Launches AVNI App for Digital Learning :-

IIT Ropar has launched the AVNI app, a digital learning platform designed to educate children about plants, crops, food, and agriculture. Developed by ANNAM.AI, the app offers features such as daily challenges, a Nature Book, and AI-based plant identification. It is available in Hindi and English and is free, ad-free, and privacy-focused. The app combines hands-on learning with AI tools to enhance children's understanding of their natural environment. Dr. Mukesh Saini led the development of this innovative educational tool.



KOAIR-10L Drone Certified by DGCA :-

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) granted a Type Certificate for the KOAIR-10L drone to Kothari Industrial Corporation Limited. This medium-class hexacopter, designed for agricultural agrochemical spraying, features 10-litre tanks. The certification, issued under Drone Rules, 2021, enables its commercial

deployment. Drone classification by weight includes nano (≤250 g), micro (≤2 kg), small (≤25 kg), medium (≤150 kg), and large (>150 kg). The Chennai-based firm announced the certification to the Bombay Stock Exchange.



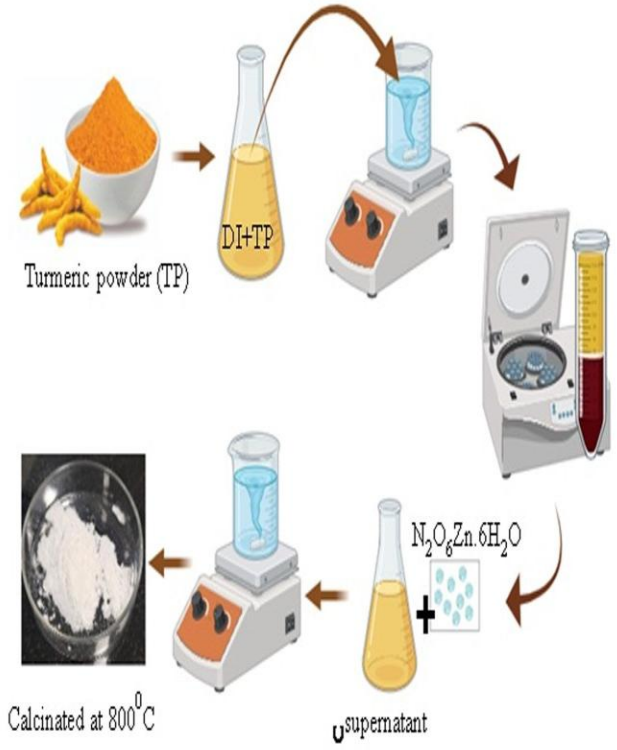
NASA's Perseverance Rover Sets Off-Planet Driving Record on Mars :-

NASA's Perseverance rover has set a new record for off-planet driving, covering 28.1 miles on Mars since its arrival in 2021. The rover surpassed the previous record held by NASA's Opportunity rover. Perseverance, equipped with advanced scientific instruments, explores the Jezero Crater, a region believed to have hosted a lake basin billions of years ago. The rover's self-driving capability, powered by the AutoNav system, plays a crucial role in its success. The mission aims to explore ancient terrains and assess the potential for past microbial life on Mars.



Indian Embassy in Indonesia Launches AI Avatar 'Dewi'

The Indian Embassy in Jakarta has introduced an AI avatar named 'Dewi' to enhance public outreach and strengthen India-Indonesia ties. Dewi will provide updates on Indian culture, travel, scholarships, business, investment opportunities, and consular services. The initiative aims to make information about India more accessible to both the Indian diaspora in Indonesia and Indonesians interested in India. The launch coincided with Navaratri and Durga Puja celebrations, as highlighted by India's Ambassador to Indonesia, Sandeep Chakravorty.



INST-Mohali Develops Nanofibre Filter for Wastewater Treatment :-

Researchers at the Institute of Nano Science and Technology in Mohali have developed a sustainable nanofibre filter that uses zinc oxide nanoparticles to treat dye-contaminated wastewater. The filter enhances pollutant degradation through light and mechanical vibrations, with machine learning predicting its performance. This innovation addresses the challenge of treating persistent organic dyes from industries, particularly textiles, and offers potential applications in environmental remediation. The research was published in Advanced Functional Materials and demonstrates significant dye decolourisation and antibacterial activity.



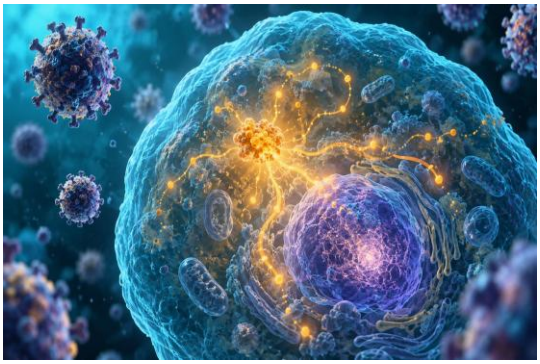
Japan to Launch Mission for Phobos Samples :-

Japan is set to launch a spacecraft on a mission to collect samples from Phobos, one of Mars' moons. This mission, led by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), aims to uncover insights into the formation of Phobos and Deimos, and potentially the origins of life in the solar system. The spacecraft will be launched on a Japanese H-3 rocket and is expected to return in 2031. The mission involves international collaboration, with support from NASA and other space agencies, and will provide valuable data for future manned missions to Mars.



ISRO Completes Key CM-SM Separation Tests for Gaganyaan :-

ISRO successfully conducted Crew Module–Service Module (CM-SM) separation tests at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Thiruvananthapuram. These tests are crucial for the upcoming uncrewed G1 flight of the Gaganyaan mission, which aims to send Indian astronauts to low-Earth orbit. The tests validated separation mechanisms, shock tolerance, avionics, inertial navigation, thermal protection, and other critical systems. The Crew Module houses astronauts and re-entry systems, while the Service Module provides power and services in orbit. This milestone ensures readiness for atmospheric re-entry procedures.



CSIR-CCMB Identifies New Viral Alarm Mechanism in Cells :-

Scientists at CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, have discovered a protein, DZIP3, that plays a dual role in detecting viral infections and activating the immune system. This protein senses viral RNA and triggers a strong immune response by activating Type-I interferons. The discovery, published in The EMBO Journal, offers potential for developing broad-spectrum antiviral therapies. The research, funded by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, highlights a significant advancement in understanding human immunity.



ISRO to Launch NVS-03 Navigation Satellite :-

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to launch the NVS-03 navigation satellite on October 30, 2026, from Sriharikota using the GSLV Mk II. This satellite is the third in the second-generation NVS series and the 12th in the IRNSS/NavIC constellation. Weighing 2,232 kg, it is designed for a lifespan of 12 years and features an indigenous Rubidium atomic clock developed by SAC Ahmedabad. The launch aims to restore NavIC's standalone positioning services, following delays due to recent PSLV setbacks.



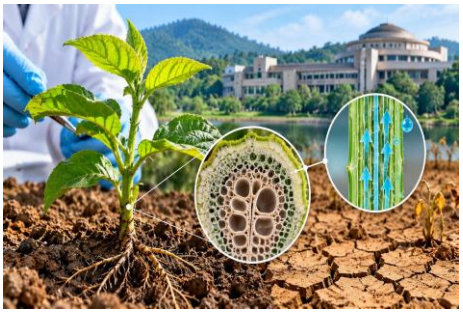
New Air Pollution Analysis Facility Inaugurated in Delhi-NCR :-

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated the Integrated Atmospheric Chemistry and Aerosol Toxicity Analysis Laboratory (AATAL) in Delhi-NCR. This facility aims to identify pollution sources, composition, and health impacts, moving beyond Air Quality Index readings to develop targeted pollution-control measures. Located at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, AATAL will analyze atmospheric gases, aerosols, and other pollutants to determine their sources, such as vehicular emissions and industrial activity.



ISRO to Launch NVS-03 Navigation Satellite :-

ISRO is set to launch the NVS-03 navigation satellite on October 30, 2026, using the GSLV Mk II rocket from Sriharikota. This second-generation NavIC satellite is designed to enhance service continuity, addressing past issues such as satellite failures and atomic clock problems. NavIC provides positioning services over India and extends 1,500 km beyond. Previously, only three satellites were functional, while four are required for basic positioning services.



IIT Guwahati Study on Plant Water Transport During Drought :-

Researchers at IIT Guwahati have explored how plants adapt their internal water transport systems during drought. The study, published in 'Applied Physics Reviews', examined the behavior of xylem vessels in plant stems. Using advanced imaging and 3D computer simulations, the team found that during drought, xylem microtubes narrow and pits shrink, increasing resistance to fluid flow. This adaptation helps prevent water loss through transpiration. The findings could aid in developing drought-tolerant crops and support sustainable agriculture in water-scarce conditions.



Anthropic's AI Model Generates Antibody Designs for Allergy Treatment :-

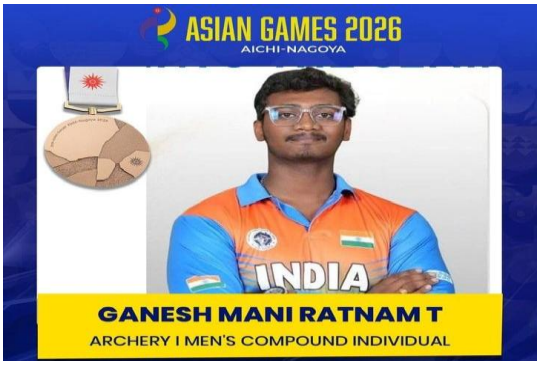
Anthropic's AI model, Claude, generated approximately 35,000 antibody designs for a potential food allergy treatment in collaboration with Divergence Labs. The designs target the removal of immunoglobulin E (IgE), a molecule involved in allergic reactions. The AI-assisted approach aims to enhance drug discovery and development processes. Anthropic plans to expand its AI applications across various stages of drug development, including rare childhood muscular dystrophy research. The company is also collaborating with organizations like Bristol Myers Squibb to support clinical trial planning.

16: Sports



India Wins Gold in Compound Mixed Team Event at Asian Games 2026 :-

Indian archers Chikitha Taniparthi and Sahil Rajesh Jadhav secured a gold medal in the compound mixed team event at the Asian Games 2026, held in Aichi-Nagoya. They triumphed in a dramatic shoot-off against South Korea, finishing level at 157-157. The victory also earned India a quota place for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics, where the discipline will debut. President Droupadi Murmu and other leaders congratulated the duo for their outstanding performance, marking a significant achievement for Indian archery.



Ganesh Wins Bronze in Compound Archery at Asian Games :-

Indian archer Ganesh Mani Ratnam Thirumuru secured a bronze medal in men's individual compound archery at the Asian Games in Nagoya. After losing in the semifinals to South Korea's Kim Jongho, Ganesh defeated Vietnam's Cong Duc Dang 149-144 in the bronze medal playoff. His performance was marked by near-perfect shooting, hitting the mark in 14 out of 15 shots. Ganesh was also part of the gold-winning men's team. His achievement adds to India's medal tally in archery at the Games.



India Wins Silver in Sailing at Asian Games 2026 :-

Indian sailors Manu Francis and Prince Noble clinched the silver medal in the men's skiff event at the Asian Games 2026, contributing to India's overall medal tally of 62. Competing in the 49er class, they finished behind China after nine races. This marks India's first sailing medal at the current Games and adds to the country's historical tally in the sport. The duo, who trained at the National Sailing School and the Army Yachting Node, have shown consistent performance, winning bronze at previous Asian Sailing Championships.



Rohit Sharma Achieves 12,000 ODI Runs and 200 Sixes Milestones :-

Indian cricketer Rohit Sharma reached two significant milestones in his ODI career during the second ODI

against the West Indies. He became the third Indian batter to score 12,000 ODI runs and the first in ODI history to hit 200 sixes in a single country. Rohit achieved the 12,000-run mark in 282 innings, making him the second-fastest to this milestone. He also surpassed Chris Gayle's record of 147 ODI sixes in a single country. Rohit scored 101 off 75 balls in the match, contributing to a record-breaking opening partnership with Shubman Gill.



Indian Women's Squash Team Wins Bronze at Asian Games :-

The Indian women's squash team secured a bronze medal at the Asian Games in Nagoya after losing 1-2 to Hong Kong in the semifinals. Despite a strong comeback by Tanvi Khanna, Anahat Singh's opening-match loss proved decisive. Anahat lost 2-3 to Sin Yuk Chan, while Tanvi defeated Ka Yi Lee 3-1 to keep India's hopes alive. However, Joshana Chinappa lost to Ho Tze Lok in the deciding match. The team had been assured of a medal, aiming to improve on their previous performance at Hangzhou 2022.



Lovlina Borgohain Wins Gold in Women's 75kg Boxing at Asian Games :-

Indian boxer Lovlina Borgohain secured a gold medal in the women's 75kg boxing category at the Asian Games 2026. She defeated China's Bao Ziyi with a unanimous 5-0 victory in the final. Lovlina's strategic counter-punching and composure throughout the match were key to her success. This victory marks her as the first Indian woman boxer to reach consecutive Asian Games finals. Lovlina, who celebrated her 29th birthday on the day of the final, adds this gold to her previous achievements, including an Olympic bronze and a world championship title.



Nitesh Siwach Wins Silver in Asian Games 2026 Greco-Roman Wrestling :-

Nitesh Siwach secured a silver medal in the men's 97 kg Greco-Roman wrestling at the Asian Games 2026, marking a significant achievement for Indian wrestling. He became the first Indian since 1962 to reach a Greco-Roman wrestling final at the Asian Games. Despite losing to Japan's Yuri Nakazato in the final, Nitesh's journey to the final is a breakthrough for India in this category. His performance included victories over wrestlers from Turkmenistan and Mongolia, showcasing his skill and resilience on the international stage.



India Wins Women's Hockey Gold at Asian Games 2026

India's women's hockey team clinched a historic gold medal at the Asian Games 2026 in Nagoya, defeating

China 1-0 in the final. This victory marks India's first women's hockey gold at the Asian Games since 1982 and secures a direct berth for the team at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Lalremsiami scored the decisive goal, while India's defense held firm against China's attacks. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Droupadi Murmu congratulated the team, highlighting their determination and skill as an inspiration for young girls across the nation.



Kumkum Mohod Wins Historic Gold in Archery at Asian Games :-

Seventeen-year-old Kumkum Mohod made history by winning the gold medal in the individual recurve archery event at the Asian Games 2026. She defeated South Korea's Yejin Oh in a tense shoot-off, securing a 6-5 victory. This achievement marks the first time an Indian woman has won an Asian Games medal in this event. Kumkum's victory also earns India an individual quota place for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Her remarkable performance included defeating reigning world champion Kang Chaeyoung and overcoming an early deficit in the final.



Odisha Rewards Women's Hockey Gold Medallists :-

The Odisha government announced a reward of ₹11 lakh each for the women's hockey team members who won gold at the Asian Games. The support staff will receive ₹5.5 lakh each. India secured the gold by defeating China 1-0 on 2 October, ending a 44-year drought. Lalremsiami scored the decisive goal, and Savita made a crucial penalty stroke save. This victory also secured the team direct qualification for the LA 2028 Olympics.



India Clinches Men's Cricket Gold at Asian Games :-

India triumphed over Pakistan to win the men's cricket gold at the Asian Games. India posted a score of 211/6, with notable performances from Abhishek Sharma, who scored 61 off 28 balls, and Tilak Varma, who remained unbeaten with 51 off 22 balls. Despite Hasan Nawaz's 96, Pakistan fell 19 runs short. Shivam Dube took the final wicket, while Washington Sundar played a key role in the victory. India had previously defeated Sri Lanka in the semi-finals, with Sri Lanka securing the bronze medal.



India Secures 85 Medals at Asian Games 2026 :-

India concluded its campaign at the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, with a total of 85 medals, including 21 gold, 27 silver, and 37 bronze. Notable achievements include five gold medals in archery and three each in shooting and boxing. The men's cricket team defeated

Pakistan in the final, while the men's hockey team retained its continental title. The event, held from September 19 to October 4, 2026, featured participation from 45 countries, with India competing in 36 disciplines. The Games were themed 'Imagine One Asia'.



BRICS Traditional Sports Games to Begin in Ahmedabad :-

Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya is set to inaugurate the BRICS Traditional and Indigenous Sports Demonstration Games on October 12, 2026, at the Veer Savarkar Sports Complex in Ahmedabad. Organized under India's BRICS Chairship, the event aims to promote cultural exchange and preserve sporting heritage. Delegations from BRICS member and partner countries will participate, showcasing traditional sports such as Mallakhamb from India and Wushu from China. The event will focus on demonstrations and cultural interactions, fostering international cooperation through traditional sports.



Mona Agarwal Sets Record at Asian Para Games :-

India's Mona Agarwal set a new Asian Para Games qualification record in the women's 10m Air Rifle Standing SH1 event at the 2026 Asian Para Games in Nagoya. She scored 629.1 points, surpassing the previous record held by China's Zhang Cuiping. Avani Lekhara finished second with 626.4 points, ensuring a strong position for India in the finals. Both Agarwal and Lekhara are Paralympic medallists, with Agarwal winning bronze and Lekhara securing gold at the 2024 Paris Paralympics.



Sheetal Devi Sets New Asian Record at Para Asian Games :-

Indian para-archer Sheetal Devi equalled the world record and set a new Asian record in the women's compound qualification round at the Para Asian Games. She scored 704 out of a possible 720 points, surpassing the previous Asian record of 698. This performance places her in a strong position for the elimination rounds. Fellow Indian archer Payal Nag also performed well, scoring 675 points. Both archers are among the leading contenders in the women's compound event, highlighting India's strength in para-archery.



India Wins Five Bronze Medals in Para Table Tennis at Asian Para Games :-

Indian para table tennis players secured five bronze medals at the Asian Para Games in Nagoya. Ravi Baby Sahana and Prachi Pandey became the first Indians to win medals in the standing category. Paralympics medallist Bhavina Patel, Sonalben Patel, Prachi, and

Sahana reached the semifinals in their respective categories. Jehan Madan won a bronze in the men's singles class 1 event. This achievement surpasses India's previous edition's medal tally, marking a significant milestone in para table tennis for the country.



An Se Young Wins 47th Title at Denmark Open :-

South Korean badminton player An Se Young claimed her 47th career international women's singles title at the BWF World Tour Super 750 Denmark Open in Odense. She defeated Japan's Akane Yamaguchi in a thrilling match, with scores of 21–23, 21–14, 21–18, despite experiencing right-ankle discomfort. This victory surpasses Susi Susanti's previous record of 46 titles. An Se Young's 2026 record stands at 61 wins and 1 loss, with a 98.4% win rate, nine World Tour titles, and an Asian Games gold.



India Wins Silver in Women's Compound Doubles at Asian Para Games :-

Indian para-archers Sheetal Devi and Payal Nag secured a silver medal in the women's compound doubles event at the Asian Para Games 2026 in Aichi-Nagoya. Despite a strong performance, they were defeated by China's Xu Xueqing and Zhao Jing. Sheetal Devi, who equaled the world record in the qualification round, and Payal Nag, a quadruple-amputee archer, set new Asian and Games records. Their achievement highlights the strength of India's para-archery contingent and Payal's inspiring journey in international competitions.



Ayush Verma Wins Gold in Shot Put at Asian Para Games :-

Indian para-athlete Ayush Verma secured a gold medal in the men's shot put F53 event at the Asian Para Games 2026 in Nagoya, Japan. His victory, with a best throw of 8.16 meters, increased India's gold medal count to 10 and overall tally to 38, maintaining the country's sixth position in the medal standings. Ayush had previously won a bronze in the men's javelin F53/54 event. Additionally, Paralympic medallist Suhas Yathiraj advanced to the semifinals in para-badminton, ensuring at least a bronze medal for India.



India Achieves Best-Ever Medal Tally at Asian Para Games 2026 :-

India's para-athletes have achieved their best-ever performance at the Asian Para Games 2026, securing a record 114 medals. Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded the athletes for their determination and contribution to this historic achievement. India finished fourth overall, with 30 gold, 35 silver, and 49 bronze medals. The previous record was 111 medals at the 2023 Hangzhou Games. Para athletics was the leading contributor with 65 medals, including 22 gold. Notable

performers included Sheetal Devi, who won three medals, and world record setters Haney and Sandeep in javelin and 400m events, respectively.



Mirabai Chanu Leads India at World Weightlifting Championships :-

Olympic medallist Mirabai Chanu is leading India's campaign at the 2026 World Weightlifting Championships in Ningbo, China, from October 27 to November 8. This event is the first of 10 qualifying events for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics. Chanu will compete in the women's 53 kg category, marking her entry into a new weight class for the LA 2028 Olympic cycle. The championships offer athletes a chance to begin accumulating results for Olympic qualification, with the top eight in each category securing quota places.

17: State



Gujarat Restructures Porbandar Forest for Asiatic Lion Rehabilitation :-

The Gujarat government has restructured the Porbandar forest division to develop the Barda area as a 'second home' for Asiatic lions. This initiative follows the natural return of lions to Barda after 143 years and aims to improve forest management and lion rehabilitation. The restructuring includes forming new range-beats, assigning two Assistant Conservator of Forests, and consolidating staff and equipment. The reorganisation also divides Porbandar and Ranavav into separate beats for better forest conservation and patrolling. The lion population in Gujarat has increased to 891, up from 674 in the previous census.



Rewilding of Captive-Bred Great Indian Bustards Begins in Jaisalmer :-

India has initiated the rewilding process for captive-bred Great Indian Bustards (GIBs) in Jaisalmer's Desert National Park. Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav and Rajasthan CM Bhajan Lal Sharma marked the event, which is part of a decade-long GIB recovery programme. Two GIBs will be released into their natural habitat, marking a significant transition from conservation breeding to rewilding. The programme, supported by the Rajasthan government, aims to bring the critically endangered bird back from the brink of extinction and promote eco-tourism benefits for local communities.



Mandar Instrument from Jharkhand Gets GI Tag :-

The Mandar, a traditional double-headed percussion instrument from Jharkhand, has been awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Chennai Registry. This instrument is crafted from red soil and clay with a unique cylindrical shape and features two leather-covered openings. The smaller side is coated with Kirman, and braided strings are used. The Mandar is typically played during festivals, dances, and social events, and its distinct sound is attributed to its unique soil-leather construction. This recognition helps protect the traditional craftsmanship and cultural heritage of tribal and folk communities.



Andhra Pradesh to Establish Global Horticulture Hub :-

The foundation stone for a ₹1-lakh-crore Global Horticulture Hub was laid in Madanapalle, Andhra Pradesh. The project aims to transform the drought-prone Rayalaseema region into a global center for fruit and vegetable exports. It will cover 10 districts, 201 clusters, and 5,869 villages in three phases from 2026 to 2029. The hub will see a ₹40,352 crore investment from the government and ₹60,000 crore from private entities. Additionally, the Indian School of Agriculture was launched with support from Reliance.



Uttarakhand Achieves Full Literacy Status :-

Uttarakhand has been declared India's sixth fully literate state, achieving an adult literacy rate of 98.70% under the ULLAS scheme. This milestone was announced by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami in Dehradun. The state joins others like Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh in surpassing the national benchmark of 95%. Approximately 25,000 volunteers participated in surveys and learner registrations, with assessments conducted via FLNAT by NIOS. ULLAS focuses on foundational literacy, numeracy, digital and financial literacy, and civic awareness.



Wild Buffaloes Reintroduced in Madhya Pradesh After 100 Years :-

Madhya Pradesh has reintroduced wild buffaloes to the state after nearly a century. Eight buffaloes from Assam's Kaziranga National Park were released into a 17-hectare enclosure at Kanha Tiger Reserve. This initiative, led by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, aims to reintroduce 50 buffaloes over the next three years to strengthen biodiversity and wildlife conservation in the region. The buffaloes were transported 2,200 km with assistance from Assam's Chief Minister. The project also plans to develop a third habitat for cheetahs, reflecting the state's commitment to restoring wildlife species.



Kumbh Mela Projects to Transform Nashik and Trimbakeshwar :-

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced that development projects in Nashik and Trimbakeshwar, ahead of the Simhastha Kumbh Mela, will transform these areas. The infrastructure improvements are designed to meet the needs for the next 25 to 30 years. Fadnavis inspected ongoing projects and directed officials to maintain quality standards. The projects aim to enhance transport facilities and amenities for devotees and tourists. The Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Simhastha Kumbh Mela will be held from October 31, 2026, to July 24, 2028, and these developments are expected to bolster the region's infrastructure.



Jaipur Hosts CXO Meet to Boost DDU-GKY 2.0 Industry Participation :-

The Ministry of Rural Development, alongside the Rajasthan Skill and Livelihoods Development Corporation, organized a CXO Meet in Jaipur to enhance industry involvement in the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) 2.0. The event aimed to align skill development with industry needs, facilitating sustainable employment for rural youth. Over 50 employers and industry representatives attended, discussing workforce requirements and collaboration opportunities. DDU-GKY has trained 18.49 lakh youth and placed 12.44 lakh candidates, focusing on placement outcomes for at least 70% of trainees.



2 MW Solar Plant Inaugurated in Spiti Valley :-

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu inaugurated a 2 MW solar plant with a 1 MWh battery storage system in Rongtong, Spiti Valley. The project, costing ₹4.42 crore, is expected to generate approximately 36 lakh units annually. It was commissioned in December 2024 and is part of developmental works worth ₹116.28 crore. Additionally, the foundation for two 66/22 kV substations, costing ₹47.95 crore, was laid. This initiative aims to boost renewable energy in high-altitude remote tribal areas.



ABVP's Odisha Poll Victory Shows Youth Support for 'Nation First' Ideology :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah congratulated the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) on winning the Odisha student union elections, reflecting youth alignment with the 'Nation First' ideology. ABVP's victories in 13 universities follow successes at Panjab University and Delhi University. BJP President Nitin Nabin also praised the results as a rejection of politics promoting anarchy. The elections, held after eight years, saw a 56% voter turnout across 337 institutions.



Periyar Arivulagam Inaugurated in Coimbatore :-

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay inaugurated the Periyar Arivulagam, a library and science center, in Coimbatore. The eight-storey complex, built at a cost of approximately ₹300 crore, features a library, science center, planetarium, and various other facilities. It also includes a competitive exam coaching center and a library for persons with disabilities. The foundation was laid by former CM M.K. Stalin in November 2024.



Punjab Launches SANGAT Mental Health Clubs :-

Punjab launched SANGAT Mental Health Clubs in 40 colleges as part of the 'Yudh Nashean Virudh' (War Against Drugs) campaign. The initiative is led by the Higher Education Department in collaboration with the Aditya Birla Education Trust and Mpower. Each college will train 25 students, totaling 1,000, through a 14-hour Youth Mental Health First Aid course. The program aims at early intervention, promoting wellbeing, and preventing substance abuse. The launch event took place at Plaksha University, Mohali.



Maharashtra Offers Free NEET, JEE Coaching Amid Drought :-

In Maharashtra's Nanded district, free coaching for NEET, JEE, and CET exams will be provided to 200 meritorious students from economically weaker rural families. This initiative aims to support students in pursuing higher education despite financial constraints due to drought conditions. Eligible students from Class 10 in rural Zilla Parishad and private aided schools will be selected through an entrance test in December. The program seeks to ensure that financial difficulties do not hinder talented students from accessing higher education opportunities.

18: Summits & Conferences



India Showcases Forest Initiatives at COFO 28 in Rome :

At the 28th Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO 28) in Rome, India emphasized its commitment to sustainable forest management and climate action. The country highlighted its progress in expanding forest and tree cover, currently at 82.74 million hectares, and its aim to restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030. India ranks ninth globally in forest area and third in net annual forest area gain. Initiatives like the Aravalli Green Wall and MISHTI for mangrove restoration were showcased. India called for international cooperation and effective financing for forest restoration.



Piyush Goyal Attending G20 Trade Ministers' Meeting in the US :-

Union Minister Piyush Goyal is visiting the US from September 29 to October 5 for the G20 Trade Ministers' Meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The meeting, scheduled for September 30 and October 1, will focus on global trade issues. Goyal will also engage with American industry leaders and investors to discuss expanding trade opportunities. Bilateral talks with the US will aim to advance the India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement. Goyal's visit includes meetings with startups and business leaders to promote India as a manufacturing and investment hub.



UP International Trade Show 2026 Secures Rs 6,500 Crore in MoUs :-

The Uttar Pradesh International Trade Show (UPITS) 2026 concluded with the signing of 4,400 MoUs worth approximately Rs 6,500 crore. The event, held in Noida, aimed to connect MSMEs, exporters, and manufacturers with domestic and international buyers. The trade show recorded potential business inquiries worth Rs 15,500 crore. A total of 41,500 B2B meetings took place, with significant participation from international delegations, including six partner countries. The government's One District, One Cuisine initiative was a major attraction, showcasing traditional crafts and products from Uttar Pradesh.



India Energy Week 2027 to be Held in Kolkata :-

The fifth edition of India Energy Week (IEW) 2027 will take place in Kolkata from 28 to 31 January, marking the

first time the event is hosted in eastern India. Organized by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, the event will be held at the New Town Convention Centre. With the theme 'Unlocking Innovation. Securing Energy. Shaping Tomorrow', the event will focus on hydrogen, biofuels, AI, renewables, LNG, petrochemicals, and net-zero initiatives. Over 75,000 professionals and 700 international exhibitors are expected to participate.



14th India-UAE High Level Joint Task Force Meeting in Mumbai :-

The 14th High Level Joint Task Force on Investments (HLJTFI) between India and the UAE was held in Mumbai, co-chaired by Piyush Goyal and Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The meeting reviewed the progress of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and discussed major investments, including the Food Park in Gujarat and financial sector expansions in GIFT City. Bilateral trade reached $101.25 billion in FY 2025-26, with non-oil trade at $76.2 billion. The task force aims for $200 billion in bilateral trade by 2032.

19th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas Convention Scheduled in Kolkata :-

The 19th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (PBD) Convention will take place in Kolkata, West Bengal, from January 7 to 9, 2027. Organized by the Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with the West Bengal government, the event will gather Indian diaspora and stakeholders globally. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the convention, and President Droupadi Murmu will confer the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards. The convention aims to strengthen connections between the Indian diaspora and India, recognizing their contributions worldwide.



Windergy India 2026 Inaugurated by Union Minister Pralhad Joshi :-

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi inaugurated the 8th edition of Windergy India on 8 October 2026 at the Chennai Trade Centre. The event, running from 7 to 9 October, is co-graced by MoS Shripad Yesso Naik and Tamil Nadu Energy Minister C.T.R. Nirmal Kumar. It features global MoU announcements, sectoral report launches, and recognition of leading wind-energy states. India added a record 6.05 GW wind capacity in FY2025-26, with a cumulative capacity of 58.52 GW as of August 2026. The event includes a trade fair, conference, technical sessions, and B2B/B2G meetings.



Indian Delegation Participates in 153rd IPU Assembly in Tanzania :-

An Indian Parliamentary Delegation led by Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh participated in the 153rd Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly in Arusha, Tanzania. The event saw Indian MPs engaging in various committees and forums, including the IPU Committee on Health and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. Notable contributions included Kamaljeet Sehrawat speaking on disability rights and Bijuli Kalita Medhi on women leadership. Bilateral meetings were conducted with the Speakers of Australia and Tanzania.



India Mobile Congress 2026 Concluded in New Delhi :-

The 10th edition of the India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2026 which began on 7 October at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi ran until 10 October. The event, themed “Scale Without Boundaries,” was inaugurated by Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia. It focused on expanding technological innovations for global-scale adoption, with key technologies including 6G, AI-native telecom, and quantum tech. The congress was organized around four pillars: innovation, infrastructure, inclusion, and security, aiming to advance India's position in the global tech landscape.



India and Qatar Review Bilateral Ties in New Delhi :-

India and Qatar held the 6th round of Foreign Office Consultations in New Delhi, focusing on political engagement, trade, investment, and energy. The meeting, co-chaired by Sripriya Ranganathan from India's Ministry of External Affairs and Dr. Ahmad Hassen Al-Hammadi from Qatar, also covered regional and multilateral issues, including developments in West Asia. The discussions highlighted the deepening strategic partnership between the two nations and the significant role of the Indian community in Qatar. Both countries agreed to hold the next consultations in Doha at a mutually convenient date.



BRICS Theatre Festival 2026 Concluded in Delhi :-

The BRICS Theatre Festival 2026 was held at the National School of Drama in New Delhi, featuring participants from nine BRICS member and partner countries. Organized under India's BRICS Presidency 2026, the event promotes cultural dialogue and artistic exchange. The festival, held from October 12 to 14, included performances from countries like India, Russia, and South Africa. Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat highlighted culture's role in fostering mutual understanding.



BIMSTEC Home Ministers Adopt Delhi Declaration for Regional Security :-

The first BIMSTEC Home Ministers' Meeting concluded with the adoption of the Delhi Declaration, focusing on strengthening regional cooperation against terrorism, human trafficking, and transnational crime. The declaration emphasizes the Bay of Bengal region as a common security space facing shared challenges. Member states, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, committed to enhancing security cooperation based on mutual respect and benefit. The declaration also condemned terrorism in all forms and called for a comprehensive approach to combat it, aligning with international law.



India and Vietnam Review Key Security Cooperation Areas :-

India and Vietnam held the 4th Security Dialogue in New Delhi, focusing on economic security, maritime engagement, counter-terrorism, emerging technologies, and cyber security. Co-chaired by India's Deputy National Security Adviser Pavan Kapoor and Viet Nam's Deputy Minister of Public Security, Senior Lieutenant General Pham The Tung, the dialogue reaffirmed commitments to closer collaboration on mutual interests. This biennial dialogue is part of the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation between India's National Security Council Secretariat and Viet Nam's Ministry of Public Security.



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio to Visit India for Strategic Talks :-

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is set to visit India on October 20, following his participation in the C5+1 Ministerial in Uzbekistan. The visit aims to strengthen the US-India strategic partnership, focusing on economic opportunities and energy cooperation. Rubio's visit comes after US President Donald Trump paused sanctions related to Russian fuel sales, considering India's energy needs. During his visit, Rubio will meet with senior government officials and business leaders to discuss regional dynamics and promote economic cooperation.



Rajnath Singh Attended SCO Heads of Government Meeting in Tajikistan :-

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh represented India at the 25th meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Council of Heads of Government in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on October 19-20. The meeting was focused on enhancing cooperation among SCO member states in areas such as trade, economy, and innovation. India exchanged views on advancing practical cooperation and remains engaged in SCO

initiatives involving startups and digital public infrastructure.



India to Host First SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum :-

India is set to host the inaugural SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum by the end of 2026. This initiative was announced by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at the SCO Council of Heads of Government meeting in Dushanbe. The forum, proposed by PM Modi at the 2025 Tianjin summit, aims to enhance people-to-people ties and share civilisational heritage among SCO members, including India, China, and Russia. The platform will use Chinese and Russian as official languages, with permanent bodies in Beijing and Tashkent.



India Chem 2026 Showcased India as Global Chemicals Hub :-

The 14th India Chem 2026 was held at the Bombay Exhibition Centre in Mumbai. The event, themed “Advantage Bharat: An Emerging Global Chemicals Hub”, was inaugurated by Union Minister JP Nadda, with Japan as a partner country. India ranks as the world's 6th-largest chemicals producer and Asia's 4th-largest. The sector aims to reach USD 300 billion by 2030 and USD 1 trillion by 2040. The event will serve as a platform for collaboration and investment among policymakers, industry leaders, and technology providers.



19th Urban Mobility India Conference Inaugurated in Bhubaneswar :-

The 19th Urban Mobility India Conference was held in Bhubaneswar, focusing on sustainable and inclusive mobility solutions. The two-day event, organized by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, emphasized urban accessibility in the digital age. Key discussions include public transport sustainability, multimodal integration, and reducing traffic congestion. Union Minister Tokhan Sahu highlighted India's metro expansion and digital initiatives like the National Common Mobility Card. The conference aims to shape future urban transport policies and improve city livability.



8th All India Conference of GRP Chiefs Highlights Railway Security :-

The 8th All India Conference of Government Railway Police (GRP) Chiefs concluded in New Delhi focusing on intelligence-led policing and enhanced coordination among railway security agencies. Convened by the Railway Protection Force (RPF), the conference emphasized technology use for passenger safety. Key initiatives discussed included the onboarding of GRP personnel onto the RailMadad platform for improved grievance redressal and South Central Railway's women-led initiative, Pink Patrol.



India to Host 23rd Asia Pacific Automotive Engineering Conference :-

SAEINDIA will host the 23rd Asia Pacific Automotive Engineering Conference (APAC 23) on November 13-14, 2026, at the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre in New Delhi. The conference, themed "Xellerating towards Safe, Secure, Sustainable & Intelligent Mobility," marks the second time India hosts APAC, after a 15-year interval. The event will bring together leaders, engineers, researchers, and policymakers from 11 Asia-Pacific countries, focusing on advancements in automotive engineering.



ICGEB Hosts Curtain Raiser for ESTIC 2026 in New Delhi :-

The International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) in New Delhi hosting a curtain raiser for the Emerging Science, Technology and Innovation Conclave (ESTIC) 2026. The event focused on the potential of systems and synthetic biology to advance biotechnology, healthcare, and sustainable development. The conclave, scheduled for October 27-29, will highlight opportunities in these disciplines for scientific advancement. Key discussions will include the role of artificial intelligence in biological research and the importance of translating scientific discoveries into practical applications.



Emerging Science, Technology and Innovation Conclave 2026 held in New Delhi :-

Inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi the Emerging Science, Technology and Innovation Conclave (ESTIC) 2026 was held in New Delhi. The event gathered scientists, researchers, and industry leaders to discuss emerging technologies. Key areas include AI, biotechnology, and climate science. The conclave aimed to strengthen India's scientific capabilities and promote international research partnerships. ISRO showcased future space missions, including Chandrayaan-4 and Chandrayaan-5. Organized by CSIR, the event supports India's long-term scientific goals under Viksit Bharat 2047.



COP31 to be Held in Antalya, Türkiye in November 2026 :-

The 31st UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP31) will take place in Antalya, Türkiye, from 9 to 20 November 2026. Türkiye will host the event, with Australia leading the negotiations. Chris Bowen will serve as the Negotiations President, and Murat Kurum will be the COP President. The conference will focus on implementing the Paris Agreement, covering areas such as mitigation, adaptation, finance, and loss and damage. A World Leaders' Summit is scheduled for 11–12 November 2026. The event will also include CMP21 and CMA8 sessions.

SECTION 2

Practice Questions with Answers



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1) Which of the following features was inaugurated by Amit Shah at Sabarmati Railway Station in Ahmedabad?

A) First bullet train corridor
B) Solar-powered railway station
C) India's first LNG-powered train
D) Hyperloop passenger service

2) Exercise Tarang Shakti 2026, hosted by the Indian Air Force, features participation from which of the following countries?

A) Australia, UAE, France, Bangladesh
B) Canada, UK, Italy, Spain
C) Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia
D) Russia, China, Nepal, Bhutan

3) Which government department is supporting 210 nanomedicine R&D projects in India with financial assistance of ₹174 crore?

A) Department of Pharmaceuticals
B) Department of Biotechnology
C) Department of Science and Technology
D) Department of Health Research

4) Where is India's first port-based e-methanol production facility being established?

A) Paradip, Odisha
B) Chennai, Tamil Nadu
C) Kandla, Gujarat
D) Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

5) Which of the following is featured among the 37 mementos from Rajasthan in the PM Mementos e-Auction 2026?

A) Replica of Gateway of India
B) Model of Qutub Minar
C) Handcrafted Ambabari elephant with Howdah
D) Bronze statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

6) During recent talks, what did India invite French higher educational institutions to do?

A) Offer online-only courses in India
B) Set up campuses in France
C) Limit student exchanges to engineering only
D) Establish branch campuses in India, including at GIFT City

7) Which two locations does the newly approved Amrit Bharat Express connect?

A) Bhuj and Barauni
B) Surat and Lucknow
C) Mumbai and Varanasi
D) Ahmedabad and Patna

8) Who won the 10m air pistol mixed team gold for India at the Asian Games 2026?

A) Suruchi Inder Singh & Kamaljeet
B) Parul Chaudhary & Gulveer Singh
C) Anahat Singh & Abhay Singh
D) Joshna Chinappa & Velavan Senthil Kumar

9) What is the primary goal of the DRDO's first high-value deep-tech project signed with Zero mK India Pvt Ltd?

A) Indigenous development of a 20 mK dilution refrigerator for quantum applications
B) Manufacture of military drones
C) Production of AI-based surveillance systems
D) Development of advanced missile technology

10) Which institution has developed India's first indigenous micro-GPU aimed at embedded systems?

A) IIT Bombay
B) IISc Bangalore
C) IIT Delhi
D) IIT Madras

11) Which of the following statements about the recent extension of AFSPA is correct?

A) AFSPA has been extended in parts of Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh until 31 March 2027.
B) AFSPA now covers all police stations in Manipur.
C) AFSPA has been withdrawn from all districts of Nagaland.
D) AFSPA applies only to Assam as per the latest notification.

12) Which port is the only non-major port among those recently declared as mega ports under the Indian Ports Act, 2025?

A) Mundra
B) Jawaharlal Nehru (Nhava Sheva)
C) Paradip
D) Deendayal (Kandla)

13) Who was appointed as the Chairman of CBSE?

A) Dinesh Pant
B) Mandeep K Bhandari
C) Shanti Swaroop Bhatnagar
D) Dr. N. Kalaiselvi

14) Which Indian city ranked highest in the 2026 Oxford Economics Global Cities Index?

A) Bengaluru
B) Delhi
C) Mumbai
D) Chennai

15) Which Indian companies participated in the 10th India–South Korea Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) on defence industries?

A) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and DRDO
B) Tata Advanced Systems and Mahindra Defence
C) Larsen & Toubro (L&T) and Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML)
D) ISRO and BEL

16) What is the primary objective of the Green Energy Corridor Phase-III (GEC-III) scheme approved by the Cabinet?

A) Expansion of hydroelectric dams in the Himalayas
B) Evacuation of up to 135 GW of renewable energy across states and UTs
C) Development of new coal-fired power plants
D) Promotion of nuclear energy for rural electrification

17) Under the newly launched Livestock Insurance Portal, what percentage of the premium is paid by the beneficiary?

A) 15%
B) 25%
C) 85%
D) 50%

18) Which aircraft made its debut with the Indian Air Force during the second 'Power in Partnership' multinational exercise at AFS Jodhpur?

A) Eurofighter Typhoon
B) MiG-29
C) Sukhoi Su-30MKI
D) F-35

19) What is the main focus of the India–Kazakhstan Exercise KAZIND-2026?

A) Cybersecurity and digital warfare exercises
B) Humanitarian relief operations after natural disasters
C) Joint counter-terrorism operations in semi-urban and mountainous terrain under a UN mandate
D) Naval warfare training in the Indian Ocean

20) During his visit to Milwaukee for the G20 Trade Ministers' Meeting, what aspect did Piyush Goyal emphasize about the India-US economic relationship?

A) It is limited to agricultural exports and imports
B) It is primarily about student exchange programs
C) It is expanding beyond traditional trade to include investment, technology, and innovation
D) It focuses only on defence procurement

21) Where will India Energy Week 2027 be held for the first time in eastern India?

A) Patna
B) Bhubaneswar
C) Ranchi
D) Kolkata

22) Who received the Lifetime Achievement Award at FICCI FRAMES 2026?

A) Uday Shankar
B) Ayushmann Khurrana
C) Ekta Kapoor
D) Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

23) Which institution marked its silver jubilee with the theme 'Future Readiness Through Jointness and Integration' and organized the event 'Trishakti Manthan'?

A) Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS)
B) Indian Army Training Command
C) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
D) National Defence Academy

24) What is the main goal of the National PNG Drive 3.0 launched by the Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry?

A) Increase piped natural gas (PNG) adoption in households
B) Expand solar rooftop installations
C) Subsidize LPG cylinder prices
D) Promote ethanol blending in petrol

25) Which two organizations signed an MoU to develop safer, sustainable alternatives to chemical fumigation for grain storage?

A) DRDO and Food Safety Authority
B) ICAR and FCI
C) FAO and Indian Railways
D) NABARD and Ministry of Agriculture

26) What is the total capacity of the Cleanmax–Nuvoco wind-solar hybrid project announced in Rajasthan in 2026?

A) 72.8 MW
B) 20 MW
C) 46.4 MW
D) 100 MW

27) Which new feature was launched by UIDAI for ePDS beneficiaries at the Aadhaar Samvaad event in Kolkata?

A) Face Authentication
B) Iris Scan Only
C) Voice Recognition
D) Fingerprint-Only Authentication

28) Who became the first Indian woman to win an Asian Games medal in the individual recurve archery event in 2026?

A) Sakshi
B) Salima Tete
C) Lalremsiami
D) Kumkum Mohod

29) What is the primary beneficiary project of the proceeds from the eighth edition of the PM Mementos e-Auction?

A) Swachh Bharat Mission
B) Digital India
C) Make in India
D) Namami Gange Project

30) Who did Indian wrestler Sujeet Kalkal defeat in the final to win gold in the men's freestyle 65kg category at the Asian Games 2026?

A) Abbas Ebrahimzadehsavadkouhi
B) Abdulmazhid Kudiev
C) Sayed Omar Zazai
D) Kiyooka

31) The MoU between NRIDA and IIM Kolkata focuses on the impact study of which government schemes?

A) Digital India and Skill India
B) Swachh Bharat and Jal Jeevan Mission
C) MGNREGA and PMAY-G
D) PMGSY-IV and PM-JANMAN

32) What is the bilateral trade target set by India and the UAE for 2032, as discussed at the 14th High Level Joint Task Force meeting?

A) $150 billion
B) $200 billion
C) $100 billion
D) $250 billion

33) Which feature does Bank of India's new programmable digital rupee offer to account holders?

A) Physical gold redemption
B) Automatic fixed-amount transfers to CBDC wallets
C) International remittance services
D) Loan disbursal automation

34) What is the purpose of the Swachh Seva Aankalan framework discussed during the Special Gram Sabha on Swachh Bharat Diwas?

A) Mandatory daily cleaning drives in cities

B) Centralized waste disposal for urban areas
C) Annual digital self-assessment at the Gram Panchayat level
D) Distribution of free sanitation kits

35) Who became the first Indian woman to win an individual golf gold medal at the Asian Games 2026?

A) Ankita Bhakat
B) Kirti Sharma
C) Kumkum Mohod
D) Pranavi Sharath Urs

36) Which of the following sectors has been identified as a key area for collaboration in the ongoing India-Canada Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) negotiations?

A) Pharmaceuticals
B) Aerospace
C) Automobiles
D) Textiles

37) Which technological innovation is being piloted in Andhra Pradesh for rural housing under PMAY-G 2.0?

A) Solar-powered modular homes
B) Eco-brick construction
C) Pre-fabricated steel structures
D) 3D concrete-printing technology

38) At the 2026 Asian Games, which Indian women's team ended a 44-year wait for a gold medal by defeating China 1-0?

A) Women's hockey team
B) Women's kabaddi team
C) Women's archery team
D) Women's cricket team

39) What was a key feature of the hypersonic missile test conducted by North Korea under Kim Jong Un's supervision?

A) It was tracked throughout by South Korea and Japan
B) It failed to reach its target
C) It was launched from a submarine
D) It used a wave-like trajectory mode to evade tracking

40) Which of the following universities will host the Centre of Excellence for Classical Bengali, as approved by the Ministry of Education?

A) Central University of Gujarat
B) Deccan College, Pune
C) Tezpur University, Assam
D) Visva-Bharati University, West Bengal

41) According to the first National Household Travel Survey (NHTS), which mode of transport is most commonly used by students in India to commute to educational institutions?

A) Walking
B) Auto-rickshaw
C) Bicycle
D) Bus

42) What is the total financial assistance provided under West Bengal's Bhagini Nivedita Scheme for unmarried women pursuing higher education?

A) Rs 75,000
B) Rs 50,000
C) Rs 1,00,000
D) Rs 25,000

43) Which of the following is NOT listed as a component of the National Coastal Mission 2.0 (NCM 2.0)?

A) Space exploration
B) Pollution control
C) Sustainable tourism
D) Ecosystem restoration

44) Where is Uttarakhand's first glacial lake early-warning system being installed?

A) Roopkund Lake, Pithoragarh
B) Hemkund, Chamoli
C) Naini Lake, Nainital
D) Vasundhara Tal, Chamoli

45) Which traditional instrument from Jharkhand was recently awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag?

A) Mandar
B) Dholak

C) Tabla
D) Nagada

46) What is the primary aim of the Andhra Pradesh Global Horticulture Hub launched at Madanapalle?

A) Establish a textile manufacturing cluster
B) Promote marine fisheries in the region
C) Develop a new IT park in Andhra Pradesh
D) Transform Rayalaseema into a global fruit and vegetable export centre

47) What reward did the Odisha government announce for each women's hockey gold medallist after India's win over China?

A) ₹25 lakh
B) ₹11 lakh
C) ₹1 lakh
D) ₹5.5 lakh

48) Who became the first Indian woman to win Asian Games golf gold?

A) Diksha Dagar
B) Shannon Tan
C) Aditi Ashok
D) Pranavi Urs

49) Which Indian athlete was named in TIME100 Next 2026 in the Phenom category?

A) Aditi Ashok
B) Vaibhav Sooryavanshi
C) Pranavi Urs
D) Shivam Dube

50) Which initiative led to Jawahar Dweep Marine Oil Terminal being declared plastic-free?

A) Clean Ganga Mission
B) Digital India
C) Swachhata Abhiyan 2026
D) Make in India

51) Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently completed 25 continuous years as Head of Government. Which position did he first assume to begin this journey?

A) Prime Minister of India
B) Home Minister of India
C) Chief Minister of Gujarat
D) Governor of Maharashtra

52) India and Ghana recently signed a five-year MoU in agriculture. Which crop will be the primary focus in the first phase of their cooperation?

A) Tomato
B) Maize
C) Rice
D) Wheat

53) Which university has been selected to host the Centre of Excellence for Classical Assamese?

A) Tezpur University
B) Visva-Bharati
C) Deccan College Pune
D) Central University of Odisha

54) At which venue the 8th edition of Windergy India was held?

A) Pragati Maidan, New Delhi
B) Bombay Exhibition Centre
C) India Expo Mart, Greater Noida
D) Chennai Trade Centre

55) Exercise MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN 2026, held in Uttarakhand, is a joint military exercise between India and which country?

A) United Arab Emirates
B) Nepal
C) Japan
D) France

56) What is the name of India’s first indigenous Fleet Support Ship launched in October 2026?

A) Shakti
B) Surya
C) Viraat
D) Vikrant

57) Which Indian state launched the country’s first dedicated MICE Incentive Portal to promote business tourism?

A) Kerala
B) Odisha
C) Gujarat
D) Maharashtra

58) Which public sector bank became the second to enter the pension fund business after receiving a PFRDA Certificate of Appointment as Sponsor?

A) Canara Bank
B) Bank of Baroda
C) Union Bank of India
D) Punjab National Bank

59) Who won the inaugural Jaspal Rana Award for best female athlete at the Asian Games, as instituted by the Indian Olympic Association?

A) P. V. Sindhu
B) Mary Kom
C) Kumkum Anil Mohod
D) Deepika Kumari

60) What is the new name of SpaceX's AI division as confirmed by Elon Musk in October 2026?

A) SpaceXAGI
B) SpaceXAI
C) SpaceXGI
D) SpaceXSI

61) Which state launched India's first national-level 3D Concrete Printing (3DCP) rural housing pilot under PMAY-G 2.0?

A) Tamil Nadu
B) Gujarat
C) Maharashtra
D) Andhra Pradesh

62) For which area of mathematics was Mahesh Kakde recognized with the 2026 Ramanujan Prize?

A) Topology
B) Probability theory
C) Algebraic number theory
D) Combinatorics

63) Which state became India's sixth fully literate state in 2026 under the ULLAS scheme?

A) Sikkim
B) Goa
C) Tripura
D) Uttarakhand

64) Which two Indian institutions signed MoUs with Ghanaian counterparts to enhance research and agricultural cooperation?

A) IISc Bengaluru and NIOS
B) CSIR-CBRI and MY Bharat
C) NCC and Suryakiran Aerobatic Team
D) Zoological Survey of India and ICAR

65) India partnered with which international organisation as a pilot country to bridge the AI gap for the Global South?

A) World Bank
B) World Economic Forum
C) UNESCO
D) International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

66) What renewable energy source now powers all of India's lighthouses, as part of their modernisation?

A) Hydroelectric power
B) Biogas
C) Wind energy
D) Solar energy

67) At the AIIMS Deoghar convocation, what percentage of the 173 graduating students were women, as highlighted by Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan?

A) About 50%
B) About 90%
C) About 76%
D) About 25%

68) Which stretch of the Chennai Metro Rail Project did PM Modi inaugurate during his visit to Tamil Nadu, and what is its notable feature?

A) Chennai Central–Airport stretch with underwater tunnels
B) Washermanpet–Thiruvottriyur stretch with monorail integration
C) Poonamallee–Vadapalani stretch with a double-decker structure
D) Egmore–Tambaram stretch with elevated stations

69) What is the maximum settlement amount for which SEBI's new fast-track mechanism applies under the revised Settlement Regulations, 2026?

A) ₹5 lakh
B) ₹1 crore
C) ₹50 lakh
D) ₹10 lakh

70) Which traditional Indian sports will be demonstrated at the BRICS Traditional and Indigenous Sports Games 2026 in Ahmedabad?

A) Wushu, Capoeira, Sambo
B) Mallakhamb, Yogasana, Kalaripayattu
C) Cricket, Hockey, Football
D) Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, Gilli Danda

71) Which major infrastructure project did Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlight as key to transforming VOC Port in Thoothukudi into a global container and green energy hub?

A) Construction of a new airport terminal
B) Around ₹17,000 crore investment for port development
C) Establishment of a new IT park
D) Expansion of the Chennai-Bangalore highway

72) Where is the Indian Council of Medical Research's first high-altitude health research centre being established?

A) Leh
B) Shimla
C) Keylong
D) Manali

73) What was the theme of the 94th edition of Fit India Sundays on Cycle held in Varanasi?

A) Swachh Bharat Abhiyan
B) Nasha Mukt Yuva for Viksit Bharat
C) Digital India for All
D) Clean Ganga Mission

74) What is the primary purpose of the Indian Navy's next-generation offshore patrol vessel 'Shreyas' launched at GRSE in Kolkata?

A) To support multi-domain operations including maritime surveillance and anti-piracy
B) To function as a submarine tender
C) To conduct only humanitarian assistance missions
D) To serve exclusively as a training ship for naval cadets

75) Which state received the highest amount from the National Biodiversity Authority's recent Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) funds disbursement?

A) Bihar
B) Odisha
C) West Bengal
D) Madhya Pradesh

76) What is the primary role of the newly commissioned INS Mangrol in the Indian Navy?

A) Anti-Submarine Warfare in shallow waters
B) Long-range missile deployment
C) Deep-sea oil exploration
D) Aircraft carrier operations

77) Which company holds the majority stake in the Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) for upgrading ITI clusters in Surat and Visakhapatnam under PM-SETU?

A) New Age Makers' Institute of Technology
B) Government of India
C) State Governments
D) ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India

78) Who will succeed Sashidhar Jagdishan as the MD & CEO of HDFC Bank in October 2026?

A) Sergio Gor
B) Anup Bagchi
C) Debashree Mukherjee
D) Swapan Dasgupta

79) Which theme was highlighted at the World Cotton Day event jointly organised by India and Mali at the UN Headquarters in 2026?

A) Technological Innovations in Cotton Farming
B) Cotton and Climate Change Mitigation
C) Cotton for Sustainability: Livelihoods, Value Addition and Partnership
D) Global Cotton Trade and Tariffs

80) What was the theme of World Post Day observed on 9 October 2026?

A) Connecting the World
B) One postal network, infinite possibilities
C) Postal Services for All
D) Delivering the Future

81) Which traditional sweet received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in October 2026?

A) Palani Panchamirtham
B) Ambaji Mohanthal Prasad
C) Tirupati Laddu
D) Mathura Peda

82) What is the primary use of the KOAIR-10L drone certified by DGCA in October 2026?

A) Parcel delivery
B) Aerial photography
C) Surveillance for law enforcement
D) Agricultural agrochemical spraying

83) Which institution awarded the first MTech (Defence Technology) degrees to Armoured Corps officers in October 2026?

A) IIT Ropar
B) IIT Bombay
C) IIT Madras
D) IIT Delhi

84) Who heads the Supreme Court's newly formed standing committee on judicial well-being?

A) Dr. Savita Malhotra
B) Rajat Mitra
C) Justice K. V. Viswanathan
D) Justice D. Y. Chandrachud

85) What was a key outcome of the first BIMSTEC Home Ministers' Meeting held in New Delhi in October 2026?

A) Launch of a regional currency
B) Signing of a Free Trade Agreement
C) Adoption of the Delhi Declaration
D) Formation of a joint military force

86) Which of the following is a feature of the new passenger terminal at Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport in Leh inaugurated by PM Modi?

A) Located in Kargil
B) Incorporates geothermal energy systems
C) Dedicated only to cargo flights
D) Built entirely of glass

87) What percentage of identified villages in Northeast India have been connected to a bank branch or India Post Payments Bank as of October 2026?

A) 90%
B) 35%
C) 50%
D) 73%

88) Who heads the Maharashtra MPSC Reforms Committee constituted in October 2026?

A) Dilip Bhosale
B) Tukaram Mundhe
C) Vivek Bhimnawar
D) Ganesh Patil

89) Which Indian Navy ship is participating in the INDRA-2026 naval exercise with Russia?

A) INS Shivalik
B) INS Sahyadri
C) INS Vikramaditya
D) INS Kolkata

90) Prakash Rajpurohit, appointed Deputy Election Commissioner in October 2026, belongs to which IAS cadre?

A) Tamil Nadu
B) Maharashtra
C) Uttar Pradesh
D) Rajasthan

91) What was a key focus of the 14th High-Level Meeting between the Indian Coast Guard and the Korea Coast Guard held in Incheon?

A) Launching a joint satellite
B) Enhancing maritime search and rescue cooperation
C) Discussing nuclear disarmament

D) Negotiating a free trade agreement

92) What is the primary focus area of the newly inaugurated BRIC-CDFD–ONT India Genomics Centre of Excellence?

A) Renewable energy solutions
B) Space technology development
C) Artificial intelligence for agriculture
D) Genomics research in rare diseases and cancer

93) Which Indian territory was declared fully literate in October 2026 under the ULLAS–Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram?

A) Puducherry
B) Andaman and Nicobar Islands
C) Daman and Diu
D) Lakshadweep

94) Who was appointed the new Governor of Odisha in the reshuffle announced by President Droupadi Murmu in October 2026?

A) Dhal Singh Bisen
B) Dushyant Gautam
C) Braj Mohan Ram
D) Dr Sudha Yadav

95) Which two major defence acquisitions were covered by the Ministry of Defence's contracts worth approximately Rs 4,106 crore signed in October 2026?

A) GSAT-7C satellite and Varunastra Heavy Weight Torpedoes
B) Tejas Aircraft and Akash Missiles
C) INS Vikrant and BrahMos Missiles
D) Pinaka Rockets and Arjun Tanks

96) What is the new name of the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) as approved by the Union Cabinet?

A) Samajik Suraksha Abhiyan
B) Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana
C) Rashtriya Pension Yojana
D) Pradhan Mantri Samajik Sahayata Yojana

97) What is a key feature of the India-Russia Temporary Employment Agreement ratified in October 2026?

A) It requires work permits and host-country standard wages and conditions.
B) It is limited to the IT sector only.
C) It allows only Indian students to work in Russia.
D) It does not address Russia's labour shortages.

98) Which country became India's largest LNG supplier in September 2026?

A) Oman
B) Nigeria
C) United States
D) Qatar

99) Which state or union territory is NOT among those where PM-SETU approved ITI clusters in October 2026?

A) Maharashtra
B) Jammu & Kashmir
C) Gujarat
D) Odisha

100) Which of the following groups is now eligible to be appointed as Census enumerators under the amended Census Rules, 2026?

A) Only bank employees
B) Only police personnel
C) Teachers from private educational institutions
D) Only Central government officers

101) What is the proposed Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) for Acetamiprid in tea, as per FSSAI's draft regulations?

A) 10 mg/kg
B) 30 mg/kg
C) 50 mg/kg
D) 20 mg/kg

102) Which of the following is proposed to be banned in nutrition products for infants up to six months of age by FSSAI?

A) Lactose and glucose polymers
B) Sucrose and fructose

C) Starch and maltose
D) Galactose and ribose

103) Which bridge, part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL), is recognised as the world's highest railway arch bridge?

A) Pamban Bridge
B) Anji Khad Bridge
C) Chenab Rail Bridge
D) Bogibeel Bridge

104) What is the reported reduction in police response time in Uttar Pradesh, as highlighted by CM Yogi Adityanath?

A) From 65 minutes to 5 minutes
B) From 20 minutes to 2 minutes
C) From 30 minutes to 10 minutes
D) From 45 minutes to 15 minutes

105) In the recent Odisha student union elections, which student organisation won in 13 universities, as noted by Union Home Minister Amit Shah?

A) National Students' Union of India (NSUI)
B) Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP)
C) All India Students Association (AISA)
D) Students' Federation of India (SFI)

106) Which country hosted the Asian Para Games for the first time in 2026?

A) Japan
B) South Korea
C) Thailand
D) China

107) What was the theme or motto of the fifth Asian Para Games held in Aichi-Nagoya?

A) Unity in Diversity
B) Beyond Limits
C) Imagine One Heart
D) Sports for All

108) Following drone and missile attacks, what emergency number should Indian nationals in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, call in case of a threat?

A) 911
B) 112
C) 998
D) 100

109) What key measure did the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) implement regarding anti-cancer drugs effective November 9, 2026?

A) Mandated compulsory licensing for cancer drug patents
B) Reduced GST on all cancer medicines to 5%
C) Banned the sale of imported anti-cancer drugs
D) Capped trade margins on 137 non-scheduled anti-cancer drugs at 30% of MRP

110) Which state received the largest share of benefit-sharing funds from the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) in October 2026?

A) Rajasthan
B) Telangana
C) Maharashtra
D) Karnataka

111) Which area was officially declared as Ladakh's eighth district in October 2026?

A) Drass
B) Zanskar
C) Nubra
D) Sankoo

112) What innovation earned Raji Doshi the title of America's Top Young Scientist 2026?

A) Designing an AI-driven crop monitoring tool
B) Inventing a solar-powered water purifier
C) Developing the ALKACORE system to combat ocean acidification
D) Creating a biodegradable plastic alternative

113) Under which Article of the Constitution did L. Murugan resign from the Union Council of Ministers in October 2026?

A) Article 153
B) Article 155
C) Article 75(2)
D) Article 356

114) Which Indian para-athlete won gold in the men's T47 long jump at the 2026 Asian Para Games?

A) Nishad Kumar
B) Avani Lekhara
C) Sumit Antil
D) Mona Agarwal

115) Which of the following is a focus area at the Indian Navy's 'Swavlamban' 2026 seminar to be conducted at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi?

A) Maritime surveillance and counter-unmanned aircraft systems
B) Space exploration technologies
C) Nuclear missile development
D) Urban infrastructure planning

116) Police Commemoration Day, observed annually on October 21 in India, commemorates which historical incident?

A) Attack on Parliament in 2001
B) Kargil conflict in 1999
C) Ambush of Indian police by Chinese troops at Hot Springs in Ladakh in 1959
D) Operation Blue Star in Amritsar in 1984

117) Which Indian athlete defended her women's 400m T20 title with a Games record at the Asian Para Games 2026?

A) Deepthi Jeevanji
B) Nishad Kumar
C) Tejalben Damor
D) Simran

118) After the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), India-UAE bilateral trade recently crossed which milestone?

A) $100 billion
B) $25 billion
C) $10 billion
D) $50 billion

119) What system was used to determine the placings in the men's discus throw combined F51/52/53 event at the Asian Para Games 2026?

A) Time-based ranking
B) Raza Point System
C) Average of best two throws
D) Direct distance measurement

120) The Green Diwali campaign launched by WWF-India in 2026 encourages citizens to take which of the following actions?

A) Celebrate Diwali only with imported products
B) Adopt environmentally responsible celebrations and avoid firecrackers
C) Organize fireworks competitions
D) Use more firecrackers

121) What is the primary purpose of the new 'Toll Plaza Feedback' feature added to the Rajmargyatra mobile app by NHAI?

A) To offer discounts on toll payments
B) To provide real-time traffic updates
C) To facilitate emergency roadside assistance
D) To collect user feedback and monitor improvement areas at toll plazas

122) Which two official languages will be used at the first SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum to be hosted by India?

A) Chinese and Russian
B) English and Russian
C) Hindi and English
D) Hindi and Chinese

123) Which bird species has been preliminarily assessed as 'Critically Endangered' in India's national Red List assessment?

A) Great Indian Bustard
B) Sarus Crane
C) Grey Plover
D) Indian Roller

124) As part of the India–New Zealand FTA effective from October 2026, what percentage of

Indian tariff lines will eventually receive concessions?

A) 50%
B) 100%
C) 30%
D) 70%

125) What is the proposed capacity of the undersea HVDC power link discussed between India and Saudi Arabia?

A) 500 MW
B) 3 GW
C) 1 GW
D) 10 GW

126) Which country is the partner country for the 14th India Chem 2026 event in Mumbai?

A) South Korea
B) Singapore
C) Japan
D) Germany

127) What is the main focus of the 7th AgriVoltaics World Conference held in New Delhi?

A) Improving irrigation systems
B) Genetically modified crops
C) Integrating agriculture and renewable energy
D) Promoting organic farming

128) Which immunotherapy drug was approved by DCGI in October 2026 for first-line treatment of advanced ESCC?

A) Nivolumab
B) Pembrolizumab
C) Atezolizumab
D) Toripalimab (Zytorvi)

129) What is the theme of the 12th BRICS Parliamentary Forum hosted by India in 2026?

A) Innovation in Parliamentary Procedures
B) Digital India for Global Growth
C) Fostering Parliaments for People-Centric Development
D) Parliamentary Diplomacy for Peace

130) What is India's rank in the Ipsos Quality of Care Perception Index 2026?

A) First
B) Tenth
C) Fifth
D) Third

131) Which of the following statements is correct regarding the newly discovered subterranean fish species in Assam?

A) Gitchak nakana and Rakthamichthys anchi are both marine species.
B) Both species were discovered in the Brahmaputra river in 2026.
C) Gitchak nakana is a blind, transparent loach found in wells in Goalpara district.
D) Rakthamichthys anchi is a pigmented catfish found in the Brahmaputra river.

132) What is the maximum initial duration allowed for a regulatory sandbox under the Telecommunications (Regulatory Sandbox) Rules, 2026?

A) 36 months
B) 24 months
C) 12 months
D) 48 months

133) Which port's container terminal was designated as a green terminal after 100% electrification of operational equipment in October 2026?

A) Jawaharlal Nehru Port
B) Kandla Port
C) Chennai Port
D) Tuticorin (VOC Port)

134) What is the main purpose of the ISRO NVS-03 satellite scheduled for launch in October 2026?

A) Weather forecasting
B) Communication for remote areas
C) Earth observation for agriculture
D) Navigation and restoration of NavIC's standalone positioning service

135) India recently became the third-largest exporter of defence goods to Europe, mainly due to which initiative?

A) Atmanirbhar Bharat
B) Make in India
C) Rearm Europe
D) Defence Offset Policy

136) What certification has the newly inaugurated RBI Data Centre and Cybersecurity Training Institute in Bhubaneswar received?

A) Uptime Institute's Tier IV
B) PCI DSS
C) LEED Gold
D) ISO 9001

137) According to Union Minister JP Nadda, what is the target market size for India's chemicals and petrochemicals sector by 2040?

A) $2 trillion
B) $1.6 trillion
C) $1 trillion
D) $500 billion

138) What is the primary purpose of the Integrated Atmospheric Chemistry and Aerosol Toxicity Analysis Laboratory (AATAL) inaugurated in Delhi-NCR?

A) Identifying sources and health impacts of air pollution
B) Developing new pharmaceuticals
C) Studying earthquake risks
D) Monitoring rainfall patterns

139) What milestone did India achieve under the Digital Agriculture Mission five months ahead of schedule?

A) Distribution of 11 crore soil health cards
B) Construction of 11 crore irrigation wells
C) Completion of 11 crore crop insurance claims
D) Creation of 11 crore Farmer IDs

140) What is the main objective of the SAMHiTA Project launched at Colombo's Gangaramaya Temple?

A) Establishing a trade corridor
B) Training monks in India
C) Digitising ancient manuscripts to preserve cultural knowledge
D) Building new Buddhist temples

141) What is the primary objective of ISRO's NVS-03 satellite launch scheduled for 30 October 2026?

A) To monitor agricultural output using remote sensing
B) To test a new launch vehicle prototype
C) To improve service continuity for the NavIC navigation system
D) To provide internet connectivity across rural India

142) Which platform will provide OpenAI Academy resources for AI training of Indian civil servants?

A) Digital India Portal
B) SWAYAM
C) iGOT Karmayogi
D) MyGov Learning

143) What is a key outcome of the MoU between the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs and the Association of ARCs in India?

A) Launching a new banking regulation framework
B) Setting up a national credit rating agency
C) Strengthening industry linkages for the Post Graduate Insolvency Programme
D) Establishing a new stock exchange

144) What is the name of India's national telemedicine platform that has facilitated nearly 50 crore teleconsultations across the country?

A) C-DAC Health Portal
B) Ayushman Bharat
C) e-Sanjeevani
D) Arogya Setu

145) Why is the Reliance Industries' Jamnagar refinery in Gujarat significant for global diesel supplies?

A) It is India's only refinery exporting crude oil.
B) It exclusively supplies diesel to Europe.
C) Capable of processing heavy Venezuelan crude.
D) It operates solely on renewable energy sources.

146) During the UP GCC Innovation Summit-2026, how many Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed by the Uttar Pradesh

government with companies and talent development partners?

A) 22
B) 7
C) 10
D) 15

147) Which city hosted the first National SARAS Mela outside the Delhi-NCR region, featuring women entrepreneurs from self-help groups?

A) Mumbai
B) Bengaluru
C) Lucknow
D) Vijayawada

148) What is one of the incentives offered under the PARIVARTAN Scheme for scrapping and replacing old trucks and buses in Delhi-NCR?

A) 100% road tax concession for 10 years
B) Lifetime fuel vouchers
C) No-interest vehicle loans
D) Free insurance for 5 years

149) Which international meeting did India host for the first time in October 2026, focusing on global measurement standards?

A) G20 Summit
B) UN Climate Change Conference
C) World Economic Forum Annual Meeting
D) 61st Meeting of the International Committee of Legal Metrology (CIML)

150) On which date is the International Day of the Snow Leopard observed every year?

A) 5 June
B) 23 October
C) 12 August
D) 1 December

ANSWERS

1) Correct Answer: C

Amit Shah flagged off India's first LNG-powered train from Sabarmati Railway Station in Ahmedabad. The event also included the inauguration of railway projects worth ₹1,472 crore and a WAG-12 Maintenance Shed. The LNG-powered train is expected to contribute to environmental protection and sustainability. The Kavach safety system was also launched on specific railway sections.

2) Correct Answer: A

Exercise Tarang Shakti 2026 includes participation from Australia, the United States, the UAE, France, Germany, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. The exercise is held at Jodhpur and focuses on interoperability and operational cooperation. Advanced combat aircraft and airlift platforms are part of the joint training. The theme is "Power in Partnership," emphasizing mutual learning and trust.

3) Correct Answer: B

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) is supporting 210 R&D projects in nanomedicine with ₹174 crore. These projects cover targeted drug delivery, cancer nanomedicine, nano-diagnostics, and more. The announcement was made at the World Congress on Nanomedicine 2026 in New Delhi.

4) Correct Answer: C

The first port-based e-methanol plant is coming up at Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) in Kandla, Gujarat. The facility will use renewable power, water, and biogenic CO_2 to produce green fuel. It will supply e-methanol to vessels on the Asia-Europe International Trade Corridor. The project involves an investment of ₹2,300 crore in two phases.

5) Correct Answer: C

A handcrafted Ambabari elephant with Howdah is one of the highlights of Rajasthan's collection in the PM Mementos e-Auction 2026. The collection showcases Rajasthan's art, devotion, textiles, and heritage. Other items include Pichwai paintings, silver mementos of Veer Tejaji Maharaj, and artworks of Ajmer Sharif Dargah.

6) Correct Answer: D

India invited French higher educational institutions to explore setting up branch campuses in India, including at GIFT City, Gujarat. The talks focused on strengthening cooperation in education, research, and innovation. Both sides discussed academic mobility and institutional

partnerships. The meeting included India's Education Minister and France's Minister for Higher Education, Research and Space.

7) Correct Answer: A

The Amrit Bharat Express connects Bhuj in Gujarat to Barauni in Bihar. It covers a distance of 2,532 km and operates tri-weekly. The train passes through Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar. It offers non-AC, affordable long-distance service with sleeper and unreserved coaches. This service enhances connectivity between western and eastern India.

8) Correct Answer: A

Suruchi Inder Singh and Kamaljeet won the 10m air pistol mixed team gold for India. They set a new Asian record with a score of 484.6, defeating South Korea and Iran. This was India's second gold at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games. The duo led after qualification with a score of 587.

9) Correct Answer: A

DRDO signed a project with Zero mK India Pvt Ltd to indigenously develop a 20 mK dilution refrigerator for quantum applications. This system is critical for quantum computing and superconducting devices. The project is mentored by the Solid State Physics Laboratory. It aligns with the National Quantum Mission and indigenous cryogenics.

10) Correct Answer: C

The Electrical Engineering Department of IIT Delhi unveiled a working micro-GPU. The micro-GPU was designed by M.Tech students and mapped on Spartan-7 FPGA. It targets embedded systems such as industrial displays and e-rickshaw navigators. Future plans include scalable architecture on a 65 nm ASIC process.

11) Correct Answer: A

AFSPA was extended in parts of Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh until 31 March 2027. The Act grants special powers to armed forces in 'disturbed areas' under Section 3. In Manipur, it continues except for 13 police station areas in five districts. Nagaland has nine districts fully covered and 21 police stations in five other districts.

12) Correct Answer: A

Mundra is the only non-major port among the four declared as mega ports. The other three—Deendayal (Kandla), Jawaharlal Nehru (Nhava Sheva), and Paradip—are major ports. The notification was issued under the Indian Ports Act, 2025. The mega-port classification is based on cargo and container throughput criteria. This status aims to enhance port infrastructure and capacity.

13) Correct Answer: B

IAS officer Mandeep K Bhandari (2001 AGMUT cadre) was appointed as CBSE Chairman. The appointment was made by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary. This followed administrative changes, including a transfer of the previous chairman.

14) Correct Answer: B

Delhi ranked 268th globally, the highest among Indian cities in the 2026 Oxford Economics Global Cities Index. Bengaluru, Mumbai, Chennai, and Hyderabad followed Delhi in the Indian rankings. The index covers 1,000 cities worldwide and assesses them on economics, human capital, quality of life, environment, and governance.

15) Correct Answer: C

Larsen & Toubro (L&T) and Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) represented India at the 10th JCM with South Korea. The meeting focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation in defence industries and logistics. Leading Korean companies like Hanwha Aerospace and Korean Air also participated. The event was held in New Delhi and co-chaired by senior officials from both countries.

16) Correct Answer: B

The GEC-III scheme aims to enable evacuation of up to 135 GW of renewable energy. It will strengthen power grids and support India's target of 900 GW non-fossil capacity by 2035. The scheme includes 50 GWh of battery storage and a project outlay of Rs 1,86,405 crore. India ranks third globally in renewable energy installed capacity.

17) Correct Answer: A

Beneficiaries pay 15% of the premium under the Livestock Insurance Portal. The government covers the remaining 85%. The portal was launched in New Delhi by Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh under the National Livestock

Mission. It supports policy issuance, claims, and monitoring in multiple languages. Coverage includes milch, pack animals, sheep, goats, and more.

18) Correct Answer: D

The F-35 made its debut with the Indian Air Force during the exercise. The event is being held at AFS Jodhpur from 26 September to 12 October 2026. Seven nations participated: Australia, USA, UAE, France, Germany, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. Other aircraft included Rafale, F-16, A400M, MRTT, and C-130s. The exercise aimed to enhance interoperability among participating air forces.

19) Correct Answer: C

The exercise focuses on joint counter-terrorism in semi-urban and mountainous terrain under a UN mandate. It involves Indian Armed Forces and Kazakhstan, aiming to boost interoperability. Key drills include raids, cordon-and-search, heliborne ops, UAV/anti-UAV, and joint command post. The ninth edition runs from 28 September to 11 October 2026 in Oskemen, Kazakhstan.

20) Correct Answer: C

Piyush Goyal emphasized that the India-US economic relationship is expanding beyond traditional trade to encompass investment, manufacturing, technology, innovation, and resilient supply chains. He interacted with CEOs of leading US manufacturing and technology companies at a business roundtable. NAM represents a significant share of US manufacturing GDP.

21) Correct Answer: D

India Energy Week 2027 will take place in Kolkata at the New Town Convention Centre. This is the first time the event is being held in eastern India. The event is under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas and will focus on hydrogen, biofuels, AI, renewables, and more. Over 75,000 professionals and 700+ exhibitors are expected.

22) Correct Answer: A

Uday Shankar was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 26th FICCI FRAMES in Mumbai. The event was held at the Grand Hyatt. The theme was “India’s Media Moment: Creating Value in an Age of Infinite Content.” The conference covered TV, streaming, films, sports, gaming, AI, and the creator economy.

23) Correct Answer: A

HQ IDS celebrated its 25th anniversary with the theme 'Future Readiness Through Jointness and Integration'. It is India's apex institution for tri-service synergy and integration. The silver jubilee event, 'Trishakti Manthan', featured addresses by senior defence officials. HQ IDS has played a key role in domains like cyber, space, and AI.

24) Correct Answer: A

National PNG Drive 3.0 aims to accelerate PNG adoption and increase its share in India's energy mix. The drive targets 50 lakh new domestic PNG connections and 40 lakh conversions to active users. It focuses on activating dormant connections and expanding PNG in semi-urban and rural areas. The initiative supports the shift from LPG to PNG for cleaner energy.

25) Correct Answer: B

ICAR and FCI signed an MoU to develop alternatives to chemical fumigation for wheat and rice storage. The project focuses on using nitrogen gas, CO2, and CO2-phosphine combinations. The initiative addresses pest resistance, occupational exposure, and environmental concerns from conventional chemicals.

26) Correct Answer: C

The project has a total capacity of 46.4 MW, combining 20 MW wind and 26.4 MWp solar. It includes a 2 MWh Battery Energy Storage System at Bhikamkhore, Rajasthan. Nuvoco will acquire a 26% stake in the SPV Clean Max Ilgohp Pvt Ltd. Power will be supplied via open access under a group captive model.

27) Correct Answer: A

Face Authentication for ePDS was launched as a contactless option for beneficiaries. The event marked the 17th Aadhaar Day and was attended by over 600 participants. Other initiatives included SWIK Portal 2.0 and a new UIDAI website. Sub-AUA/Sub-KUA (LITE) and a Token Management System were also unveiled.

28) Correct Answer: D

Kumkum Mohod won the gold medal in the individual recurve event at the Asian Games 2026. She defeated South Korea’s Yejin Oh in a shoot-off, prevailing 6-5. The victory also secured an individual quota place for India at

the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games. Kumkum became the first Indian woman to reach and win the Asian Games individual recurve final.

29) Correct Answer: D

The proceeds from the PM Mementos e-Auction go to the Namami Gange Project. The auction features artefacts presented to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with 30 mementos highlighting Delhi's heritage. Items include religious artefacts, Delhi Metro models, and student artwork. The auction is open to the public for bidding until October 31, 2026.

30) Correct Answer: B

Sujeet Kalkal defeated Tajikistan's Abdulmazhid Kudiev in the final. He made a comeback from a 2-9 deficit with just over a minute and a half remaining. The win marked India's first Asian Games wrestling gold since 2018. Sujeet also defeated Japan's Olympic champion Kiyooka in the semifinal.

31) Correct Answer: D

The impact study will cover PMGSY-IV and PM-JANMAN schemes. The MoU was signed for a four-year study. It spans 10 states/UTs, 50 districts, 150 blocks, and 250 roads, surveying about 5,000 households. The study uses a longitudinal design with baseline, transition, and endline phases.

32) Correct Answer: B

India and the UAE aim for $200 billion in bilateral trade by 2032. The 14th HLJTFI meeting was held in Mumbai. Bilateral trade reached $101.25 billion in FY 2025-26, with non-oil trade at $76.2 billion. The meeting reviewed CEPA progress and major investments, including a proposed $11.5 billion aluminium complex in Odisha.

33) Correct Answer: B

Bank of India's programmable e₹ allows users to schedule fixed-amount automatic transfers to beneficiaries' CBDC wallets. The platform supports purpose-based spending restrictions set by the sender. It is useful for recurring payments like allowances and education expenses. Developed by Montran India, the system aligns with RBI and NPCI guidelines.

34) Correct Answer: C

Swachh Seva Aankalan is an annual digital self-assessment framework at the Gram Panchayat level. It helps rural communities review sanitation and waste management efforts. The framework was presented during a Special Gram Sabha in Gujarat's Navsari district. It supports the goals of Swachh Bharat Mission by promoting community participation.

35) Correct Answer: D

Pranavi Sharath Urs became the first Indian woman to win an individual golf gold medal at the Asian Games 2026. She achieved this by carding a 15-under 265 over four rounds at the Kasugai Country Club East Course. Her gold was accompanied by a silver medal in the women's team event for India.

36) Correct Answer: B

Aerospace is highlighted as a key sector for collaboration in the India-Canada CEPA talks. The negotiations aim to deepen economic ties after a diplomatic chill. Other focus areas include energy, critical minerals, and artificial intelligence. Canada seeks to double bilateral trade with India to $70 billion by 2030.

37) Correct Answer: D

Andhra Pradesh is launching a pilot project using 3D concrete-printing technology for rural housing. The project will construct 177 houses at a cost of ₹14 crore. Construction is expected to finish within six months, reducing time, costs, and labour. The initiative aims to modernise rural housing and improve durability.

38) Correct Answer: A

The Indian women's hockey team ended a 44-year gold medal drought by defeating China 1-0. Lalremsiami scored the decisive goal in the 10th minute. It was India's first women's hockey gold at the Asian Games since 1982. Both men's and women's teams won gold at the same Games for the first time.

39) Correct Answer: D

The missile used a 'wave-like trajectory mode' to expose limitations in South Korean and Japanese tracking. North Korea claims the missile struck a target about 1,000 km away. South Korea asserted it tracked the missile after launch, but North Korea disputes this.

40) Correct Answer: D

Visva-Bharati University in West Bengal will host the Centre of Excellence for Classical Bengali. The Ministry of Education approved five Centres for Classical Assamese, Bengali, Marathi, Pali, and Prakrit. Each Centre will focus on advanced research, preservation, and digitisation of linguistic and literary heritage.

41) Correct Answer: A

Walking is the most common mode of student travel, accounting for 37% of commutes. The NHTS covered over 4.9 lakh households across India. Buses accounted for 29.5%, bicycles 15.8%, and auto-rickshaws 10.5% of student commutes. The survey highlights differences in commuting patterns between rural and urban areas.

42) Correct Answer: B

The Bhagini Nivedita Scheme provides Rs 50,000 assistance over three years. Beneficiaries receive Rs 17,000 in the first and second years and Rs 16,000 in the third year. The scheme will be implemented from January next year. It aims to support unmarried women pursuing higher education in West Bengal.

43) Correct Answer: A

NCM 2.0 focuses on ecosystem restoration, pollution control, biodiversity, sustainable tourism, spatial planning, research, and capacity building. The scheme has a ₹767 crore outlay till 2030-31. It covers 9 coastal states and 4 Union Territories. The mission aims to strengthen coastal resilience and promote the blue economy.

44) Correct Answer: D

The first glacial-lake early-warning system is being installed at Vasundhara Tal in Chamoli. The project is led by a 22-scientist team from the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology. It operates under the Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority and the National GLOF Risk Mitigation Programme. Sensors monitor various parameters and send data via satellite.

45) Correct Answer: A

Mandar, an indigenous double-headed percussion instrument of Jharkhand, received the GI tag. It is made of red soil/clay with two leather-covered openings. The instrument is played during festivals, dances, and social events. Its unique construction preserves the craftsmanship and heritage of tribal and folk communities.

46) Correct Answer: D

The Andhra Pradesh Global Horticulture Hub aims to transform drought-prone Rayalaseema into a global fruit and vegetable export centre. The initiative covers 10 districts, 201 clusters, and 5,869 villages in three phases between 2026 and 2029. The project involves ₹40,352 crore in government investment and ₹60,000 crore from private sources.

47) Correct Answer: B

Odisha announced ₹11 lakh each for women's hockey gold medallists. Support staff will receive ₹5.5 lakh each. India defeated China 1-0 on 2 October, ending a 44-year gold medal drought. Lalremsiami scored the winning goal, and Savita made a crucial penalty stroke save. The gold medal secured India's direct qualification for the LA 2028 Olympics.

48) Correct Answer: D

Pranavi Urs became the first Indian woman to win Asian Games golf gold. She finished at 265 (−15), one shot ahead of Shannon Tan and Yin Ruoning. India also secured women’s team silver with Aditi Ashok and Diksha Dagar. Aditi Ashok had previously won individual silver at Hangzhou 2022.

49) Correct Answer: B

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, a 15-year-old cricketer, was named in TIME100 Next 2026 in the Phenom category. He is the youngest on the list and the only Indian athlete selected. Sooryavanshi debuted in Ranji at 12 and IPL at 14, scoring the fastest Indian IPL century. Other Indians on the main TIME100 include Sundar Pichai, Vikas Khanna, and Ranbir Kapoor.

50) Correct Answer: C

Jawahar Dweep Marine Oil Terminal was declared plastic-free as part of Swachhata Abhiyan 2026. The event was led by Minister Sarbananda Sonowal. The port had already banned single-use plastics from September 2021. The terminal handles crude oil via five jetties (JD1–JD5).

51) Correct Answer: C

Narendra Modi began his 25-year journey as Head of Government by assuming office as Chief Minister of Gujarat on October 7, 2001. This tenure continued with his role as Prime Minister of India from 2014. He attributes the nation's progress to the collective participation of millions of Indians.

52) Correct Answer: A

The first phase of the India-Ghana agricultural partnership will focus on tomato research and development. The MoU aims to advance research, technology transfer, and commercialisation in agriculture. ICAR will support the introduction of high-yielding tomato varieties in Ghana.

53) Correct Answer: A

Tezpur University in Assam is the host for the Centre of Excellence for Classical Assamese. The Department of Higher Education sanctioned Centres for five classical languages in October 2026. The initiative follows the 2024 grant of classical status to Assamese, Bengali, Marathi, Pali, and Prakrit.

54) Correct Answer: D

The 8th edition of Windergy India was held at the Chennai Trade Centre. The event was inaugurated by Union Minister Pralhad Joshi. Windergy India featured global MoU announcements, sectoral reports, and recognition of leading wind-energy states.

55) Correct Answer: A

Exercise MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN 2026 is a joint military exercise between India and the United Arab Emirates. It commenced on 5 October 2026 at the Foreign Training Node, Chaubatia, Uttarakhand. The exercise focuses on mountain warfare and includes tactical drills, firing, and drone operations. Both armies are represented by 92 personnel each, including women officers.

56) Correct Answer: B

India’s first indigenous Fleet Support Ship is named ‘Surya’. The ship was launched at Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Visakhapatnam. ‘Surya’ offers enhanced cargo/fluid capacity, at-sea replenishment, maintenance workshops, helicopter deck, and self-defence systems. The launch boosts the Indian Navy’s endurance in the Indian Ocean Region.

57) Correct Answer: B

Odisha launched India’s first dedicated MICE Incentive Portal. The initiative was unveiled during Odisha Travel Bazaar 2026. MICE stands for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions. The portal simplifies applications for financial incentives and targets corporate events and investments.

58) Correct Answer: B

Bank of Baroda became the second public sector bank to enter the pension fund business. It received the PFRDA Certificate of Appointment as Sponsor. The bank set up BoB Pension Fund Management Company Limited with an authorised capital of ₹100 crore. SBI was the first PSB to enter this sector in 2008.

59) Correct Answer: C

Archer Kumkum Anil Mohod won the inaugural Jaspal Rana Award for best female athlete. She secured two gold medals (individual and team recurve) at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games. Her performance ended South Korea’s dominance and secured a 2028 Olympic quota for India. The Indian Olympic Association instituted the award for Asian Games performance.

60) Correct Answer: D

SpaceX’s AI division has been renamed SpaceXSI, with SI standing for Super Intelligence. The change followed a US Executive Order titled “Inaugurating the Era of Super Intelligence.” The order directs US executive agencies to use “Super Intelligence” and “SI” terminology.

61) Correct Answer: D

Andhra Pradesh launched the 3DCP rural housing pilot in Guntur district. The pilot involves constructing 177 houses using 3D concrete printing technology. Technical support is provided by CSIR-CBRI, Roorkee. The project is estimated to cost ₹13.93 crore and targets completion in six month

62) Correct Answer: C

Mahesh Kakde was recognized for his work in algebraic number theory. His contributions include Iwasawa theory, Gross-Stark and Brumer-Stark conjectures, and links to Hilbert’s 12th problem. The Ramanujan Prize is jointly awarded by ICTP and IMU to mathematicians under 45 from developing countries.

63) Correct Answer: D

Uttarakhand achieved full literacy status with a 98.70% adult literacy rate. The milestone was announced by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami in Dehradun. The achievement was under the ULLAS scheme, which covers foundational, digital, and financial literacy. Uttarakhand joined Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Goa, and Tripura in this achievement.

64) Correct Answer: D

The Zoological Survey of India and ICAR signed MoUs with the University of Ghana and CSIR-Crops Research Institute, Ghana, respectively. The agreements aim to promote academic cooperation, scientific research, and agricultural knowledge sharing. The MoUs were exchanged during External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit.

65) Correct Answer: D

India partnered with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) as a pilot country to bridge the AI gap for the Global South. The collaboration was highlighted during the 'AI for Good Lab Workshop' at the India Mobile Congress 2026. India brings its model of shared compute, open datasets, and Digital Public Infrastructure to this initiative.

66) Correct Answer: D

All lighthouses in India are now solar-powered, integrating renewable energy into navigation infrastructure. The initiative is part of a broader effort to modernise lighthouses and promote tourism. Examples include upgrades at Samiyani Island and Jodiya with solar-powered LED lanterns.

67) Correct Answer: C

132 out of 173 graduating students were women, which is about 76%. This reflects growing participation of women in higher education. The Vice-President said this shift shows progress from women's empowerment to women-led development. Such trends are seen as essential for India's inclusive growth.

68) Correct Answer: C

PM Modi inaugurated the Poonamallee–Vadapalani stretch of Phase II, featuring a 3.7-km double-decker structure. The project cost around ₹4,900 crore. It uses advanced signalling for driverless operations. The stretch improves connectivity between Chennai's western suburbs and city centre.

69) Correct Answer: D

The fast-track route applies to cases involving amounts up to ₹10 lakh. The new regulations aim to simplify and speed up settlements. The process moves directly from the internal committee to SEBI's whole-time members for eligible cases. The framework also revises how settlement amounts are calculated.

70) Correct Answer: B

India will showcase Mallakhamb, Yogasana, and Kalaripayattu. The event focuses on demonstration and cultural exchange, not competition. Other countries will present their own traditional sports, such as Wushu from China and Capoeira from Brazil. The Games aim to promote sporting heritage and people-to-people ties.

71) Correct Answer: B

PM Modi announced a Centre decision to invest around ₹17,000 crore in VOC Port, Thoothukudi. This aims to develop it into a world-class mega container and green energy hub. The project will allow the port to accommodate ultra-large container vessels. It supports Tamil Nadu's ambition to become a global industry and transport hub.

72) Correct Answer: C

ICMR's first dedicated centre for high-altitude medicine and public health research is being set up in Keylong, Himachal Pradesh. The centre will address health challenges in high-altitude, climate-sensitive regions. Research will cover physiology, acclimatisation, and emerging diseases. It will also explore digital health and telemedicine for remote areas.

73) Correct Answer: B

The Varanasi cycle rally was held under the theme 'Nasha Mukt Yuva for Viksit Bharat'. The event encouraged youth to adopt healthy lifestyles and reject substance abuse. Over 500 cyclists and 1,000 participants joined, including Asian Games medallists. Activities included meditation, Kathak, and Zumba sessions.

74) Correct Answer: A

'Shreyas' will augment the Navy's offshore patrol vessels for multi-domain operations such as maritime surveillance, search and rescue, protection of offshore assets, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and anti-piracy. The vessel was launched at GRSE, Kolkata, as part of indigenous shipbuilding. These ships are being built at both GRSE and Goa Shipyard Limited.

75) Correct Answer: D

Madhya Pradesh received ₹23,81,072, the highest among all states. The NBA disbursed ₹2.02 crore to 27 states and 3 UTs from seed-sector contributions. The funds support biodiversity conservation, sustainable resource use, and local livelihoods. Disbursement was based on cultivation area using agricultural statistics.

76) Correct Answer: A

INS Mangrol is designed for Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) in coastal and shallow waters. The ship is equipped with advanced sensors, sonar, and weapon systems for detecting and countering underwater threats. It was indigenously built by Cochin Shipyard Limited with over 80% indigenous content. The vessel continues the legacy of the erstwhile INS Mangrol (M85), a former minesweeper.

77) Correct Answer: D

ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) will hold a 51% stake in the SPVs for ITI cluster upgradation. The Government of India and respective state governments will each hold 24.5%. The project aims to modernize ITIs in Surat and Visakhapatnam with a ₹440 crore investment. NAMTECH will support curriculum and training reforms as the academic partner.

78) Correct Answer: B

Anup Bagchi is set to become MD & CEO of HDFC Bank from 27 October 2026. His annual compensation package for 2026-27 is ₹35.9 crore, including fixed and variable components. Variable pay includes cash and share-linked instruments, plus a joining bonus. The compensation package details perks such as cars and fuel.

79) Correct Answer: C

The event's theme was 'Cotton for Sustainability: Livelihoods, Value Addition and Partnership.' The event marked World Cotton Day, observed every 7 October as per UNGA resolution 75/318. Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni linked cotton with self-reliance and freedom.

80) Correct Answer: B

World Post Day 2026 was observed with the theme 'One postal network, infinite possibilities.' The day marks the founding of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) on 9 October 1874. The UPU is a UN specialised agency based in Berne with 192 member states. The theme highlighted postal systems as hubs for digital finance, virtual healthcare, and community services.

81) Correct Answer: B

Ambaji Mohanthal Prasad was granted the GI tag under Class 30. The application was filed by Shree Arasuri Ambaji Mata Devsthan Trust. This sweet is made from gram flour, ghee, and sugar. The certificate handover was scheduled for the first day of Navratri at Ambaji Devasthan.

82) Correct Answer: D

The KOAIR-10L drone is designed for agricultural agrochemical spraying. It is a medium-class hexacopter with 10-litre tanks. Certification was granted to Kothari Industrial Corporation Limited. Issued under Drone Rules, 2021, this enables its commercial deployment.

83) Correct Answer: A

IIT Ropar awarded the first MTech (Defence Technology) degrees to 59 Armoured Corps officers. This is the first IIT course tailored specifically for military applications. The curriculum covers applied research, armoured vehicle technologies, advanced armaments, and new materials. The programme supports defence indigenisation and Viksit Bharat 2047 goals.

84) Correct Answer: C

Justice K. V. Viswanathan heads the Supreme Court's standing committee on judicial well-being. The committee includes a psychiatrist, psychologist, advocate, and registrar as members. Its purpose is to address professional and personal challenges faced by judicial officers. The committee was formed as an institutional mechanism for long-term support around World Mental Health Day.

85) Correct Answer: C

The first BIMSTEC Home Ministers' Meeting concluded with the adoption of the Delhi Declaration. Member states reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening regional cooperation under BIMSTEC. The declaration recognised the Bay of Bengal region as a common security space facing shared transnational challenges.

86) Correct Answer: B

The new terminal at Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport uses geothermal energy systems to improve energy efficiency and reduce its carbon footprint. The terminal is part of projects aimed at sustainable infrastructure in Ladakh's ecologically sensitive environment. It covers 23,800 square metres and can handle 35 lakh passengers annually.

87) Correct Answer: D

73% of the 9,479 identified villages in the Northeast are now connected to a bank branch or India Post Payments Bank. This progress is part of efforts to expand financial inclusion in the region. 6,905 villages are covered, while 2,574 remain. The expansion includes opening 131 new branches and installing 126 ATMs.

88) Correct Answer: A

Retired judge Dilip Bhosale is the head of the Maharashtra MPSC Reforms Committee. The committee was formed after a 10-day protest by aspirants in Pune. Its mandate includes a two-month inquiry into exam irregularities and paper leaks. Tukaram Mundhe serves as Secretary, and other members include IPS Laxmi Gautam and ex-IAS Ganesh Patil.

89) Correct Answer: B

INS Sahyadri, a Shivalik-class stealth frigate, is participating in INDRA-2026 with the Russian Navy. The exercise is held in Vladivostok from 13–18 October 2026. It features both harbour and sea phases, focusing on interoperability and maritime coordination. The event aligns with India's MAHASAGAR vision announced in 2025.

90) Correct Answer: D

Prakash Rajpurohit is a 2010-batch IAS officer from the Rajasthan cadre. He was appointed Deputy Election Commissioner for a tenure until April 2030. Previously, he served as Joint Secretary in the Department of Defence Production. The Election Commission of India is responsible for conducting elections to Parliament, state legislatures, and presidential offices.

91) Correct Answer: B

The 14th High-Level Meeting focused on strengthening cooperation in Maritime Search and Rescue (M-SAR). The meeting also covered marine pollution response, law enforcement, capacity building, and operational coordination. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to a Memorandum of Understanding. The Indian delegation was led by Inspector General T. Sashi Kumar.

92) Correct Answer: D

The centre focuses on genomics research in rare diseases, cancer, infectious-disease surveillance, newborn screening, and oral-cancer genomics. It is a collaboration between BRIC-CDFD and Oxford Nanopore Technologies. The centre supports technology translation and commercialisation under India–UK Science & Innovation cooperation. It was inaugurated during the 8th India–UK Science and Innovation Council meeting.

93) Correct Answer: D

Lakshadweep achieved 100% literacy status on 11 October 2026. All 1,113 identified adult non-literates passed the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT). The achievement was enabled by home-based teaching and doorstep assessments. The ULLAS programme covers literacy, numeracy, life skills, and vocational education.

94) Correct Answer: C

Braj Mohan Ram was appointed as the new Governor of Odisha. The reshuffle covered six states and included new appointments and transfers. Governors are constitutional heads appointed by the President under Articles 153–161. The tenure is five years at the President's pleasure.

95) Correct Answer: A

The Ministry of Defence signed contracts for the GSAT-7C satellite for the Indian Air Force and Varunastra Heavy Weight Torpedoes for the Indian Navy. The GSAT-7C will enhance secure communication among IAF assets.

Varunastra is an indigenously developed ship-launched anti-submarine torpedo.

96) Correct Answer: D

The Union Cabinet approved renaming NSAP as Pradhan Mantri Samajik Sahayata Yojana. The programme is allocated ₹53,428 crore for 2026–27 to 2030–31. It is expected to benefit 3.20 crore people. Disability pension eligibility has been relaxed and monthly rates revised. The scheme includes renamed components for old age, widow, disability, and family benefit pensions.

97) Correct Answer: A

The agreement requires work permits and mandates that wages and conditions match host-country standards. It facilitates temporary employment of Indian citizens in Russia and vice versa. The agreement addresses labour shortages in Russia, especially in construction and textiles. Around 71,000 Indians are already employed in Russia, with a target near 100,000 by 2026. It was signed in New Delhi and ratified by President Putin.

98) Correct Answer: A

Oman became India's largest LNG supplier in September 2026, supplying 585,000 tonnes (27% of total imports). India's total LNG imports were 2.17 million tonnes, down from August. Nigeria ranked second, and the US dropped to third after a 59% decline. Qatar was sixth, affected by disruptions at Ras Laffan.

99) Correct Answer: C

Five ITI clusters were approved in Maharashtra, Odisha, and Jammu & Kashmir. Gujarat is not among the states listed for new PM-SETU ITI clusters. The total sanctioned investment for these clusters was ₹1,194.92 crore.

100) Correct Answer: C

The amended rules expand eligibility to teachers from any government, aided, or unaided private educational institution. Enumerators can also include clerks or officials from various government and local authority establishments. The aim is to broaden the pool of qualified individuals for Census operations.

101) Correct Answer: D

FSSAI has proposed an MRL of 20 mg/kg (20 ppm) for Acetamiprid in tea. This limit is lower than Japan's (30 ppm) and the United States' (50 ppm). The standards are part of efforts to strengthen food safety and consumer protection. India's average pesticide consumption is less than 0.5 kg per hectare, below the global average.

102) Correct Answer: B

FSSAI has proposed prohibiting the addition of sucrose and fructose in infant nutrition products for babies up to six months old. The move aims to prevent early exposure to added sugars and related health risks. Lactose and glucose polymers remain preferred carbohydrate sources. The proposal aligns with recommendations for exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months.

103) Correct Answer: C

The Chenab Rail Bridge in Reasi district is the world's highest railway arch bridge. It stands 359 metres above the riverbed and is 1,315 metres long with a 467-metre arch span. The bridge is a key engineering achievement of the USBRL project. The USBRL connects the Kashmir Valley to the national railway network.

104) Correct Answer: A

Police response time in Uttar Pradesh has decreased from 65 minutes in 2016 to 5 minutes currently. This improvement is attributed to the state's zero-tolerance policy towards crime. Initiatives like Mission Shakti and the Safe City project have enhanced women's safety.

105) Correct Answer: B

ABVP secured victories in 13 universities in the Odisha student union elections. The elections were held after an eight-year gap across 337 institutions. The results are seen as a reflection of youth support for the 'Nation First' ideology. The overall voter turnout was 56%, with 3,610 candidates elected. The outcome is linked to growing student support for nationalism and nation-building.

106) Correct Answer: A

The Asian Para Games 2026 were held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi welcomed athletes and officials from across Asia. The event featured 18 sports. All 45 Asian nations participated for the first time in the event's history. Hosting the Games highlights Japan's commitment to inclusivity in sports.

107) Correct Answer: C

The motto of the fifth Asian Para Games was 'Imagine One Heart'. The Games brought together athletes from 45 Asian nations. The opening ceremony was held at Nagoya City Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium. India's contingent wore blazers inspired by the Indus Valley Civilisation. The motto emphasizes unity and inclusion through sports.

108) Correct Answer: A

Indian nationals in Riyadh are advised to call emergency number 911 in case of any threat. The advisory was issued after attacks by Iran-backed Houthi rebels, including a strike on King Khalid International Airport. People in other regions of Saudi Arabia should call 998.

109) Correct Answer: D

NPPA capped trade margins on 137 non-scheduled anti-cancer drugs at 30% of their maximum retail price. This aims to reduce MRPs by up to 70% and ease the financial burden of cancer treatment. The revised prices will be effective from November 9, 2026. The list covers widely used medicines such as pembrolizumab and bevacizumab.

110) Correct Answer: C

Maharashtra received ₹19,46,149, the largest share of the NBA's benefit-sharing funds. The funds were distributed to 29 State Biodiversity Boards and one Union Territory Biodiversity Council. Allocations were based on estimated cultivation areas of crops like maize, rice, pearl millet, and cotton. The funds support conservation, sustainable use, and community welfare under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

111) Correct Answer: D

Sankoo was declared Ladakh's eighth district by the Lieutenant Governor. It is located in the Suru Valley, previously part of Kargil district. The creation aims to decentralise administration and improve service delivery in remote areas. Five other new districts were approved earlier in April 2026.

112) Correct Answer: C

Raji Doshi won the 2026 3M Young Scientist Challenge for the ALKACORE system. The system uses macroalgae cultivation and aragonite to raise seawater alkalinity and absorb CO_2. Doshi developed a computational model for optimal aragonite dosing. The project aims for a sustainable, low-cost solution for coastal waters. The award included a $25,000 prize.

113) Correct Answer: C

L. Murugan's resignation took effect under Article 75(2) of the Constitution. He was the Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs. The resignation was accepted by President Droupadi Murmu on the advice of the Prime Minister.

114) Correct Answer: A

Nishad Kumar clinched gold in the men's T47 long jump at the 2026 Asian Para Games. He achieved a best effort of 7.11m in his first international appearance in the discipline. India had a strong start at the Games, winning 11 medals on Day 1.

115) Correct Answer: A

The exhibition at 'Swavlamban' 2026 will showcase indigenous innovations in maritime surveillance and counter-unmanned aircraft systems. The seminar aims to strengthen Aatmanirbharta and operational capabilities. It brings together innovators, industry, startups, MSMEs, academia, and investors.

116) Correct Answer: C

Police Commemoration Day honours the sacrifice of 10 Indian police personnel killed in an ambush by Chinese troops at Hot Springs, Ladakh, on October 21, 1959. This incident led to the establishment of the annual commemoration. The National Police Memorial in New Delhi was dedicated in 2018 to recognize their sacrifices.

117) Correct Answer: A

Deepthi Jeevanji defended her women's 400m T20 title with a Games record at the Asian Para Games 2026. She is praised for her champion spirit and inspiring young athletes. Her achievement included setting a new Games record. Deepthi hails from Telangana and has also won medals at the Para World Championships.

118) Correct Answer: A

India-UAE bilateral trade crossed $100 billion since the signing of CEPA. This reflects growing two-way investments and strategic cooperation in defence, energy, and technology. The relationship is described as a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. 2026 saw

intensive leadership-level engagement between the two countries.

119) Correct Answer: B

The Raza Point System was used to determine placings in the combined F51/52/53 discus throw event. This system standardizes performances across different classifications by adjusting scores. Athletes with more severe impairments may rank higher even with shorter distances. Pranav Soorma won gold and set an Asian record using this system.

120) Correct Answer: B

The Green Diwali campaign urges citizens to avoid firecrackers and adopt eco-friendly ways of celebrating. Supported by MoEFCC, it runs from October 20 to November 8. The campaign targets schools, colleges, and communities, especially in 130 cities under the National Clean Air Programme.

121) Correct Answer: D

NHAI introduced the 'Toll Plaza Feedback' feature to gather user experiences and identify service issues at National Highway toll plazas. The feature allows all users to submit ratings, journey options, and remarks. The data is used to monitor and improve toll plaza operations.

122) Correct Answer: A

The SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum will use Chinese and Russian as its official languages. The forum aims to strengthen people-to-people ties and share civilisational heritage among SCO members. India will host the inaugural event by end-2026. The SCO has permanent bodies in Beijing and Tashkent.

123) Correct Answer: A

The Great Indian Bustard has been preliminarily assessed as 'Critically Endangered' in the ongoing national Red List assessment. The assessment covers 1,211 regularly occurring bird species in India. Preliminary results for 107 species were completed by October 2026.

124) Correct Answer: D

India will grant concessions on 70% of tariff lines under the new FTA with New Zealand. Of these, 57% become duty-free immediately, rising to 82% over time. The agreement aims to boost bilateral trade from about NZ$2.4 billion to NZ$7 billion by 2030.

125) Correct Answer: B

The proposed undersea HVDC link between India and Saudi Arabia is planned to have a capacity of 3 GW. The link would span approximately 2,100 km and is estimated to cost US$9 billion. Discussions also covered technical cooperation and renewable integration.

126) Correct Answer: C

Japan is the partner country for the 14th India Chem 2026. The event will be held at the Bombay Exhibition Centre, Mumbai. The theme is “Advantage Bharat: An Emerging Global Chemicals Hub”. India is the world’s 6th-largest chemicals producer. The event aims to foster collaboration and investment in the chemicals sector.

127) Correct Answer: C

The conference focuses on integrating agriculture and renewable energy. It aims to help farmers become both Annadatas and Urjadatas. Organised by MNRE with support from German BMUV and Conexio-PSE. The event seeks to scale precision agrivoltaics solutions. It is the first time the conference is hosted in the Global South.

128) Correct Answer: D

DCGI approved Zytorvi (toripalimab) for advanced ESCC. It is a PD-1 inhibitor immunotherapy used with cisplatin and paclitaxel. Approval is based on the JUPITER-06 trial, showing improved survival. No PD-L1 selection is required for its use. ESCC forms about 80% of esophageal cancers in India.

129) Correct Answer: C

The theme is “Fostering Parliaments for People-Centric Development”. The forum will be held at Central Hall and Library Hall in Parliament. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will chair the inaugural session. The agenda includes AI, digital transformation, and sustainability. Cultural programmes and visits to Agra and Jaipur are planned.

130) Correct Answer: D

India ranks third in the Ipsos Quality of Care Perception Index 2026. Malaysia and Singapore are ranked above India. 68% of Indians are satisfied with healthcare quality. 54% expect local healthcare quality to improve. The survey covered 22,528 adults across 32 countries.

131) Correct Answer: C

Gitchak nakana is a blind, transparent loach discovered in wells in Goalpara district, Assam. The discovery was announced by Environment Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah. Rakthamichthys anchi is a slender, transparent swamp eel (Synbranchidae) also found in the same district. Micro-CT scanning and international collaboration were used for identification.

132) Correct Answer: B

The rules allow sandboxes to run up to 24 months, with a possible 12-month extension. These rules were notified by the Department of Telecommunications under the Telecommunications Act, 2023. The sandbox enables testing of new telecom technologies in controlled environments.

133) Correct Answer: D

Tuticorin International Container Terminal (TICT) at VOC Port was designated a green terminal. The designation followed the 100% electrification of operational equipment. TICT began operations in September 2024 with all-electric cranes and reach stackers. The port is India's first major port to be Scope 2 emission-free as of August 2026.

134) Correct Answer: D

NVS-03 is a navigation satellite supporting the restoration of NavIC's standalone positioning service. It is the third satellite in the second-generation NVS series and the 12th in the IRNSS/NavIC constellation. The satellite has a mass of 2,232 kg and a planned life of 12 years. It carries an indigenous Rubidium atomic clock developed by SAC Ahmedabad.

135) Correct Answer: C

India's rise as the third-largest arms exporter to Europe is attributed to the 'Rearm Europe' initiative. This surge is supported by India's expanding domestic defence manufacturing sector. Defence exports reached an all-time high of Rs 38,424 crore (about 3.6 billion euros). India now exports defence goods to over 80 countries.

136) Correct Answer: A

The RBI's new Data Centre and Cybersecurity Training Institute in Bhubaneswar has received the Uptime Institute's Tier IV certification. This is the highest benchmark for data centre infrastructure resilience. The facility is designed to provide secure and scalable computing for the RBI and the financial sector.

137) Correct Answer: C

JP Nadda stated that the chemicals and petrochemicals sector should reach $1 trillion by 2040. The current market size is around $220 billion. The sector is seen as vital for achieving India's long-term economic ambitions. India Chem-2026 focused on investment, competitiveness, and global partnerships.

138) Correct Answer: A

AATAL is designed to identify the sources, composition, and potential health impacts of air pollution in Delhi-NCR. The facility provides real-time information to help authorities develop targeted pollution-control measures. It analyses gases, aerosols, PM2.5, and other pollutants.

139) Correct Answer: D

India achieved the creation of 11 crore Farmer IDs five months before the March 31, 2027 deadline. The Farmer ID initiative provides a unique digital identity to farmers. It aims to simplify access to government schemes, loans, and disaster relief. More than six crore farmers have already received benefits through the system.

140) Correct Answer: C

The SAMHiTA Project aims to digitise ancient manuscripts and preserve historical, religious, and cultural knowledge. It is a collaborative initiative between India and Sri Lanka, with support from the Indian government. Gangaramaya Temple is the first partner institution, with 100 manuscripts being digitised.

141) Correct Answer: C

NVS-03 is a second-generation NavIC navigation satellite aimed at improving service continuity. NavIC provides positioning services over India and 1,500 km beyond. The system previously faced issues with satellite failures and atomic clock problems. Only three satellites were functional earlier, but four are needed for basic positioning.

142) Correct Answer: C

OpenAI Academy resources will be available on the iGOT Karmayogi platform. The platform has over 1.7 crore registered government employees. The MoU aims to build practical AI skills and promote responsible AI use

among civil servants. Capacity building will cover Centre, States, and Union Territories.

143) Correct Answer: C

The MoU aims to strengthen industry linkages for the Post Graduate Insolvency Programme. It was signed in the presence of DG & CEO Gyaneshwar Kumar Singh. ARCs can now act as resolution applicants under the IBC after the 2022 RBI framework.

144) Correct Answer: C

e-Sanjeevani is the national telemedicine platform highlighted for reaching nearly 50 crore teleconsultations. It connects people in remote areas with medical expertise using digital technology. The platform supports both doctor-to-doctor and doctor-to-patient consultations.

145) Correct Answer: C

The Jamnagar refinery is the world's largest single-site oil-refining complex, processing 1.4 million barrels daily. Its high complexity index (21.1) allows it to refine ultra-heavy crude, such as Venezuela's. The US is leveraging Jamnagar's capacity to address its diesel crisis by processing more Venezuelan crude.

146) Correct Answer: D

The Uttar Pradesh government signed 15 MoUs at the UP GCC Innovation Summit-2026. These agreements aim to promote investment, innovation, and skill development in the state. The summit also issued letters of comfort to five investors. Partnerships were made with leading educational institutions and companies.

147) Correct Answer: D

Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, hosted the National SARAS Mela 2026. The event showcased women entrepreneurs from self-help groups with turnovers up to ₹1 crore. It was organised by the Ministry of Rural Development with state and institutional support.

148) Correct Answer: A

The PARIVARTAN Scheme offers a 100% road tax concession for 10 years as an incentive. The scheme encourages scrapping old trucks and buses for cleaner vehicles. Additional benefits include OEM discounts, interest subvention, and fuel vouchers. The Transport Mela in Delhi provides information and access to these incentives.

149) Correct Answer: D

India hosted the 61st Meeting of the International Committee of Legal Metrology (CIML) for the first time. The event took place in New Delhi from 26 to 28 October 2026. Delegates discussed legal metrology, digitalisation, and harmonised standards.

150) Correct Answer: B

International Day of the Snow Leopard is observed on 23 October annually. The day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2024. It aims to raise awareness about snow leopard conservation and related challenges. The snow leopard is found in 12 Asian countries and is classified as Vulnerable by the IUCN.

SECTION 3

Detailed Analysis of Important Events



Economics

12 years of Make in India



Why in the News?

The Make in India initiative completed 12 years on 25 September 2026. Launched by the Government of India on 25 September 2014, the initiative was introduced with the objective of transforming India into a global hub for manufacturing, design and innovation.

On the occasion, the Prime Minister highlighted the initiative's role in increasing domestic production, investment and exports. The government has also emphasised the expansion of India's manufacturing capabilities across sectors such as electronics, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, steel, railways and defence.

About Make in India

Make in India is a flagship initiative of the Government of India aimed at facilitating investment, promoting innovation, improving manufacturing infrastructure and creating a conducive business environment.

The initiative was launched on 25 September 2014 and initially focused on 25 sectors. It has subsequently evolved into Make in India 2.0, which currently covers 27 sectors, comprising 15 manufacturing sectors and 12 services sectors.

The initiative is driven by the broader objective of increasing India's productive capacity, attracting domestic and foreign investment, generating employment and integrating Indian manufacturing with global value chains.

Major Objectives

The major objectives of Make in India include:

- Facilitating investment in India
- Fostering innovation and entrepreneurship
- Building world-class manufacturing infrastructure
- Improving the ease of doing business
- Enhancing skill development and employment opportunities
- Increasing domestic production and reducing excessive dependence on imports
- Expanding India's role in global manufacturing and supply chains
- Encouraging the production of goods for both the domestic and international markets

The initiative was also designed around the principle of “Minimum Government, Maximum Governance”, with emphasis on simplifying procedures and modernising regulatory processes.

Make in India 2.0

Over time, the initiative expanded into Make in India 2.0, reflecting a broader approach towards manufacturing as well as services.

According to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Make in India currently focuses on 27 sectors. Government departments and States work across identified sub-sectors based on India's industrial strengths, export potential, opportunities for import substitution and employment generation.

Manufacturing Growth

The latest government assessment released in September 2026 highlights substantial expansion in India's manufacturing capacity.

Manufacturing Gross Value Added (GVA) at constant prices recorded a compound annual growth rate of 10.88% between 2022-23 and 2025-26, according to the revised national accounts series.

The manufacturing component of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) also increased by 7.0% during April-July 2026 compared with the corresponding period of 2025.

These indicators point to continued expansion in manufacturing activity, although individual sectors have

experienced different growth rates and investment patterns.

Growth of Electronics Manufacturing

Electronics has emerged as one of the major areas of India's manufacturing expansion.

- Electronics production increased from approximately ₹1.9 lakh crore in 2014-15 to around ₹13.11 lakh crore in 2025-26.
- This represents an increase of nearly seven times.
- Electronics production grew by 15.8% in 2025-26 compared with the previous year.
- Mobile-phone production increased from approximately ₹18,900 crore in 2014-15 to around ₹6.3 lakh crore in 2025-26, an approximately 32-fold increase.
- India is currently the world's second-largest mobile-phone manufacturer by volume.

The expansion of electronics manufacturing has also contributed to the development of domestic component manufacturing and India's integration into global electronics supply chains.

Role of the Production Linked Incentive Scheme

The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme has become an important policy instrument supporting the broader manufacturing objectives associated with Make in India.

PLI provides incentives linked to incremental production and sales in selected strategic sectors. It seeks to encourage companies to expand manufacturing capacity in India, attract investment and develop domestic supply chains.

The scheme has been particularly relevant to sectors such as:

- Electronics and mobile phones
- Pharmaceuticals
- Automobiles and auto components
- Telecommunications and networking products
- Specialty steel
- Solar photovoltaic modules
- Textiles
- White goods
- Drones and drone components
- Food processing

PLI is therefore an important component of India's strategy to move from simply assembling products to developing deeper domestic manufacturing capabilities.

Other Supporting Initiatives

Make in India has been supported by several complementary government initiatives and reforms.

- **National Single Window System (NSWS)**

The National Single Window System seeks to provide investors with a unified digital platform for identifying and obtaining necessary approvals and clearances.

- **PM GatiShakti**

PM GatiShakti National Master Plan seeks to improve multimodal connectivity and coordinate infrastructure development, thereby reducing logistics costs and improving the efficiency of supply chains.

- **India Industrial Land Bank**

The India Industrial Land Bank provides information on industrial land availability and infrastructure, helping investors identify suitable locations for manufacturing projects.

- **Industrial Corridors**

Industrial corridors are being developed to create integrated manufacturing and logistics ecosystems with supporting infrastructure, transport connectivity and industrial clusters.

The 2026 government backgrounder identifies NSWS, PLI, PM GatiShakti and the India Industrial Land Bank among the initiatives supporting investment and production under the broader manufacturing strategy.

From “Make in India” to “Make for the World”

The initiative has increasingly moved beyond the objective of producing goods for India's domestic market.

The broader policy approach seeks to make India a competitive manufacturing base capable of serving global markets.

This involves improving product quality, developing domestic supply chains, increasing manufacturing scale and strengthening India's position in international production networks.

The government's 2026 assessment specifically notes the expansion of production, investment and capabilities across industries and the increasing ability to manufacture components, machinery and advanced technologies domestically.

Importance for Atmanirbhar Bharat

Make in India is closely linked with the broader objective of Atmanirbhar Bharat, particularly in strategic and manufacturing sectors.

Domestic manufacturing capabilities can help:

- Reduce vulnerability to external supply disruptions
- Strengthen strategic autonomy
- Develop domestic industrial capabilities
- Generate employment
- Increase exports
- Encourage innovation and technology development

However, self-reliance does not necessarily imply complete isolation from international trade. The broader objective is to strengthen domestic capabilities while participating more effectively in global markets.

Challenges

Despite significant expansion in several manufacturing sectors, India's manufacturing transformation continues to face challenges.

These include:

- Need for greater manufacturing employment
- Dependence on imported components and critical raw materials in some industries
- Logistics and infrastructure constraints in certain regions
- Need for deeper domestic supply chains
- Skill gaps in advanced manufacturing
- Need for greater R&D and technological capability
- Global competition for manufacturing investment
- Ensuring that small and medium enterprises are integrated into modern value chains

Addressing these challenges will be important for sustaining manufacturing growth and increasing India's share in global production networks.

Steel Industry Safety Council (SISC)



Why in the News?

The Ministry of Steel, Government of India, has decided to establish the Steel Industry Safety Council (SISC) as an apex-level industry safety body under the administrative control of the Ministry of Steel. The initiative seeks to strengthen safety standards, accident prevention, safety practices and safety awareness across India's steel industry.

The move is significant because steel manufacturing involves several high-risk operations, including handling molten metal, blast-furnace operations, coke ovens, gas systems, heavy machinery, electrical installations, cranes and high-temperature processes. A common institutional mechanism is expected to promote greater uniformity in safety practices and encourage the industry to learn systematically from accidents and near-miss incidents.

The initiative also builds upon the Ministry of Steel's earlier efforts to establish common safety benchmarks for the sector. The Ministry had already formulated 25 common minimum safety guidelines in 2020 and subsequently developed 16 process-based safety guidelines, which were formally launched in July 2024.

About Steel Industry Safety Council

The Steel Industry Safety Council (SISC) will function as the apex-level institutional mechanism for safety-related matters in the Indian steel industry. It will be headed by the Secretary, Ministry of Steel, as Chairman. Its membership will bring together government officials,

major steel producers and specialised technical and statutory organisations.

The proposed composition includes:

- Senior officials of the Ministry of Steel
- Chief Executives of integrated steel producers
- Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS)
- Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO)
- National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)
- Representatives of recognised steel technology institutions

This multi-stakeholder structure is intended to combine administrative oversight with technical expertise and practical experience from operating steel plants.

Major Functions of SISC

The Council will have a broad sector-wide safety mandate. Its principal functions include:

1. Assessment of Safety Situation

SISC will periodically assess the overall safety situation in the steel industry and identify major risks, recurring accident patterns and areas requiring corrective action.

2. Development of Safety Practices

The Council will facilitate studies and promote improvements in safety practices across steel-producing units. This can help disseminate successful safety practices from one plant or organisation to others.

3. Approval of Industry Safety Standards

SISC will approve industry safety standards and recommended practices, helping establish a more consistent safety framework across India's steel sector.

4. Review of Accidents and Near-Misses

A major feature of the Council will be the review of serious accidents, accidents and near-miss incidents. Near-miss reporting is important because an incident that causes no injury or damage may nevertheless reveal a potentially serious underlying hazard.

5. Safety Awareness and Training

The Council will provide directions for strengthening safety awareness, worker training and preventive measures, thereby encouraging a shift from a reactive approach to a more proactive safety culture.

Steel Industry Safety Directorate (SISD)

To provide specialised technical and professional support to SISC, the Ministry of Steel will establish a Steel Industry Safety Directorate (SISD).

The Directorate will serve as the technical arm supporting implementation of the Council's decisions. Its expertise will cover areas such as:

- Process safety
- Blast furnaces
- Steel melting
- Rolling mills
- Coke ovens
- Refractory systems
- Electrical and mechanical safety
- Occupational health
- Fire engineering
- Disaster management

The SISD will also undertake periodic safety audits and reviews, investigate serious safety incidents, maintain accident and near-miss information, review emergency preparedness and safety training programmes, and develop safety standards and guidelines suited to Indian conditions.

Jurisdiction and Coverage

The safety framework supported by SISC and SISD will have a wide sectoral reach. The jurisdiction of SISD will cover primary and secondary iron and steel producers across India, as well as mines belonging to Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) under the administrative control of the Ministry of Steel.

This is particularly relevant because India's steel industry comprises large integrated steel plants as well as numerous secondary steel producers, with significant variation in technology, scale and operating practices.

Existing Safety Framework in the Steel Sector

The establishment of SISC is not an isolated measure. It strengthens an already evolving safety framework.

In 2020, the Ministry of Steel developed 25 common minimum safety guidelines covering hazards and activities such as working at height, confined spaces, electrical safety, fire safety, PPE management, conveyor

belts, energy isolation, liquid-metal handling and transportation.

In 2024, the Ministry introduced another 16 process-based safety guidelines covering specific iron and steel-making processes. These included workplace safety as well as process-specific requirements, and were formally launched on 25 July 2024. Thus, SISC can provide an institutional mechanism for taking these guidelines forward through monitoring, review, standardisation and continuous improvement.

Why is SISC Important?

India's steel sector has been expanding rapidly. According to the Ministry of Steel's Annual Report 2025–26, India's crude steel capacity had reached 218.445 million tonnes per annum by December 2025, while crude steel production during April–December 2025 stood at 124.551 million tonnes.

The growth has continued into FY 2026–27. During April–August 2026, India produced about 70.3 million tonnes of crude steel, 1.8% higher than the corresponding period of the previous year. Finished steel production during the same period stood at 68.1 million tonnes, registering 3.8% growth.

With increasing production and capacity, ensuring that safety performance keeps pace with industrial expansion becomes essential. SISC can contribute by:

- Promoting uniform safety benchmarks
- Strengthening accident-prevention mechanisms
- Improving reporting and analysis of near-misses
- Encouraging technology-based safety solutions
- Strengthening emergency preparedness
- Promoting occupational health
- Improving safety training and awareness
- Sharing best practices across steel plants
- Encouraging continuous review of safety standards

Significance for India's Steel Industry

The creation of SISC represents a shift towards a more coordinated and preventive approach to industrial safety. Rather than treating safety merely as a plant-level operational issue, the Council provides a platform for addressing safety at the industry level.

The participation of organisations such as DGMS, PESO and NDMA is also important because steel plants involve interconnected risks relating to mining, industrial gases, hazardous materials, fire, explosions and emergency management.

The Council's emphasis on near-miss incidents is particularly significant. Systematic analysis of near-misses can help identify unsafe conditions before they result in fatalities, injuries, equipment damage or production losses.

FASTag Annual Pass



Why in the News?

The FASTag Annual Pass has crossed the landmark figure of 1 crore passes issued since its launch on 15 August 2025. The milestone highlights the growing acceptance of digital and cashless tolling among private vehicle owners travelling on National Highways and National Expressways.

The scheme was introduced to make highway travel more convenient and economical by replacing repeated toll payments with a one-time annual payment for eligible private vehicles.

About FASTag Annual Pass

The FASTag Annual Pass is a facility introduced by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways for non-commercial cars, jeeps and vans having a valid FASTag.

The scheme became operational from 15 August 2025 and is available at about 1,150 fee plazas on National Highways and National Expressways across the country.

Under the scheme, an eligible vehicle can travel through designated National Highway and National Expressway

fee plazas for one year or up to 200 toll plaza crossings, whichever is earlier. For FY 2026–27, the applicable fee is ₹3,075, revised from ₹3,000 with effect from 1 April 2026.

Key Features

- **Launch date:** 15 August 2025
- **Eligible vehicles:** Non-commercial private cars, jeeps and vans
- **Current fee:** ₹3,075 for FY 2026–27
- **Validity:** One year or 200 toll plaza crossings, whichever is earlier
- **Coverage:** About 1,150 fee plazas on National Highways and National Expressways
- **Activation:** On the existing FASTag linked to the vehicle
- **Platform:** Rajmargyatra App or NHAI website
- **Implementing agency:** National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)

Growth in Adoption

The Annual Pass has witnessed rapid adoption since its introduction. Within the first four days of launch, more than 5 lakh users had purchased the pass. By October 2025, the number had crossed 25 lakh users, with around 5.67 crore transactions recorded.

Within six months, by February 2026, the scheme had crossed 50 lakh users, generating more than 26.55 crore transactions. At that stage, around 28% of car transactions on the National Highway network were being carried out through the Annual Pass.

By June 2026, more than 77 lakh Annual Passes had been issued and had facilitated about 63 crore transactions on National Highway fee plazas. Annual Pass transactions accounted for around 33% of ETC transactions by cars, jeeps and vans.

The scheme subsequently crossed the 1 crore passes milestone in September 2026, demonstrating sustained demand among frequent National Highway users.

How the Annual Pass Works

The Annual Pass is linked to the user's existing FASTag rather than requiring a separate physical tag. After payment of the applicable fee through the Rajmargyatra App or NHAI website, the pass is activated on the FASTag associated with the vehicle. This reduces the need for repeated FASTag wallet recharges for eligible toll crossings.

The 200 crossings limit provides particular benefits to frequent highway commuters who regularly travel on routes involving multiple toll plazas.

Benefits

The FASTag Annual Pass provides several advantages:

1. Reduced toll-payment burden

Frequent travellers can avoid paying individual user fees at eligible toll plazas during the validity of the pass.

2. Convenience

The scheme reduces the need for repeated FASTag recharges and simplifies toll payments.

3. Faster movement

Since the system operates through FASTag-based electronic toll collection, it supports smoother movement through toll plazas.

4. Promotion of digital payments

The initiative strengthens India's transition towards cashless and technology-driven highway toll collection.

5. Greater ease of commuting

The rapid growth in Annual Pass usage indicates that the facility is particularly useful for people who frequently travel on National Highways and Expressways.

Limitations and Applicability

The Annual Pass is specifically intended for non-commercial vehicles and is linked to a valid FASTag. Its primary coverage is on National Highways and National Expressways; it does not automatically extend to toll plazas on State Highways or roads operated by local authorities.

Thus, the regular FASTag balance may still be used for tolls and other eligible payments outside the Annual Pass network.

Significance for India's Digital Tolling System

FASTag has become a major component of India's Electronic Toll Collection system. By December 2025, 11.86 crore FASTags had been issued, while more than 98% of user-fee collection on National Highways was being carried out through FASTag.

The Annual Pass builds on this existing digital infrastructure by shifting frequent highway users from individual toll payments towards a simplified pass-based model. It therefore complements India's broader efforts to modernise toll collection, reduce congestion and improve the overall highway travel experience.

Overall Significance

The crossing of the 1 crore FASTag Annual Pass milestone represents an important step in the evolution of India's digital tolling ecosystem. The strong adoption—from 50 lakh users in February 2026 to over 1 crore by September 2026—shows the growing preference for predictable, convenient and cashless highway payments.

The initiative supports the government's broader objectives of Ease of Living, digitalisation, efficient highway management and seamless mobility, while providing frequent private vehicle users with a more convenient method of paying tolls.

NABKISAN WASH Social Bond Lists On NSE To Raise ₹180 Crore



Why in the News?

NABKISAN Finance Limited, a subsidiary of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), listed India's first Social Bond exclusively dedicated to the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector on the National Stock Exchange (NSE), Mumbai, on 1 October 2026. The issue raised ₹180 crore and was oversubscribed 1.8 times, reflecting strong investor participation. The five-year bond carries a coupon rate of 8.10%, matures in September 2031, and has received CRISIL AAA (Stable) and CARE AAA (Stable) credit ratings. The initiative marks an important development in India's sustainable finance ecosystem by directing capital-market resources towards essential social infrastructure, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

About the WASH Social Bond

A Social Bond is a debt instrument through which an organisation raises funds to finance or refinance projects intended to generate positive social outcomes. Unlike conventional bonds that may finance a broad range of activities, a dedicated social bond channels funding towards specified social objectives.

The NABKISAN WASH Social Bond focuses exclusively on improving access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene services. Its proceeds are intended to support solutions that improve living conditions and contribute to better health, stronger livelihoods and an improved quality of life in rural and underserved areas.

The bond also demonstrates how financial institutions can use capital-market instruments to mobilise resources for development priorities that have traditionally depended heavily on public funding and institutional finance.

Key Features of the Bond

- Issuer: NABKISAN Finance Limited, a subsidiary of NABARD.
- Listing date: 1 October 2026.
- Listing platform: National Stock Exchange (NSE), Mumbai.
- Bond amount: ₹180 crore.
- Subscription: 1.8 times the issue size.
- Tenure: Five years.
- Coupon rate: 8.10%.
- Maturity: September 2031.
- Credit rating: CRISIL AAA (Stable) and CARE AAA (Stable).
- Purpose: To expand access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene solutions in rural and underserved communities.

Objectives of the WASH Social Bond

The primary objective of the bond is to mobilise finance for projects that improve access to essential water, sanitation and hygiene services. Its broader objectives include:

1. Improving access to safe water: Supporting solutions that help rural and underserved communities obtain safer and more reliable water supplies.
2. Strengthening sanitation infrastructure: Facilitating investment in sanitation services and infrastructure that can contribute to healthier living environments.
3. Promoting hygiene: Supporting access to hygiene-related solutions that can help reduce preventable health risks.
4. Enhancing rural livelihoods: Improving access to essential services that influence household well-being, productivity and quality of life.
5. Mobilising private capital: Encouraging investors and financial institutions to participate in development-oriented projects through market-based financing.

Importance of the WASH Sector

Water, sanitation and hygiene are fundamental components of public health and sustainable rural development. Inadequate access to safe drinking water, sanitation facilities and hygienic practices can increase exposure to waterborne diseases, raise household expenditure and disproportionately affect vulnerable communities.

Improved WASH services can help reduce these risks, support school attendance and economic participation, and ease the burden of collecting water, particularly for women and girls. Reliable water and sanitation infrastructure is also important for rural settlements, community institutions and livelihood activities.

Therefore, financing WASH infrastructure is not merely an investment in physical facilities; it is also an investment in human development, health and social well-being.

Role of NABKISAN and NABARD

NABKISAN Finance Limited operates within the broader rural development financing framework associated with NABARD. The institution's WASH-focused bond illustrates how specialised financial institutions can connect capital-market funding with development needs.

By raising funds through a listed debt instrument, NABKISAN can mobilise resources from investors for a clearly defined social purpose. Such financing mechanisms can help expand the pool of capital available for development projects and encourage greater participation from commercial and institutional investors.

The bond issuance was supported by Water.org as a technical adviser and knowledge partner, alongside other participating institutions and market intermediaries. Representatives of NABARD, NABKISAN, Water.org, Trust Group and NSE participated in the listing ceremony.

Significance for Sustainable Finance in India

The listing has several broader implications:

- Innovation in development finance: It demonstrates the use of a dedicated social bond to finance a specific social-development priority.
- Greater investor participation: The 1.8-times oversubscription indicates demand exceeding the amount offered, although it does not by itself establish the long-term impact of the financed projects.
- Expansion of sustainable finance: It adds a WASH-focused instrument to India's evolving market for financing environmental and social objectives.
- Support for inclusive development: The intended use of proceeds links financial mobilisation with essential services for rural and underserved populations.
- Potential for replication: If implementation, monitoring and impact reporting are effective, similar financing approaches could inform future funding for other development sectors.

The actual social benefits will depend on how the funds are deployed, the quality of the projects financed, the communities reached and the results achieved.

Overall Significance

NABKISAN Finance Limited's ₹180-crore WASH Social Bond represents a notable step in connecting India's capital markets with essential rural development needs. Its listing on 1 October 2026, five-year tenure, 8.10% coupon rate and AAA (Stable) ratings highlight the financial structure of the instrument, while its dedicated focus on water, sanitation and hygiene gives it a defined social purpose.

The initiative reinforces the role of development finance institutions in mobilising capital for underserved communities and expanding access to essential services. Its longer-term significance will depend on the effective utilisation of the proceeds and measurable improvements in water access, sanitation, hygiene and community well-being.

National Strategic Trade Command Centre (NSTCC)



On 15 October 2026, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal launched the National Strategic Trade Command Centre (NSTCC) at Vanijya Bhawan, New Delhi. The launch took place in the presence of Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal and Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Lav Agarwal.

Developed by the Department of Commerce under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, NSTCC is an integrated trade intelligence and data analytics platform designed to improve the monitoring, analysis and governance of India's international trade. It aims to provide policymakers with a consolidated view of trade performance, export promotion schemes, regulatory approvals and administrative processes, thereby facilitating timely and evidence-based decision-making.

About the National Strategic Trade Command Centre

The NSTCC is a centralised analytics and visualisation hub that brings together trade-related information through interactive dashboards. It is intended to help government officials identify emerging trade trends, monitor the performance of export-related schemes, track pending applications and identify administrative bottlenecks.

The initiative represents a move towards more integrated and data-driven trade governance, where decisions can be informed by consolidated information rather than fragmented reports from different systems.

Key Features and Functions

1. Integrated trade monitoring: Provides a consolidated overview of India's international trade performance and key operational indicators.
2. Data analytics and visualisation: Uses dashboards to present trade statistics, regional trends, scheme performance and regulatory information in an accessible format.
3. Application tracking: Helps officials monitor application pendency, processing timelines and delays in trade-related approvals.
4. Export opportunity identification: Supports product-wise and market-wise analysis to identify potential export opportunities and strengthen India's position in international markets.
5. Performance assessment: Facilitates the monitoring of export promotion schemes and the functioning of trade-related regulatory systems.
6. Evidence-based policymaking: Enables policymakers to use data-driven insights to identify problems, evaluate performance and determine areas requiring administrative or policy intervention.

Major Trade-Related Areas Covered

The initial set of dashboards covers important functions administered by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), including:

- Importer Exporter Code (IEC): A key identification number required by most businesses undertaking import or export

activities in India, subject to applicable exemptions.

- Advance Authorisation: A scheme that permits duty-free imports of inputs used in the production of export goods, subject to specified conditions.
- Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme: Facilitates imports of capital goods at concessional or zero customs duty, subject to export obligations and scheme requirements.
- Certificate of Origin (CoO): Certifies the country of origin of goods and supports the application of preferential tariff treatment under relevant trade agreements.
- SCOMET: Stands for Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies. It covers specified sensitive and dual-use items that may have both civilian and military applications.
- Restricted imports and exports: Supports oversight of goods subject to restrictions, licensing requirements or other regulatory conditions.

By bringing information relating to these functions into a consolidated analytical environment, NSTCC is intended to improve administrative visibility and help officials identify delays or issues that require attention.

Strategic Importance of NSTCC

1. Strengthening India's Export Competitiveness

The platform can help policymakers analyse the export performance of different products and markets. Such insights may support the identification of emerging destinations, high-growth sectors and areas where Indian exporters could improve their international competitiveness.

2. Improving Ease of Doing Business

Delays in licences, authorisations and other regulatory processes can increase costs for exporters and importers. By tracking application pendency and processing timelines, NSTCC can help authorities identify bottlenecks and take corrective action.

3. Enhancing Transparency and Administrative Accountability

Consolidated dashboards make it easier to monitor the progress of applications, the performance of schemes and variations in processing times. This can strengthen institutional accountability and help officials identify areas requiring intervention.

4. Supporting Data-Driven Governance

The centre is designed to help policymakers move towards more systematic, evidence-based decisions. Instead of relying exclusively on periodic reports, officials can use integrated indicators to identify emerging patterns and assess operational performance.

5. Strengthening Strategic Trade Controls

Monitoring sensitive goods and technologies is important for compliance with export-control requirements and India's international commitments. The inclusion of SCOMET-related information provides a mechanism for closer monitoring of relevant regulatory applications and administrative pendency.

Institutional Framework

Particular	Details
Name	National Strategic Trade Command Centre
Abbreviation	NSTCC
Launch date	15 October 2026
Launched by	Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry
Location	Vanijya Bhawan, New Delhi
Developed by	Department of Commerce
Administrative ministry	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Key coordinating organisation	Directorate General of Foreign Trade
Primary purpose	Integrated trade analytics, monitoring and evidence-based governance

Challenges and the Way Forward

The effectiveness of NSTCC will depend on the quality, timeliness and consistency of the data integrated into its dashboards. Information from different trade-related systems must be appropriately standardised and updated to ensure that the analysis reflects actual operational conditions.

Other important considerations include protecting commercially sensitive information, ensuring secure access for authorised officials, maintaining reliable digital infrastructure and training personnel to interpret analytical findings correctly.

The centre's long-term value will depend not merely on displaying information but also on translating that information into measurable improvements, such as reduced application pendency, better monitoring of export promotion schemes and more responsive policymaking.

Regular review of dashboard indicators, coordination among relevant departments and the timely resolution of identified bottlenecks will be important for achieving these outcomes.

IMF : AI cuts hiring demand by nearly 10% in exposed occupations across Asia



Why in the News?

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its October 2026 Regional Economic Outlook: Asia and Pacific, reported that employer demand for workers in occupations more exposed to artificial intelligence (AI) has declined by nearly 10% relative to less AI-exposed occupations since November 2022. The report analyses data from approximately 40 million online job postings across 19 Asian economies.

About the IMF Report

The Regional Economic Outlook: Asia and Pacific, October 2026, titled Resilience Amid Uncertainty: Can it Be Sustained?, was published by the IMF's Asia and Pacific Department in October 2026.

Its second chapter, “Labor Markets in Asia: Challenges and Opportunities in the AI Era,” examines the effects of AI exposure on labour demand and the challenges facing workers and policymakers.

- Publishing institution: International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- Publication: Regional Economic Outlook: Asia and Pacific, October 2026.
- Study coverage: 19 Asian economies.
- Data analysed: Approximately 40 million online job postings.
- Period highlighted: Since November 2022, when ChatGPT was publicly launched.
- Central finding: Employer demand in more AI-exposed occupations fell by nearly 10% relative to less-exposed occupations.
- Key policy focus: Labour-market adaptation, reskilling, youth employment and social protection.

The finding concerns the relative change in employer demand for occupations with greater AI exposure. It should not be interpreted as a 10% decline in total employment across Asia or as proof that AI alone caused every reduction in hiring.

Key Findings of the Report

1. Declining Demand for AI-Exposed Occupations

The IMF found that employer demand for occupations more exposed to AI declined by nearly 10% relative to occupations less exposed to AI.

The emergence of generative AI tools has enabled businesses to automate or accelerate tasks involving text generation, information processing, coding, data analysis and routine administrative work. Consequently, employers may reconsider recruitment requirements for roles in which AI can perform a growing share of existing tasks.

However, AI exposure does not necessarily mean that an occupation will disappear. Many jobs combine

automatable tasks with activities requiring human judgement, interpersonal communication, accountability and specialised expertise.

2. Hiring Trends Appear to Have Stabilised

The report notes that the negative effect on relative hiring demand appears to have stabilised even as AI capabilities have improved rapidly.

One possible explanation is that businesses are increasingly using AI to augment employees rather than replace them entirely. Employers may also be seeking workers who can operate AI tools, verify their outputs and integrate them into existing workflows.

This distinction is important because the long-term effect of AI will depend not only on technological capabilities but also on how businesses redesign jobs, reorganise production and invest in their workforce.

3. Growing Importance of AI-Related Skills

As AI adoption spreads, the skills required across many occupations are changing. Employers may increasingly value a combination of technical proficiency and human capabilities.

Important skills include:

- Digital literacy: Understanding and using digital tools effectively.
- AI literacy: Knowing how AI systems work, where they are useful and what their limitations are.
- Critical thinking: Evaluating AI-generated information and identifying errors or bias.
- Data literacy: Interpreting information and making evidence-based decisions.
- Communication and collaboration: Working effectively with colleagues and customers.
- Adaptability: Learning new tools and adjusting to changing job responsibilities.

Workers who acquire these skills may be better positioned to adapt to changing workplace requirements, although outcomes will vary by occupation, industry and access to training.

4. Youth Employment Challenges

AI-driven changes in recruitment may create particular challenges for young people entering the labour market. Many entry-level jobs involve routine research, documentation, basic coding, customer support and administrative tasks. If employers automate some of these activities or reduce hiring for such roles, new graduates may find it harder to obtain their first job or gain the initial experience needed for career progression.

This creates a potential challenge for Asian economies with large young populations. Policymakers and educational institutions will need to ensure that young workers can acquire practical, job-relevant skills and gain access to meaningful work experience.

At the same time, AI-related industries can create new opportunities in software development, data management, cybersecurity, AI implementation and other technical and professional services.

5. Uneven Impact Across Occupations and Economies

The impact of AI is unlikely to be uniform across Asia.

Occupations involving repetitive cognitive tasks may face different pressures from those requiring physical dexterity, complex judgement, direct human interaction or responsibility for high-stakes decisions. Similarly, firms with advanced digital infrastructure may adopt AI more quickly than smaller businesses with limited resources.

The report's regional findings therefore need to be interpreted alongside differences in education, industrial structure, digital readiness and social protection across individual economies.

Policy Recommendations and the Way Forward

The report emphasises labour-market reforms, stronger social safety nets and policies that help workers adapt to AI-driven change. These priorities can be translated into several practical measures.

1. Strengthen reskilling and upskilling: Expand affordable, industry-linked training in AI literacy, digital tools and emerging technical skills.

2. Reform education and vocational training: Update curricula to combine foundational knowledge with practical problem-solving, communication and digital competencies.

3. Support youth employment: Strengthen apprenticeships, internships and entry-level

employment pathways so that young people can gain experience in AI-enabled workplaces.

4. Improve social protection: Ensure that workers facing displacement or occupational transitions can access appropriate income support, career counselling and retraining opportunities.

5. Encourage responsible AI adoption: Promote appropriate safeguards for privacy, data security, transparency and accountability while allowing businesses to benefit from productivity-enhancing technologies.

6. Improve labour-market information: Track hiring trends, changing occupational requirements and emerging skill shortages to help governments, workers and employers make informed decisions.

7. Promote inclusive access to technology: Help smaller businesses and disadvantaged workers access digital infrastructure, training and appropriate AI tools.

SBI cyberattack: Personal data of 3897 customers leaked on dark web, probe ordered



Why in the News?

The State Bank of India (SBI), India's largest public sector bank, reported a suspected data exposure incident after approximately 3.75 lakh (375,000) records surfaced on the dark web. A preliminary examination identified 3,897 customer records containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII), raising concerns about the protection of sensitive customer data and the growing cybersecurity challenges faced by India's banking sector.

The bank received alerts about the suspected exposure on 16 October 2026 from its threat intelligence service provider, the Defence Cyber Agency and the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In). Following the alerts, SBI activated its cyber incident response and containment protocols and appointed an independent cybersecurity agency empanelled by CERT-In to investigate the incident.

On 21 October 2026, the bank disclosed the incident to the stock exchanges. SBI stated that the incident had no material impact on its core business operations, financial performance or business continuity. In a subsequent customer advisory reported on 23 October 2026, the bank said it had individually informed customers whose data had been identified as involved and reassured them that their account balances and funds remained safe.

The investigation is intended to establish the authenticity and completeness of the exposed information, identify its possible source, determine the extent of the compromise and assess the risks to customers and the bank.

About the SBI Data Exposure Incident

The incident concerns the suspected availability of customer-related information associated with SBI on the dark web. The bank's preliminary analysis examined approximately 375,000 records and identified 3,897 records containing personally identifiable information.

The presence of data on the dark web does not, by itself, establish how it was obtained or whether every record in the larger dataset is authentic. The precise source of the exposure and the full extent of the incident remain matters for investigation.

Information Reportedly Exposed

The preliminary findings identified several categories of personal and customer-related information, including:

- **Personal details:** Customers' names, gender and dates of birth.
- **Contact information:** Registered mobile numbers, email addresses and residential addresses.
- **Banking identification details:** Branch identifiers and Customer Information File (CIF) identifiers.

- **Lead-related information:** Lead identification numbers and associated records.
- **Loan-related information:** Metadata connected with loan records, lead records and other related files.

The combination of these details is particularly significant because personal information can be used to create convincing fraudulent communications. Even when passwords or transaction credentials are not known to be exposed, information such as a customer's name, date of birth, phone number and loan-related details can help criminals impersonate bank officials or construct targeted phishing attempts.

The bank has not publicly established the complete contents of the dataset or the precise mechanism through which the information became available. Therefore, the exposure should not automatically be interpreted as proof that customers' passwords, PINs, one-time passwords (OTPs) or account balances were compromised.

Response Taken by State Bank of India

Following the alerts received on 16 October 2026, SBI initiated a series of response measures to investigate and contain the incident.

1. Activation of Cyber Incident Response Protocols

The bank activated its cyber incident response and containment procedures after receiving information about the suspected exposure. Such procedures are intended to help organisations investigate potential security incidents, restrict further unauthorised access and reduce the risk of additional data loss.

2. Independent Cybersecurity Assessment

SBI engaged an independent cybersecurity agency empanelled by CERT-In to conduct a detailed investigation. The assessment is expected to establish the authenticity of the exposed records, determine their likely source, evaluate the scale of the incident and identify associated risks.

3. Remedial and Preventive Measures

The bank stated that its assessment was underway and that appropriate remedial and preventive measures were being implemented. The effectiveness of these measures will depend on identifying the underlying cause and addressing any weaknesses revealed by the investigation.

4. Communication with Affected Customers

In an update reported on 23 October 2026, SBI said it had individually informed customers whose data had been identified as involved in the incident through email and/or WhatsApp. The bank also advised customers to follow safe digital banking practices and remain alert to suspicious calls, messages and emails.

5. Continuity of Banking Operations

SBI stated that the incident had no material impact on its core business operations, financial performance or business continuity. It also reassured customers that their account balances and funds remained safe.

However, the confirmation that banking operations continue normally should be distinguished from the question of personal-data security. An institution may continue providing banking services even while investigating the exposure of customer information.

What Is Personally Identifiable Information (PII)?

Personally Identifiable Information refers to information that can identify an individual directly or indirectly, either on its own or when combined with other information.

Examples include:

- Name and date of birth.
- Mobile number and email address.
- Residential address.
- Customer identification numbers.
- Certain financial, loan and application-related details.

PII is especially valuable to cybercriminals because it can support identity impersonation, social engineering, targeted phishing and other fraudulent activities.

For example, a fraudster who knows a customer's name, phone number and details associated with a loan application may contact that person while pretending to be a bank employee. By using accurate personal information, the fraudster may make a fraudulent call or message appear genuine and persuade the customer to disclose confidential credentials.

Consequently, protecting personal information is an important part of banking security, even when the exposed data does not directly provide access to a bank account.

Precautions for SBI Customers

Customers should remain vigilant even if their account balances and funds have not been reported as compromised.

1. Never share an OTP, ATM PIN, internet banking password or other confidential credentials with anyone claiming to represent the bank.
2. Treat unsolicited calls or messages requesting urgent action, KYC updates or account verification with caution.
3. Do not click suspicious links or install applications received through unverified messages.
4. Verify banking-related communications through SBI's official website or established customer-service channels.
5. Monitor account statements and transaction alerts for unfamiliar activity.
6. Use strong, unique passwords and enable available security features.
7. Contact the bank immediately if suspicious transactions or attempted fraud are detected.
8. Report suspected cyber financial fraud promptly through India's official cybercrime reporting channels, including the national cybercrime helpline at 1930 where applicable.

Customers should also be cautious about anyone who contacts them using details that appear to prove knowledge of their banking relationship. Possession of genuine personal information does not establish that a caller is an authorised bank representative.

Environment & Diversity

Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)



Why in the News?

Indian cities are increasingly adopting local and community-driven initiatives to reduce, reuse, return, recover and recreate plastic waste. The focus is gradually shifting from merely collecting plastic waste to building a circular economy in which plastic is segregated, recovered, recycled and reintroduced into productive use.

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), launched on 2 October 2014, has strengthened systems for door-to-door collection, source segregation, processing and recovery of municipal waste. Under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0), special emphasis has been placed on source segregation, Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), scientific processing and reduction of plastic waste.

Scale of Plastic Waste in India

India continues to generate a substantial quantity of plastic waste. According to data provided by State Pollution Control Boards and Pollution Control Committees to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), plastic waste generation was:

- **2020–21:** 41,26,808 tonnes per annum
- **2021–22:** 39,01,802 tonnes per annum
- **2022–23:** 41,36,188 tonnes per annum

These figures highlight the continuing need for stronger segregation, recycling and recovery systems, particularly in rapidly growing urban areas.

Major Government Initiatives

1. Swachh Bharat Mission

The Swachh Bharat Mission has helped establish a nationwide framework for improved waste collection and scientific waste management. Under SBM-U 2.0, the

objective is to achieve garbage-free cities through 100% source segregation, door-to-door collection and scientific management of different waste streams.

The mission also supports the establishment of Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), where dry waste such as plastics, paper, metal and glass can be sorted and sent for recycling or other forms of recovery.

2. Ban on Identified Single-Use Plastic Items

The Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021 prohibited identified single-use plastic items having low utility and high littering potential from 1 July 2022.

The restrictions were accompanied by enforcement against plastic carry bags below the prescribed thickness. As of 2025, all 36 States and Union Territories had constituted Special Task Forces for elimination of identified SUP items and effective plastic waste management.

3. Extended Producer Responsibility

A major shift in India's plastic policy has been the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for plastic packaging.

Under the EPR framework, producers, importers and brand owners are assigned obligations relating to collection, recycling and environmentally sound management of plastic packaging. The framework also promotes the use of recycled plastic and creates an online system for generating and transferring EPR certificates.

The Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2024 further strengthened the framework by expanding the categories of obligated entities and improving online reporting and monitoring mechanisms. Manufacturers and importers of plastic raw materials were also brought within the EPR framework for specified obligations.

Latest EPR Performance

As of 5 March 2026, India had 2,986 registered plastic waste recyclers under the EPR framework.

The reported quantity of plastic waste recycled under the framework stood at approximately 196.97 lakh tonnes, with EPR certificates generated for an equivalent quantity. This indicates the increasing formalisation of plastic waste recovery and recycling systems.

The broader circular-economy ecosystem has also expanded. By December 2025, 71,401 producers and 4,447 recyclers were registered across different EPR waste streams, which together facilitated recycling of approximately 375.11 lakh tonnes of waste.

City-Level Innovations

Indian cities are increasingly experimenting with local solutions that connect citizens, municipal bodies, self-help groups, recyclers and private enterprises.

- **Mira Bhayandar – Thaila Bank**

During World Environment Day 2025 activities, Mira Bhayandar promoted a "Thaila Bank", under which old clothes collected through RRR (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) Centres were converted into reusable cloth bags with the involvement of Self-Help Group women.

- **Indore – RRR and Plastic-Free Initiatives**

Indore has continued to strengthen community-based waste management. Its initiatives include RRR centres, plastic-free zones and campaigns encouraging citizens and shopkeepers to adopt alternatives to single-use plastic.

The city has also become part of the Swachh Shehar Jodi initiative, through which experienced cities mentor other urban local bodies and help replicate effective waste-management practices.

- **Jamshedpur – Plastic Collection and Processing**

During World Environment Day 2025 activities, Jamshedpur organised a clean-up and plogging initiative through collaboration between the municipal corporation and NGOs. More than 300 kg of plastic waste was collected and sent to a Plastic Waste Management Unit for processing.

- **Lucknow – River and Plastic Clean-up**

Lucknow mobilised more than 10,000 volunteers for a major Gomti river clean-up drive, demonstrating how citizen participation can complement municipal waste-management systems.

RRR Centres and the Circular Economy

The RRR approach — Reduce, Reuse and Recycle — is increasingly being complemented by broader concepts of recovery and resource regeneration.

RRR Centres provide citizens with a platform to deposit items that still have value, including clothes, books, household articles and recyclable materials. In the case of plastics, such systems can divert usable material away from mixed waste and dumpsites and channel it towards authorised processors.

The approach therefore supports the transition from a "take-use-dispose" linear model towards a circular model in which materials remain in productive use for as long as possible.

Material Recovery Facilities

Material Recovery Facilities play a crucial role in this transition. They receive segregated dry waste and facilitate sorting and channelisation of recyclable materials.

According to government data cited in 2024, the country had 4,446 existing solid-waste MRFs, with a combined capacity of about 31,427 tonnes per day. SBM-U 2.0 identifies MRFs as an important component of sustainable solid-waste management.

Role of Citizens and Local Bodies

Plastic waste management cannot depend solely on municipal authorities. Its success requires cooperation across the entire waste chain:

- **Households:** Segregate dry and wet waste at source.
- **Consumers:** Prefer reusable bags, bottles and containers.
- **Retailers:** Reduce dependence on disposable plastic packaging.
- **Urban Local Bodies:** Ensure segregated collection and scientific processing.
- **Waste pickers:** Recover recyclable materials from the waste stream.
- **Recyclers:** Process recovered plastic into usable material.
- **Producers and brand owners:** Fulfil EPR obligations and increase the use of recycled content.

This integrated approach can improve resource recovery while also creating livelihood opportunities in the recycling sector.

Challenges

Despite significant progress, several challenges remain:

1. Low-value and contaminated plastics are difficult to recycle economically.
2. Source segregation is not uniformly practised across all cities.
3. Informal waste workers need greater integration into formal waste-management systems.
4. Enforcement of the single-use plastic restrictions remains important.
5. Plastic packaging continues to enter the waste stream in large quantities.
6. Recycling alone cannot solve the problem; reduction and reuse must remain central to the strategy.

Overall Significance

India's plastic-waste strategy is gradually moving beyond simply removing waste from streets towards resource recovery and circularity. The combination of SBM-U 2.0, the single-use plastic restrictions, EPR, MRFs, RRR Centres and city-level innovations is creating a more integrated framework for plastic waste management.

The latest data also indicate a substantial expansion of formal recycling and EPR infrastructure. The challenge now is to ensure that these systems operate effectively at the local level, with better segregation, stronger enforcement, greater participation by citizens and reliable linkages between waste generators, municipalities and authorised recyclers.

India's First Port-Based e-Methanol Plant at Kandla



Why in the News?

The foundation stone for India's first port-based e-methanol production facility was laid on 26 September 2026 at Deendayal Port Authority (DPA), Kandla, Gujarat. The ceremony was attended by Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

The project represents a major step in India's efforts to decarbonise the maritime sector and develop green-fuel production and bunkering infrastructure at ports. The proposed plant will use renewable power, water and biogenic carbon dioxide (CO_2) to produce e-methanol, which can be supplied as a cleaner marine fuel to ships operating on international trade routes.

About the e-Methanol Plant

The proposed facility will have a total production capacity of 150 tonnes per day (TPD). At full-year operation, this corresponds to approximately 54,750 tonnes of e-methanol annually.

The project has a total estimated investment of ₹2,300 crore and is being developed jointly by:

- Deendayal Port Authority (DPA), Kandla
- Assam Petro-Chemicals Ltd. (APCL)

The project will be developed through scalable modules in two phases.

Phase-wise Development

Phase I

- Capacity: 50 TPD
- Investment: ₹1,200 crore
- Target completion: January 2027

Phase II

- Additional capacity: 100 TPD
- Investment: ₹1,100 crore
- Target completion: March 2027

Together, the two phases will raise the plant's capacity to 150 TPD, with total investment reaching ₹2,300 crore. These are project targets announced by the government and project partners.

What is e-Methanol?

e-Methanol, or electro-methanol, is a synthetic fuel produced using renewable electricity, green hydrogen and a carbon source.

The basic production pathway involves:

Renewable electricity → Electrolysis of water → Green Hydrogen → Combination with captured CO_2 → e-Methanol

In the Kandla project, the plant will use renewable power and water to generate green hydrogen and biogenic CO_2 as the carbon source. The resulting methanol can be used as a fuel for suitable dual-fuel marine engines.

The use of biogenic CO_2 is important because the carbon originates from biological sources rather than conventional fossil-carbon sources. However, the overall climate benefit of any alternative fuel depends on its complete life-cycle emissions, including production, transport and use.

Why is e-Methanol Important for Shipping?

Shipping is considered a hard-to-abate sector because large ocean-going vessels require high energy density and cannot easily rely solely on direct electrification for long-distance journeys.

E-methanol offers several potential advantages:

- It can be used as an alternative marine fuel in suitable engines.
- It can reduce dependence on conventional fossil-based marine fuels.
- It can be handled using dedicated fuel-storage and bunkering infrastructure.
- It can support the development of green shipping corridors.
- It can help shipping companies comply with increasingly stringent international emissions requirements.

The IMO's 2023 GHG Strategy calls for international shipping to reach net-zero GHG emissions by or around 2050 and seeks greater uptake of zero- or near-zero-GHG technologies and fuels. The strategy also calls for such fuels to account for at least 5%, striving for 10%, of the energy used by international shipping by 2030.

Strategic Location of Kandla

The choice of Deendayal Port, Kandla is strategically important because of its location on India's western coast and its connection with major international maritime trade routes.

The plant is intended to supply green fuel to vessels operating along the Asia-Europe International Trade Corridor, including ships associated with the Singapore–Rotterdam route. This gives Kandla the potential to develop into an important green-fuel supply and bunkering hub.

Port-based production also reduces the need to transport the finished fuel over long distances before it reaches ships. Integrating production, storage, transportation and bunkering within the port ecosystem can therefore create a more efficient green-fuel supply chain.

Institutional Collaboration

The project brings together the maritime infrastructure of Deendayal Port Authority and the methanol-production expertise of Assam Petro-Chemicals Ltd.

Under the January 2026 MoU:

- DPA is to provide pipeline connectivity, storage and fuel-handling infrastructure.
- APCL is to establish the green methanol production facility within the port area.
- The project creates an integrated value chain connecting production with maritime fuel supply.

The capital contribution is structured in a 76:24 ratio between DPA and APCL. DPA's contribution includes equity capital of approximately ₹567.32 crore, along with 75 acres of land, desalinated water and renewable energy in the form of green hydrogen.

Economic and Employment Benefits

The project is expected to generate more than 3,500 direct and indirect employment opportunities.

Its economic impact is expected to extend beyond the plant itself by creating demand for:

- Green-energy generation
- Hydrogen production
- CO_2 collection and handling
- Methanol storage
- Pipelines and transportation
- Port-based bunkering
- Ship-fuel handling
- Maintenance and engineering services
- Other supporting logistics and industrial activities

Thus, the project can contribute to the creation of a broader green-energy value chain around Kandla and the Kutch region.

Link with National Green Hydrogen Mission

The Kandla e-methanol project is closely connected with India's National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM).

The Mission was approved in January 2023 with an initial outlay of ₹19,744 crore and aims to make India a global hub for the production, use and export of green hydrogen and its derivatives. Its target includes developing 5 million metric tonnes per annum (MMT) of green hydrogen production capacity by 2030.

Green hydrogen can be further converted into derivatives such as green ammonia and green methanol, making e-methanol an important potential component of India's green-molecule economy.

Kandla is already part of India's broader green-hydrogen development ecosystem. The National Green Hydrogen Mission database lists a Deendayal Port Authority Kandla Green Hydrogen Project, including a commissioned Phase I project and a Phase II project under construction.

Contribution to India's Net Zero 2070 Goal

India has announced its long-term goal of achieving Net Zero emissions by 2070. Decarbonising difficult sectors such as shipping will be an important part of this transition.

The Kandla project contributes to this broader objective by:

1. Promoting renewable-energy-based fuel production.
2. Supporting the use of alternative fuels in maritime transport.
3. Developing green-fuel infrastructure at an Indian port.
4. Reducing dependence on fossil-based marine fuels.
5. Supporting India's emergence as a producer and exporter of green molecules.
6. Encouraging technological development in green hydrogen and synthetic fuels.

At the international level, the project also aligns with the IMO's efforts to move shipping towards significantly lower greenhouse-gas emissions and eventual net-zero emissions.

Cost Competitiveness

According to the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, the Kandla project is expected to produce green methanol at around US$750 per tonne, compared with a cited global rate of around US$1,300 per tonne. If achieved, such cost competitiveness could improve the commercial viability of Indian green-methanol production and strengthen India's potential position in the international green-fuel market.

However, actual competitiveness will depend on factors such as renewable electricity costs, electrolyser efficiency, CO_2 availability, plant utilisation, financing, logistics and international fuel standards.

Environmental Significance

The maritime sector is a major consumer of fossil fuels, particularly for long-distance shipping. Replacing conventional fuels with renewable-based alternatives can contribute to lowering the sector's greenhouse-gas footprint.

The Kandla project is environmentally significant because it combines:

Renewable energy + Green hydrogen + Biogenic CO_2 + Green methanol + Green shipping

It therefore demonstrates how renewable electricity can be converted into a transportable chemical fuel for sectors where direct electrification is difficult.

Challenges

Despite its strategic potential, the development of e-methanol at scale involves several challenges:

- **High production costs:** Green hydrogen remains more expensive than conventional hydrogen in many markets.
- **Renewable-energy requirement:** Large quantities of reliable renewable electricity are necessary.
- **CO_2 availability:** A consistent and appropriately sourced biogenic CO_2 stream is required.
- **Bunkering infrastructure:** Ports need specialised storage, handling and safety systems.
- **Vessel compatibility:** Ships require suitable dual-fuel engines or other compatible technologies.
- **International standards:** Fuel certification and life-cycle emissions accounting will influence market acceptance.
- **Scale-up:** Demonstration and initial production capacity must eventually expand to meet the requirements of international shipping.

Therefore, the success of the Kandla project will depend not only on plant construction but also on the development of a complete green maritime ecosystem.

Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve: Landslide-Prone Zones Nearly Double



Why in the News?

The Nanda Devi Biosphere Decadal Monitoring Campaign 2026, conducted by the Uttarakhand Forest Department in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), has highlighted significant environmental changes in the Himalayan ecosystem. According to the findings reported on 9 October 2026, landslide-prone zones in the strictly protected core of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve have nearly doubled over the past decade.

About Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve

- Location: Garhwal and Kumaon regions of Uttarakhand, covering parts of Chamoli, Pithoragarh and Bageshwar districts.
- Area: Approximately 6,407 square kilometres.
- Constituent core areas: Nanda Devi National Park and Valley of Flowers National Park.

- River system: Located within the upper Alaknanda River catchment, which includes the Rishi Ganga and Dhauli Ganga river systems.
- Highest peak: Nanda Devi, approximately 7,817 metres above sea level.

The reserve represents one of the most ecologically significant high-altitude landscapes of the Indian Himalayas. Its ecosystems include temperate forests, subalpine vegetation, alpine meadows, glaciers and snow-covered mountain terrain. The steep variation in altitude supports diverse habitats and specialised plant and animal communities.

UNESCO Recognition and Conservation Status

Nanda Devi National Park was established in 1982, and access to its core area was prohibited in 1983 to protect its fragile ecosystem from excessive human pressure, particularly from mountaineering and trekking activities. Nanda Devi National Park was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1988. Valley of Flowers National Park was subsequently included in the World Heritage property in 2005. The broader Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve is also part of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme, which promotes the conservation of biodiversity alongside scientific research and sustainable development.

The relative isolation of the core area makes it particularly valuable for studying long-term ecological changes with comparatively limited direct human disturbance.

Key Findings of the 2026 Monitoring Campaign

The monitoring campaign combined field surveys, satellite imagery and drone-based observations to assess changes in biodiversity, glacier-fed landscapes and geological stability. The major findings are as follows:

1. Nearly Doubling of Landslide-Prone Zones

- Satellite and drone observations indicate that areas identified as landslide-prone in the core zone have nearly doubled compared with the 2015 assessment.
- Glacier melt, unstable mountain slopes and changing environmental conditions are emerging as important concerns for the region.
- Increased slope instability may affect natural habitats, stream channels and downstream settlements, particularly during periods of intense rainfall or rapid snow and ice melt.

The findings demonstrate that the absence of substantial direct human activity does not eliminate natural hazards or the impacts of global climate change.

2. Formation of a New Glacial Lake

The campaign identified a new glacial lake forming at an altitude of approximately 5,000 metres behind a moraine, a ridge of rock debris deposited by a glacier.

The lake's formation is significant because a moraine can act as a natural barrier retaining glacial meltwater. If this barrier weakens or breaches, a sudden release of water may cause a Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF).

Such floods can transport large quantities of water, sediment and debris downstream, damaging river valleys, infrastructure and settlements. The 2013 Kedarnath disaster and the 2021 Rishi Ganga–Dhauli Ganga disaster at Reni–Tapovan illustrate the destructive potential of water-related hazards in the Uttarakhand Himalayas. However, the identification of a new lake does not, by itself, establish that an outburst is imminent.

3. Biodiversity Assessment

Despite increasing geological and climatic pressures, the survey documented considerable biological diversity within the protected landscape.

- 490 Vascular plant species recorded. Including 451 angiosperms, 7 gymnosperms and more than 32 fern species.
- 96 Lichen taxa documented. Seventy lichen records were reported as new to the park.
- 20 mammals and 125 birds Faunal diversity recorded during the campaign
- The beech marten was recorded in the park for the first time.
- Blue sheep were recorded in seven of the nine surveyed areas, while camera traps detected snow leopards in four areas. These observations provide useful baseline information for

understanding species distribution and planning conservation measures.

Factors Contributing to Increasing Landslide Risk

The reported findings point to a combination of climatic, geological and hydrological processes that can influence slope stability in the high Himalayas.

- Glacier retreat: Rising temperatures contribute to glacier mass loss and changes in meltwater movement. These processes can expose unstable terrain and alter drainage patterns.
- Intense rainfall: Heavy precipitation can saturate soil and loose debris, increase pore-water pressure and trigger slope failures.
- Fragile geology: The young, tectonically active Himalayan mountain system contains steep slopes and fractured rocks that are naturally susceptible to landslides.
- Freeze–thaw processes: Repeated freezing and thawing can weaken rocks and contribute to rockfalls and slope failures.
- Changing snow and ice conditions: Alterations in snow cover, glacier margins and meltwater storage can increase instability in some high-altitude locations.

These are established mechanisms of Himalayan slope instability; the precise contribution of each factor to the changes observed in Nanda Devi requires detailed site-specific investigation.

Significance of the Findings

1. Climate Change and Protected Ecosystems

The campaign highlights that protected areas cannot remain insulated from large-scale climatic changes. Restrictions on human activity can reduce local ecological pressures, but they cannot prevent regional warming, glacier retreat or extreme weather events.

2. Disaster Risk Reduction

The formation of a new glacial lake and the expansion of landslide-prone areas strengthen the case for systematic monitoring of high-altitude hazards. Early identification of unstable slopes and potentially hazardous lakes can support disaster preparedness in downstream river valleys.

3. Biodiversity Conservation

Landslides can destroy vegetation, fragment habitats and change the availability of food and shelter for wildlife. Long-term monitoring is therefore essential for understanding how climate-driven landscape changes affect species such as snow leopards, Himalayan musk deer and blue sheep.

4. Scientific Importance

Repeated surveys allow scientists to compare changes over time rather than relying on isolated observations. The Nanda Devi monitoring programme provides a valuable opportunity to study the relationship between biodiversity, glacier dynamics and landscape stability in a relatively undisturbed Himalayan environment.

Recommendations and the Way Forward

The monitoring findings point towards the need for an integrated approach to conservation and disaster management. The reported recommendations include the following:

- Regular ecological monitoring: Conduct assessments of the core zone every five years and the buffer zone annually, as recommended in the reported findings.
- Glacial lake surveillance: Use satellite-based mapping to track changes in lake area, water levels and surrounding moraine stability, with support from organisations such as ISRO and the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology.
- Early-warning systems: Establish suitable monitoring and warning arrangements for potentially hazardous glacial lakes and vulnerable downstream locations.
- Landslide susceptibility mapping: Combine satellite imagery, drone surveys, rainfall records and geological field investigations to identify locations requiring closer observation.
- Biodiversity monitoring: Continue camera trapping, vegetation surveys and species documentation to identify changes in wildlife distribution and habitat conditions.
- Inter-agency coordination: Strengthen cooperation among the Uttarakhand Forest

Department, WII, geological research institutions, disaster management authorities and local administrations.

These measures should be guided by scientific evidence, local terrain conditions and the need to minimise disturbance to sensitive habitats.

Japan–India Sign Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) Agreement to Boost Decarbonization



Why in the News?

India and Japan jointly launched the Operational Manual for the India–Japan Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) in New Delhi. The manual was jointly launched by Japan's Ambassador to India, Keiichi Ono, and the then Secretary of India's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Tanmay Kumar.

The JCM operates under Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement, which provides a framework for countries to cooperate voluntarily in achieving their climate targets through internationally transferred mitigation outcomes, subject to applicable accounting and reporting requirements.

About the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM)

The Joint Crediting Mechanism is a bilateral cooperation mechanism through which Japan and a partner country facilitate the deployment of low-carbon technologies, products, services and infrastructure. The resulting greenhouse gas emission reductions or removals can be quantified, verified and issued as carbon credits under the mechanism's rules.

Under the India–Japan arrangement, the mechanism is intended to support India's sustainable development while contributing to the climate commitments of both countries.

The JCM combines three major elements:

- Technology cooperation: Deployment of advanced technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Climate finance: Mobilisation of public and private investment for decarbonisation projects.
- Carbon credit generation: Measurement and verification of emission reductions or removals, followed by the issuance and authorised use or transfer of eligible credits.

Unlike a general technology-sharing agreement, the JCM establishes a framework for measuring the climate benefits of supported projects and determining how the resulting credits are managed.

Key Features of the Operational Manual

The Operational Manual provides a structured procedure for implementing JCM activities, from the initial proposal to the issuance and authorisation of carbon credits.

1. Project identification and submission

Project proponents begin by identifying a potential mitigation activity and submitting a Project Idea Note (PIN). The proposal outlines the project concept, the technology involved and its expected contribution to emission reductions or removals.

2. Project assessment and approval

The proposed activity must follow the mechanism's rules and undergo the required review and approval procedures. The bilateral Joint Committee plays a central role in project governance, including decisions relating to methodologies and project registration.

3. Measurement and monitoring

Projects need a credible method for estimating their greenhouse gas reductions or removals against an appropriate baseline. Monitoring procedures and supporting documentation help demonstrate whether the claimed climate benefits have actually occurred.

4. Independent validation and verification

Third-party validation and verification help assess whether a project follows the approved methodology and whether its reported mitigation outcomes are

supported by evidence. These checks are important for maintaining the environmental integrity of carbon credits.

5. Credit issuance and authorisation

Once the applicable requirements have been met, eligible projects can proceed towards credit issuance. The rules also govern authorisation and the tracking of credits, including their transfer and use where permitted.

The manual therefore provides operational guidance for the full project lifecycle rather than merely establishing broad principles for cooperation.

Link with Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), provides the international framework for addressing climate change. Article 6 enables countries to cooperate in implementing their climate commitments.

Article 6.2 specifically provides an accounting framework for cooperative approaches involving internationally transferred mitigation outcomes (ITMOs).

Under such arrangements, countries may authorise eligible mitigation outcomes for use towards nationally determined contributions (NDCs) or other permitted purposes, subject to the relevant requirements. Corresponding adjustments are an important safeguard against the same mitigation outcome being counted towards the climate targets of more than one country.

The India–Japan JCM is designed to operate within this framework. Its project procedures and credit-management arrangements are therefore important not only for generating carbon credits but also for ensuring transparent accounting of the resulting mitigation outcomes.

Important distinction: Not every carbon credit is automatically an ITMO. Its treatment depends on the applicable rules, authorisation and accounting requirements.

Importance for India's Climate Goals

1. Supporting India's NDCs

India's nationally determined contribution sets out its climate commitments under the Paris Agreement. The JCM can support relevant mitigation activities, provided that projects align with applicable national priorities and accounting requirements.

2. Accelerating low-carbon technology deployment

Access to advanced technologies can help Indian industries and infrastructure operators improve energy efficiency, reduce fossil-fuel consumption and adopt cleaner production processes.

3. Mobilising climate finance

The mechanism can create opportunities for investment from Japanese companies and other eligible participants. Such financing may help address the upfront costs of introducing low-carbon equipment and infrastructure.

4. Strengthening carbon-market credibility

Clear methodologies, independent verification, project registration and credit tracking can help improve confidence in the quality and traceability of mitigation outcomes.

5. Promoting sustainable development

Projects may also deliver benefits such as lower air pollution, more efficient energy use, improved industrial productivity and the development of technical skills, depending on the technology and project design.

Potential Areas of Application

The precise portfolio of projects will depend on project proposals, approved methodologies, investment decisions and government procedures. Potential areas for low-carbon cooperation include:

- Renewable energy and associated infrastructure.
- Industrial energy-efficiency improvements.
- Energy-efficient equipment and technologies.
- Low-carbon manufacturing and industrial processes.
- Cleaner transport and mobility solutions.
- Waste management and other eligible emission-reduction activities.

These are potential application areas, not a confirmed list of projects approved under the India–Japan JCM.

Overall Significance

The launch of the India–Japan JCM Operational Manual represents an important step in translating bilateral

climate commitments into practical implementation. By establishing procedures for project development, verification, registration and carbon-credit management, the two countries have strengthened the operational foundation of their climate cooperation.

Google's Data Centre Project in Andhra Pradesh Raises Environmental Concerns



Why in the News?

Google's proposed mega data centre project in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, has drawn attention because of concerns over forest clearance, land allocation, water availability and the environmental consequences of expanding artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure. The project is part of Google's planned investment of approximately US$15 billion in India, announced in October 2025, to develop large-scale AI and data centre infrastructure.

About the Google Data Centre Project

The proposed project is located in the Visakhapatnam region of Andhra Pradesh. According to reports, the development covers more than 500 acres across three locations: Tarluvada, Adavivaram–Mudasarlova and Rambilli.

The Andhra Pradesh government cleared the project in October 2025. The proposed facility is intended to support cloud computing, AI applications and other digital services that require substantial computing capacity.

A data centre is a specialised facility that houses computer servers, storage systems and networking equipment. These facilities process and store information used by services such as search engines, online banking, video streaming, cloud platforms and generative AI tools.

With the rapid growth of AI, data centres have become strategically important infrastructure. However, large facilities also require dependable electricity, cooling systems, land and supporting infrastructure. Consequently, their location and resource requirements have become important environmental and public-policy considerations.

Land Allocation and Forest-Clearance Concerns

According to reports highlights allegations that approximately 160 acres of forested land were being cleared for the project and that hilly terrain was being cut and levelled. It also refers to the allocation of around 586 acres across three villages.

These figures should be understood in their respective contexts: the 160-acre figure relates to the reported clearing concern, while the 586-acre figure refers to the broader land allocation described in the report. They should not automatically be interpreted as the total area of forest being cleared.

Environmental concerns have also focused on the project's proximity to the Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary and other ecologically sensitive areas. Activists fear that changes in land use could affect wildlife habitats, vegetation, drainage patterns and local biodiversity. Legal challenges and objections to environmental approvals have added to the scrutiny surrounding the development.

Water Consumption and the Impact on Local Communities

Water availability is one of the most significant concerns associated with large data centres. Servers generate heat during operation and require effective cooling to maintain performance and prevent overheating. Depending on the cooling technology, local climate and facility design, cooling can involve substantial quantities of water.

The proposed Google facility has attracted particular scrutiny because Visakhapatnam already faces pressure on its water resources. Reuters reported in August 2026 that the city's daily water demand exceeded available

supply by approximately 70 million litres, highlighting the sensitivity of the issue.

Google has stated that the proposed facility will use air-based cooling systems rather than relying on water for conventional server cooling, alongside other sustainability measures. This commitment is relevant because air-based systems can reduce direct water use for cooling. However, their overall environmental performance also depends on electricity consumption, local temperatures, equipment efficiency and the design of the complete facility.

A further distinction is necessary between the water used directly at a data centre and the water used indirectly to generate the electricity it consumes. Even if a facility minimises on-site water use, the electricity supply may have its own water footprint, depending on the energy sources involved.

The project therefore requires transparent information about projected water demand, the sources of water for construction and other activities, cooling technology, emergency requirements and safeguards against competition with household water supplies.

Energy Consumption and Carbon Emissions

Data centres are among the most electricity-intensive components of the modern digital economy. Their power requirements arise not only from servers but also from storage equipment, networking systems, cooling and backup infrastructure.

The International Energy Agency's report Energy and AI, published in April 2025, estimated that global data centre electricity consumption could rise from around 415 terawatt-hours (TWh) in 2024 to approximately 945 TWh by 2030 under its base-case scenario. This would make data centres a growing component of worldwide electricity demand.

For Andhra Pradesh, the proposed development could stimulate investment in electricity transmission, renewable energy and supporting infrastructure. At the same time, an inadequately planned increase in demand could place pressure on local grids and competing electricity users.

Economic Benefits and Employment Opportunities

Despite the environmental concerns, the project could provide significant economic opportunities for Andhra Pradesh.

Major data centre investments can contribute to:

- Capital investment: Construction of facilities, power infrastructure, fibre-optic networks and associated industrial services.
- Employment generation: Jobs in civil engineering, electrical systems, construction, equipment installation, cybersecurity and facility management.
- Digital infrastructure: Greater capacity for cloud computing, AI development and digital services.
- Local business opportunities: Contracts for construction, maintenance, transport, security and other support services.
- Technology development: Opportunities for Indian businesses and institutions to participate in the expanding AI ecosystem.

Google's project has been associated with an estimated US$15 billion investment and ambitious employment projections. However, the figures reported for employment vary according to whether they refer to construction jobs, permanent facility jobs or wider indirect economic effects. They should not be treated as interchangeable.

Global Experience: Data Centres and Water Scarcity in Indonesia

In Batam, Indonesia, residents have protested prolonged interruptions to household water supplies while data centre developments continue to expand. In October 2026, residents in the Nongsa area reported that some communities had been without reliable piped water for months. Local authorities have pointed to factors including drought and constraints on water infrastructure, while residents have questioned whether industrial development is receiving priority over household needs. The precise contribution of data centre demand to individual supply disruptions remains a matter requiring careful assessment.

In response to these concerns, Batam's authorities have promoted Sea Water Reverse Osmosis (SWRO), a

desalination technology that converts seawater into usable freshwater, as a way for data centre developments to meet industrial water requirements without relying entirely on reservoirs serving the public. In September 2026, local authorities described plans to expand desalination capacity for industrial demand.

The Indonesian experience offers an important lesson for India: infrastructure planning must account for water availability before industrial expansion begins. Desalination can reduce pressure on freshwater resources, but it also requires energy, investment and responsible management of concentrated brine.

The goal should be to ensure that new digital infrastructure does not compromise access to safe and affordable water for local communities.

Government Response and the Need for Environmental Safeguards

The Andhra Pradesh government has supported the project as part of its strategy to attract large-scale technology investment and strengthen the state's digital infrastructure. The land-allocation process and environmental approvals have nevertheless faced scrutiny.

In October 2026, the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation reportedly informed the High Court that the detailed project report and land-allocation proposal had undergone due diligence and had been considered by the relevant state-level investment bodies. This indicates that administrative scrutiny has become an important part of the ongoing debate, although it does not, by itself, settle every environmental objection.

A comprehensive approach should include the following measures:

- Environmental impact assessment: Evaluate potential effects on forests, wildlife, groundwater, drainage and nearby settlements, with independent monitoring where appropriate.
- Transparent land records: Publicly disclose the nature of the land, the applicable permissions and the basis of allocation.
- Water-security planning: Establish a clear water budget and demonstrate that the project's requirements will not undermine essential household supplies.
- Clean and reliable electricity: Link the facility's expansion to adequate grid capacity and credible renewable-energy procurement.
- Community participation: Consult affected villages, disclose environmental monitoring results and provide accessible grievance-redress mechanisms.
- Accountability for economic benefits: Monitor actual employment, local procurement, skill development and public revenues against the commitments made during project approval.

These measures can help reduce conflict while giving investors greater regulatory certainty.

Policy Significance for India

- The debate is particularly important as India seeks to become a major global hub for AI, cloud computing and digital services. Large technology investments can strengthen digital infrastructure and economic competitiveness, but they also require careful planning of land, electricity, water and transport facilities.
- The International Energy Agency's 2026 analysis, Key Questions on Energy and AI, updates its outlook using newer data. It estimates that global data centre electricity consumption rose to approximately 485 TWh in 2025 and could reach around 950 TWh by 2030 under its central projection. The agency also emphasises that the rapid growth of AI infrastructure creates challenges for electricity affordability, energy security and infrastructure planning.
- For India, this underlines the importance of evaluating data centre proposals on more than the promised investment amount. Approvals should also consider local resource availability, infrastructure costs, environmental sensitivity and the measurable benefits delivered to surrounding communities.

- A well-designed data centre policy could encourage energy-efficient computing, renewable electricity, responsible water management, reuse of suitable treated wastewater and transparent environmental reporting. It could also encourage developers to locate facilities where supporting infrastructure can be provided without placing excessive pressure on vulnerable communities.

PETA India Urges Centre To Withdraw Draft Animal Experimentation Rules, Warns Of Weaker Safeguards



Why in the News?

Animal rights organisation People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India, on 19 October 2026, called for the immediate withdrawal of the Centre's draft Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Control and Supervision of Experiment, Breeding and Trading of Laboratory Animals) Rules, 2026. The organisation alleged that the proposed rules could dilute existing animal welfare safeguards, permit certain experiments involving protected wildlife and community animals, and reduce independent central oversight of laboratory research.

About PETA India

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is an international animal rights organisation founded in 1980. PETA India was established in 2000 and campaigns against animal cruelty in areas such as scientific experimentation, food production, clothing and entertainment.

The organisation advocates the replacement of animal experiments with alternative scientific methods wherever feasible. It argues that research regulations should ensure that animals are not subjected to unnecessary pain and suffering and that independent monitoring mechanisms remain effective.

About the Draft Rules, 2026

The draft rules concern the breeding, supply, trading and use of laboratory animals for scientific experiments. They are intended to establish a regulatory framework governing animal experimentation and the institutions involved in it.

The proposed framework is associated with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, which provides the broader legal basis for preventing unnecessary pain and suffering to animals in India.

The draft was published by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying on 6 October 2026, as notification G.S.R. 864(E), for public objections and suggestions. It proposes replacing the existing 1998 rules governing the breeding of and experiments on animals.

Major Concerns Raised by PETA India

1. Use of Protected Wildlife in Experiments

PETA India has raised concerns that provisions in the draft could permit the capture and use of certain wild animals protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, for laboratory experiments, subject to scientific justification and the required legal permissions.

The organisation has also questioned exemptions relating to endangered species and the treatment of wild animals that are injured or become unwell during or after capture. According to PETA India, these provisions could create gaps in the protection of wildlife.

2. Possible Use of Community Dogs and Cats

The draft has also attracted criticism over exemptions that, according to PETA India, could permit experiments involving stray dogs and cats under specified circumstances.

Community animals are particularly vulnerable because they do not necessarily have individual owners to

monitor their treatment or represent their interests. PETA India has argued that regulations should provide clear safeguards to prevent such animals from being captured and used for laboratory research.

3. Experiments Involving Severe Pain and Suffering

Another major concern relates to the classification and regulation of experiments according to the degree of pain, distress and suffering involved.

PETA India has highlighted examples listed in the draft, including:

- Inescapable electric shocks.
- Prolonged isolation of social animals, including dogs and monkeys.
- Certain experiments involving induced tumours.
- Toxicity tests in which the death of the animal is an endpoint.

The organisation argues that although the draft prohibits prolonged severe suffering that cannot be alleviated, it does not eliminate all experiments involving severe suffering.

4. Reduction in Central Oversight

The proposed changes to the approval mechanism constitute another major point of disagreement.

PETA India has alleged that institutional ethics committees could approve experiments classified as mild or moderate on larger animals, including dogs, horses, pigs and cattle, without obtaining prior approval from the central Committee for Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CCSEA).

The organisation has also expressed concern about provisions that could allow certain experiments involving smaller animals, including rabbits, to proceed without central review based on the proposed classification framework.

According to PETA India, these changes could reduce independent scrutiny of laboratory activities and make it more difficult to ensure uniform animal welfare standards across research institutions.

5. Inspections and Animal Welfare Safeguards

PETA India has also questioned provisions concerning advance notice of inspections at animal research facilities. It argues that prior notification could reduce the effectiveness of inspections by giving facilities time to prepare for scrutiny.

The organisation has further raised concerns about safeguards relating to mandatory anaesthesia, rehabilitation of animals after experiments and provisions concerning euthanasia.

These issues have renewed the debate over whether regulatory systems should prioritise institutional procedures alone or also ensure effective, independent monitoring of the actual treatment of animals.

Alternatives to Animal Experimentation

PETA India has called for greater investment in scientifically advanced non-animal research methods. Advances in biotechnology, computational science and human-cell-based research have created additional ways to investigate diseases, study biological processes and assess the potential toxicity of substances.

Important alternatives include:

- Organ-on-chip technology: Uses engineered systems that reproduce selected functions of human organs, helping researchers investigate disease processes and responses to drugs.
- Human cell and tissue cultures: Allow researchers to study cellular mechanisms, biological responses and certain toxic effects using human-derived material.
- Computer modelling and simulation: Uses computational methods to predict biological interactions, drug behaviour and potential toxicity.
- Three-dimensional tissue models: Reproduce certain features of human tissues more realistically than conventional two-dimensional cell cultures.
- Advanced in-vitro testing: Uses laboratory-based biological systems to assess specific effects without conducting the corresponding test on a living animal.

These technologies may improve the relevance of some research findings to human biology and reduce reliance on animal experiments. However, their suitability depends on the scientific question, and different

methods require appropriate validation before being used for regulatory or research decisions.

India has already taken steps towards replacing animal testing in selected fields, including restrictions on animal testing for cosmetics and the replacement of animal experiments in certain undergraduate medical, dental and pharmacy teaching activities with alternative methods.

The Way Forward

The controversy over the draft rules presents several important policy considerations.

1. Strengthen animal welfare safeguards: Regulations should clearly define the circumstances in which experiments may be conducted and establish enforceable protections against unnecessary pain and suffering.
2. Maintain independent oversight: The respective responsibilities of central authorities and institutional ethics committees should be clearly defined, with appropriate review requirements for experiments involving substantial welfare risks.
3. Protect wildlife and community animals: Any exceptions involving protected species or free-ranging animals should be clearly specified and consistent with applicable legislation.
4. Improve inspection and compliance: Monitoring mechanisms should be designed to identify violations effectively, supported by transparent reporting and appropriate enforcement measures.
5. Promote alternatives to animal testing: Research institutions, universities and industry should be encouraged to develop, validate and adopt non-animal testing methods where scientifically suitable.
6. Ensure transparent public consultation: Scientific experts, animal welfare organisations, research institutions and other stakeholders should have opportunities to examine the proposed provisions and submit evidence-based recommendations before the final rules are notified.

Kolamarka and Tansa Wildlife Sanctuaries



Why in the News?

The Maharashtra State Board for Wildlife, during its 26th meeting held on 26 October 2026 under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, approved several important proposals aimed at strengthening wildlife and biodiversity conservation in the state.

The major decisions include:

- Approval to declare the Kolamarka Conservation Reserve in Gadchiroli district as a Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Approval for the expansion of the Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Approval of 14 new Conservation Reserve proposals across seven districts of Maharashtra.
- Approval of proposals to designate parts of Koka Wildlife Sanctuary and Jayakwadi Bird Sanctuary as Critical Wildlife Habitats.

These decisions are intended to strengthen habitat protection, conserve endangered wildlife species, improve ecological connectivity and promote long-term biodiversity conservation.

About Kolamarka Wildlife Sanctuary

The Kolamarka Conservation Reserve is located in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra and is particularly important for the conservation of the endangered Asiatic Wild Buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*).

The Maharashtra State Board for Wildlife approved the proposal to upgrade Kolamarka Conservation Reserve into a Wildlife Sanctuary.

Key Features:

1. **Location:** Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra.

2. **Ecological importance:** The area provides an important natural habitat for the Asiatic Wild Buffalo.
3. **Biodiversity:** Apart from wild buffaloes, the region supports other wildlife species, including deer, gaur, leopards and several bird species.
4. **Geographical significance:** The region is associated with the Indravati and Pranhita river landscapes and forms part of an important forest ecosystem in eastern Maharashtra.

Importance of the Asiatic Wild Buffalo

The Asiatic Wild Buffalo is one of the largest wild bovines in the world and is classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.

Its natural distribution includes parts of India and Southeast Asia, although its population has declined considerably due to habitat fragmentation, hunting, disease transmission from domestic cattle and human-wildlife conflict.

The species is particularly important for maintaining ecological balance because large herbivores influence vegetation patterns, seed dispersal and the functioning of forest ecosystems.

The protection of Kolamarka is therefore significant for conserving the remaining natural habitat of this threatened species.

Expansion of Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary

The Maharashtra State Board for Wildlife also approved the proposal to expand Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary by incorporating additional land adjoining the existing protected area.

The expansion involves the inclusion of approximately 588.767 hectares of revenue and private land belonging to six villages.

The six villages are:

1. Ogda
2. Khodde
3. Tirmal
4. Pachghar
5. Phansad
6. Amle

Objective of the Expansion

The primary objective is to consolidate the protected landscape and make the sanctuary free from human habitation through the relevant administrative and rehabilitation processes.

The expansion is expected to:

- Strengthen the protection of wildlife habitats.
- Improve the continuity of forest ecosystems.
- Reduce human interference in sensitive wildlife areas.
- Facilitate better management of forest and water resources.
- Support the conservation of biodiversity in the Tansa region.

About Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary

Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in Maharashtra's Thane region and forms part of an ecologically important forest landscape in the northern Western Ghats.

The sanctuary is associated with the catchment areas of important water reservoirs, including Tansa, which contributes to the water supply system of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

The region supports diverse flora and fauna and is important for maintaining ecological stability, protecting forest cover and conserving water resources.

Its forests also contribute to soil conservation, groundwater recharge and the maintenance of local climatic conditions.

Approval of 14 New Conservation Reserves Across Seven Districts

One of the major decisions taken during the meeting was the approval of proposals for establishing 14 Conservation Reserves across seven districts of Maharashtra.

These proposed reserves cover forest landscapes, biodiversity-rich areas and ecologically significant regions.

The seven districts are:

- Pune
- Raigad
- Nashik
- Nandurbar
- Thane

- Palghar
- Chandrapur

List of the 14 Proposed Conservation Reserves

District	Proposed Conservation Reserves
Pune and Raigad	Velhe-Mulshi, Lonavala
Pune	Bhor-Girgad
Nashik	Dindori, Surgana, Taharabad
Nandurbar	Chinchpada
Raigad	Alibag, Ghera Manikgad
Thane	Ghumtara
Palghar	Jawhar, Asherigad, Dhamani
Chandrapur	Ekara

These proposals are expected to strengthen the protection of local biodiversity and promote the conservation of natural habitats beyond the existing network of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

Importance of the New Conservation Reserves

1. Protection of Biodiversity

The proposed conservation reserves will help protect different ecosystems, including forests, grasslands, hills and other natural habitats. They can provide protection to numerous plant and animal species.

2. Ecological Connectivity

Many conservation reserves are important because they help connect fragmented forest landscapes and existing protected areas.

Wildlife corridors enable animals to move between habitats in search of food, water, shelter and breeding grounds. Such connectivity is particularly important for large mammals.

3. Protection of Local Ecosystems

The proposed reserves will contribute to the conservation of natural vegetation, water bodies, soil resources and ecological processes.

4. Community Participation

Conservation reserves provide opportunities for involving local communities in biodiversity conservation and natural resource management.

5. Strengthening the Protected Area Network

The creation of additional conservation reserves will expand Maharashtra's protected-area network and complement existing national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and other conservation areas

Governance

Telecom Consumer Protection (Thirteenth Amendment) Regulation, 2026



Why in the News?

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) released the Telecom Consumers Protection (Thirteenth Amendment) Regulations, 2026 in September 2026 to expand the availability of affordable Voice-and-SMS-only Special Tariff Vouchers (STVs).

The amendment seeks to address the limited availability of shorter-duration voice-and-SMS-only recharge options, particularly for consumers who do not require mobile data. TRAI noted that existing Voice-and-SMS-only STVs were largely concentrated around longer validity periods, creating a relatively high upfront payment requirement for some consumers.

The final regulations followed a consultation process that began with a draft released on 7 April 2026. TRAI received 1,132 stakeholder responses and subsequently held an Open House Discussion (OHD) on 15 June 2026 before finalising the amendment.

Background

TRAI had earlier introduced the Telecom Consumers Protection (Twelfth Amendment) Regulations, 2024, under which every telecom service provider was required to offer at least one Special Tariff Voucher

exclusively for Voice and SMS, with a validity period of up to 365 days.

However, TRAI subsequently observed that telecom service providers were offering only a limited number of such vouchers, primarily with longer validities such as 80/84 days and 336/365 days. Shorter-duration options were not adequately available.

The regulator also observed that the initial pricing of some Voice-and-SMS-only vouchers did not reflect a sufficiently proportional reduction despite the removal of data benefits. The new amendment therefore seeks to improve both availability and affordability of such plans.

Key Provisions of the Amendment

The 2026 amendment requires telecom service providers to offer Voice-and-SMS-only STVs with an appropriate reduction in tariff in the following categories:

1. Shorter-Validity STVs

For every validity period of 30 days or less for which a telecom operator offers a bundled STV containing Voice, SMS and data, it must also offer a corresponding Voice-and-SMS-only STV.

This provision is intended to ensure that consumers who do not need data are not restricted to longer-duration recharge options.

2. Monthly Renewable STV

Telecom service providers must also offer at least one Voice-and-SMS-only STV that can be renewed on the same date every month.

If that date does not exist in a particular month, renewal will take place on the last date of that month.

This provision provides consumers with a monthly recharge option instead of requiring them to make a relatively large upfront payment for longer-validity plans.

3. Longer-Validity STV

The amendment also requires at least one Voice-and-SMS-only STV with a validity longer than the shorter and monthly options, corresponding to a longer-validity STV offered with Voice, SMS and data.

Thus, the framework provides options across shorter, monthly and longer validity periods.

4. Proportional Reduction in Tariff

The Voice-and-SMS-only STVs are required to have an appropriate reduction in tariff compared with corresponding Voice, SMS and data STVs.

The underlying rationale is that consumers should not have to pay essentially the same tariff when the data component of a bundled service is excluded. TRAI's consultation material specifically highlighted the need for a largely proportional reduction in tariff.

Target Beneficiaries

The amendment is particularly relevant for consumers who primarily use mobile services for voice calls and SMS and have limited or no requirement for mobile data.

Important beneficiary groups include:

- Low-income consumers
- Rural users
- Elderly consumers
- Feature-phone users
- Consumers who have access to alternative internet connectivity and therefore do not require mobile data
- Users seeking basic telecom connectivity without paying for unused data benefits

TRAI's explanatory material states that the earlier framework was intended to provide greater choice to groups such as elderly persons, low-income users and digitally less-active consumers.

Importance of the Amendment

The amendment seeks to strengthen consumer choice, affordability and flexibility in India's prepaid telecom market.

Under the earlier framework, a consumer who needed only voice and SMS could face a choice between relatively long-validity STVs or bundled plans containing data. The new framework creates more validity options and allows consumers to select a recharge period closer to their actual requirements.

It can also reduce the upfront financial burden for price-sensitive consumers because shorter-validity options require a smaller payment at one time.

Consultation Process

The amendment followed a detailed regulatory consultation.

- **7 April 2026:** TRAI released the draft Thirteenth Amendment.
- **28 April 2026:** The initial deadline for stakeholder comments.
- The deadline was subsequently extended during the consultation process.
- **15 June 2026:** TRAI conducted an Open House Discussion.
- 1,132 stakeholder responses were received.
- **September 2026:** TRAI finalised the amendment after considering stakeholder responses and its own analysis.
- **22 September 2026:** TRAI announced the final regulations.

The consultation also reflected differing stakeholder views. While consumer groups highlighted the need for more affordable and shorter-duration Voice-and-SMS-only plans, industry stakeholders raised concerns about prescribing specific tariff structures and validity requirements.

Legal and Regulatory Basis

The amendment modifies the Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012.

It is made by TRAI under the regulatory powers provided by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997, and substitutes the earlier provision concerning Voice-and-SMS-only STVs.

The regulations provide that they will come into force 30 days after their publication in the Official Gazette.

Difference Between the 12th and 13th Amendments

Aspect	**12th Amendment, 2024**	**13th Amendment, 2026**
Voice & SMS-only STV	At least one required	Wider range of such STVs required
Validity	Up to 365 days	Shorter, monthly and longer options
Short-duration options	Not specifically ensured	Required for bundled STV validities of 30 days or less
Monthly renewal	Not specifically mandated	At least one monthly-renewable option
Tariff approach	General requirement	Appropriate/ largely proportional reduction compared with bundled plans
Main focus	Basic availability	Availability, affordability and greater consumer choice

Five Years of PM GatiShakti: Transforming India's Infrastructure Planning



Why in the News?

The PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (PMGS-NMP), launched on 13 October 2021, completed five years on 13 October 2026. On this occasion, the initiative's progress highlighted the expansion of integrated, technology-driven infrastructure planning across India.

The Union Cabinet had approved the establishment of the Integrated Transport & Logistics Authority (ITLA) on 6 October 2026. The proposed authority will undertake technical appraisal of Central Government infrastructure projects costing ₹500 crore or more, coordinate transport planning across sectors, and monitor implementation and post-completion outcomes. Financial appraisal will continue under existing mechanisms.

About PM GatiShakti National Master Plan

PM GatiShakti is a national, GIS-based digital planning framework designed to integrate infrastructure

networks and improve coordination among ministries, departments, states and Union Territories.

Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 13 October 2021, the initiative seeks to move infrastructure planning away from fragmented, department-specific decision-making towards a coordinated, data-driven and whole-of-government approach.

As reported by the Press Information Bureau on 12 October 2026, the framework covers 58 Central Ministries and Departments and all 36 States and Union Territories. Its digital platform had integrated more than 23,493 data layers as of 12 October 2026.

Objectives of PM GatiShakti

The principal objectives of PM GatiShakti are:

1. **Integrated infrastructure development:** To coordinate the planning of roads, railways, ports, airports, waterways and other infrastructure networks.
2. **Improved multimodal connectivity:** To facilitate the movement of passengers and goods across different modes of transport without unnecessary delays or duplication.
3. **Last-mile connectivity:** To connect industrial clusters, agricultural regions, economic zones, logistics facilities and remote areas with major transport networks.
4. **Reduction in logistics inefficiencies:** To improve freight movement, supply-chain coordination and the utilisation of existing infrastructure.
5. **Data-driven decision-making:** To use geospatial mapping and integrated datasets for route selection, site assessment and infrastructure planning.
6. **Better coordination among departments:** To minimise planning conflicts, duplication of work and delays arising from the lack of interdepartmental coordination.
7. **Sustainable infrastructure development:** To support better route alignment, reduce avoidable environmental impacts and improve the efficient use of land and other resources.

Seven Infrastructure Engines

PM GatiShakti identifies seven infrastructure engines that form the core of its integrated planning approach:

- **Roads:** National highways, expressways and other road networks.
- **Railways:** Railway lines, freight corridors and rail connectivity to economic centres.
- **Ports:** Port infrastructure and connectivity with industrial and commercial areas.
- **Waterways:** Inland waterways and related transport infrastructure.
- **Airports:** Airport development and connectivity to regional and economic centres.
- **Mass Transport:** Urban and other mass-transit systems.
- **Logistics Infrastructure:** Multimodal logistics parks, warehousing facilities and freight-handling infrastructure.

The integration of these seven engines is intended to ensure that transport infrastructure is planned as an interconnected network rather than as a collection of independent projects.

Key Features of PM GatiShakti

1. GIS-Based Digital Platform

The National Master Plan uses a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based platform to display infrastructure assets, geographical features, economic zones and other relevant information on a common map.

This enables planners to examine the relationship between proposed infrastructure and existing networks before finalising project alignments or locations.

2. Whole-of-Government Approach

PM GatiShakti facilitates coordination among Central Ministries, Departments, States and Union Territories. It enables infrastructure proposals to be examined from the perspective of their links with other sectors, helping improve the consistency of planning decisions.

3. Multimodal Connectivity

The initiative promotes coordination between road, rail, port, airport and waterway networks. Better integration can facilitate the transfer of goods between different modes of transport and improve access to markets and industrial centres.

4. Data Layers and Digital Tools

The platform incorporates geospatial datasets covering infrastructure, land, economic activity and other planning-related information. According to the PIB update of 12 October 2026, it contained more than 23,493 data layers.

The platform supports activities such as identifying missing links, analysing connectivity, evaluating potential project locations and examining possible environmental or land-use constraints.

5. Public Access to Selected Data

The PM GatiShakti Public platform, launched in October 2025, broadened access to selected, non-sensitive infrastructure and geospatial datasets.

As of October 2026, the public platform provided access to 230 approved datasets. It can support site-suitability analysis, connectivity mapping, alignment planning and compliance checks by eligible users.

6. Integration with Existing Infrastructure Schemes

PM GatiShakti provides a common planning framework for infrastructure initiatives such as Bharatmala, Sagarmala, inland waterways development, dry and land ports, and UDAN.

It does not replace the individual schemes, their budgets or their implementing agencies. Instead, it helps align their infrastructure plans and connectivity requirements.

Progress and Achievements

PM GatiShakti has expanded considerably since its launch in 2021.

According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's PIB release dated 11 August 2026:

- **Projects evaluated:** 396 infrastructure projects.
- **Total estimated project cost:** Approximately ₹18.66 lakh crore.
- **Projects sanctioned:** 256.
- **Projects under implementation:** 198.

These figures reflect the status reported as of August 2026 and should not be interpreted as final outcomes or completed projects.

The platform has also expanded across ministries and states, while the integration of geospatial data has strengthened the capacity to identify infrastructure gaps and assess connectivity requirements.

The government has reported improvements in logistics efficiency, turnaround times and infrastructure coordination through a wider set of initiatives, including PM GatiShakti and the National Logistics Policy.

A DPIIT assessment conducted in 2025 in collaboration with the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) estimated India's logistics costs at 7.9% of GDP. This is an economy-wide estimate and should not be interpreted as a reduction attributable solely to PM GatiShakti.

Integrated Transport & Logistics Authority (ITLA)

Background

The Union Cabinet approved the establishment of ITLA on 6 October 2026 as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). Its creation addresses the need for stronger coordination across transport-related ministries and agencies, particularly in long-term planning, project appraisal and monitoring.

Major Functions of ITLA

1. National Transport Master Plan: ITLA will prepare a comprehensive National Transport Master Plan with a planning horizon of ten years or more, covering roads, railways, ports and shipping, civil aviation, inland waterways, coastal shipping, urban mobility and logistics.

2. Appraisal of Major Projects: It will undertake technical appraisal of Central Government infrastructure projects costing ₹500 crore or more. Financial appraisal will remain with the existing financial appraisal mechanisms.

3. Integrated Sectoral Planning: It will assess short-term sectoral plans, generally covering around five years, and annual plans of transport ministries to ensure consistency with the long-term national plan.

4. Project Monitoring: It will monitor the implementation of major projects, facilitate coordinated resolution of issues and assess their impact after completion.

5. National Transport Data Repository (NTDR): ITLA will develop a unified repository by integrating relevant information from sources such as FASTag, VAHAN, GSTN

e-way bills, GPS-based systems and urban traffic management systems.

6. Research and Policy Support: It will support research, innovation, data analytics and capacity building in the transport and logistics sectors. It will also assist in reviewing and updating the National Logistics Policy, 2022.

Challenges and the Way Forward

- Despite progress in digital integration, the effectiveness of PM GatiShakti depends on the quality and regular updating of data, coordination between institutions, and the ability of implementing agencies to translate planning decisions into completed infrastructure.
- Differences in administrative capacity across states, land acquisition requirements, statutory clearances, environmental considerations and funding constraints can continue to affect project timelines.
- To strengthen implementation, authorities need to maintain accurate and interoperable datasets, ensure timely interdepartmental coordination, monitor measurable project outcomes and incorporate environmental and social considerations from the planning stage.

Union Cabinet approved the continuation of the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)



Why in the News?

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the continuation of the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) for five years, from Financial Year (FY) 2026–27 to FY 2030–31, with a total financial outlay of ₹53,428 crore. The decision was announced on 14 October 2026.

Along with extending the programme, the Cabinet approved its renaming as the Pradhan Mantri Samajik Sahayata Yojana, changes to the eligibility criteria and financial assistance under the disability pension component, and the continuation of the old-age pension, widow pension and family benefit schemes in their existing form. The approval is intended to strengthen social security for vulnerable sections of society across India.

About the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)

The National Social Assistance Programme is a centrally sponsored social welfare initiative administered by the Department of Rural Development under the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. It provides financial assistance to eligible vulnerable individuals and families, particularly those experiencing economic hardship.

The programme was launched on 15 August 1995 to provide social assistance to poor households and support the government's responsibility under Article 41 of the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution of India. Its framework seeks to provide a basic level of social security to eligible elderly persons, widows, persons with disabilities and families facing the loss of their primary breadwinner.

Objectives of the Scheme

The main objectives of the programme are:

- To provide financial assistance to eligible people belonging to economically vulnerable sections of society.
- To offer basic social security to elderly persons, widows and persons with disabilities.
- To provide financial support to eligible families following the death of their primary breadwinner.

- To strengthen the social welfare framework and reduce the financial insecurity faced by disadvantaged households.
- To ensure that eligible beneficiaries across States and Union Territories can access assistance under a common national framework.

Key Changes Approved by the Union Cabinet

The Cabinet's decision includes four major components: continuation of the programme, renaming of the schemes, revision of disability pension provisions, and continuation of existing assistance for elderly persons, widows and eligible families.

1. New Names of the Schemes

Existing scheme	Newly approved name
National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)	Pradhan Mantri Samajik Sahayata Yojana
Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)	Pradhan Mantri Vridhavastha Pension Yojana
Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS)	Pradhan Mantri Vidhawa Pension Yojana
Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS)	Pradhan Mantri Divyangjan Pension Yojana
National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)	Pradhan Mantri Parivar Labh Yojana

These approved names reflect the restructuring and renaming of the programme and its constituent schemes. The changes in names are accompanied by specific revisions to the disability pension component, while the old-age and widow pension schemes and the family benefit scheme continue in their existing form.

2. Revised Disability Pension Provisions

One of the most significant changes concerns the Pradhan Mantri Divyangjan Pension Yojana, which aims to extend financial assistance to eligible persons with disabilities.

Monthly central assistance under the revised disability pension provisions

Age	Per month
0–79 years	₹375
80 years and above	₹625

Lower disability threshold

The benchmark disability requirement has been reduced from 80% to 40%.

Removal of the minimum age criterion

Eligibility for disability pension will begin from birth, subject to the applicable scheme conditions.

The revised provisions are intended to broaden coverage and enable more persons with disabilities to receive financial assistance. The Cabinet decision also provides for revised guidelines covering eligibility, beneficiary numbers and assistance rates to be issued and implemented within three months.

3. Continuation of Old-Age and Widow Pensions

The old-age and widow pension schemes will continue in their existing form under the Cabinet-approved decision. These components provide financial support to eligible elderly persons and widows who meet the applicable scheme conditions. Their continuation maintains the existing social assistance framework for these beneficiary groups while the disability pension provisions undergo revision.

4. Continuation of the National Family Benefit Scheme

The National Family Benefit Scheme, renamed the Pradhan Mantri Parivar Labh Yojana, will also continue in its existing form.

The scheme provides a one-time financial benefit to eligible households following the death of their primary breadwinner, helping families cope with the sudden loss of an important source of income.

Constitutional Significance

The programme is associated with Article 41 of the Directive Principles of State Policy under the Constitution of India.

Article 41 directs the State, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, to make effective provision for the right to work, education and public assistance in cases including unemployment, old age, sickness, disablement and other circumstances of undeserved want.

NSAP represents one of the Government of India's institutional mechanisms for providing public assistance to eligible vulnerable groups. Its continuation reflects the role of social welfare programmes in supporting income security and addressing the needs of disadvantaged households.

Supreme Court Declares Internet Access Fundamental Right For All Children



Why in the News?

A claim has emerged that the Supreme Court of India has explicitly recognised internet access as a fundamental right for every individual, including children irrespective of age. This issue concerns the intersection of digital rights, freedom of expression, access to education and the protection of children in an increasingly digital society.

Important legal clarification: The Supreme Court recognised the constitutional importance of internet access in its landmark Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India judgment in 2020. However, the broader claim that the Court has expressly declared internet access to be a fundamental right for every child, irrespective of age, needs to be verified against the specific judgment or order being referenced. The established legal position is that internet-based exercise of constitutionally protected rights receives constitutional protection; this is not necessarily the same as an unconditional, standalone right to internet service for every individual.

About the Supreme Court Judgment

The ruling was delivered on 15 October 2026 by a Bench comprising Justice J. B. Pardiwala and Justice K. Vinod Chandran in Just Rights for Children Alliance and Another v. S. Harish and Others. The decision is reported as 2026 INSC 1149.

The Court held that the right to access and use the internet is a fundamental right under Article 21 read with Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India. It explicitly stated that children enjoy the same rights irrespective of their age.

The judgment is significant because it moves beyond the earlier recognition of certain internet-based activities as constitutionally protected and expressly addresses internet access itself, including for children.

Constitutional Provisions Involved

Article 21: Right to Life and Personal Liberty

Article 21 states that no person shall be deprived of life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law.

The Supreme Court has interpreted this provision broadly to encompass the right to live with dignity and other conditions necessary for meaningful participation in society. In the digital age, access to online information, educational resources and public services can be closely connected to these interests.

Article 19(1)(a): Freedom of Speech and Expression

Article 19(1)(a) guarantees citizens the freedom of speech and expression. The internet provides a means of receiving information, communicating ideas, participating in public debate and expressing opinions.

The Court's ruling recognises the constitutional importance of this digital medium. The freedom remains subject to the reasonable restrictions permitted under Article 19(2).

Article 14: Equality Before the Law

Article 14 guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the laws. It provides an important constitutional context for ensuring that digital services and opportunities are not inaccessible to disadvantaged groups.

The judgment's broader discussion of digital inclusion highlights the importance of ensuring that children and vulnerable communities can participate in the digital environment.

Background of the Case

The case arose from proceedings concerning the circulation of child sexual exploitation and abuse material (CSEAM) on social media platforms and other online services.

The Supreme Court had previously issued directions in September 2024 concerning the identification, reporting and removal of such material. In subsequent proceedings, the Court examined compliance by online intermediaries and considered whether restricting children's access to the internet altogether would be an appropriate response to online risks.

In its order of 15 October 2026, the Court rejected blanket restrictions on children's internet access as a general child-safety solution. It emphasised that the responsibility for protecting children should focus on harmful content, those who produce or distribute it, and the platforms that fail to address it effectively.

Key Observations of the Supreme Court

1. No Blanket Ban on Children's Internet Access

The Court observed that children do not necessarily stop using the internet simply because access is prohibited. Instead, they may migrate to unregulated platforms and websites that expose them to greater risks.

It also noted that children who face online threats, grooming or exploitation may hesitate to seek help if they fear punishment for violating internet restrictions.

2. Children's Safety and Freedom Must Coexist

The Court emphasised that the protection of children and respect for their constitutional freedoms are compatible objectives. It held that safety measures should target harmful material and those responsible for it rather than treating children themselves as the problem.

3. Privacy Risks Associated with Age Verification

The Court raised concerns that extensive age-verification systems could require the continuous collection and monitoring of sensitive personal information. Such systems may create risks of surveillance, misuse of personal data and disproportionate interference with privacy.

4. Stronger Accountability for Online Platforms

The judgment emphasised the need for effective mechanisms to identify and remove child sexual exploitation and abuse material. It also addressed measures involving databases for identifying such content, prompt removal procedures, complaint handling and stronger accountability for online intermediaries.

Safeguards for Children in the Digital Environment

The Court did not suggest that children should have unrestricted access to every website, application or category of online content. Instead, it discussed proportionate, age-appropriate safeguards.

These include:

- Parental guidance and consent: Greater involvement of parents and guardians in children's use of social media.
- Default private accounts: Privacy settings that reduce the exposure of children's personal information.
- Restrictions on unknown contacts: Safeguards against unsolicited messages and contact from unknown adults.
- Child-friendly account settings: Dedicated child modes that limit exposure to inappropriate content and advertising.
- Content moderation: More effective identification and removal of harmful or exploitative material.
- Targeted restrictions: Appropriate limitations on inherently harmful services or content, including adult-content websites.

The Court left the detailed implementation of these safeguards to the Union Government, while emphasising that any restrictions must respect constitutional requirements.

Challenges and the Way Forward

Implementing the judgment will require cooperation between the government, online platforms, schools, parents and child-protection agencies.

First, the government must develop safeguards that protect children without imposing unnecessarily broad

restrictions on their access to information and educational resources.

Second, online intermediaries must improve their systems for detecting and removing exploitative content, responding to complaints and preventing the repeated circulation of illegal material.

Third, digital literacy and online-safety education should be strengthened so that children can recognise grooming, cyberbullying, fraudulent schemes and other online threats.

Finally, any age-verification or parental-control framework should incorporate privacy protections, minimise unnecessary data collection and provide effective safeguards against misuse.

Global Hunger Index 2026: India Ranks 100th Out of 122 Countries



Why in the News?

India has been ranked 100th among 122 countries in the 2026 Global Hunger Index (GHI), with a GHI score of 24.1, placing the country in the "serious" hunger category. The report, released on 14 October 2026, highlights the progress made by India in reducing hunger over the long term while drawing attention to persistent challenges related to child malnutrition, food insecurity and nutritional inequality.

India's score has improved from 37.0 in 2006 to 24.1 in 2026. However, the country continues to face significant challenges in ensuring that its population, particularly children and vulnerable communities, has access to adequate, nutritious and affordable food.

About the Global Hunger Index (GHI)

The Global Hunger Index is a peer-reviewed annual report that measures and tracks hunger at the global, regional and national levels. It aims to identify countries facing serious hunger challenges and encourage governments and international organisations to strengthen food security and nutrition policies.

The index is jointly published by Welthungerhilfe, the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV), and Helvetas.

The GHI uses a numerical score to assess the severity of hunger. A higher score indicates a more severe hunger situation, while a lower score reflects better outcomes across the indicators used in the index.

Hunger Severity Categories

The Global Hunger Index classifies hunger into the following categories:

- **Low:** Score below 10.0
- **Moderate:** Score from 10.0 to 19.9
- **Serious:** Score from 20.0 to 34.9
- **Alarming:** Score from 35.0 to 49.9
- **Extremely alarming:** Score of 50.0 or above

India's score of 24.1 places it in the serious category, indicating that hunger and undernutrition remain important public health and development concerns.

Four Indicators Used in the GHI

The Global Hunger Index is calculated using four key indicators that capture different dimensions of hunger and malnutrition.

1. Undernourishment

This indicator measures the proportion of the population whose habitual food consumption is insufficient to meet the dietary energy requirements needed for a normal, active and healthy life.

In India, approximately 9.8% of the population is undernourished according to the 2026 GHI data. This highlights the continuing challenge of ensuring adequate food access for all sections of society.

2. Child Stunting

Stunting refers to low height for age among children under five years. It is generally associated with chronic undernutrition, repeated infections and inadequate care during critical stages of growth and development.

In India, 29.3% of children under five are stunted. Although this represents a substantial improvement from 50.0% in 2000, nearly three in ten young children continue to experience impaired growth.

3. Child Wasting

Wasting refers to low weight for height and is commonly associated with acute undernutrition. It can result from insufficient food intake, illness or a combination of both. India's child-wasting rate stands at 19.0%, making it one of the most significant concerns highlighted by the index. Wasting increases children's vulnerability to illness and is associated with a greater risk of mortality.

4. Under-Five Mortality

This indicator measures the proportion of children who die before reaching five years of age. It reflects several underlying factors, including nutritional status, access to healthcare, sanitation, disease prevention and maternal health.

According to the 2026 GHI data, 2.7% of children in India die before their fifth birthday.

India's Performance in the Global Hunger Index

India has recorded a substantial reduction in its GHI score over the past two decades. The decline indicates progress in addressing hunger and improving certain nutrition-related outcomes, although the pace of improvement has varied over time.

Year	India's GHI score
2000	38.1
2006	37.0
2012	28.8
2018	25.8
2026	24.1

The figures show that India's GHI score declined by 12.9 points between 2006 and 2026. However, the relatively smaller improvement between 2018 and 2026 suggests that further progress will require sustained and targeted interventions.

The 2026 report also notes that the global hunger situation has deteriorated compared with 2018, interrupting the longer-term downward trend recorded since 2000.

Major Challenges Behind India's Hunger Situation

Despite improvements in food production and public food distribution, several structural challenges continue to affect India's nutrition outcomes.

1. Poverty and Unequal Access to Food

Household income strongly influences the ability to purchase diverse and nutritious foods. Low-income households may rely heavily on inexpensive staple foods while consuming inadequate quantities of protein, fruits, vegetables and other micronutrient-rich foods.

2. Child and Maternal Malnutrition

Maternal nutrition, infant feeding practices and healthcare during pregnancy and early childhood influence children's growth. Poor nutritional conditions during the first 1,000 days—from conception until a child's second birthday—can have long-term consequences for physical growth, cognitive development and learning.

3. Sanitation and Public Health

Unsafe drinking water, inadequate sanitation and repeated infections can reduce the body's ability to absorb nutrients. Consequently, food availability alone may not be sufficient to eliminate malnutrition.

4. Regional and Social Inequalities

Nutrition outcomes differ across states, districts and socioeconomic groups. Tribal communities, disadvantaged households and people living in remote areas may face additional barriers to accessing healthcare, nutritious food and social protection services.

5. Climate Change and Agricultural Vulnerability

Droughts, floods, heatwaves and irregular rainfall can affect agricultural productivity, food prices and household incomes. Climate-related disruptions may disproportionately affect small farmers and vulnerable rural households.

Government Initiatives to Address Hunger and Malnutrition

The Government of India has introduced several programmes to improve food security, maternal health and child nutrition.

1. National Food Security Act, 2013

The National Food Security Act provides a legal framework for subsidised foodgrains to eligible beneficiaries through the Targeted Public Distribution System. It also contains provisions relating to nutritional support for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children.

2. Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)

The programme provides free foodgrains to eligible beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act. The continuation of free foodgrain distribution for five years from 1 January 2024 was intended to strengthen household food security for approximately 81.35 crore beneficiaries.

3. Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0

This integrated nutrition programme supports children, pregnant women, lactating mothers and adolescent girls through nutrition services, supplementary nutrition and measures to strengthen early childhood care.

4. POSHAN Abhiyaan

POSHAN Abhiyaan seeks to improve nutrition outcomes through coordinated action, community participation, behavioural change and better monitoring of nutrition-related services.

5. PM POSHAN Scheme

The PM POSHAN Scheme provides cooked meals to eligible children in government and government-aided schools. It aims to improve children's nutritional status, support school attendance and reduce classroom hunger.

6. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

Anganwadi services play an important role in delivering supplementary nutrition, early childhood care, growth monitoring and nutrition education at the community level.

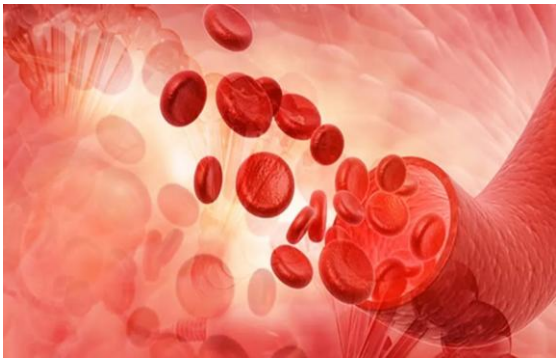
Together, these initiatives seek to address both immediate food insecurity and the underlying causes of malnutrition.

Way Forward

Improving India's position in the Global Hunger Index requires a comprehensive approach that combines food access, dietary diversity, healthcare, sanitation and social protection.

- **Strengthen maternal and child nutrition:** Improve antenatal care, breastfeeding support, complementary feeding and the identification and treatment of malnutrition.
- **Promote dietary diversity:** Encourage access to pulses, milk, eggs where culturally appropriate, fruits, vegetables and other nutrient-rich foods.
- **Improve implementation of nutrition schemes:** Strengthen monitoring, accountability and the delivery of food and nutrition services at the district and village levels.
- **Expand nutrition awareness:** Promote healthy dietary practices and community-based nutrition education.
- **Improve water, sanitation and hygiene:** Reduce infections that contribute to undernutrition and poor nutrient absorption.
- **Build climate-resilient agriculture:** Support sustainable farming, diversified crops, efficient storage and stronger local food supply chains.
- **Focus on vulnerable groups:** Prioritise children, pregnant women, lactating mothers, low-income households and communities with persistently poor nutrition outcomes.

AMB-7X7X7: Anemia Mukt Bharat Strategy



Why in the News?

The Government of India's renewed 7X7X7 Anemia Mukt Bharat (AMB) Abhiyaan strategy has brought fresh attention to preventive nutritional interventions,

particularly Double Fortified Salt (DFS), as an affordable and population-scale approach to addressing iron deficiency and anaemia.

The revised strategy expands the earlier 6X6X6 framework and places greater emphasis on screening, treatment, dietary diversification, community participation and digital tracking. In this context, Double Fortified Salt assumes importance because it can deliver two essential micronutrients—iron and iodine—through a food item consumed regularly by most households.

About Double Fortified Salt (DFS)

Double Fortified Salt is a type of edible salt fortified with two essential micronutrients:

1. Iron: Helps in the formation of haemoglobin, which carries oxygen throughout the body.
2. Iodine: Supports the production of thyroid hormones, which regulate growth, metabolism and brain development.

Ordinary iodised salt primarily addresses iodine deficiency, whereas DFS combines iodine and iron fortification in a single food product. This makes it a potential tool for tackling two important micronutrient deficiencies simultaneously.

Composition and FSSAI Standards

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has prescribed standards for the fortification of salt with iron and iodine under its Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations.

Component	Prescribed level
Iodine	15–30 ppm
Iron (as Fe)	850–1,100 ppm
Iron compounds	Ferrous sulphate or ferrous fumarate
Iodine compound	Potassium iodate

The fortification process is designed to maintain the stability of both micronutrients and ensure that the salt remains suitable for regular household consumption.

Why is Double Fortified Salt Important for India?

India faces a considerable burden of anaemia, particularly among vulnerable population groups.

According to the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), conducted during 2019–21:

- 67.1% of children aged 6–59 months were anaemic.
- 59.1% of adolescent girls aged 15–19 years were anaemic.
- 57.0% of women aged 15–49 years were anaemic.
- 52.2% of pregnant women aged 15–49 years were anaemic.

These figures highlight the importance of strengthening preventive nutritional interventions alongside screening and medical treatment.

An important data-related development is that the NFHS-6 (2023–24) fact sheets released in May 2026 do not include anaemia prevalence estimates. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has stated that it will use an independent Indian Council of Medical Research survey employing the gold-standard intravenous haemoglobin testing method for these estimates. Therefore, NFHS-5 remains the latest available comparable national baseline for these indicators.

Role of DFS in the 7X7X7 Anemia Mukt Bharat Strategy

The Government of India released the revised Anemia Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan Operational Guidelines on 29 June 2026, expanding the earlier 6X6X6 framework into a comprehensive 7X7X7 strategy.

The revised framework covers three major components:

1. Seven Beneficiary Groups

1. Children aged 6–59 months.
2. Children aged 5–9 years.
3. Adolescents aged 10–19 years.
4. Pregnant women.
5. Lactating mothers.
6. Women of reproductive age (20–49 years).
7. Low Birth Weight (LBW) babies aged 0–6 months.

2. Seven Key Interventions

1. Prophylactic Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) supplementation.
2. Testing for anaemia.
3. Therapeutic management of anaemia.

4. Deworming and delayed cord clamping.
5. Jan Bhagidari for awareness generation and improved compliance.
6. Addressing non-nutritional causes of anaemia.
7. Promoting locally available iron-rich foods and dietary diversification through the Eat Right approach.

3. Seven Institutional Mechanisms

1. Intra-ministerial coordination.
2. National Centre of Excellence and Advanced Research on Anemia.
3. National AMB Abhiyaan Unit.
4. Strengthening supply chain and logistics.
5. Convergence with other ministries.
6. Anemia Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan Portal.
7. Digital monitoring framework through the T4 approach.

Relevance of DFS: Although DFS is not separately listed as one of the seven interventions, it can complement the programme's broader objectives of dietary diversification and preventive nutrition. Its integration into suitable public nutrition and food distribution programmes could help extend micronutrient delivery beyond conventional supplementation.

Advantages of Double Fortified Salt

1. Population-Scale Nutritional Intervention

Salt is consumed regularly across different socioeconomic groups. Fortifying commonly consumed salt provides an opportunity to deliver iron and iodine through an existing dietary habit without requiring people to adopt an entirely new food product.

2. Cost-Effectiveness

DFS can be introduced through existing food distribution and nutrition delivery systems, potentially reducing additional distribution costs.

An earlier technical assessment published by FSSAI estimated the incremental manufacturing cost of DFS at approximately ₹2–4 per kilogram over ordinary iodised salt. This estimate is historical and should not be treated as a current retail price.

3. Addresses Two Micronutrient Deficiencies

The simultaneous delivery of iron and iodine offers a dual nutritional benefit.

- Iron supports haemoglobin formation and oxygen transportation.
- Iodine supports thyroid function and normal physical and cognitive development.

4. Complements Existing Government Programmes

DFS can potentially be distributed through established public delivery mechanisms, including:

- Public Distribution System (PDS).
- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS).
- School nutrition programmes.
- Government-supported maternal and child nutrition initiatives.

These platforms can help reach vulnerable households, particularly in rural, tribal and economically disadvantaged areas.

5. Supports Preventive Healthcare

Unlike interventions that begin after an individual is diagnosed with anaemia, food fortification can provide micronutrients as part of routine dietary consumption.

However, DFS should complement rather than replace IFA supplementation, anaemia screening and therapeutic treatment.

Scientific Evidence and Effectiveness of DFS

Research has demonstrated the potential of double fortified salt in improving iron status.

A systematic review and meta-analysis published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition examined studies involving double fortified salt in low- and middle-income countries.

Its findings indicated that:

- DFS increased haemoglobin concentrations in efficacy studies.
- The risk of anaemia was reduced by approximately 41%.
- The risk of iron deficiency anaemia was reduced by approximately 63%.

A randomised controlled trial conducted among 458 schoolchildren in rural southern India also found improvements in iron status following the consumption of DFS over ten months.

In the trial, anaemia prevalence declined:

- From 16.8% to 7.7% in one DFS group.
- From 15.1% to 5.0% in another DFS group.

These findings demonstrate the potential of DFS as a nutritional intervention. However, outcomes can vary depending on the fortification formulation, dietary patterns, consumption levels and implementation quality. Evidence from controlled efficacy studies should not automatically be interpreted as equivalent to nationwide programme impact.

History

100 Years of UPSC



Why in the News?

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) completed 100 years of its institutional journey on 1 October 2026, marking a century of evolution from the first Public Service Commission established during the colonial period to an independent constitutional body responsible for merit-based recruitment to key public services.

The centenary celebrations, which began on 1 October 2025, culminated at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 1 October 2026. The celebrations highlighted the Commission's continuing role in maintaining merit, fairness, transparency and public trust in public-service recruitment.

Historical Evolution

- **Beginning of Competitive Public Service**

The roots of India's modern civil-service recruitment system can be traced to the Indian Civil Service (ICS) examination introduced in 1855. It replaced the earlier system of nomination associated with the East India Company's patronage system with a system based on open competitive examination.

However, the examination was conducted in London and in English, which created substantial practical barriers for Indians seeking entry into the higher civil services.

The demand for greater Indian participation in administration gradually became an important constitutional and political issue.

- **Government of India Act, 1919**

The Government of India Act, 1919 provided for the establishment of a Public Service Commission in India. This was an important institutional step towards creating a more systematic mechanism for recruitment to public services.

The Lee Commission (1924) subsequently recommended the establishment of a Public Service Commission and played an important role in shaping the institutional framework that followed.

- **Establishment of Public Service Commission – 1926**

On 1 October 1926, India's first Public Service Commission was established.

It initially functioned as an advisory body, and its institutional independence was considerably more limited than that of the present-day UPSC. Nevertheless, its creation represented a significant shift towards institutionalising competitive recruitment to public services.

Thus, 1 October 1926 is regarded as the starting point of the UPSC's century-long institutional journey.

- **Federal Public Service Commission – 1937**

The Government of India Act, 1935 provided for a Federal Public Service Commission.

Accordingly, the Public Service Commission established in 1926 evolved into the Federal Public Service Commission in 1937.

This represented another stage in the gradual development of an institutionalised public-service recruitment system before Independence.

- **Union Public Service Commission – 1950**

With the adoption of the Constitution of India on 26 January 1950, the Federal Public Service Commission was transformed into the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

Unlike its colonial predecessor, the post-Independence Commission received a clear constitutional status and safeguards designed to protect its independence.

The Constitution placed Public Service Commissions within Part XIV, Chapter II, covering Articles 315 to 323.

Constitutional Status

UPSC is a **constitutional body**, unlike statutory bodies that derive their authority primarily from legislation.

Important Constitutional Articles

Article 315

Provides for a Public Service Commission for the Union and a Public Service Commission for each State. It also provides for the possibility of a Joint State Public Service Commission for two or more States.

Article 316

Deals with the appointment and tenure of the Chairman and Members of Public Service Commissions.

Article 317

Provides safeguards relating to the removal and suspension of the Chairman or Members.

Article 318

Deals with regulations concerning the conditions of service of members and staff.

Article 319

Places restrictions on the holding of certain offices by former members of Public Service Commissions.

Article 320

Specifies the functions of Public Service Commissions, including conducting examinations and providing advice on recruitment, appointments, promotions, transfers and disciplinary matters.

Article 321

Allows Parliament or a State Legislature to extend the functions of the respective Public Service Commission.

Article 322

Provides that the expenses of the Commission are charged on the Consolidated Fund of India, contributing to its institutional independence.

Article 323

Deals with the submission of annual reports by the Commission to the President or Governor, as applicable.

Major Functions of UPSC

UPSC performs functions extending beyond merely conducting the Civil Services Examination.

1. Conducting Competitive Examinations

The Commission conducts examinations for recruitment to various services of the Union Government.

Its examinations include, among others:

- Civil Services Examination
- Engineering Services Examination
- Combined Defence Services Examination
- National Defence Academy and Naval Academy Examination
- Combined Medical Services Examination
- Indian Forest Service Examination
- Indian Economic Service/Indian Statistical Service Examination

The Commission states that these examinations are conducted in accordance with government-notified rules through a just, fair and impartial process for merit-based selection to various Group A and Group B services.

2. Direct Recruitment through Selection

UPSC also undertakes direct recruitment through interviews and selection procedures for various government posts.

3. Recruitment Rules

The Commission is consulted on matters relating to the framing and amendment of Recruitment Rules for different services and posts.

4. Promotion and Deputation

UPSC has a role in matters concerning appointment through promotion, deputation and absorption, where consultation with the Commission is prescribed.

5. Disciplinary Matters

The Commission is consulted on specified disciplinary matters involving civil servants.

Article 320 specifically provides for consultation on disciplinary matters affecting persons serving the Union or State governments in a civil capacity.

6. Advisory Role

The Commission may also advise the Government on matters referred to it by the President.

Thus, UPSC's constitutional role covers the wider architecture of public-service recruitment and service administration rather than examination alone.

UPSC as an Institution of Administrative Continuity

India's governments and political leadership change through elections, but the permanent civil services provide continuity in administration.

UPSC contributes to this system by selecting personnel for several important public services through a structured recruitment process.

Civil servants recruited through these mechanisms subsequently work in areas such as:

- Policy implementation
- District administration
- Revenue administration
- Internal security
- Economic management
- Environmental governance
- Infrastructure development
- Social-sector programmes
- Defence-related services
- Foreign relations

Thus, the significance of UPSC extends beyond the examination hall to the functioning of the permanent administrative machinery of the Indian state.

Safeguards for Institutional Independence

The constitutional design provides several safeguards intended to protect Public Service Commissions from undue interference.

These include:

- **Constitutional Status**

UPSC derives its authority directly from the Constitution.

- **Security of Tenure**

The Constitution provides specific provisions concerning the appointment, tenure and removal of members.

- **Financial Independence**

The expenses of the Commission are charged upon the Consolidated Fund of India, providing an important financial safeguard.

- **Constitutional Reporting**

The Commission submits its annual report to the President, who places it before Parliament along with a memorandum explaining cases where the Commission's advice was not accepted.

These mechanisms strengthen institutional accountability while preserving functional independence.

UPSC in the Digital Age

The Commission's centenary has also coincided with significant technological changes in the examination system.

UPSC has increasingly incorporated digital processes into examination administration, recruitment and candidate services.

A major recent development has been the use of AI-based facial authentication. According to the Ministry of Personnel, a pilot was conducted during NDA & NA (II) and CDS (II) examinations in September 2025, followed by implementation on a larger scale during the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination on 24 May 2026, covering approximately 5.50 lakh candidates.

The system is intended to strengthen candidate authentication and examination integrity while reducing the possibility of impersonation.

The Commission's centenary discussions have also highlighted technology, transparency and trust as important themes for the future of public-service recruitment.

Pratibha Setu and Wider Talent Utilisation

Another contemporary initiative associated with the centenary period is UPSC Pratibha Setu, which seeks to connect candidates who reach the final stages of UPSC examinations but are not ultimately recommended for appointment with potential employment opportunities.

The initiative reflects a broader idea: competitive examinations generate a pool of candidates who have undergone a rigorous assessment process, and their capabilities can potentially be utilised beyond the limited number of vacancies available in a particular recruitment cycle.

This approach connects public recruitment with the wider objective of ensuring that assessed talent is not entirely lost from the national workforce.

UPSC Centenary Celebrations – 2025–26

The centenary year was formally launched on 1 October 2025 and continued until 1 October 2026.

A major Shatabdi Sammelan was held in November 2025 at Bharat Mandapam, bringing together present and former members of UPSC and State Public Service Commissions, senior officials, academics and other stakeholders.

The discussions focused on themes including:

- Merit and integrity in public recruitment
- Institutional independence
- Innovation in public-service selection
- Technology and examination reform
- Inclusivity
- Future-ready civil services
- Constitutional values

The final centenary programme in October 2026 included the release of a commemorative coin, postage stamp and a compilation titled "100 Landmark Judgements – Shaping the Policies of UPSC and Public Service Commissions in India."

International Relations

India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA)



Why in the News?

The India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is scheduled to enter into force on 20 October 2026, following the completion of domestic ratification procedures in both countries. The agreement was signed on 27 April 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, by India's Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, and New Zealand's Minister for Trade and Investment, Todd McClay.

The agreement aims to strengthen bilateral trade, expand market access, promote investment, and enhance cooperation in services and mobility. It provides zero-duty access to 100% of India's exports to New Zealand from the date it enters into force.

About the India–New Zealand FTA

A Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is a pact between two or more countries to reduce or eliminate customs duties and other trade barriers on goods and services. It aims to facilitate cross-border trade, investment, and economic cooperation.

The India–New Zealand FTA establishes a framework for closer economic engagement through tariff concessions, improved market access, investment facilitation, and provisions for services and professional mobility.

- Signing date: 27 April 2026
- Place of signing: Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi
- Entry into force: 20 October 2026
- Negotiations launched: March 2025
- Negotiations concluded: December 2025

The agreement was negotiated in approximately nine months, reflecting the two countries' efforts to deepen their economic partnership.

Key Features of the Agreement

1. Trade in Goods and Tariff Liberalisation

The agreement provides extensive tariff concessions to improve the competitiveness of goods traded between the two countries.

- Indian exports: New Zealand will provide duty-free access to 100% of Indian exports across all tariff lines from the date of implementation.
- Labour-intensive sectors: Textiles, apparel, leather, footwear, gems and jewellery,

engineering goods, and processed food products are among the sectors expected to benefit.

- New Zealand exports: India will reduce or eliminate tariffs on a large share of New Zealand's exports, with concessions phased in over time.
- Industrial inputs: Preferential access to inputs such as wood, coking coal, and metal waste and scrap is expected to support Indian manufacturing.

2. Protection of Sensitive Indian Sectors

India has retained protection for several sensitive sectors to safeguard domestic producers and agricultural interests.

Key exclusions include:

- Dairy products such as milk, cream, cheese, yoghurt, and whey.
- Selected agricultural products, including onions, chana, peas, corn, and almonds.
- Sugar and certain animal, vegetable, and microbial fats and oils.
- Arms and ammunition.

These exclusions are intended to maintain safeguards for sectors considered sensitive to increased import competition.

3. Investment Promotion

The agreement includes a commitment by New Zealand to facilitate USD 20 billion in investment into India over 15 years.

The proposed investment is intended to support industrial development, infrastructure, innovation, employment generation, and business opportunities, including for MSMEs and women-led enterprises.

4. Trade in Services and Professional Mobility

The FTA extends beyond trade in goods and includes provisions to improve cooperation in services and create opportunities for professionals, students, and young people.

Key areas include:

- Professional mobility: Improved pathways for skilled Indian professionals to access opportunities in New Zealand.
- Student mobility: Enhanced opportunities for Indian students, including provisions for post-study work pathways for eligible STEM graduates.
- Services trade: Greater opportunities in sectors such as healthcare, education, traditional medicine, and other professional services.
- Youth mobility: Provisions aimed at expanding opportunities for young people to gain international exposure and experience.

These measures are intended to strengthen people-to-people ties and support the exchange of skills and knowledge between the two countries.

5. Bilateral Trade Target

India and New Zealand have set an aspirational target of doubling bilateral trade in goods and services to NZ$7 billion (approximately ₹35,000 crore) by 2030.

The target is part of the broader India–New Zealand Strategic Partnership Roadmap to 2030, which seeks to expand economic engagement and strengthen cooperation across multiple sectors.

6. Benefits for Key Sectors

Sector	Potential benefits
Textiles and apparel	Duty-free access to the New Zealand market
Leather and footwear	Improved export competitiveness
Engineering goods	Reduced tariff barriers and expanded market access
Agriculture and food processing	Opportunities for eligible agricultural and processed food exports
MSMEs	Better access to international markets and investment opportunities
Education and services	Expanded cooperation and mobility pathways
Manufacturing	Access to selected industrial inputs at preferential rates

These are expected opportunities under the agreement; actual benefits will depend on demand, competitiveness, compliance with trade rules, and businesses' ability to access the market.

Strategic and Economic Significance

1. Diversification of Export Markets

The agreement can help Indian exporters expand their presence in New Zealand and diversify their export destinations. Improved market access may create opportunities for businesses seeking to reduce dependence on a limited number of overseas markets.

2. Boost to MSMEs and Employment

Small and medium-sized businesses operating in labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, leather, footwear, and food processing may benefit from reduced tariff barriers. Increased export opportunities could support production, entrepreneurship, and employment.

3. Strengthening Manufacturing Competitiveness

Preferential access to selected industrial inputs may help Indian manufacturers manage input costs and improve their competitiveness in international markets.

4. Strengthening Bilateral Relations

The FTA is part of a broader effort to deepen India–New Zealand relations through trade, investment, education, technology, and people-to-people exchanges.

5. Greater Economic Integration

The agreement provides a framework for expanding cooperation in goods, services, investment, and professional mobility, potentially supporting stronger economic links between the two countries.

Challenges and Limitations

Despite the opportunities created by the agreement, several factors may influence its implementation and outcomes.

- Competition for domestic industries: Increased access for New Zealand products could create competitive pressure on Indian producers in sectors receiving tariff concessions.
- Uneven distribution of benefits: Export-oriented industries may benefit more quickly than businesses with limited capacity to meet international standards or expand production.
- Non-tariff barriers: Compliance with product standards, certification requirements, and other regulations may remain a challenge for exporters.
- Implementation requirements: Businesses will need to understand the agreement's rules of origin, tariff schedules, and documentation requirements to access preferential treatment.
- Realisation of investment commitments: The proposed investment facilitation target will depend on actual investment decisions, project execution, and prevailing economic conditions.

The US-Denmark-Greenland Security Agreement



Why in the News?

The United States, Denmark and Greenland signed a new trilateral agreement at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, aimed at strengthening security in the Arctic and North Atlantic region. The agreement amends and supplements the 1951 U.S.–Denmark Defense Agreement on Greenland, bringing Greenland formally into the updated security framework.

The agreement comes amid growing strategic competition in the Arctic, increasing military activity in the High North and heightened geopolitical interest in Greenland because of its strategic location, Arctic sea routes, mineral resources and proximity to North America and Europe.

Importantly, the agreement does not transfer sovereignty over Greenland to the United States. It reaffirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Denmark while recognising the Greenlandic people's right to self-determination.

Background: 1951 Defense Agreement

The original 1951 Defense Agreement was concluded between the United States and Denmark on 27 April 1951, pursuant to the North Atlantic Treaty. It provided the legal basis for U.S. military activities and defence arrangements in Greenland during the Cold War. The treaty is registered with the United Nations as a bilateral agreement between Denmark and the United States.

The new 2026 agreement builds upon the 1951 arrangement as well as subsequent agreements, particularly the 2004 Igaliku Agreement, which expanded and updated the framework governing U.S. military activities in Greenland.

Key Features of the New Agreement

1. Expansion of U.S. Military Presence

The agreement permits the United States to modernise and expand activities at Pituffik Space Base, formerly known as Thule Air Base. It also provides for additional U.S. defence areas at Narsarsuaq and Mestersvig, subject to mutually agreed arrangements.

The agreement also allows for the possibility of establishing additional defence areas in Greenland through consultations among the parties.

2. Greater Military Access

The United States will have extensive rights of access and movement between defence areas through Greenland by land, air and sea.

U.S. military aircraft will be permitted to fly over and land in Greenland, while U.S. public vessels will receive access to Greenland's territorial waters, subject to the provisions agreed by the parties.

This provides Washington with greater operational flexibility for monitoring and responding to security developments in the Arctic.

3. Stronger NATO Role in the Arctic

The agreement explicitly supports greater NATO engagement in the Arctic, including:

- Defence planning
- Military presence
- Joint exercises
- Intelligence gathering
- Greater interoperability among NATO members

The Arctic is increasingly viewed as a strategically important theatre because melting sea ice is opening new maritime possibilities while Russia and other powers expand their interest and activities in the region.

4. Restriction on Non-NATO Military Presence

A significant provision is that non-NATO states will not be permitted to establish their own military installations or maintain a persistent military presence in Greenland, unless the three parties agree otherwise.

This provision has an important strategic dimension because it seeks to prevent rival powers from gaining a military foothold in the Arctic.

5. Screening of Foreign Investment

The agreement also extends beyond conventional military security.

It provides safeguards against certain investments or activities by states or investors from non-NATO, non-NATO-partner or non-EU countries in particularly sensitive sectors where such activities could threaten national security or public order.

Thus, the agreement links military security with economic and strategic security.

Greenland and the Principle of Self-Determination

Greenland is an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark and possesses extensive self-government.

The 2026 agreement explicitly recognises that the people of Greenland constitute a people under international law and possess the right to self-determination. At the same time, it reaffirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Denmark.

The agreement also contains provisions for a possible future scenario in which Greenland becomes independent. In such an eventuality, the agreement envisages Greenland remaining within NATO and assuming the relevant rights and obligations contained in the defence arrangements.

Strategic Importance of Greenland

Greenland occupies an exceptionally important position in the Arctic–North Atlantic security architecture.

Its strategic importance arises from:

- **Geographical location:** Greenland lies between North America and Europe and close to important North Atlantic and Arctic approaches.
- **Military significance:** Its location provides an advantageous position for early warning, surveillance, missile defence and monitoring of air and maritime activity.
- **Space infrastructure:** The U.S. presence at Pituffik supports space-related and missile-warning activities.
- **Arctic sea routes:** Changing climatic conditions are increasing attention towards emerging Arctic maritime routes.
- **Natural resources:** Greenland possesses significant mineral and other natural-resource potential, increasing its geopolitical and economic importance.
- **Great-power competition:** Russia, China, the United States and European countries have growing strategic interests in the Arctic.

The new agreement therefore seeks to strengthen the western security architecture in the High North while integrating Greenland more closely into broader NATO Arctic planning.

Importance for the United States

For Washington, the agreement strengthens the defence of the North American continent and the North Atlantic Treaty area.

It provides expanded access and basing possibilities in Greenland and supports the development of advanced defence capabilities, including provisions related to the proposed Golden Dome missile-defence system.

The agreement also provides the United States with greater ability to monitor strategic activity across the Arctic and North Atlantic.

Importance for Denmark and Greenland

For Denmark, the agreement strengthens its role in Arctic security while keeping Greenland within the Kingdom's constitutional framework.

For Greenland, the agreement provides greater recognition of its role as a participant in Arctic security discussions. It also contains provisions intended to ensure that U.S. defence activities respect Greenlandic society, traditional activities such as hunting and fishing, and environmental considerations.

The agreement also states that U.S. contracts relating to defence areas should, to the maximum extent possible, be awarded to Greenlandic sources, taking into account their capabilities and feasibility. This could provide opportunities for local economic participation in defence-related infrastructure.

A Permanent Security Framework

Unlike a temporary arrangement, the new agreement has no end date and can be amended only by mutual consent under the established treaty framework. However, it will enter into force only after the required national parliamentary procedures are completed by Denmark and Greenland.

Thus, the September 2026 signing represents the conclusion of negotiations, while its full legal implementation remains subject to the prescribed domestic procedures.

Russia sends nuclear warning to NATO as tensions rise in the Baltic



Why in the News?

Russia issued a stern diplomatic warning to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), stating that it was prepared to use its entire military arsenal, including nuclear weapons, if NATO members attempted to isolate the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad from the rest of the country. The warning was conveyed through a diplomatic document seen by Reuters, in which Moscow described the situation as a potential trigger for direct armed conflict.

About Kaliningrad

Kaliningrad is a Russian territory situated on the southeastern coast of the Baltic Sea. It is geographically separated from mainland Russia and lies between Poland and Lithuania, both members of NATO.

The region was formerly part of East Prussia and became part of the Soviet Union following the Second World War. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Kaliningrad remained part of the Russian Federation, but the independence of neighbouring states left it geographically detached from mainland Russian territory.

Its location gives it considerable strategic importance for Russia's military presence in the Baltic region and for NATO's security calculations in northeastern Europe.

Key Geographical Features

- Country: Russia
- Region: Baltic Sea, northeastern Europe
- Neighbouring countries: Poland and Lithuania
- Water body: Baltic Sea
- Political status: Russian exclave, separated from the Russian mainland by the territory of other countries and international waters.

Why Is Kaliningrad Strategically Important?

1. Military outpost in the Baltic Sea: Kaliningrad hosts important Russian military installations, including elements of the Baltic Fleet and missile systems. Its location enables Russia to project military power into the Baltic Sea region.
2. Proximity to NATO territory: The exclave is surrounded by NATO-member countries on its landward sides. This geographical position makes it particularly sensitive to changes in regional military deployments and transport access.
3. Missile capabilities: Russia has deployed Iskander missile systems in the region. These systems are capable of carrying conventional or nuclear warheads, although the presence of a nuclear-capable system does not establish that nuclear warheads are deployed with it at any particular time.
4. Logistical vulnerability: Because Kaliningrad is separated from mainland Russia, its transport links are important for the movement of personnel, civilian goods and military supplies. Any severe disruption to these connections could become a major security concern for Moscow.

Details of Russia's Diplomatic Warning

The Russian diplomatic communication reportedly contained three important elements:

- Threat of military escalation: Moscow warned that an attempt to isolate Kaliningrad could lead to direct armed conflict between Russia and NATO.
- Possible nuclear response: Russia stated that it could use its entire arsenal, including nuclear weapons, to defend its territory.
- Threat of strikes against decision-making centres: The document also referred to possible Russian strikes against decision-making centres in NATO member states at the outset of a conflict.

The warning was part of a broader series of statements from Russian diplomatic missions in Europe. Moscow claimed that NATO was preparing an air and naval blockade, but this allegation should be distinguished from a confirmed NATO decision to impose such a blockade.

NATO's Response

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte responded on 30 September 2026 by reiterating that NATO is a defensive alliance and calling on Russia to stop issuing nuclear threats. He said the alliance had responded to Moscow's communication and maintained that its activities did not pose a threat to Russian territory.

NATO has also reaffirmed its commitment to defending allied territory. The alliance's position is that deterrence and collective defence are intended to prevent aggression, rather than to facilitate an attack on Kaliningrad.

The exchange illustrates the opposing security narratives: Russia portrays NATO's regional activities as a

potential threat to its territory, while NATO characterises its military posture as defensive.

Broader Geopolitical Context

1. Russia–Ukraine War

Russia's warning comes against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, which began with Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. Continued Western military support for Ukraine, European defence preparations and Russian military responses have contributed to deteriorating relations between Moscow and NATO members.

2. NATO Expansion in Northern Europe

Finland joined NATO in April 2023, followed by Sweden in March 2024. Their accession expanded the alliance's presence in northern Europe and changed the strategic environment around the Baltic Sea. This has increased the importance of regional defence planning, maritime security and military coordination.

3. Nuclear Deterrence

Nuclear deterrence rests on the expectation that the threat of catastrophic retaliation will discourage an adversary from launching an attack. Russia's warning seeks to communicate that any attempt to isolate or attack Kaliningrad could carry consequences extending well beyond the Baltic region.

However, nuclear threats also raise the possibility of miscalculation, particularly when military exercises, ambiguous intentions and rapidly changing events occur in close proximity.

4. Renewed Nuclear Risks

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, its 2026 assessment estimated that the world's nine nuclear-armed states possessed approximately 12,187 nuclear warheads in January 2026. Of these, around 9,745 were in military stockpiles potentially available for use. SIPRI also highlighted continuing nuclear modernisation and weakening arms-control arrangements as sources of concern.

These global figures provide context for the risks associated with nuclear rhetoric; they do not indicate that nuclear weapons are about to be used in the Baltic region.

Implications for International Security

- Risk of miscalculation: A confrontation over maritime access, military exercises or transport routes could escalate if either side misinterprets the other's intentions.
- European defence preparedness: NATO members bordering the Baltic Sea have strong incentives to coordinate surveillance, air defence and contingency planning.
- Importance of diplomacy: Direct communication between Russia and NATO can help clarify intentions and reduce the risk of accidental escalation.
- Arms-control challenges: Repeated nuclear warnings may weaken confidence in strategic stability and make future arms-control negotiations more difficult.
- Global economic uncertainty: A serious military confrontation in the Baltic region could disrupt maritime transport, energy markets and trade across Europe.

Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)



Why in the News?

The Central Government of India approved India's accession to the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA), marking an important development in India's participation in international fisheries governance. The decision aims to strengthen India's presence in high-seas fisheries, expand access to valuable marine resources and provide Indian fishing enterprises with opportunities to operate in international waters under an established regulatory framework.

India has been participating in SIOFA as a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party (CNCP) since 2022. The approval of accession will enable India to move towards full Contracting Party status, subject to completion of the applicable formalities.

About the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)

The Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement is a multilateral international agreement established to ensure the long-term conservation, management and sustainable utilisation of fishery resources in the high seas of the Southern Indian Ocean.

- Signed: 7 July 2006, in Rome, Italy.
- Entered into force: 21 June 2012.
- Nature: Regional fisheries agreement supported by a regional fisheries management framework.
- Geographical coverage: The high-seas area of the Southern Indian Ocean covered by the Agreement.
- Headquarters: Saint-Denis, Réunion Island, France.
- Primary objective: To promote the conservation and sustainable use of marine fishery resources through international cooperation.

SIOFA provides a common framework for countries and participating fishing entities to cooperate in regulating fishing activities beyond national maritime jurisdictions. Its work includes fisheries research, resource assessment, conservation measures and efforts to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Objectives of SIOFA

The major objectives of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement are as follows:

1. Conservation of marine resources: To ensure the long-term conservation of fish stocks and other marine living resources within its jurisdiction.
2. Sustainable fishing practices: To promote responsible harvesting that maintains marine biodiversity and the long-term productivity of fish populations.
3. Scientific cooperation: To encourage the collection and exchange of fisheries data, scientific research and assessments of marine resources.
4. Regulation of fishing activities: To develop conservation and management measures for fishing operations conducted in the high seas.
5. Combating IUU fishing: To strengthen cooperation among participating countries to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.
6. International collaboration: To facilitate coordinated action among countries for the sustainable management of shared marine resources.

India's Earlier Status and the Significance of Accession

India joined SIOFA as a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party in 2022. This status allowed India to participate in the framework of the Agreement, but its involvement in certain decision-making processes was limited compared with that of full Contracting Parties.

The approval of accession represents a step towards greater participation in the Agreement's institutional and regulatory mechanisms.

India's accession is particularly significant because it will allow the country to participate more fully in the work of SIOFA's Scientific Committee and Compliance Committee. These bodies contribute to scientific assessments, the monitoring of fishing activities and the implementation of conservation measures.

The approval should not, by itself, be interpreted as evidence that every subsequent legal or administrative step has already been completed.

Fisheries Resources Covered under SIOFA

SIOFA focuses on fishery resources in the Southern Indian Ocean that fall within its area of competence. Its regulatory framework is relevant to several commercially valuable species.

Following India's accession, Indian-flagged fishing vessels and enterprises will be able to undertake authorised fishing for species such as:

- Squid: A commercially important marine resource used in domestic consumption and international seafood markets.
- Toothfish: A high-value deep-sea fish, including species such as Patagonian toothfish and Antarctic toothfish where the applicable jurisdiction and regulations permit.
- Alfonsino: A deep-water fish with commercial value in international markets.
- Other non-migratory fish stocks: Additional resources covered by the Agreement and its applicable conservation measures.

Access to these resources will be subject to the Agreement's conservation requirements, applicable fishing authorisations, catch limits where established, monitoring obligations and other relevant regulations. Membership does not provide unrestricted fishing rights across all international waters.

It is also important to distinguish SIOFA from arrangements governing highly migratory species such as tuna. Those species are addressed through other applicable international fisheries frameworks.

Strategic and Economic Importance for India

1. Expansion of India's High-Seas Fisheries

Indian fishing operations have traditionally been concentrated largely in coastal waters and within India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Participation in SIOFA can help create a more structured pathway for Indian-flagged vessels to explore fishing opportunities in international waters.

This may encourage investment in vessels, navigation systems, fish-finding technology, onboard processing and cold-chain facilities.

2. Strengthening the Blue Economy

The Blue Economy refers to the sustainable use of ocean resources to support economic growth, livelihoods and environmental protection.

Greater participation in high-seas fisheries can support India's seafood industry, create opportunities for fishing enterprises and contribute to the development of marine-related economic activities. The long-term benefits, however, will depend on responsible harvesting, commercially viable operations and compliance with international rules.

3. Improved Access to High-Value Marine Resources

Species such as squid, toothfish and alfonsino can offer opportunities in specialised seafood markets. Authorised access to these resources may help diversify India's marine fisheries beyond its traditional catch profile.

The benefits will depend on market demand, fishing costs, vessel capabilities, storage infrastructure and the conservation measures applicable to individual stocks.

4. Greater Participation in Global Fisheries Governance

Full Contracting Party status will provide India with a stronger institutional role in discussions concerning the management of fisheries resources in the Southern Indian Ocean.

India will be better positioned to contribute to scientific assessments, conservation decisions and compliance arrangements, while representing its interests in the sustainable use of marine resources.

5. Support for Fisherfolk and Fisheries Enterprises

The expansion of deep-sea fishing opportunities may create new avenues for fishing entrepreneurs, vessel operators, seafood processors, exporters and associated service providers.

However, these benefits will not automatically reach all small-scale fishers. Their distribution will depend on access to finance, training, technology, infrastructure and suitable business arrangements.

Role of Scientific Cooperation and Compliance

Sustainable fishing in international waters requires reliable scientific information and effective monitoring. Fish populations may extend across large geographical areas, and excessive harvesting can reduce their capacity to replenish naturally.

SIOFA promotes cooperation in the collection of fisheries data, the assessment of marine resources and the development of conservation and management measures.

India's increased participation can contribute to:

- Scientific assessments of commercially exploited fish stocks.

- Better understanding of the distribution and condition of marine resources.
- The exchange of information on fishing operations and catches.
- Improved compliance with conservation measures.
- Coordinated efforts against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

India's accession will also facilitate its participation in the High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) Scheme, adopted under SIOFA and intended to support compliance with applicable fisheries rules. Such arrangements help strengthen monitoring and accountability in areas where effective enforcement requires cooperation among multiple countries.

Challenges and the Way Forward

Although accession offers new opportunities, India will need to address several practical challenges to realise its potential.

First, fishing capacity must be developed. Deep-sea fishing requires specialised vessels, skilled crews, modern equipment and appropriate onboard storage and processing facilities.

Second, operations must remain economically viable. Long-distance fishing involves substantial expenditure on fuel, maintenance, insurance, equipment and logistics. Access to new fishing grounds will not necessarily guarantee commercial profitability.

Third, environmental sustainability must remain a priority. Increased fishing activity needs to be aligned with scientific assessments, conservation measures and applicable catch restrictions to avoid overexploitation.

Fourth, effective monitoring and enforcement are essential. Fishing vessels must comply with authorisation requirements, reporting obligations, vessel-monitoring arrangements and applicable international rules.

Finally, the benefits should be broadly distributed. Appropriate support for fishing communities, training programmes, access to finance and improvements in processing and marketing infrastructure can help translate new opportunities into sustainable livelihoods.

India's participation in SIOFA should therefore be accompanied by investments in scientific research, responsible fishing technology, institutional capacity and international cooperation.

Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI)



Why in the News?

The Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO), Mumbai, reportedly issued a 'Leave India' notice to actor Imran Khan, a United States citizen and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholder, after his alleged presence at a protest against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar in Mumbai on 10 October 2026. Reports state that the notice dated 14 October directed him to leave India by 28 October.

A further development followed on 18 October, when the FRRO reportedly issued a show-cause notice asking why his OCI registration should not be cancelled. The notice reportedly refers to Section 7D(e) of the Citizenship Act, 1955. Khan has challenged the leave notice before the Bombay High Court. As of 19 October 2026, the matter remains a live legal dispute; a notice seeking an explanation is not itself a final cancellation order.

About Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI)

The Overseas Citizenship of India scheme was introduced through an amendment to the Citizenship Act, 1955, and became operational in December 2005. It was designed to maintain links with the Indian diaspora by offering eligible foreign nationals of Indian origin a range of long-term facilities in India.

Despite its name, OCI is not dual citizenship and does not make a cardholder an Indian citizen. An OCI cardholder remains a foreign national and travels on the passport of

the country of which they are a citizen. The scheme provides specified privileges under Indian law, but these privileges do not equal the full set of rights enjoyed by Indian citizens.

Eligibility and Legal Framework

Section 7A of the Citizenship Act, 1955, sets out the categories of foreign nationals who may be registered as OCI cardholders. Eligibility generally covers certain former Indian citizens, people who were eligible to become Indian citizens at the commencement of the Constitution, people from territories that became part of India after 15 August 1947, and qualifying descendants of such persons. Specific exclusions and documentary conditions also apply.

Sections 7B, 7C and 7D of the Act address the rights available to OCI cardholders, renunciation of OCI registration and cancellation of registration, respectively. These provisions are central to understanding the present case because OCI status is a statutory registration with defined benefits and limitations—not citizenship in the constitutional sense.

Rights and Benefits of OCI Cardholders

The official OCI framework provides a multiple-entry, lifelong visa for visiting India for permitted purposes and generally exempts cardholders from registration with the FRRO or Foreigners Registration Officer for any length of stay. Certain activities, however, require prior permission or a special permit, including specified research, missionary, Tabligh, mountaineering and journalistic activities, internships or employment in foreign diplomatic missions or foreign government organisations in India, and visits to protected, restricted or prohibited areas.

OCI cardholders receive parity with Non-Resident Indians in specified economic, financial and educational fields, subject to applicable laws and notifications. They may also pursue certain notified professional activities and can, if statutory conditions are met, apply for Indian citizenship through the prescribed registration route. These benefits do not confer an unrestricted right to undertake every activity in India.

Rights Not Available to OCI Cardholders

OCI cardholders cannot vote in Indian elections, contest elections to Parliament or State Legislatures, or hold constitutional offices reserved for Indian citizens, such as the offices of President and Vice-President or judgeships in the Supreme Court and High Courts. They are generally not eligible for public employment connected with the affairs of the Union or a State, except where specifically permitted. They also cannot acquire agricultural land, farmhouses or plantation properties under the OCI framework.

The distinction matters in political contexts. An OCI cardholder is not an Indian elector and does not enjoy every political right available to a citizen. However, the precise legal question in any particular case is whether the conduct alleged falls within a statutory ground or valid restriction—not simply whether the individual took part in a public demonstration.

Cancellation of OCI Registration: Section 7D

Section 7D of the Citizenship Act, 1955, empowers the Central Government to cancel OCI registration on specified grounds. These include registration obtained through fraud or concealment of material facts; conduct showing disaffection towards the Constitution as established by law; certain conduct connected with an enemy during a war involving India; a qualifying prison sentence within five years of registration; and circumstances in which cancellation is considered necessary in the interests of India's sovereignty and integrity, security, friendly relations with foreign countries or the general public.

The show-cause notice reported in Imran Khan's case is significant because it indicates that the authorities are considering whether a statutory ground for cancellation may apply. It does not, by itself, establish that the ground has been proved or that the OCI registration has already been cancelled. The precise reasoning, evidence, response from the cardholder and final decision will be important to any legal assessment.

The statutory framework contemplates an opportunity to be heard before cancellation. In practice, a show-cause process gives the affected person an opportunity to respond to the allegations and submit relevant

material. Any eventual decision may be subject to judicial review in accordance with law.

OCI Status and the 'Leave India' Notice

The reported leave notice and the OCI show-cause notice are related but legally distinct steps. The first concerns the authorities' direction that a foreign national leave India under the applicable immigration framework. The second concerns whether the person's OCI registration should be cancelled under the Citizenship Act. A challenge to one notice does not automatically resolve every question arising from the other.

The reported case has arisen under the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, according to news reports on the notice. The public reporting available as of 19 October 2026 does not fully establish every factual or legal ground relied upon by the authorities. It is therefore important to distinguish the authorities' allegations from findings that may be made by a court or competent authority.

Imran Khan has reportedly approached the Bombay High Court to challenge the leave notice. The court has scheduled further consideration for 26 October 2026 and directed that the Maharashtra government be added as a party, according to reporting published on 19 October. The outcome of the proceedings and any response to the OCI show-cause notice remain pending.

Key Issues Raised by the Case

First, the case highlights the difference between OCI privileges and Indian citizenship. OCI is intended to facilitate long-term engagement with India, but the cardholder remains a foreign national subject to the applicable immigration and citizenship-related statutory framework.

Second, it raises questions about the relationship between political expression, participation in demonstrations and the conditions governing a foreign national's stay in India. The legal analysis depends on the actual statutory provisions invoked, the conduct alleged, the evidence and the process followed. The fact that an individual is an OCI cardholder should not be treated as conclusive proof either of a violation or of immunity from immigration law.

Third, procedural fairness is important when a status that enables long-term residence and travel is at risk. Notice of the allegations, a meaningful opportunity to respond, a reasoned decision and access to lawful review can all be relevant. The courts' consideration of the challenge may help clarify how the applicable legal provisions operate in the specific circumstances.

Overall Significance

The Imran Khan matter has brought renewed attention to the legal character of OCI status. The scheme offers substantial long-term facilities to eligible members of the Indian diaspora, but it does not confer Indian nationality or the full political rights of citizens. At the same time, cancellation of OCI registration is governed by statutory grounds and procedures; a show-cause notice is an initiating step, not a final determination.

For students of Indian polity and governance, the case is relevant to the Citizenship Act, 1955—especially Sections 7A to 7D—the distinction between citizenship and immigration privileges, and the role of judicial review in disputes involving executive action. The final legal position should be assessed in light of the authorities' formal orders and the outcome of the pending proceedings.

India and Sri Lanka launched the SAMHiTA Project



Why in the News?

India and Sri Lanka launched the SAMHiTA (South Asian Manuscript Histories and Textual Archive) Palm-Leaf Manuscript Digitisation Project at Gangaramaya Temple in Colombo on 23 October 2026. The initiative aims to digitise 100 ancient palm-leaf manuscripts preserved at

the temple, safeguarding valuable historical, religious and cultural knowledge for future generations.

The project is being implemented by the India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi, in collaboration with Gangaramaya Temple, with financial assistance from the Government of India. It represents an important step towards strengthening bilateral cultural cooperation and preserving the shared Buddhist and civilisational heritage of the two countries.

About the SAMHiTA Project

The SAMHiTA Project is an initiative designed to preserve South Asia's rich manuscript heritage by creating digital records of historical texts held in libraries, archives, temples and other institutions. Its broader objective is to bring together manuscript collections dispersed across different countries and make information about them more accessible to researchers and the public.

The word *Samhita* has its roots in Sanskrit and means a collection or compilation. The initiative seeks to document and connect historical knowledge preserved in manuscripts, including works relating to philosophy, medicine, mathematics, literature, religion and other intellectual traditions.

The project also supports international institutional cooperation to protect manuscripts that may otherwise remain difficult to access because of their fragile condition or geographical location.

Key Features of the Project

1. Digitisation of Ancient Manuscripts

The first phase at Gangaramaya Temple focuses on digitising 100 ancient palm-leaf manuscripts. These manuscripts preserve valuable information concerning Buddhist teachings, religious traditions, philosophy, languages, customs and cultural practices.

The digitisation process involves carefully handling the original documents, capturing high-quality digital images and organising relevant manuscript information into a structured catalogue. This approach helps preserve the contents of historical texts while reducing the need to handle delicate originals repeatedly.

2. Implementing Institutions

The project is being undertaken by the India International Centre, New Delhi, in collaboration with Gangaramaya Temple, Colombo.

Gangaramaya Temple became the first institution in Sri Lanka to partner with the India International Centre under Project SAMHiTA. The two institutions signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in July 2026 to facilitate the digitisation of the temple's manuscript collection.

The work is being carried out by a team of Sri Lankan experts, with completion expected by the end of November 2026.

3. Financial Assistance from India

The Government of India is providing grant assistance for the initiative, reflecting its commitment to cultural diplomacy, heritage preservation and cooperation with neighbouring countries.

The project also offers a framework through which other institutions in Sri Lanka involved in preserving ancient manuscripts may collaborate with SAMHiTA and explore similar preservation initiatives.

4. Preservation of Palm-Leaf Manuscripts

Palm-leaf manuscripts are an important part of South Asian literary and religious traditions. Before the widespread use of paper and modern printing, palm leaves were used in several parts of the region as a medium for recording and transmitting knowledge.

However, such manuscripts can be vulnerable to humidity, temperature fluctuations, insects, physical damage and the natural deterioration of their material. Digitisation provides an additional layer of protection by creating digital copies that can be stored, studied and reproduced without frequent handling of the originals.

Digital preservation does not replace the need for physical conservation. Instead, it complements traditional preservation practices and helps ensure that the information contained in historical documents remains available even if the original materials deteriorate.

Role of Gangaramaya Temple

Gangaramaya Temple, located in Colombo, is an important Buddhist religious and cultural institution in

Sri Lanka. It has contributed to Buddhist education, religious activities, cultural preservation and social service.

Its historical collections form part of Sri Lanka's wider religious and intellectual heritage. By participating in SAMHiTA, the temple is extending its preservation efforts through modern digital methods, helping connect its manuscript collection with future research and educational activities.

Strategic and Cultural Significance

1. Strengthening India–Sri Lanka Relations

India and Sri Lanka share centuries-old religious, cultural and intellectual connections. Buddhism has played a particularly important role in shaping the historical relationship between the two countries.

The SAMHiTA Project reinforces these connections through practical cooperation in the preservation of cultural resources. It also strengthens people-to-people relations by creating opportunities for experts and institutions from both countries to work together.

2. Preserving Shared Buddhist Heritage

Ancient Buddhist manuscripts are important sources for understanding religious teachings, philosophical ideas, monastic traditions and the historical development of Buddhism across South Asia.

Preserving these documents helps protect a shared intellectual heritage that extends beyond modern national boundaries. The project therefore contributes to the conservation of both Sri Lanka's historical collections and the wider Buddhist heritage of the region.

3. Promoting Research and Education

Digitised manuscripts can support researchers, historians, linguists, religious scholars and students studying South Asian history and culture. Proper cataloguing can also help researchers identify relevant documents more efficiently.

Where digital access is provided, scholars may be able to study manuscripts without travelling to the institutions holding the originals. This can facilitate comparative research, textual analysis and the documentation of historical languages and traditions.

4. Advancing Digital Heritage Preservation

The initiative highlights the growing role of digital technologies in cultural conservation. Creating reliable digital records helps institutions document their collections, improve information management and support long-term preservation planning.

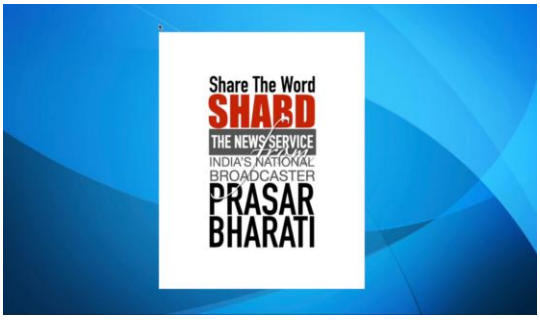
It also demonstrates the value of combining traditional custodianship with modern documentation techniques to protect vulnerable cultural resources.

5. Encouraging Wider Institutional Participation

The Government of India has encouraged other Sri Lankan institutions working on ancient manuscript preservation to explore collaboration under SAMHiTA. Expanding the initiative could help document additional collections and create stronger institutional networks for preserving South Asia's manuscript heritage.

Polity

PB-SHABD: Free News Feed Service by Prasar Bharati



Why in the News?

Prasar Bharati's Prasar Bharati – Shared Audio-Visuals for Broadcast and Dissemination (PB-SHABD) has emerged as a major multimedia news-sharing platform for India's media ecosystem. Launched on 13 March 2024, the service provides registered media organisations with free, ready-to-use news content in multiple formats and Indian languages.

In a significant recent development, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting announced in March 2026 that free access to PB-SHABD would continue until March 2027. The platform currently delivers more than

1,000 news stories every day, supported by a network of over 1,500 reporters, correspondents and stringers and around 60 dedicated editorial desks operating round the clock.

About PB-SHABD

PB-SHABD stands for Prasar Bharati – Shared Audio-Visuals for Broadcast and Dissemination. It is a shared news-feed service developed by Prasar Bharati to make its extensive news-gathering infrastructure available to registered media organisations.

The platform enables newspapers, television channels, digital news publishers and other eligible media organisations to access timely and ready-to-use news material generated through Prasar Bharati's nationwide network.

The service was launched on 13 March 2024 with the objective of facilitating wider dissemination of credible news content beyond Prasar Bharati's own broadcasting platforms.

Content Formats and Language Coverage

PB-SHABD provides multimedia news content in five major formats:

- Text
- Video
- Audio
- Photographs
- Infographics

The service provides content in 15 Indian languages, covering both national and regional news requirements. The 15 languages include Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Dogri and Urdu.

This multilingual approach enables smaller and regional media organisations to access content that may otherwise require substantial editorial and reporting resources.

Extensive News-Gathering Network

PB-SHABD draws strength from Prasar Bharati's large nationwide news-gathering infrastructure.

The platform is supported by:

- More than 1,500 reporters, correspondents and stringers
- Around 60 dedicated edit desks
- Editorial operations functioning 24×7
- Regional News Units (RNUs) as well as headquarters-based news operations

The platform currently uploads over 1,000 stories daily, covering a wide range of subjects such as agriculture, technology, foreign affairs, government and public affairs, and other national, regional and local developments.

Major Features

- **Logo-Free Content**

One of the important features of PB-SHABD is that the news material supplied through the platform is logo-free. According to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, users do not have to provide a mandatory Prasar Bharati credit while using the supplied content.

This makes the material easier for media organisations to integrate into their own news products.

- **Live Feed**

PB-SHABD also provides a Live Feed facility for important events.

It can provide live coverage of events of national importance, investiture ceremonies, press briefings and other significant events. This facility allows media organisations to obtain timely visual material without having to independently deploy large reporting teams for every event.

- **Media Repository**

The platform provides access to a Media Repository, which functions as an archival resource.

It enables subscribers to access archival footage and curated material from the extensive Doordarshan and Akashvani collections. Such archival resources can be useful for background reports, documentaries, special programmes and explanatory news coverage.

- **Specialised Content**

Apart from routine news stories, PB-SHABD regularly provides special packages, interviews, weather updates and editorial content.

These additional resources can help media organisations develop complete news reports while reducing the time

and resources required for gathering supporting material.

Categories of News Coverage

PB-SHABD provides news across a broad range of subjects. Its coverage includes areas such as:

- Agriculture and rural affairs
- Science and technology
- Foreign affairs
- National developments
- Regional and local developments
- Government and public affairs
- Political developments
- Weather and environment
- Special events and interviews

The broad coverage is intended to serve media organisations with different editorial requirements and audiences.

Target Beneficiaries

PB-SHABD is primarily intended for registered media organisations and digital news publishers.

Its user base includes:

- Newspapers and periodicals
- Television news organisations
- Digital news publishers
- Other eligible media organisations and content platforms

Digital news portals can also register subject to the applicable eligibility and verification requirements.

Free Access

Initially, PB-SHABD was offered free of charge to media organisations for a limited period. The free-access period was subsequently extended.

After completing two years of operation, Prasar Bharati announced in March 2026 that free access would continue until March 2027. This is particularly significant for smaller media organisations because it allows them to access a large volume of multimedia news material without a subscription fee.

Role of Prasar Bharati

Prasar Bharati is India's public service broadcaster, established under the Prasar Bharati Act, 1990, and it came into existence on 23 November 1997.

Its two principal constituents are:

- Akashvani
- Doordarshan

Prasar Bharati's digital news infrastructure, including its news services and digital platforms, complements its traditional radio and television broadcasting network. PB-SHABD extends this ecosystem by enabling external media organisations to access and disseminate news content generated through the broadcaster's extensive network.

Maharashtra CEO Seeks ECINet Changes, More Discretion For EROs In SIR Process



Why in the News?

Maharashtra's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) S. Chockalingam has sought changes in the Election Commission of India's ECINET software so that Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) can exercise the discretion available to them under election law while dealing with voter-data discrepancies during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The issue has gained importance because Maharashtra is in the notice phase of the SIR exercise, and the state's draft electoral roll published on August 31, 2026, showed a 21.1% reduction in electors. The final electoral roll is scheduled for November 16, 2026.

The Maharashtra CEO's intervention also comes amid concerns raised within the Election Commission about whether centralised control of electoral software could restrict the statutory functions of field-level election officials.

What is ECINET?

ECINET is the Election Commission's integrated digital platform for election-related services and electoral-roll

management. It provides digital facilities for activities such as searching electoral-roll information, submitting forms and responding to notices issued during SIR. The ECI's citizen portal currently provides dedicated SIR-2026 services through the ECINET platform.

The ECI also uses ERONET, a web-based system developed to manage electoral registration, migration and deletion of names from electoral rolls. The system was introduced to replace disparate state-level applications and create a more integrated approach to elector management.

What is a "Logical Discrepancy"?

A logical discrepancy does not by itself establish that a person is ineligible to vote. It refers to a mismatch detected by the software while attempting to link an elector with a parent or grandparent in the previous SIR electoral roll.

Examples include:

- Difference between the elector's and parent's names.
- An unusually small or large age gap between parent and child.
- An age progression that does not appear consistent between old and current electoral records.
- Cases where an elector has not submitted a document or has submitted only Aadhaar.

Thus, a software-generated discrepancy is essentially a data-matching alert, which still requires examination by the competent election authority.

Changes Sought by Maharashtra CEO

The Maharashtra CEO sought greater flexibility in four major areas:

1. Waiver of personal hearings

The CEO sought an "Exempted from Hearing" option in ECINET. If an elector submits satisfactory documents, the ERO should be able to decide that a personal appearance is unnecessary. This could particularly reduce inconvenience for senior citizens, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

2. Acceptance of additional documents

The list of 13 documents mentioned in SIR notices was described as indicative rather than exhaustive. Maharashtra sought an "Other/Other Equivalent Document" option so that people unable to produce documents from the specified list could still present other relevant evidence.

3. Greater authority for EROs

In certain logical-discrepancy cases, the software required supporting material to be forwarded to the District Election Officer (DEO). The Maharashtra CEO sought the ability for the ERO to dispose of such cases directly when satisfied with the evidence.

4. Flexibility regarding the "Extract of Last SIR"

ECINET required an Extract of Last SIR to be uploaded in every discrepancy case. The Maharashtra CEO argued that this should be optional because the discrepancy had already been identified using the previous SIR electoral roll.

The communication also sought clearer written instructions and FAQs for EROs because oral directions alone were considered insufficient for handling the large-scale revision exercise.

Why is ERO Discretion Important?

Under the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, Electoral Registration Officers have statutory responsibility for electoral rolls. An ERO generally handles claims and objections and takes decisions concerning inclusion, retention or deletion of names.

This creates an important distinction between software-based identification of discrepancies and the legal decision on a voter's eligibility.

A software system can flag a mismatch, but the final determination requires consideration of the facts and evidence available in an individual case. The Maharashtra CEO's request therefore seeks to ensure that technological workflows do not prevent an officer from exercising a discretion that election law provides.

Centralisation and Institutional Concerns

The issue has also become part of a wider discussion within the Election Commission about the relationship

between centralised IT systems and decentralised statutory responsibility.

According to reporting by , Election Commissioner Sukhbir Singh Sandhu had earlier raised concerns that centralised control of the electoral-roll software could limit the ability of CEOs, DEOs and EROs to perform their statutory functions. Election Commissioner Vivek Joshi had also raised related concerns.

The ECI, however, has maintained that its digital platforms operate under data-security protocols designed to prevent unauthorised tampering and that EROs and DEOs continue to function according to their statutory powers.

Response of the Election Commission

Following a full Commission meeting on September 26, 2026, the ECI partially addressed Maharashtra's concerns by allowing EROs to exempt electors flagged for logical discrepancies from personal hearings where appropriate. The Commission also indicated that further flexibility required by field officials could be incorporated into the system.

The Commission further decided that ECINET would be reviewed by a committee headed by a senior Deputy Election Commissioner and including an independent expert from an IIT or IIIT.

Significance

The Maharashtra episode highlights a broader governance issue arising from the digitisation of electoral administration:

- Technology should support statutory decision-making, rather than mechanically replace it.
- Software-generated discrepancies need to be distinguished from findings of voter ineligibility.
- EROs require sufficient access and flexibility to examine individual cases.
- Digital electoral systems need strong auditability, transparency and accountability.
- Vulnerable voters should not face unnecessary procedural barriers.
- Centralised databases must be balanced with the legally decentralised structure of electoral-roll administration.

Peaceful protesters shall not be illegally detained: Supreme Court's big order



Why in the News?

The Supreme Court of India held a special hearing on 11 October 2026 amid protests in New Delhi against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The Court directed the authorities to prevent unlawful detentions, ensure the free movement of people, maintain normal Metro and railway services subject to lawful restrictions, and avoid unnecessary disruption of internet services.

The hearing followed allegations that Delhi Police had detained protesters, political leaders and other individuals and that restrictions on public transport and movement had affected access to protest venues and other parts of the capital.

The Court issued notices to the Centre, Delhi Police and the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), seeking their responses and compliance reports. The proceedings brought renewed attention to the balance between citizens' fundamental rights and the state's responsibility to maintain public order.

Background: What Is the Special Intensive Revision (SIR)?

The Special Intensive Revision is a process undertaken by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to scrutinise and update electoral rolls. It can involve the verification of voter details, identification of eligible electors and the correction or removal of entries in accordance with applicable electoral laws.

The objective of electoral-roll revision is to maintain accurate voter lists and ensure that eligible citizens can exercise their voting rights.

However, the process has generated political controversy. Opposition parties and other critics have raised concerns about alleged irregularities, the deletion of voter names and the possibility that eligible voters could be excluded. The Election Commission's procedures and the legality of particular decisions have consequently become subjects of political debate and judicial scrutiny.

Protests in Delhi also demanded the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. The protesters sought accountability over the conduct of the electoral-roll revision and related concerns about the functioning of the Election Commission.

These allegations remain contested and must be distinguished from established judicial findings.

3. Key Directions Issued by the Supreme Court

During the special sitting, a Bench comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana issued interim directions to safeguard civil liberties and prevent unnecessary disruption of public life.

The principal directions were:

1. Prevention of unlawful detention: Peaceful and unarmed individuals must not be detained illegally, particularly outside areas where lawful prohibitory restrictions apply.
2. Free movement: People must be allowed to move through Delhi, subject to traffic regulations and legitimate public-order requirements.
3. Normal public transport: Metro and railway services should function normally unless restrictions are legally necessary to address public-order concerns.
4. Review of barricades: Authorities were directed to review barricading arrangements promptly, taking traffic and law-and-order conditions into account.
5. Uninterrupted internet access: Internet facilities should remain available without unlawful disruption.
6. Access to courts: A notice announcing prohibitory restrictions near the Supreme Court premises was to be removed, if it had not already been removed, to prevent apprehensions about access to courts.
7. Protection of professional duties: Lawyers, journalists and other professionals should not be obstructed from performing their legitimate duties.

The Court also issued notices to the concerned authorities in contempt proceedings and directed them to submit affidavits and compliance reports. Importantly, these were interim directions issued while allegations were being examined; they were not a final finding that every alleged detention or restriction was unlawful.

4. Constitutional Provisions Involved

The case raises important questions about the relationship between fundamental rights and the state's authority to regulate public gatherings.

Article 19: Freedom of speech and peaceful assembly

Article 19(1)(a) guarantees citizens the right to freedom of speech and expression, while Article 19(1)(b) protects the right to assemble peaceably and without arms.

These rights provide the constitutional foundation for peaceful demonstrations, public meetings and the expression of disagreement with government policies or public institutions.

However, these rights are not absolute. Articles 19(2) and 19(3) permit reasonable restrictions on specified constitutional grounds, including public order. Restrictions must satisfy applicable legal and constitutional requirements.

Article 21: Protection of life and personal liberty

Article 21 provides that no person shall be deprived of life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law.

Detention must therefore have a lawful basis and comply with applicable procedural safeguards. The legality of

any particular detention depends on the relevant facts, statutory authority and circumstances.

Article 22: Safeguards against arbitrary arrest and detention

Article 22 provides safeguards for arrested persons, including requirements concerning communication of the grounds of arrest, access to legal representation and production before a magistrate within the constitutionally prescribed period, subject to applicable exceptions.

These protections are relevant when police action during demonstrations involves arrest or detention.

Article 32: Constitutional remedies

Article 32 empowers individuals to approach the Supreme Court for enforcement of fundamental rights. Habeas corpus proceedings can be used to challenge unlawful detention and seek judicial examination of a person's custody.

The petitions arising from the Delhi protests illustrate the role of judicial remedies in examining allegations that executive action has infringed individual liberty.

5. Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023

An important legal provision in this case is Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, which replaced Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

Section 163 empowers an executive magistrate to issue urgent orders in cases where immediate prevention or speedy remedies are considered necessary to address potential danger, public disturbance or threats to public safety. Depending on the circumstances, such orders may restrict gatherings or certain activities.

However, the existence of a prohibitory order does not automatically authorise every detention or restriction. Police action must remain within the scope of the applicable order and comply with the law.

The Supreme Court specifically emphasised that peaceful, unarmed individuals should not be detained unlawfully, particularly outside areas where Section 163 restrictions are in operation. It also clarified that the administration retains its lawful powers to regulate public order.

6. The Central Government and Delhi Police's Position

The proceedings also involved the authorities' explanation of the restrictions imposed during the protests.

The Centre's representative told the Court that internet services had been restored and that Metro and railway operations were functioning normally. The government also stated that the restrictions had not reduced the overall volume of Metro operations, although several stations had been closed temporarily.

The Delhi Police, meanwhile, cited public-order concerns in defending its handling of demonstrations and restrictions. Authorities have argued that security measures must account for the possibility of disorder and disruption.

The dispute therefore involves two related questions: whether particular restrictions were necessary to maintain public order and whether the manner in which they were imposed complied with the law and the Supreme Court's directions.

The Court's interim directions sought to ensure that public safety measures did not unnecessarily prevent citizens from moving around the city, accessing courts or exercising their lawful rights.

7. Latest Developments as of 15 October 2026

The legal scrutiny has continued beyond the initial special hearing.

On 13 October, the Supreme Court postponed further consideration of petitions concerning the protest-related restrictions and police action, giving the Centre time to respond by 15 October. The petitions include allegations concerning detentions, transport restrictions and the treatment of protesters and journalists.

On 15 October, the Court also issued notices to the Centre and Delhi Police in a separate petition challenging the removal of Jantar Mantar's status as a designated protest venue.

Under a Delhi Police order dated 11 October, Jantar Mantar was de-notified as a designated demonstration site, and three alternative venues were identified:

- Ramlila Ground
- Burari Ground
- CBD Ground in east Delhi

The Supreme Court sought the authorities' responses and directed Delhi Police to produce prohibitory orders issued over the preceding fortnight under Section 163 of the BNSS. It also directed law-enforcement agencies to preserve CCTV footage and digital evidence connected with the recent protests.

The question of protest venues is significant because the practical ability to demonstrate can depend on accessibility, visibility and proximity to the institutions or authorities being addressed. Identifying alternative locations may not, by itself, resolve every concern about the exercise of the right to peaceful assembly.

These developments should be distinguished from the earlier interim directions on detention and movement. The Court has been examining several connected but legally distinct issues, and the issuance of notices does not constitute a final determination of the parties' claims.

8. Significance for Indian Democracy

The case highlights the importance of protecting constitutional rights while maintaining public order in a democratic society.

First, it reinforces the right to peaceful protest. Demonstrations provide citizens with a means of expressing disagreement, seeking accountability and drawing attention to public issues.

Second, it underlines the limits of police powers. Law-enforcement agencies can take preventive measures where legally justified, but such measures must comply with applicable law and constitutional safeguards.

Third, it highlights the importance of proportionality. Restrictions should be based on legitimate requirements and should not go further than necessary in the circumstances. Broad restrictions on transport, movement or communication can affect people who have no involvement in a demonstration.

Fourth, it emphasises access to justice. Citizens, lawyers and journalists must be able to reach courts and perform their legitimate professional duties without unlawful obstruction.

Fifth, it raises questions about electoral accountability. Controversies surrounding SIR demonstrate why electoral-roll revision requires transparent procedures, accessible mechanisms for correcting errors and effective remedies for eligible voters who believe their names have been wrongly excluded.

The Supreme Court's examination of these matters reflects the judiciary's constitutional role in reviewing executive action and protecting fundamental rights.

Allahabad High Court Suspends Conviction of Murder Convict Seeking to Contest Election



Why in the News?

The Allahabad High Court has suspended the conviction and life sentence of Nandlal Rai, also known as Babloo Rai, who expressed his desire to contest the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly elections either as an independent candidate or, if possible, on a ticket.

A division bench comprising Justice Siddharth and Justice Vinai Kumar Dwivedi passed the order while hearing Rai’s criminal appeal against his conviction in a murder case. The decision became public through media reports on 19 October 2026.

The court granted him bail and stayed his conviction and sentence during the pendency of his appeal. The order has drawn attention to the relationship between criminal convictions, electoral disqualification, judicial discretion and the right to participate in the democratic process.

What Is Suspension of Conviction?

Suspension of conviction is a judicial remedy through which an appellate court temporarily suspends the legal operation of a conviction while an appeal is pending.

It is different from suspension of sentence and the grant of bail.

- **Suspension of sentence:** Temporarily prevents the sentence from being enforced during the relevant period, subject to the court's order and conditions.
- **Grant of bail:** Permits an accused or convicted person to remain at liberty under specified legal conditions.
- **Suspension of conviction:** Temporarily suspends the operative effect of the finding of guilt, which may have consequences beyond imprisonment, including statutory disqualification from contesting elections.

Under Section 389(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC), an appellate court may, for reasons recorded in writing, suspend the execution of a sentence or order appealed against and release the convicted person on bail or on their own bond, as applicable. The provision has a corresponding successor under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), subject to the applicable procedural law and transitional provisions.

Suspension of conviction is an exceptional remedy rather than an automatic consequence of filing an appeal. Courts examine the facts, circumstances, legal consequences and grounds presented in the particular case.

Legal Framework: Representation of the People Act, 1951

The Representation of the People Act, 1951, provides the principal statutory framework governing disqualification from membership of Parliament and State Legislatures on specified grounds, including certain criminal convictions.

Section 8: Disqualification on Conviction for Certain Offences

Section 8 of the Act prescribes disqualification for persons convicted of specified offences.

Under Section 8(3), a person convicted of an offence and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than two years, where the offence is not covered by the preceding subsections, is disqualified from the date of conviction. The disqualification ordinarily continues during imprisonment and for six years after release.

A life sentence for murder therefore raises serious electoral-disqualification consequences under the Act.

However, the precise legal effect in an individual case depends on the applicable statutory provisions and any operative judicial order. A stay of conviction may suspend the disqualification arising from that conviction while the order remains in force, but it does not erase the trial court's judgment permanently or guarantee that the person will be elected.

Section 389(1) of the CrPC

Section 389(1) empowers an appellate court to suspend the execution of a sentence or order appealed against and, where appropriate, release the convicted person on bail.

Suspension of conviction requires separate consideration because a conviction can produce consequences beyond imprisonment. Courts must therefore assess whether the circumstances justify this exceptional relief.

Supreme Court Precedent: Afjal Ansari v. State of Uttar Pradesh (2023)

An important precedent in this area is the Supreme Court's decision in *Afjal Ansari v. State of Uttar Pradesh*, delivered on 14 December 2023.

Afjal Ansari, a Member of Parliament representing Ghazipur, had been convicted under the Uttar Pradesh Gangsters and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act, 1986, and sentenced to four years' imprisonment. The conviction triggered disqualification under the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

The Supreme Court partially allowed his appeal and suspended his conviction subject to specific conditions and directions. It also made clear that the underlying criminal appeal had to be decided on its own merits.

The judgment is significant because it illustrates that an appellate court may consider the electoral consequences

of a conviction when deciding whether exceptional relief is justified. At the same time, it does not establish that every politician seeking to contest an election is entitled to have a conviction suspended.

The Allahabad High Court referred to this line of reasoning while considering Rai's request for relief.

Why Is Suspension of Conviction Important for Elections?

The legal consequences of a conviction can directly affect a person's eligibility to contest elections. This is particularly significant where the sentence attracts statutory disqualification and an appeal may take considerable time to be decided.

Suspension of conviction may therefore have several implications:

1. **Electoral eligibility:** It may remove, for the period and within the scope of the operative order, the disqualification arising from the conviction.
2. **Opportunity to contest:** It may preserve the possibility of participating in an upcoming election, subject to all other legal requirements.
3. **Protection against irreversible consequences:** A person may lose an electoral opportunity if the appeal is not decided before the relevant election.
4. **Judicial scrutiny:** Courts must balance the individual consequences of conviction against the seriousness of the offence, the statutory framework and the public interest in maintaining the integrity of elections.

Importantly, suspension of conviction does not automatically secure a party ticket, nomination or election victory. The candidate must still satisfy the other applicable requirements of election law.

Criminalisation of Politics in India

The case has also renewed discussion about the criminalisation of politics in India. Criminalisation of politics refers broadly to the participation of individuals with criminal backgrounds, serious criminal charges or criminal convictions in electoral politics.

India has a legal framework intended to prevent persons convicted of certain offences from contesting elections. Nevertheless, the interaction between criminal appeals, interim judicial relief and electoral deadlines can create complex situations.

The distinction between an accused person and a convicted person is particularly important. An allegation or pending criminal case is not equivalent to a judicial finding of guilt. Conversely, a conviction by a trial court remains legally significant unless its effect is altered by a competent court.

When a conviction is suspended to preserve electoral eligibility, the decision raises questions about judicial discretion, the rights of candidates, the interests of voters and public confidence in democratic institutions.

The issue must be assessed through the applicable law and the reasoning in each judicial decision rather than through assumptions based solely on political affiliation.

Significance of the Case

1. Judicial Discretion

The decision highlights the power of appellate courts to grant exceptional relief where the consequences of a conviction may extend beyond the punishment imposed by the trial court.

2. Electoral Rights and Disqualification

It demonstrates the connection between criminal convictions and electoral eligibility under the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

3. Importance of Timely Appeals

Where electoral deadlines are approaching, delays in deciding criminal appeals may have consequences that cannot easily be reversed. The case brings attention to the importance of timely adjudication.

4. Democratic Accountability

The decision raises broader questions about how the legal system should balance an individual's opportunity to participate in elections with the public interest in preventing persons convicted of serious offences from entering legislative institutions.

5. Continuing Judicial Review

The stay is an interim measure. The final outcome of the criminal appeal remains crucial to determining the ultimate legal position.

Overall Significance

The Allahabad High Court's decision to suspend Nandlal Rai's conviction and life sentence has brought renewed attention to the legal relationship between criminal convictions and electoral participation ahead of the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections.

The case illustrates that suspension of conviction is distinct from acquittal, bail and suspension of sentence. It also demonstrates the importance of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and the appellate court's powers when considering exceptional relief.

The broader legal challenge is to maintain a fair balance between individual legal remedies, the integrity of the electoral process, the interests of voters and the need for timely justice. The final decision in Rai's criminal appeal will remain important to the ultimate resolution of the underlying case.

Ambani and Adani-Owned Media Outlets Challenge India's Privacy Law Over Press Freedom Concerns



Why in the News?

On 27 October 2026, the Supreme Court of India heard arguments in a major legal challenge to the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, brought by the Digital News Publishers Association (DNPA), which represents 21 news publishers. The association has argued that certain provisions of the law could undermine press freedom, restrict investigative journalism and expose confidential journalistic sources.

The publishers include Network18, associated with Mukesh Ambani, NDTV, associated with Gautam Adani, The Indian Express and Times Internet, part of the Times Group. They have sought judicial intervention over provisions that they believe could interfere with reporting on corruption, corporate wrongdoing and other matters of public interest.

During the hearing, the publishers argued that requiring journalists to obtain consent from individuals they investigate could amount to pre-censorship. The Supreme Court postponed further consideration of the case until November 2026. The disputed provisions are scheduled to take effect from May 2027.

About the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, is India's principal legislation for regulating the processing of digital personal data. It seeks to protect individuals' privacy while allowing organisations to use personal data for lawful purposes.

The Act was passed by Parliament in August 2023. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) subsequently notified the Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025, on 14 November 2025, establishing the framework for implementing the legislation through a phased timeline.

The law introduces obligations for organisations that determine the purpose and means of processing personal data, referred to as Data Fiduciaries. It also provides individuals, known as Data Principals, with rights relating to their personal information.

Key provisions include:

- Notice and consent: Organisations generally need to inform individuals about the collection and use of their personal data and obtain valid consent, unless a legally recognised basis for processing applies.
- Right to access information: Individuals can seek information about the processing of their personal data, subject to the Act's provisions.

- Correction and erasure: Individuals can request correction or erasure of their personal data, subject to applicable legal requirements.
- Data protection obligations: Organisations must implement appropriate safeguards and comply with applicable requirements for handling personal information.
- Regulatory oversight: The Data Protection Board of India is responsible for adjudicating specified non-compliance matters under the Act.

The law is intended to strengthen privacy protection in an increasingly digital economy, where personal information is routinely collected by online platforms, businesses and other organisations.

Why Have Media Organisations Challenged the Law?

The central concern raised by the DNPA is that the legislation does not provide a sufficiently clear, specific exemption for journalistic activities. Publishers argue that applying ordinary data protection requirements to investigative reporting could interfere with the collection, verification and publication of information in the public interest.

1. Consent Requirements and Investigative Journalism

Investigative journalism frequently involves examining the activities of public officials, corporations and other powerful individuals. Reporters may need to collect and verify information without alerting the subjects of their investigations.

The DNPA argues that requiring journalists to notify the subjects of investigations and obtain consent could compromise confidential inquiries. Individuals facing scrutiny might destroy evidence, influence witnesses or obstruct the investigation before publication.

For example, a journalist investigating suspected financial irregularities could find it difficult to collect and verify relevant personal data if the person concerned must be informed in advance.

The publishers contend that these requirements could weaken the ability of news organisations to expose wrongdoing.

2. Right to Erasure and the Risk of Removing News Reports

The Act recognises individuals' rights concerning correction and erasure of personal data, subject to its applicable provisions.

Media organisations fear that these rights could be invoked to demand the removal or substantial redaction of published reports containing personal information.

A report concerning alleged corruption, for instance, might contain names, financial details or other personal information relevant to the public interest. If the subject subsequently seeks erasure of that information, publishers are concerned that the absence of a clear journalistic safeguard could create pressure to remove or alter the report.

The dispute raises an important distinction between the right to protect personal data and the public's right to access accurate information about matters of public concern.

However, the law's privacy protections do not automatically mean that every request for erasure must result in the removal of a news report. The legal implications will depend on the applicable provisions and their interpretation.

3. Protection of Confidential Journalistic Sources

Confidential sources play a crucial role in investigative journalism. Whistleblowers, employees and witnesses may provide evidence of corruption, financial misconduct, administrative failures or other wrongdoing only if their identities and communications are adequately protected.

The DNPA has expressed concern about provisions allowing the government to require organisations handling personal data to furnish information.

According to the association, these powers could potentially expose confidential communications between reporters and their sources. It argues that such risks could discourage individuals from sharing sensitive information with journalists.

The issue is particularly significant when reporting involves matters such as:

- Corruption and misuse of public funds.
- Corporate fraud and financial irregularities.
- Electoral malpractice.

- Abuse of official authority.
- Administrative misconduct and failures in public service delivery.

If potential whistleblowers believe that their identities could be exposed, they may become reluctant to approach journalists. This could make it more difficult for the media to investigate matters that require information from insiders.

4. Government Powers and Regulatory Penalties

- The publishers have also questioned the scope of government powers and the potential consequences of non-compliance.
- The Act provides for financial penalties for specified violations. Depending on the nature of the contravention, penalties can reach ₹250 crore for certain failures, including failures to take reasonable security safeguards to prevent personal data breaches.
- The DNPA argues that compliance risks and the possibility of significant penalties could place additional pressure on news organisations, particularly smaller publishers with limited financial and legal resources.
- The association has also questioned provisions concerning government access to information and restrictions on access to information in specified circumstances. It argues that safeguards should prevent these powers from interfering unduly with independent journalism.
- These are claims advanced by the publishers in their legal challenge; their validity and scope remain matters for judicial determination.

Arguments Presented Before the Supreme Court

The DNPA's challenge has brought the relationship between data protection and freedom of the press before the country's highest court.

During the hearing on 27 October 2026, the association's lawyer, Madhavi Goradia Divan, argued that requiring journalists to seek permission from the people they report on would fundamentally alter the nature of news gathering and could lead to newsrooms shutting down.

The publishers have requested that the Court strike down or otherwise intervene in the disputed provisions that they say threaten journalistic freedom.

The case was postponed to November 2026, leaving the substantive legal questions unresolved.

The dispute also follows concerns raised by journalists, transparency advocates and smaller media organisations about the law's implications for investigative reporting and access to information.

Constitutional Provisions Involved

The case raises questions about the relationship between privacy, freedom of speech and the public interest under the Constitution of India.

Constitutional provision	Relevance
Article 19(1)(a)	Guarantees freedom of speech and expression, which underpins press freedom.
Article 19(2)	Permits reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech and expression on specified grounds.
Article 21	Protects life and personal liberty and has been interpreted by the Supreme Court to include the right to privacy.

In the landmark Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India judgment of 2017, a nine-judge Constitution Bench recognised the right to privacy as a fundamental right under the Constitution.

The present controversy raises the question of how privacy protections should operate alongside the freedom of journalists to investigate and report on issues of public importance.

The Court may need to consider whether the existing legal framework adequately balances these interests and whether more specific safeguards are necessary for journalistic activities.

Press Freedom in India: A Wider Context

- The legal challenge comes amid continuing international debate about media independence and the operating environment for journalists in India.

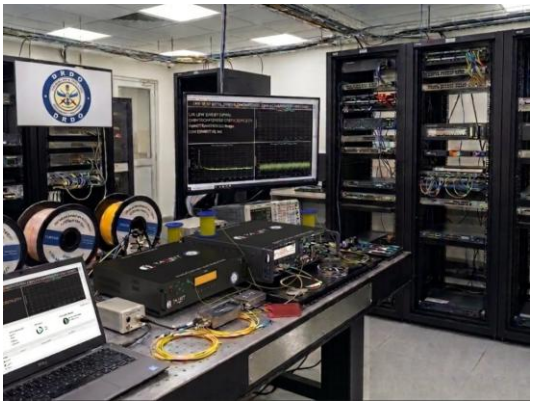
- In the 2026 World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), India ranked 157th out of 180 countries, with a score of 31.96. The ranking reflects the organisation's assessment of conditions affecting press freedom, including political, economic, legal, social and security factors.
- The ranking provides broader context for the debate, but it does not determine the constitutional validity of the DPDP Act or establish the merits of the publishers' specific claims.
- The case is significant because data protection rules increasingly affect how digital organisations collect, store and use information. For news publishers, the question is how to comply with these rules without compromising confidential reporting, source protection or the public's access to information.

Data Protection Versus Press Freedom

- The dispute highlights two legitimate democratic objectives.
- The case for data protection: Individuals should have meaningful control over their personal information. Strong safeguards can reduce misuse, unauthorised disclosure, identity-related risks and other forms of harm arising from the processing of personal data.
- The case for journalistic safeguards: Journalists need to investigate matters of public interest, verify information and protect confidential sources. Requiring prior consent from investigation subjects or exposing sensitive source communications could undermine these activities.
- A balanced framework would need to distinguish routine commercial processing of personal data from legitimate journalistic activities carried out in the public interest. It would also need safeguards against the misuse of journalistic exemptions, so that privacy rights and protection against inaccurate or harmful reporting are not disregarded.
- Possible approaches include clearly defined journalistic exemptions, safeguards for confidential sources, public-interest considerations when handling erasure requests, and appropriate oversight of government information demands.
- These are possible policy approaches rather than measures already ordered by the Supreme Court.

Science, Technology, Art & Culture

QNu Labs completes India's first 5-km free-space QKD



Why in the News?

India has achieved a significant milestone in quantum-secure communication with the successful demonstration of its first free-space Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) link over 5.56 km.

The demonstration was carried out by QNu Labs, in collaboration with the Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N) and IIT Gandhinagar. The field trial was conducted during the night of September 27–28, 2026, between BISAG-N and IIT Gandhinagar in Gujarat. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) announced the achievement on October 3, 2026.

The trial achieved a Quantum Bit Error Rate (QBER) below 5% and generated secure quantum keys at 230–

260 bits per second (bps). The keys were subsequently used for end-to-end encryption and decryption of test messages.

What is Quantum Key Distribution (QKD)?

Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) is a method of securely exchanging cryptographic keys using the principles of quantum mechanics.

In conventional cryptography, security depends largely on the computational difficulty of mathematical problems. The emergence of powerful quantum computers could threaten some existing public-key cryptographic systems.

QKD takes a different approach. It uses quantum states of particles, particularly photons, to establish a secret encryption key between two legitimate users.

A key feature of QKD is that an attempt by an unauthorised party to observe or measure the quantum information can disturb its quantum state. This disturbance can be detected by the communicating parties, allowing them to identify a possible interception attempt.

What is Free-Space QKD?

In conventional terrestrial QKD, quantum signals are generally transmitted through optical fibre.

Free-space QKD, in contrast, transmits quantum optical signals through the atmosphere without requiring a physical fibre connection. This makes it particularly useful for:

- Communication across difficult terrain.
- Links between buildings or geographically separated locations.
- Communication across water bodies.
- Air-to-ground and ground-to-air communication.
- Future satellite-based quantum communication.

The 5.56-km demonstration therefore represents an important field-level test of India's ability to maintain quantum communication through an open-air optical channel.

Organisations Involved

1. QNu Labs

QNu Labs is an Indian deep-tech company working on quantum-secure communication technologies.

For the demonstration, it provided the Armos QKD system and its Pointing, Acquisition and Tracking (PAT) technology. The PAT system helps maintain precise optical alignment between the transmitter and receiver over the free-space link.

2. BISAG-N

Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N) is an autonomous scientific organisation under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

It contributed its Vedic Kavach platform, which incorporates post-quantum cryptography (PQC) and quantum random number generation (QRNG).

3. IIT Gandhinagar

Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar provided the academic and field environment for the demonstration. The link connected the BISAG-N and IIT Gandhinagar locations in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

How Did the Demonstration Work?

The demonstration combined hardware-based QKD with software-based post-quantum security.

Step 1 – Quantum key generation:

QNu Labs' QKD equipment generated quantum keys and transmitted the quantum information through a free-space optical channel.

Step 2 – Precise optical alignment:

The Pointing, Acquisition and Tracking (PAT) system maintained alignment between the two terminals over the 5.56-km distance.

Step 3 – Error monitoring:

The system maintained a QBER below 5%, indicating that the quantum channel operated within the reported error limits.

Step 4 – Secure key generation:

The system generated keys at approximately 230–260 bps.

Step 5 – End-to-end encryption:

The generated keys were integrated into BISAG-N's Vedic Kavach platform, allowing test messages to be encrypted, transmitted and decrypted successfully.

QKD and Post-Quantum Cryptography: Difference

The demonstration is particularly significant because it combined two complementary approaches to quantum-era cybersecurity:

Technology	Basic Approach
QKD	Uses quantum principles to securely generate and distribute cryptographic keys
Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC)	Uses classical mathematical algorithms designed to resist attacks by quantum computers
QRNG	Uses quantum processes to generate high-quality random numbers

Thus, the experiment was not simply a demonstration of transmitting quantum signals; it also showed how **QKD-generated keys could be integrated into an operational security application**.

Strategic Significance

1. Strengthening quantum cybersecurity

The demonstration strengthens India's capability to develop communication systems designed for the quantum era, when sufficiently powerful quantum computers could threaten some conventional cryptographic mechanisms.

2. Foundation for satellite quantum communication

Free-space optical communication is particularly relevant to satellite-based QKD, because satellites cannot rely on fibre-optic cables for space-to-ground communication.

The National Quantum Mission envisages the development of quantum communication capabilities, including longer-distance and satellite-linked quantum networks. The present ground-based demonstration provides relevant technological experience in maintaining quantum optical links through the atmosphere.

3. Indigenous technology development

The participation of an Indian deep-tech company, a government scientific institution and an IIT demonstrates collaboration between industry, government and academia in an emerging strategic technology.

4. Secure critical infrastructure

Quantum-secure communication could eventually be relevant for protecting highly sensitive communications involving:

- Defence and national security.
- Government networks.
- Financial institutions.
- Strategic infrastructure.
- Space communication.
- Critical information systems.

Challenges

Despite the achievement, free-space QKD faces several technical challenges.

- **Atmospheric disturbances:** Fog, clouds, turbulence and other atmospheric conditions can affect optical transmission.
- **Precise alignment:** The transmitter and receiver have to remain accurately aligned over the entire communication path.
- **Limited range and key rates:** Practical systems must improve distance and secure-key generation rates for large-scale deployment.
- **Integration:** QKD has to work alongside existing communication networks and conventional cybersecurity systems.

Therefore, the 5.56-km trial should be viewed as a field demonstration and technological milestone, rather than a nationwide quantum communication network or commercial-scale deployment.

Overall Importance

The successful 5.56-km free-space QKD demonstration marks an important step in India's development of quantum-secure communication technologies. More importantly, the trial demonstrated an integrated security architecture in which QKD, post-quantum cryptography and quantum random number generation worked together to secure test communications.

It also provides valuable experience for future long-distance terrestrial, air-to-ground and satellite-based quantum communication systems.

WHO prequalifies Serum Institute of India's quadrivalent HPV vaccine, CERVAVAC



Why in the News?

The World Health Organization (WHO) has granted prequalification to CERVAVAC, India's indigenously developed quadrivalent Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, developed by the Serum Institute of India (SII). The WHO prequalification became effective on 25 September 2026, and the Serum Institute of India announced the achievement on 5 October 2026. This milestone marks an important step in India's efforts to strengthen domestic vaccine manufacturing and contribute to global public health.

CERVAVAC is India's first indigenously developed quadrivalent HPV vaccine to receive WHO prequalification. The recognition indicates that the vaccine meets WHO's required standards for quality, safety and efficacy, as well as relevant requirements for packaging and use in immunisation programmes. Its inclusion on the WHO list of prequalified vaccines makes it eligible for procurement by United Nations agencies, potentially expanding access to HPV vaccination in countries seeking affordable and reliable preventive healthcare products.

About CERVAVAC

CERVAVAC is a recombinant quadrivalent human papillomavirus vaccine manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, a vaccine producer based in Pune, Maharashtra. It is designed to protect against four HPV types: 6, 11, 16 and 18.

The vaccine was developed through collaboration involving the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), the Serum Institute of India and research and funding partners. Its development represents an effort to combine Indian vaccine-manufacturing capabilities with scientific research and public health objectives.

The vaccine had previously received approval for use in India from the country's drug regulatory authorities. WHO prequalification is an additional international milestone, distinct from national regulatory approval, because it supports eligibility for procurement through international agencies.

About Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

Human papillomavirus is a group of viruses that infect the skin and mucous membranes. Some HPV infections clear naturally, while persistent infection with certain high-risk types can cause cancer.

HPV is particularly important in public health because persistent infection with high-risk types, especially HPV 16 and 18, is responsible for a substantial proportion of cervical cancer cases worldwide. HPV can also cause cancers of the anus and other anogenital regions.

Other HPV types, particularly types 6 and 11, are associated with most cases of genital warts. Vaccination before exposure to the virus can substantially reduce the risk of diseases caused by the HPV types targeted by a vaccine.

Cervical cancer is a major preventable public health concern. The WHO's global strategy for eliminating cervical cancer as a public health problem sets targets for vaccination, screening and treatment. Its vaccination target calls for 90% of girls to be fully vaccinated against HPV by the age of 15. Increasing access to quality-assured vaccines is therefore an important component of global cancer-prevention efforts.

Types of HPV Covered by CERVAVAC

CERVAVAC targets four HPV types, each associated with particular health risks.

- HPV 16 and 18: These are high-risk types responsible for a substantial proportion of cervical cancer cases worldwide. They are also associated with other HPV-related cancers.
- HPV 6 and 11: These are low-risk types that cause most cases of genital warts.

By targeting both high-risk and low-risk HPV types, CERVAVAC provides protection against selected HPV-associated cancers and genital warts. However, it does not protect against every HPV type, and vaccination does not eliminate the need for cervical cancer screening where recommended.

Target Population and Vaccination Schedule

CERVAVAC is indicated for girls and boys aged 9–26 years, according to the manufacturer's product information. The recommended schedule depends on the age of the recipient.

Age group	Vaccination schedule
9–14 years	Two doses at 0 and 6 months
15–26 years	Three doses at 0, 2 and 6 months

The vaccine is administered through an intramuscular injection. Vaccination at an early age is particularly important because it is intended to provide protection before exposure to HPV.

The appropriate schedule and eligibility should follow official recommendations and the applicable product information. HPV vaccination is preventive; it does not treat an existing HPV infection or an established HPV-related cancer.

WHO Prequalification: Meaning and Importance

WHO prequalification is a quality-assurance process used to assess vaccines and other medical products for potential procurement by international agencies. The evaluation considers relevant quality, safety and efficacy data, product samples, manufacturing-site inspections and compliance with applicable operational requirements.

For CERVAVAC, the recognition has several important implications:

- International procurement: The vaccine becomes eligible for procurement by United Nations agencies, subject to their applicable purchasing requirements.
- Global access: It creates opportunities for countries to consider another vaccine option when designing or expanding HPV immunisation programmes.
- Quality assurance: The prequalification confirms that the product met the applicable WHO standards at the time of evaluation.
- Domestic manufacturing: It demonstrates the capacity of India's vaccine industry to develop products that can meet international procurement requirements.
- Public health collaboration: It strengthens India's potential contribution to international efforts to prevent HPV-associated diseases.

Prequalification should not be confused with automatic approval for use in every country. National regulatory authorities and immunisation programmes continue to determine registration, recommendations and implementation according to their respective requirements.

Role of Serum Institute of India

Serum Institute of India is headquartered in Pune, Maharashtra, and is a major vaccine manufacturer with an international presence. The company has supplied vaccines to numerous countries and has contributed to immunisation programmes targeting a range of infectious diseases.

The development of CERVAVAC involved collaboration with India's Department of Biotechnology and Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council, alongside international research and funding partners, including the WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the Gates Foundation.

The vaccine's WHO prequalification marks the 32nd WHO prequalification for a product or biological reported by Serum Institute of India, according to the company's announcement of 5 October 2026.

This achievement highlights the role of public research institutions, private manufacturers and international partners in advancing vaccine development and expanding access to preventive healthcare.

Significance for India

The WHO prequalification of CERVAVAC has implications for India's healthcare system and biotechnology sector.

1. Reducing dependence on imported products: Indigenous vaccine development strengthens domestic

manufacturing capacity and can broaden the range of vaccines available to immunisation programmes.

2. Supporting cervical cancer prevention: HPV vaccination can reduce the future burden of cervical cancer and other diseases caused by the HPV types covered by the vaccine.

3. Promoting affordable healthcare: Domestic production can create opportunities for cost-effective supply, although actual affordability depends on pricing, procurement arrangements and distribution.

4. Strengthening biotechnology capabilities: The achievement demonstrates India's ability to develop and manufacture complex biological products for both domestic and international markets.

5. Expanding India's global health contribution: Eligibility for United Nations procurement creates a pathway for CERVAVAC to reach additional countries, subject to demand, supply capacity and national regulatory requirements.

NASA's PUFFINS space telescope mission



Why in the News?

Bengaluru-born astronomer Dr. Ramya Manjunath Anche has been selected as the Principal Investigator (PI) of NASA's $20-million PUFFINS space telescope mission. The mission has been selected under NASA's Astrophysics Pioneers programme and aims to investigate the properties of interstellar dust using ultraviolet light.

Dr. Anche is an Assistant Research Professor at the University of Arizona's Steward Observatory in the United States.

About the PUFFINS Mission

PUFFINS stands for Polarimetry in the Ultraviolet to Find Features in INterStellar dust. It is a small-satellite (SmallSat) mission designed to study the properties of tiny dust particles distributed throughout the space between stars.

The mission will carry a specialised ultraviolet telescope with an aperture of approximately 10 inches (25.4 centimetres). Despite its relatively small size, the instrument is designed to conduct precise measurements of the polarisation of ultraviolet light from approximately 70 distant stars.

The project is being led by the University of Arizona's Steward Observatory in collaboration with McDonald Observatory at the University of Texas at Austin and researchers from other institutions.

- Funding: $20 million.
- Lead institution: University of Arizona's Steward Observatory.
- Principal Investigator: Dr. Ramya Anche.
- Mission type: Ultraviolet spectropolarimetry using a SmallSat.
- Target launch: 2030, according to the University of Arizona mission timeline.

Objectives of the PUFFINS Mission

The primary objective of PUFFINS is to understand the physical properties, structure and behaviour of interstellar dust grains. These microscopic particles play an important role in the evolution of galaxies and the formation of stars and planetary systems.

Its major scientific objectives include:

1. Studying interstellar dust: Investigating the size, composition and alignment of dust grains present in the interstellar medium.
2. Measuring ultraviolet polarisation: Observing how ultraviolet starlight becomes polarised as it passes through dust between a star and the observer.
3. Understanding star formation: Examining how dust grains interact with their surrounding environment and influence the processes associated with the formation of stars and planets.

4. Investigating magnetic-field effects: Using the alignment of dust grains to help scientists understand the relationship between interstellar dust and magnetic fields.
5. Advancing astronomical instrumentation: Demonstrating the capabilities of compact space-based ultraviolet instruments for future scientific missions.

What Is Interstellar Dust?

Interstellar dust consists of extremely small solid particles found in the space between stars. These particles are composed of materials such as silicates and carbon-rich compounds, along with other elements and compounds.

Although dust accounts for only a small fraction of the matter in the interstellar medium, it has a considerable influence on astronomical processes.

- It absorbs and scatters light travelling through space.
- It changes the brightness and colour of distant stars, a phenomenon known as interstellar extinction and reddening.
- It provides surfaces on which certain molecules, including molecular hydrogen, can form.
- It participates in the development of dense clouds from which new stars and planetary systems emerge.

Studying interstellar dust can therefore help scientists reconstruct the physical conditions under which stars and planets form and evolve.

Key Technology: Ultraviolet Spectropolarimetry

PUFFINS will employ ultraviolet spectropolarimetry, a technique that combines spectroscopy and polarimetry.

- **Ultraviolet astronomy**

Ultraviolet (UV) light has shorter wavelengths and higher photon energies than visible light. Observations in the ultraviolet can reveal features of interstellar dust that are difficult to investigate using visible light alone.

- **Polarimetry**

Polarimetry measures the orientation and degree of polarisation of light. When light interacts with aligned dust grains, its polarisation can provide clues about the particles' shape, alignment and surrounding magnetic environment.

- **Spectropolarimetry**

By measuring polarisation across different wavelengths, scientists can obtain more detailed information about dust properties than from brightness measurements alone.

The mission is designed to observe ultraviolet-bright stars over a wavelength range of approximately 180–320 nanometres. Its measurements are intended to improve understanding of very small interstellar grains and test theories explaining how dust particles become aligned.

Scientific Significance of PUFFINS

1. Improving our understanding of cosmic dust

The physical properties of interstellar dust remain an important research subject in astrophysics. PUFFINS will provide observations that can help scientists test models of grain size, composition and alignment.

2. Understanding the origins of stars and planets

Stars form within dense clouds of gas and dust. Dust also contributes to the material from which planetary systems develop. Better knowledge of its properties will improve models of how matter is processed throughout the life cycle of stars.

3. Advancing ultraviolet space astronomy

The Earth's atmosphere absorbs much of the ultraviolet radiation arriving from space, making space-based instruments particularly valuable for these observations. PUFFINS aims to demonstrate how a relatively compact satellite can perform specialised ultraviolet measurements.

4. Supporting future space telescopes

The technologies and scientific methods developed for PUFFINS may inform future astronomical observatories, including NASA's proposed Habitable Worlds Observatory. That future observatory is intended to investigate potentially habitable planets and search for signs of life beyond Earth.

These are potential contributions: PUFFINS has not yet launched, and its scientific findings will depend on the mission's eventual performance and observations.

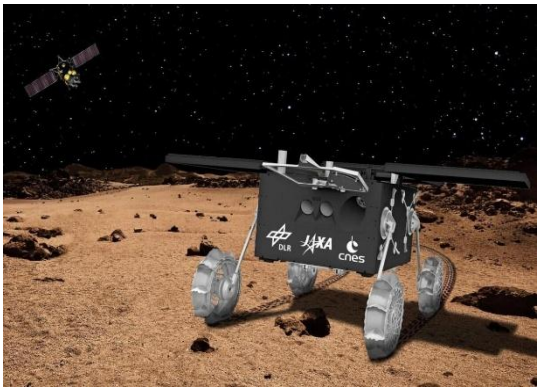
Overall Significance

The selection of Dr. Ramya Anche as Principal Investigator of NASA's PUFFINS mission represents an important milestone for her career and a notable achievement for the Indian-origin scientific community.

The mission seeks to answer fundamental questions about the nature of interstellar dust and its influence on star and planet formation. Through ultraviolet spectropolarimetry, it will explore physical properties that are difficult to investigate using conventional astronomical observations.

More broadly, PUFFINS demonstrates how compact satellite missions can contribute to advanced astrophysical research while creating opportunities for emerging scientists and student researchers. Its eventual observations may also support the development of future space-based observatories.

Japan to launch mission to collect samples from Mars moon



Why in the News?

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) successfully launched its Martian Moons eXploration (MMX) mission aboard the H3 Launch Vehicle Flight No. 10 from the Tanegashima Space Center on 20 October 2026. The rocket performed as planned, and JAXA confirmed that the spacecraft had been successfully separated and injected into its designated orbit approximately 71 minutes and 13 seconds after liftoff. The mission marks a major step in planetary exploration, as it aims to collect samples from Phobos, one of Mars' two natural moons, and return them to Earth for scientific analysis.

About the Martian Moons eXploration (MMX) Mission

The MMX mission is a JAXA-led interplanetary exploration project designed to study both of Mars' moons, Phobos and Deimos, with a primary focus on Phobos. Unlike missions that only observe celestial bodies from a distance, MMX will attempt to land on Phobos, collect surface material and transport the samples back to Earth.

The mission has an expected duration of approximately five years, with the return capsule scheduled to reach Earth in 2031. During its journey, the spacecraft will travel to the Martian region, conduct detailed observations of the moons, carry out sample collection operations and begin its return journey after completing its scientific objectives.

The mission is intended to help resolve a longstanding scientific question: did Mars' moons form from debris generated by a massive impact on Mars, or are they asteroids that were captured by the planet's gravitational field?

Major Objectives of the MMX Mission

The mission has several interconnected scientific and technological objectives.

1. Determine the origin of Phobos and Deimos: Scientists are investigating two principal theories: the giant-impact hypothesis, according to which the moons formed from debris following a major collision involving Mars, and the asteroid-capture hypothesis, which proposes that the moons originated elsewhere in the Solar System and were captured by Mars' gravity.
2. Collect and return samples from Phobos: MMX aims to bring back more than 10 grams of surface material from Phobos. Laboratory analysis of these samples on Earth will help researchers determine the moon's chemical composition, mineralogy and formation history.
3. Study both Martian moons: The spacecraft will examine the surface features, composition, internal structure and gravitational properties of Phobos. It will also observe Deimos to improve scientific understanding of the two moons and their relationship with Mars.
4. Investigate the evolution of the Martian system: The mission will provide evidence about the formation and evolution of Mars and its moons, potentially improving

our understanding of the distribution of water and organic materials in the early Solar System.

5. Develop advanced space-exploration technologies: MMX will demonstrate technologies for navigating around small celestial bodies, conducting controlled landings, collecting samples and completing a round trip between Earth and the Martian region.

Key Features of the MMX Spacecraft

The MMX spacecraft has been designed to perform several complex operations during its journey to Mars and back to Earth.

- **Three-module spacecraft architecture**

The spacecraft consists of a propulsion module, an exploration module and a return module. Together, these provide the capabilities needed for interplanetary travel, operations near the moons, sample collection and the return of material to Earth.

- **IDEFIX rover**

Developed jointly by the German Aerospace Center (DLR) and the French space agency (CNES), the IDEFIX rover is intended to explore the surface of Phobos. Its observations will help scientists understand the moon's terrain and surface properties and support planning for spacecraft landing and sampling operations.

- **Advanced sampling system**

The spacecraft is designed to conduct two soft-landing operations on Phobos to collect surface material. The collected samples will be stored in a dedicated return capsule for delivery to Earth.

- **Scientific instruments**

MMX carries 11 scientific mission instruments. These include cameras, a laser altimeter, a near-infrared spectrometer and NASA's MEGANE instrument, which measures gamma rays and neutrons to help determine the elemental composition of Phobos' surface.

Role of the H3 Launch Vehicle

The H3 is Japan's next-generation flagship launch vehicle, developed by JAXA in collaboration with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries. It is intended to provide reliable and competitive launch services for scientific missions, satellites and other spacecraft.

The successful launch of MMX demonstrates the H3's role in supporting Japan's ambitious deep-space exploration programme. Launching an interplanetary spacecraft requires sufficient energy to place the payload on the correct trajectory, allowing it to travel towards Mars and reach its intended destination.

Tanegashima Space Center, located in Kagoshima Prefecture in southwestern Japan, is one of the country's principal space-launch facilities. Its large launch complex supports Japan's major orbital launch operations.

International Collaboration

Although MMX is led by JAXA, the mission involves substantial international scientific and technical cooperation.

- Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA): Leads the mission, spacecraft development, launch and overall mission operations.
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA): Contributes the MEGANE scientific instrument and expertise in planetary science.
- French National Centre for Space Studies (CNES): Contributes to the development of the IDEFIX rover and associated exploration technologies.
- German Aerospace Center (DLR): Collaborates with CNES on the rover and supports scientific investigations of Phobos.
- European Space Agency (ESA): Participates in international cooperation and contributes to the wider scientific and technical effort.

Professor Ashoke Sen Becomes First Indian to Receive Oskar Klein Medal



Why in the News?

Renowned Indian theoretical physicist Professor Ashoke Sen has been awarded the prestigious 2026 Oskar Klein Medal, becoming the first Indian physicist to receive this international honour. The award recognises his pioneering contributions to string theory, particularly his research on S-duality, the precise calculation of black-hole entropy, and string field theory.

Professor Sen received the honour and delivered the 2026 Oskar Klein Memorial Lecture, titled *"Gravity from Strings and Strings from Gravity,"* on 22 October 2026 at the AlbaNova University Centre in Stockholm, Sweden.

The recognition represents a significant achievement for Indian science and highlights India's contribution to fundamental research in theoretical physics. Professor Sen is currently an ICTS-Infosys Madhava Chair Professor at the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS), Bengaluru, which is part of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR).

About the Oskar Klein Medal

The Oskar Klein Medal is an internationally recognised award that honours outstanding contributions to physics, particularly in theoretical physics.

- **Established:** 1988.
- **Named after:** Oskar Klein, a renowned Swedish theoretical physicist.
- **Awarding institutions:** Stockholm University and the Nobel Committee for Physics of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.
- **Nature of the award:** Recognition of distinguished contributions to physics.
- **Associated event:** The Oskar Klein Memorial Lecture, delivered by the award recipient.

The medal commemorates the scientific legacy of Oskar Klein, who made important contributions to quantum theory and the relationship between quantum mechanics and gravity.

Previous recipients include several distinguished scientists and Nobel laureates, such as Chen-Ning Yang (1988), Steven Weinberg (1989), Hans Bethe (1990), Stephen Hawking (2003), Peter Higgs (2009), and Kip Thorne (2016).

Professor Sen's selection places him among an internationally distinguished group of physicists whose work has significantly influenced modern scientific understanding of the universe.

About Professor Ashoke Sen

Professor Ashoke Sen is one of India's most distinguished theoretical physicists and is internationally recognised for his contributions to string theory and fundamental physics.

He pursued his undergraduate studies at Presidency College, Kolkata, and completed his postgraduate studies at the University of Calcutta. He subsequently earned his PhD from Stony Brook University in the United States.

Over several decades, his research has helped develop the mathematical and theoretical foundations of modern string theory, particularly in understanding the relationships between different formulations of the theory and the quantum properties of black holes.

Current Position

Professor Sen serves as the ICTS-Infosys Madhava Chair Professor at the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS), Bengaluru, under the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.

His research has contributed to India's international standing in fundamental physics, an area that seeks to explain the deepest principles governing matter, energy, space and time.

Major Scientific Contributions

1. String Theory

String theory is a theoretical framework that proposes that the fundamental constituents of nature may be tiny, one-dimensional objects called strings rather than point-like particles.

According to the theory, different vibrational states of these strings can correspond to different particles and their physical properties. String theory attempts to provide a unified mathematical description of fundamental particles and forces, including gravity.

One of its major motivations is to reconcile quantum mechanics, which describes nature at very small scales, with Einstein's general theory of relativity, which

explains gravity and the large-scale structure of spacetime.

Professor Sen's research has played a significant role in advancing the theoretical foundations of string theory and understanding its different formulations.

2. S-Duality

One of Professor Sen's most important contributions is his work on S-duality, a concept describing relationships between different descriptions of certain physical theories.

In some theoretical frameworks, S-duality relates a strongly interacting system to a weakly interacting one. This is particularly valuable because calculations that are difficult in one description may become more manageable in another.

Such relationships help physicists understand the deeper mathematical structure of fundamental theories and explore connections that might otherwise remain hidden.

Sen's work on dualities has contributed to the development of modern string theory and helped researchers investigate the relationships among apparently different theoretical models.

3. Black-Hole Entropy

Black holes are regions of spacetime whose gravitational pull is so strong that nothing, including light, can escape from within their event horizons.

A major theoretical puzzle concerns black-hole entropy, a quantity associated with the information content and microscopic physical states of a black hole.

Professor Sen made important contributions to the precise counting of microscopic states responsible for the entropy of certain black holes in string theory.

This research helps connect the macroscopic properties of black holes, described by gravity, with the microscopic description provided by quantum theory.

It is particularly significant because understanding black-hole entropy is central to broader efforts to develop a consistent quantum theory of gravity and investigate the relationship between gravity, quantum mechanics and information.

4. String Field Theory

String field theory is a formulation of string theory in which strings are described through fields, extending ideas from conventional quantum field theory.

Professor Sen has made influential contributions to the mathematical structure and development of string field theory.

His work has helped researchers investigate the dynamics of strings, the mathematical consistency of theoretical models and certain non-perturbative aspects of string theory.

These contributions are important for exploring the behaviour of fundamental physical systems beyond the limitations of simpler approximations.

5. Unifying the Different String Theories

During the development of string theory, physicists identified five consistent perturbative superstring theories. A major question was whether these represented fundamentally separate theories or different limits of a deeper underlying framework.

Research by Professor Sen and other physicists helped establish important connections among these formulations through dualities and related theoretical developments.

These insights contributed to the emergence of a broader framework often associated with M-theory, which seeks to connect different string-theory descriptions within a more comprehensive structure.

The unification of these theoretical descriptions remains an important development in attempts to understand the fundamental laws of nature.

Significance of the 2026 Oskar Klein Medal

1. International Recognition of Indian Scientific Research

Professor Sen's achievement highlights the contribution of Indian scientists to internationally competitive research in fundamental physics.

The award also demonstrates that major scientific breakthroughs can emerge from long-term theoretical investigations, even when their practical applications are not immediately apparent.

2. Advancement of Fundamental Physics

His research on string theory, dualities and black-hole entropy addresses some of the most challenging questions in contemporary physics.

These include how gravity can be reconciled with quantum mechanics, how black holes should be understood at the microscopic level, and whether the different fundamental interactions can be described within a common theoretical framework.

Although string theory has not yet been experimentally established as the definitive description of nature, it remains an important area of theoretical research.

3. Strengthening India's Research Ecosystem

Professor Sen's association with ICTS-TIFR reflects the importance of institutions that support advanced mathematical and theoretical research.

Such institutions provide an environment for collaboration, intellectual exchange and the training of researchers in specialised areas of science.

His recognition can also encourage students and early-career researchers in India to pursue fundamental research in physics and mathematics.

4. Recognition of Long-Term Scientific Contributions

The Oskar Klein Medal recognises sustained and influential scientific contributions rather than a single discovery alone.

Professor Sen's award reflects the cumulative impact of decades of research that have shaped the development of modern string theory and theoretical investigations into black holes and gravity.

Other Major Awards and Honours

Professor Ashoke Sen has received several prestigious national and international awards for his contributions to science.

Award or honour	Year
ICTP Prize	1989
Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize	1994
Fellow of the Royal Society	1998
Padma Shri	2001
Infosys Prize in Mathematical Sciences	2009
Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics	2012
Padma Bhushan	2013
Dirac Medal	2014
Oskar Klein Medal	2026

The Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics, awarded to him in 2012, recognised his contributions to establishing the unifying structure of string theory. His other honours, including the Dirac Medal, reflect the international importance of his work.

The Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan, among India's civilian honours, recognise his contributions to science.

About Oskar Klein

Oskar Klein (1894–1977) was a Swedish theoretical physicist known for his contributions to quantum theory and the relationship between higher-dimensional theories and fundamental interactions.

He independently developed the Kaluza–Klein approach, which explored the possibility of describing gravity and electromagnetism through a framework involving an additional spatial dimension.

The broader Kaluza–Klein idea subsequently influenced research into higher-dimensional physics and later developments in theoretical frameworks, including string theory.

The medal bearing his name commemorates his scientific legacy and recognises researchers whose contributions advance the understanding of fundamental physical laws.

Security Issues

18th India–Mongolia Joint Military Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT 2026



Why in the News?

The 18th edition of the India–Mongolia Joint Military Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT commenced on 21 September 2026 at the Foreign Training Node, Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand. The exercise is scheduled to continue until 3 October 2026.

The exercise aims to strengthen military cooperation, enhance interoperability between the armed forces of India and Mongolia, and improve their ability to conduct joint operations in challenging terrain. It reflects the growing defence partnership between the two countries, particularly in the areas of counter-terrorism, tactical training, and military-to-military exchanges.

About Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT

NOMADIC ELEPHANT is an annual bilateral military training exercise conducted between the Indian Army and the Mongolian Armed Forces. The exercise is held alternately in India and Mongolia to facilitate professional exchanges, improve coordination, and strengthen military cooperation.

The exercise is conducted at the platoon level and focuses on developing joint operational capabilities in semi-urban and mountainous terrain. The 2026 edition is the 18th in the series.

Key Highlights

Particulars	Details
Exercise	NOMADIC ELEPHANT
Edition	18th
Participating countries	India and Mongolia
Indian contingent	45 personnel
Mongolian contingent	45 personnel
Venue	Foreign Training Node, Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand
Duration	21 September – 3 October 2026
Level	Platoon-level exercise
Previous edition	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (2025)
Main focus	Counter-insurgency operations under a UN mandate

Source: Ministry of Defence, Government of India.

Objectives of the Exercise

The primary objective of Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT is to enhance the joint military capabilities of India and Mongolia for conducting counter-insurgency operations in semi-urban and mountainous terrain under a United Nations mandate.

Its major objectives include:

1. Enhancing interoperability: Improving coordination and the ability of troops from both countries to operate together as a joint task force.
2. Developing tactical capabilities: Strengthening combat skills through realistic field training and tactical-level operations.
3. Sharing operational experiences: Facilitating the exchange of best practices, military knowledge, and operational techniques.
4. Refining operational drills: Improving the execution of coordinated military procedures in challenging environments.
5. Strengthening defence cooperation: Building professional relationships, mutual trust, and closer military ties between the two countries.

Major Training Activities

The 2026 edition includes a range of tactical and technology-oriented training activities designed to prepare troops for complex operational environments.

1. Counter-Insurgency Operations

The exercise focuses on counter-insurgency operations in semi-urban and mountainous terrain. The training is designed to improve tactical coordination and the ability to respond to security challenges in difficult geographical conditions.

2. Cordon and Search Operations

Troops will practise cordoning off designated areas and conducting systematic searches. These drills help develop coordination, operational discipline, and the ability to conduct structured search operations.

3. Room Intervention Drills

These drills involve tactical entry and coordinated action in enclosed spaces, particularly in semi-urban environments. They help improve teamwork and communication during close-quarter operations.

4. Special Heliborne Operations

Training in special heliborne operations focuses on the use of helicopters to transport and deploy troops in difficult terrain. Such operations are relevant to mountainous environments where ground movement may be challenging.

5. Cyber Security Training

The inclusion of cyber security training reflects the growing importance of digital security in modern military operations. It provides an opportunity for both forces to exchange knowledge on cyber-related operational challenges.

6. Drones and Counter-Drone Systems

The exercise incorporates the employment of drones and counter-drone systems. This component provides training exposure to unmanned aerial technologies and measures designed to address drone-related threats.

These activities form part of the exercise's broader emphasis on tactical-level training, operational coordination, and the exchange of best practices.

Strategic and Defence Significance

1. Strengthening Bilateral Defence Relations

NOMADIC ELEPHANT provides a structured platform for regular military engagement between India and Mongolia. The alternating format allows both countries to host training activities and maintain professional exchanges between their armed forces.

2. Improving Military Interoperability

Joint training enables soldiers to understand each other's operational procedures, communication methods, and tactical approaches. This can improve coordination during future joint missions, particularly those conducted under a United Nations mandate.

3. Enhancing Mountain Warfare Preparedness

The focus on mountainous terrain provides opportunities to practise military operations in challenging geographical conditions. Training in semi-urban settings also helps troops prepare for a different set of tactical challenges.

4. Incorporating Emerging Technologies

The inclusion of drones, counter-drone systems, and cyber security training broadens the exercise beyond conventional infantry drills. It reflects the growing role of technology in contemporary military training.

5. Supporting United Nations Peacekeeping Preparedness

The exercise's emphasis on operations under a UN mandate supports the development of skills relevant to multinational military cooperation and peace-support operations.

Previous Editions and Continuity

NOMADIC ELEPHANT is conducted alternately in India and Mongolia. The 17th edition took place in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from 31 May to 13 June 2025, while the 16th edition was held at Umroi, Meghalaya, in July 2024.

The 2026 edition continues this established pattern of bilateral military engagement, with 45 personnel from each country's armed forces participating in the exercise.

Overall Significance

The 18th edition of Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT reinforces the defence partnership between India and Mongolia through joint tactical training, operational exchanges, and technology-oriented military drills.

By focusing on counter-insurgency operations in semi-urban and mountainous terrain, the exercise seeks to improve interoperability and strengthen the ability of both armies to operate together under a United Nations mandate. Its inclusion of cyber security, drones, and counter-drone systems also expands the scope of bilateral military training.

Exercise Tarang Shakti 2026



Why in the News?

The Indian Air Force (IAF) commenced the operational phase of Exercise Tarang Shakti 2026 at Air Force Station Jodhpur, Rajasthan, following the inaugural ceremony held on 26 September 2026.

The multilateral air exercise is being conducted from 26 September to 12 October 2026 under the theme "Power in Partnership", highlighting the importance of cooperation, interoperability, exchange of operational expertise and mutual trust among partner air forces.

Exercise Tarang Shakti 2026 is the second edition of the exercise, building on its inaugural edition held in 2024. It provides participating air forces an opportunity to conduct advanced joint training and gain experience in operating together in complex air-war scenarios.

About Exercise Tarang Shakti

Tarang Shakti is a major multinational air exercise hosted by the Indian Air Force.

The exercise is designed to bring together the IAF and friendly foreign air forces for:

- Advanced joint training
- Exchange of operational knowledge
- Development of interoperability
- Multinational mission planning
- Realistic air-combat training
- Strengthening of professional and strategic relationships

The 2026 edition is being conducted at Air Force Station Jodhpur and associated air bases, providing a realistic operational environment for participating forces.

The exercise focuses not merely on displaying aircraft but on developing the ability of different air forces to plan, coordinate and execute missions together.

Theme: "Power in Partnership"

The theme reflects the central objective of the exercise—building military capability through cooperation, interoperability, shared expertise and mutual trust.

Participating Foreign Countries

According to the Ministry of Defence, seven Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs) are participating in the operational phase alongside the IAF:

1. Australia
2. United States of America
3. United Arab Emirates
4. France
5. Germany
6. Sri Lanka
7. Bangladesh

Several other countries are also associated with the exercise as observers, allowing them to study operational procedures and multinational air cooperation without necessarily deploying aircraft.

Major Aircraft Participating

The exercise brings together several technologically advanced aircraft.

- **F-35 Lightning II**

The participation of the US F-35A Lightning II, a fifth-generation stealth fighter, is one of the major attractions of the 2026 exercise.

Its presence provides an opportunity for Indian and foreign air forces to gain operational exposure to advanced fifth-generation air-combat capabilities.

Recent reporting has also highlighted joint missions involving the US F-35A and Indian aircraft such as the Su-30MKI, Rafale and Tejas, demonstrating the practical interoperability dimension of the exercise.

- **Rafale**

The French Rafale represents a modern multirole fighter capable of conducting air-to-air and air-to-ground missions.

- The IAF itself operates Rafale fighters, allowing Indian pilots to train alongside foreign Rafale operators and gain additional experience in multinational operations.
- **F-16**

The F-16 provides another major fighter platform for multinational combat training and allows participating forces to practise operations involving different aircraft types.

- **A400M**

The Airbus A400M provides strategic and tactical airlift capability and expands the exercise beyond fighter operations.

- **MRTT**

The Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) aircraft provides air-to-air refuelling, enabling fighter aircraft to remain airborne for longer periods and increasing the complexity of multinational air operations.

- **C-130/C-130J and KC-30A**

These aircraft add tactical airlift and aerial-refuelling capabilities, allowing the exercise to cover a broader range of air missions.

Indian Air Force Participation

The IAF is participating with a range of its frontline and indigenous platforms.

These include aircraft such as:

- Su-30MKI
- Rafale
- LCA Tejas
- Mirage 2000
- MiG-29
- Jaguar

The participation of the LCA Tejas is particularly significant because it demonstrates India's growing indigenous fighter-aircraft capability.

The exercise therefore serves two purposes for India:

Operational training + demonstration of indigenous aerospace capability

Recent coverage of the exercise has highlighted formations involving Indian Su-30MKI, Rafale and Tejas alongside foreign aircraft.

Range of Air Operations

Tarang Shakti 2026 covers a broad spectrum of air operations.

These include:

- Counter-air operations
- Air defence
- Combat operations
- Reconnaissance
- Airlift
- Air-to-air refuelling
- Complex multinational mission sets

The exercise therefore goes beyond a conventional fighter-aircraft display and focuses on the ability of multiple air forces to function together in a contemporary battlespace.

Strategic Significance for India

Tarang Shakti 2026 has significance beyond military training.

- **Strengthening Defence Partnerships**

Participation by Australia, the United States, France, Germany, the UAE, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh reinforces India's defence engagement with a diverse group of partner countries.

- **Enhancing Interoperability**

India increasingly participates in multinational military exercises. Developing interoperability allows the IAF to work more effectively with partner air forces during humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, evacuation operations and other contingencies, apart from combat-related training.

- **Showcasing Indigenous Capability**

The participation of LCA Tejas and other Indian platforms provides an opportunity to demonstrate India's growing domestic aerospace and defence-industrial capabilities.

- **Strengthening Regional Security Cooperation**

The exercise contributes to India's broader defence diplomacy and engagement with friendly countries in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

Jodhpur as the Venue

Air Force Station Jodhpur is an important IAF air base in western India.

Its location in Rajasthan provides an appropriate environment for large-scale air operations and training.

The exercise also provides participating foreign contingents with exposure to India's military infrastructure, aerospace ecosystem and regional environment.

The operational setting around Jodhpur allows participating aircraft to undertake complex training while operating alongside Indian frontline platforms.

Social and Professional Engagements

Tarang Shakti 2026 also includes activities designed to promote interaction beyond flying operations.

These include:

- Professional seminars
- Industrial tours
- Heritage tours
- Yoga sessions
- Sekhon Marathon
- Cultural programmes

Such activities facilitate interaction between participating contingents and provide foreign personnel with greater exposure to India's cultural, industrial and aerospace environment.

Significance for India's Indigenous Defence Industry

Tarang Shakti also provides an international platform for India's growing aerospace sector.

The presence of Tejas alongside advanced foreign fighter aircraft allows India to demonstrate the operational maturity of its indigenous combat-aircraft programme.

The exercise also creates opportunities for participating foreign contingents to gain greater exposure to India's:

- Aerospace manufacturing capabilities
- Defence technology ecosystem
- Indigenous aircraft
- Maintenance and support infrastructure
- Defence-industrial base

The Ministry of Defence has specifically highlighted the exercise as an opportunity to showcase India's growing indigenous aerospace and defence capabilities.

India-UAE joint military exercise MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN 2026



Why in the News?

The joint military exercise MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN 2026 between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) commenced at Chaubatia, Uttarakhand. The exercise is scheduled to be conducted from 5 to 18 October 2026, with a primary focus on mountain warfare.

The exercise provides an opportunity for the armed forces of both countries to train together in challenging mountainous terrain, exchange operational experiences and strengthen their ability to conduct coordinated military operations. It also reflects the expanding defence cooperation between India and the UAE.

About Exercise MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN 2026

The exercise is being held at the Foreign Training Node, Chaubatia, Uttarakhand, under the joint participation of the Indian Army and the UAE Army. According to the Ministry of Defence, a total of 92 military personnel, equally represented by both countries, are participating.

Key Features

- Participating countries: India and the United Arab Emirates.
- Exercise name: MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN 2026.
- Duration: 5–18 October 2026.
- Venue: Foreign Training Node, Chaubatia, Uttarakhand.
- Main focus: Mountain warfare.
- Total personnel: 92, with equal representation from both armies.
- Indian contingent: Troops from a Bhairav Battalion.

- UAE contingent: Troops from a Mountain Infantry Battalion.
- Special participation: Women officers and combatants from both armies are participating in specialist roles.

Major Training Activities

The exercise includes a range of activities designed to develop tactical skills and improve coordination between the participating forces.

1. Joint planning and tactical drills: Developing coordinated approaches to military operations in mountainous terrain.
2. Firing practices: Improving weapon-handling skills and operational proficiency.
3. Surveillance grids: Practising the establishment of surveillance systems to monitor operational areas.
4. Drone operations: Incorporating unmanned aerial systems into reconnaissance and other technology-enabled activities.
5. Physical endurance training: Preparing personnel for the demanding physical conditions associated with mountain operations.
6. Rock climbing and obstacle training: Developing mobility, balance and confidence in difficult terrain.
7. Integrated field exercises: Applying the skills learned through simulated operational scenarios.

The exercise also facilitates the exchange of tactics, techniques and procedures between the two armies.

What Is Mountain Warfare?

Mountain warfare refers to military operations conducted in mountainous and high-altitude regions. Such environments present distinctive challenges because of steep slopes, rugged terrain, unpredictable weather, limited transport routes and reduced oxygen availability at higher elevations.

Successful mountain operations require specialised physical conditioning, terrain assessment, effective communication, appropriate equipment and coordinated movement. Surveillance and drone technology can also help troops gather information about difficult-to-access areas.

Training exercises such as MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN provide an opportunity to practise these skills and exchange operational experience under challenging terrain conditions.

Strategic Significance

The exercise is significant for several reasons:

- Improved interoperability: It helps both armies understand each other's procedures and coordinate more effectively during joint training and potential collaborative operations.
- Professional military exchange: Personnel can share operational knowledge, tactics and best practices.
- Technology-enabled training: The inclusion of drone operations and surveillance activities reflects the growing importance of technology in modern land warfare.
- Enhanced tactical proficiency: Mountain-specific drills help troops develop the skills needed to operate in rugged environments.
- Strengthened bilateral defence ties: Joint military training contributes to mutual understanding, professional trust and defence cooperation between India and the UAE.

Overall Significance

Exercise MOUNTAIN GUARDIAN 2026 represents an important step in India–UAE military engagement, with specialised training focused on mountain warfare. The participation of 92 personnel from the two armies, combined with joint tactical drills, drone operations and integrated field exercises, provides a platform for professional exchange and improved operational coordination.

For India, the exercise also supports the continued development of specialised mountain-warfare capabilities and strengthens defence cooperation with the UAE.

Exercise Cambrian Patrol 2026



Why in the News?

Troops from the Indian Army's Assam Regiment won the coveted Gold Medal at Exercise Cambrian Patrol 2026, held in Wales, United Kingdom, from 2 to 12 October 2026. The Indian contingent competed against more than 100 teams from different countries and emerged among the 10 teams awarded Gold Medals. The achievement highlighted the soldiers' physical endurance, tactical proficiency, leadership, teamwork and ability to perform under demanding field conditions.

The achievement is significant for India because Exercise Cambrian Patrol is an internationally recognised military patrolling exercise organised by the British Army. It provides an opportunity for participating troops to demonstrate their professional competence, operational preparedness and ability to respond to complex battlefield scenarios.

About Exercise Cambrian Patrol

Exercise Cambrian Patrol is the British Army's premier patrolling exercise, organised by Headquarters 160th (Welsh) Brigade in Wales. It is widely known as the "Olympics of Military Patrolling" because of its demanding physical, tactical and mental challenges.

The exercise originated in 1959 as a field-training activity designed to test soldiers' basic military skills and has developed into an internationally recognised event involving British and overseas military units. Its primary aim is to assess operational capability, strengthen soldiering skills and evaluate how effectively small military teams operate under realistic battlefield conditions.

Objectives of the Exercise

The primary objective of Exercise Cambrian Patrol is to evaluate the operational effectiveness of small military patrols through mission-oriented tasks and realistic battlefield scenarios. It tests whether soldiers can apply their training effectively while operating under physical and psychological pressure.

The major skills assessed during the exercise include:

- Navigation and fieldcraft: Moving through unfamiliar terrain, maintaining direction and applying essential field skills.
- Leadership and decision-making: Taking timely decisions, issuing orders and coordinating the actions of team members.
- Reconnaissance and observation: Identifying potential threats and gathering information about enemy positions.
- Casualty management: Performing battlefield first aid and responding to simulated injuries.
- Communication skills: Maintaining radio communications and delivering accurate patrol reports.
- Tactical proficiency: Demonstrating combat skills, obstacle-crossing techniques and responses to explosive threats.
- Physical and mental endurance: Maintaining performance, discipline and sound judgement throughout demanding tasks.

These assessments are conducted throughout the patrol, beginning at the drop-off point and continuing until the team completes the exercise. The evaluation also considers operational law, ethical conduct and interaction with civilians.

About the Assam Regiment

The Assam Regiment is an infantry regiment of the Indian Army, raised on 15 June 1941 at Shillong. It has a distinguished military heritage and is associated with the motto "Asam Vikram", reflecting courage and valour.

The regiment has developed experience in operating across varied and challenging environments. Its infantry training emphasises discipline, physical fitness, teamwork, fieldcraft and the ability to respond effectively to operational challenges.

Participation in an international exercise such as Cambrian Patrol provides an opportunity for its personnel to demonstrate these skills alongside military teams from other countries.

Significance of the Achievement

1. Recognition of the Indian Army's Professional Competence

The Gold Medal demonstrates the ability of Indian Army personnel to perform against internationally established military training standards. It also highlights the importance of rigorous preparation, tactical awareness and coordinated action at the small-unit level.

2. Strengthening International Military Cooperation

Cambrian Patrol brings together military personnel from different countries and provides a platform for professional interaction. Such engagements can support mutual understanding, the exchange of military experiences and stronger defence relationships between participating nations.

3. Emphasis on Small-Unit Leadership

Modern military operations require soldiers and junior leaders to make decisions in complex and rapidly changing situations. The exercise tests leadership, communication and initiative, demonstrating why these qualities remain essential to operational effectiveness.

4. Importance of Physical and Mental Resilience

Military patrols may face difficult terrain, demanding tasks and prolonged physical exertion. The exercise reinforces the importance of endurance, adaptability, discipline and teamwork in maintaining operational performance under pressure.

5. India's Presence in International Military Exercises

The achievement adds to the Indian Army's record of participation in international military competitions and exercises. Indian contingents have earned recognition at earlier editions of Cambrian Patrol as well, including the Gold Medal won by the 4/5 Gorkha Rifles (Frontier Force) in 2021.

Overall Significance

The Assam Regiment's success at Exercise Cambrian Patrol 2026 is a notable achievement for the Indian Army. Competing against more than 100 teams and finishing among the 10 Gold Medal recipients highlights the value of professional training, sound leadership, tactical proficiency and collective effort.

Beyond the medal itself, the exercise provides an opportunity to assess military skills under demanding conditions and strengthen professional engagement with international armed forces. The achievement underscores the importance of continuous training and operational preparedness in developing capable and resilient soldiers.

Trivia

National Single Window System (NSWS)

Why in the News?

The National Single Window System (NSWS) completed five years on 22 September 2026 since its launch in 2021. Implemented by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, NSWS is a digital platform designed to simplify the process of obtaining business approvals by bringing multiple Central and State-level approvals onto a common interface.

As of September 2026, the NSWS portal reports 67,000+ approvals applied through the platform and more than 1.3 lakh Know Your Approval (KYA) journeys undertaken by users. The platform currently facilitates approvals from 32 Central Ministries/Departments and 34 States/UTs.

About National Single Window System

The National Single Window System (NSWS) was announced in the Union Budget 2020–21 as part of the

proposed Investment Clearance Cell (ICC). It was envisioned as a one-stop platform providing end-to-end facilitation and support to investors, including pre-investment advisory, information on land availability and assistance in obtaining regulatory clearances.

The system was launched on 22 September 2021. It enables investors and entrepreneurs to identify, apply for, track and renew various approvals required for establishing, operating or expanding a business.

Key Features

1. Know Your Approvals (KYA)

The KYA module uses a guided questionnaire to identify the approvals required for a particular business based on factors such as the sector, location and nature of business activity. It provides guidance across 32 Central Departments and 35 States, while applications are currently hosted from 32 Central Departments and 34 State Governments.

2. Common Digital Platform

NSWS provides a common interface through which investors can access approvals without having to separately navigate multiple government portals.

3. Real-time Application Tracking

Applicants can track the status of their applications and receive updates through the platform, improving transparency in the approval process.

4. Secure Document Repository

The platform allows users to upload documents and reuse them for multiple applications, reducing repetitive documentation.

5. Online Communication and Query Management

The system facilitates electronic communication between applicants and concerned authorities, allowing queries and application-related issues to be handled digitally.

6. Renewal of Approvals

NSWS also provides facilities for renewal of eligible approvals through the digital interface.

Approvals and Services Available

NSWS covers a wide range of business-related approvals, including:

- Company incorporation
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) approvals
- Industrial licences
- Startup registration
- Labour-related registrations
- Various State-level licences and clearances
- Selected Government schemes and investment-related services

The portal also facilitates applications related to schemes such as the National Green Hydrogen Mission, Vehicle Scrapping Policy, Indian Footwear and Leather Development Programme, and the National Programme on High-Efficiency Solar PV Modules under the PLI Scheme.

Implementing Agency

The NSWS is implemented by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). Invest India, under the guidance of DPIIT, manages the overall NSWS project, including portal development, onboarding of Ministries and States, maintenance and performance monitoring.

Contribution to Ease of Doing Business

NSWS is an important component of India's broader Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) reforms. By enabling one-time submission of information and documents, digital processing and real-time tracking, it seeks to reduce duplication, compliance burden and delays associated with obtaining multiple approvals.

The system also promotes greater transparency and coordination between investors and government authorities, thereby creating a more predictable regulatory environment for businesses.

Significance

The NSWS represents a shift from fragmented approval mechanisms towards a digitally integrated and investor-centric regulatory system. Its expansion across Central Ministries and State Governments helps businesses navigate India's complex multi-level regulatory framework through a common interface.

The platform is particularly relevant for MSMEs, startups, domestic investors and foreign investors, as identifying the approvals required for a new project can otherwise involve interaction with multiple authorities.

Limitations

Despite its expanding coverage, NSWS does not eliminate the underlying regulatory requirements imposed by individual Ministries, Departments or States. The portal itself states that its KYA module is primarily an advisory tool, and users are advised to verify requirements with the relevant government portals for any additional approvals.

Further, although applications can be accessed through NSWS, the concerned Ministry, Department or State authority continues to process the application through its own system and procedures. Thus, integration of portals and standardisation of approval processes remain important for achieving the full potential of a single-window system.

Overall Significance

After five years, the National Single Window System has emerged as an important digital-governance initiative for improving India's business approval ecosystem. With 67,000+ approvals applied through NSWS and 1.3 lakh+ KYA journeys, its continued expansion reflects the government's effort to reduce regulatory friction and improve the ease of starting and operating businesses in India.

Nobel Prize 2026

The Nobel Prizes are among the world's most prestigious international awards. They recognise outstanding contributions to humanity in Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature, Peace, and Economic Sciences.

Nobel Peace Prize 2026



Navanethem "Navi" Pillay

South Africa · Announced 9 October 2026

The 2026 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Navi Pillay for her efforts to promote peace and international law.

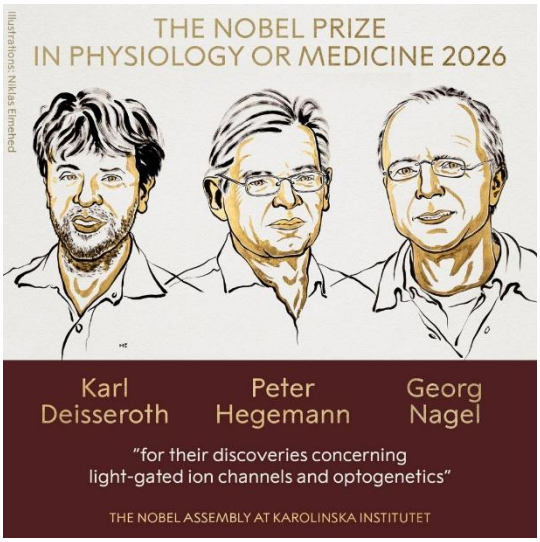
Why did she receive the prize?

The Norwegian Nobel Committee recognised Pillay's lifelong contribution to human rights, international justice and accountability for serious international crimes, including war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Her major contributions include:

- Opposition to apartheid: She defended anti-apartheid activists in South Africa, including Nelson Mandela and others who challenged racial discrimination.
- International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR): As a judge and later president of the tribunal, she contributed to landmark jurisprudence establishing that rape and sexual violence could constitute acts of genocide.
- International Criminal Court (ICC): She served as a judge of the ICC, which prosecutes individuals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression within its jurisdiction.
- United Nations human rights leadership: She served as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from 2008 to 2014.
- International legal accountability: She chaired a UN commission of inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, from 2021 to 2025, and has served as an ad hoc judge at the International Court of Justice in the case concerning allegations of genocide against Myanmar.

The award emphasises the relationship between international law, accountability and lasting peace: resolving conflicts without violence requires legal institutions capable of investigating atrocities and holding perpetrators accountable.



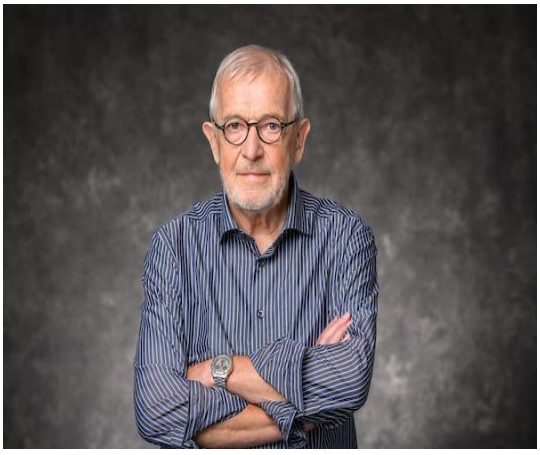
Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine

Announced: 5 October 2026

Winners: Karl Deisseroth, Peter Hegemann and Georg Nagel.

Why they received it: For discoveries concerning light-gated ion channels and optogenetics, a technique that uses light to control the activity of nerve cells.

Significance: Optogenetics enables researchers to activate or inhibit specific neurons with great precision, improving the study of brain circuits, behaviour and neurological disorders.



Nobel Prize in Physics

Announced: 6 October 2026

Winner: Francis Halzen, a physicist at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Why he received it: For decisive contributions to the IceCube Neutrino Observatory and the discovery of high-energy neutrinos of astrophysical origin.

Significance: IceCube uses sensors embedded deep in Antarctic ice to detect rare signals produced when neutrinos interact with matter. These observations help scientists investigate distant cosmic sources and extreme astrophysical events.



Nobel Prize in Chemistry

Announced: 7 October 2026

Winners: Henri B. Kagan of France and Kenso Soai of Japan.

Why they received it: For discovering nonlinear effects and autocatalysis in asymmetric organic synthesis.

Significance: Their work explains how chemical reactions can favour one of two mirror-image forms of a molecule and how that preference can be amplified. This is important in pharmaceutical manufacturing because different molecular forms can have different biological effects.



Nobel Prize in Literature

Announced: 8 October 2026

Winner: Anne Carson, a Canadian poet, essayist and translator.

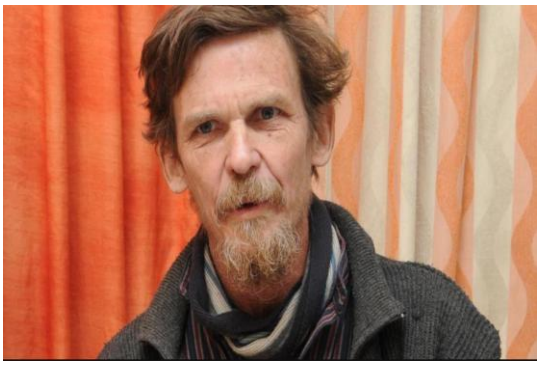
Why she received it: For her bold and inventive literary works, which engage playfully with the classical tradition and create new forms of contemporary literature.

Significance: Carson is known for combining poetry, prose, translation and classical Greek themes in unconventional ways. Notable works include Autobiography of Red, Eros the Bittersweet and Nox.

Important facts about the Nobel Prizes

- Established by: Alfred Nobel's will, signed in 1895.
- First awards: 1901.
- Original categories: Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature and Peace.
- Economics: The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel was established in 1968 and first awarded in 1969.
- Award ceremonies: Traditionally held on 10 December, the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death. The Peace Prize ceremony takes place in Oslo, Norway; the other Nobel Prize ceremonies take place in Stockholm, Sweden.

Who is Jean Drèze?



Why in the News?

The question, "Bhai saheb, aap ho kahan se?" (Sir, where are you from?), addressed to noted development economist and social activist Jean Drèze by a reporter during a protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on 10 October 2026, triggered a debate on social media. The exchange drew criticism because Drèze, despite his decades-long contribution to Indian society and public policy, appeared to be questioned about his identity and origins.

Drèze had joined protesters demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over concerns surrounding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. He criticised the extensive security arrangements, arguing that the deployment of force was disproportionate and could prevent citizens from raising concerns about their voting rights. The incident brought renewed attention to his work in India and raised questions about identity, citizenship, media responsibility and the freedom to participate in peaceful demonstrations.

About Jean Drèze

Jean Drèze is a Belgian-born Indian development economist, academic and social activist known for his research on poverty, hunger, food security, education, healthcare and rural development.

- **Birth and background:** He was born in Belgium in 1959 and moved to India in 1979. He became an Indian citizen in 2002.
- **Education:** He studied mathematical economics at the University of Essex in the United Kingdom and completed his PhD in economics at the Indian Statistical Institute in New Delhi.
- **Academic career:** He has taught at the London School of Economics and the Delhi School of Economics. He has also held academic positions at Indian universities, including Jawaharlal Nehru University.
- **Research contributions:** His work focuses on the relationship between public policy, economic inequality and the living conditions of disadvantaged communities.
- **Academic collaborations:** He has co-authored influential works with Nobel laureate Amartya Sen on hunger, famine, welfare and public action.

Drèze is particularly recognised for combining academic research with fieldwork, often studying the everyday experiences of rural households and marginalised communities. His approach emphasises that economic development must be assessed not only through national income and growth but also through

improvements in nutrition, health, education and human dignity.

Contribution to Indian Public Policy

Jean Drèze has played an influential role in discussions surrounding several major social welfare initiatives in India. His work has helped bring attention to the importance of public accountability, access to essential services and the protection of vulnerable populations.

1. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

Drèze was among the economists and social policy experts associated with the development and advocacy of the National Rural Employment Guarantee framework, which later became MGNREGA.

The legislation, enacted in 2005, established a legal guarantee of up to 100 days of wage employment per financial year for eligible rural households willing to undertake unskilled manual work, subject to the scheme's provisions.

The programme aims to provide livelihood security, reduce distress migration, create rural assets and strengthen the bargaining power of rural workers. Drèze's research has highlighted the importance of employment guarantees as a means of supporting poor households during periods of economic hardship.

2. Right to Information (RTI) Act

Drèze has supported efforts to improve transparency and accountability in government institutions. The Right to Information Act, 2005, provides citizens with a legal mechanism to seek information from public authorities, subject to statutory exemptions.

Access to official information can help citizens examine public expenditure, question administrative decisions and identify irregularities in welfare delivery.

3. National Food Security Act, 2013

Drèze has also contributed to debates concerning food security and the public distribution system. The National Food Security Act, 2013, created a legal framework for subsidised foodgrain entitlements for eligible households and provisions for nutritional support.

His research on hunger and public action has emphasised that food insecurity is not simply a consequence of insufficient food production. It is also linked to poverty, unequal access to resources, weak public services and gaps in welfare implementation.

Together, these areas illustrate his central argument: effective development requires institutions that make essential services accessible to people who need them most.

What Was the Jantar Mantar Protest About?

- The protest on 10 October 2026 centred on the Election Commission of India's Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls and demands for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.
- Electoral rolls are official lists of eligible voters maintained for elections. Their accuracy is essential to ensuring that eligible citizens can exercise their constitutional right to vote.
- The SIR exercise became controversial amid allegations by opposition parties and activists that large numbers of names had been removed from voter lists and that the process lacked sufficient transparency. Critics expressed concern that eligible voters, particularly migrants, economically disadvantaged citizens and other vulnerable groups, could face difficulties establishing their eligibility or restoring their names.
- The Election Commission and supporters of the revision have defended electoral-roll verification as necessary to identify deceased, duplicate and otherwise ineligible entries. The central issue is therefore how to maintain accurate voter lists without excluding eligible citizens.
- According to Reuters' reporting on 13 October 2026, the dispute had escalated into a broader political controversy, with critics alleging that the revisions could affect millions of voters. Such claims and the official justification need to be assessed separately; the number of names removed does not, by itself, establish how many eligible voters were wrongly excluded.

ADMISSIONS OPEN

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