



## MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS - JANUARY 2026

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# Foot Prints

(Compilation of Current Events)

 <b>TAMIL NADU</b>	 <b>STATES</b>	 <b>NATIONAL</b>	 <b>INDIA &amp; THE WORLD</b>	 <b>INTERNATIONAL</b>
 <b>SCHEMES</b>	 <b>DEFENCE</b>	 <b>SCIENCE &amp; TECHNOLOGY</b>	 <b>EVS</b>	 <b>ECONOMY</b>
 <b>COURT VERDICTS</b>	 <b>CONFERENCES &amp; SUMMITS</b>	 <b>AWARDS</b>	 <b>PERSONALITIES</b>	 <b>BOOKS &amp; AUTHORS</b>
 <b>SPORTS</b>	 <b>RANKS &amp; REPORTS</b>	 <b>DAYS</b>	 <b>OBITUARY</b>	 <b>NEWS OF THE MONTH</b>
 <b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	 <b>APPOINTMENTS</b>	 <b>COMMITTEES</b>	 <b>APPS / PORTALS</b>	 <b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>

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# TAMIL NADU

## Tamil Nadu Pension Committee Report

The Tamil Nadu government constituted a three-member Pension Committee to review the existing pension frameworks.

- The committee was headed by **Gagandeep Singh Bedi**, with **K.R. Shanmugam** and **Pratik Tayal** as members.
- Its mandate was to study and compare **OPS, CPS, and UPS** in terms of sustainability and employee welfare.



## PE-VC Investments in Tamil Nadu 2025

- Private Equity and Venture Capital activity in Tamil Nadu showed strong momentum in 2025, reflecting continued investor confidence in the state's business ecosystem.
- PE-VC firms invested \$3,513 million across 61 deals in Tamil Nadu-based companies during the year. This marked a 20% increase in total investment value compared to 2024, indicating improved deal sizes and higher capital deployment.
- The rise in investment value despite a moderate deal count highlights a shift toward larger ticket investments.
- It also reflects growing interest in scalable companies rather than early-stage experimentation. While the overall annual performance remained positive, the quarterly trend revealed volatility.
- In the **fourth quarter of 2025**, PE-VC investments fell sharply to **\$421 million** across **14 deals**. This represented a significant contraction compared to earlier quarters.
- The **Q4 investment value was nearly 71% lower than Q3**, when investments touched **\$1,461 million**. Such a steep decline suggests cautious investor sentiment towards the end of the year.



## TN Goat and Sheep Breeding Policy 2025

The TN Goat and Sheep Breeding Policy 2025 marks a major step by Tamil Nadu to improve small ruminant production and preserve native breeds.

- The policy focuses on structured breeding practices that can raise productivity while retaining genetic purity.
- It also emphasises scientific breeding models to support farmers engaged in goat and sheep rearing across the State.
- The policy proposes an **open nucleus breeding system for goats**, where the best-performing animals are selected and bred within a nucleus herd.
- This system allows regular genetic inflow from field populations, strengthening traits such as growth rate, fertility, and disease resistance.



## TN 100 Chip Varsity Project

The TN 100 Chip Varsity Project marks a major step in Tamil Nadu's technology roadmap. Launched in partnership with iVP Semi, the initiative focuses on strengthening India's presence in semiconductor design.

- The programme aims to equip engineering colleges with advanced design labs to nurture skilled talent.
- The project plans to establish a wide network of chip design labs across selected engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu.
- These labs will host industry-grade tools and training chips, enabling students to work on real-world semiconductor design workflows. This builds a robust academic-to-industry pipeline within the State.
- A key highlight of the initiative is its goal to train 5,000 students every year in chip and semiconductor design.
- The programme focuses on practical skill development, making graduates industry-ready.
- Tamil Nadu, with its strong engineering education base, is positioned to become a leading talent hub in chip design.



## Karikiyoor Rock Art Documentation Initiative

**The documentation of Karikiyoor rock art marks a significant step in preserving Tamil Nadu's prehistoric heritage.**

- The site in Kil Kotagiri is known for its ancient paintings depicting human figures, animals and early cultural expressions.
- The Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department has now initiated a structured effort to formally record these artifacts.
- The upcoming book on Karikiyoor was announced during the launch of "The Nilgiris Archaeology" at Udhagamandalam.
- This publication event highlights the State's continued commitment to archaeological research in the Nilgiris region. The book has been curated by Yaakai Heritage Trust, an organisation involved in heritage conservation.
- The Karikiyoor publication forms part of a broader four-year documentation project covering multiple archaeological themes across Tamil Nadu.
- This project focuses on identifying and recording rock paintings and associated cultural sites.
- The initiative strengthens the State's archaeological database and helps preserve fragile heritage materials.



## Tamil Nadu Assured Pension Scheme

**The Tamil Nadu Assured Pension Scheme (TAPS) has been introduced by the Tamil Nadu government as a major reform in employee welfare. The scheme broadly follows the structure and philosophy of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS). Its primary objective is to ensure income security for government employees after retirement.**

- TAPS marks a significant shift in pension policy by moving away from market-linked uncertainty.

- It aims to provide predictable and stable post-retirement benefits. The announcement has direct relevance for serving and retiring state government employees.
- Under **TAPS**, pension is fixed at **50% of the last drawn pay** in the final month of service. This ensures that the pension amount reflects the employee's final salary position.
- Unlike contributory systems, the pension is not dependent on accumulated corpus or market returns.
- This feature closely mirrors the **OPS framework**, which was prevalent for government employees appointed before 2004.
- The assured nature of the benefit provides financial certainty after retirement. The scheme includes **Death-cum-Retirement Gratuity (DCRG)** as a key retirement benefit.
- Under TAPS, the maximum limit for gratuity has been fixed at **₹25 lakh**. This amount is payable as a one-time lump sum at the time of retirement or death.
- Gratuity acts as immediate financial support for retired employees or their families. The enhanced ceiling reflects rising living costs and post-retirement expenses.
- TAPS provides a strengthened **family pension** mechanism. In the event of the pensioner's death, the family pension will be **60% of the pension amount**. This ensures sustained income support for dependents.
- Family pension plays a crucial role in social security for spouses and eligible family members.
- The higher percentage improves financial resilience for bereaved families.

The scheme officially comes into force from **January 1, 2026**.

A formal **Government Order (G.O.)** was issued by the **Finance Department** on **January 9, 2026**, giving statutory backing to the implementation.

All **government employees joining service on or after January 1, 2026**, will be compulsorily brought under **TAPS**. This removes ambiguity regarding pension entitlement for future recruits.

Employees currently covered under the **Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS)** and **retiring on or after January 1, 2026**, will also be transitioned into TAPS automatically.

Government servants who entered service **before January 1, 2026**, and are currently under **CPS**, are given a choice. At the time of retirement, they can **opt either for TAPS or continue with CPS benefits**.

## Ulagam Ungal Kaiyil Scheme

- The **Ulagam Ungal Kaiyil Scheme** is a major digital education initiative launched by the **Tamil Nadu Government** to strengthen technology access among students.
- The scheme was officially rolled out on **5 January 2026** in **Sivaganga district**.
- Its central objective is to ensure that higher education students are not excluded from digital learning due to economic barriers.
- The scheme aims to cover **20 lakh students across Tamil Nadu**, making it one of the largest student-centric digital initiatives in the state.
- In the **first phase**, **10 lakh students** are being provided with free laptops.
- The scheme covers students enrolled in **Government colleges** and **Government-aided colleges** across Tamil Nadu.
- In addition, **eligible private college students** are also included under specific welfare provisions.
- Students admitted through the **7.5% reservation for government school students** are explicitly covered.
- Beneficiaries under recognized **state welfare schemes** are also eligible, ensuring inclusion of socially and economically disadvantaged groups.
- Students pursuing **medical, engineering, arts and science, agriculture, and law** courses are eligible.
- Technical and skill-based education streams such as **polytechnic, nursing, and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)** are also covered. This ensures that both academic and vocational learners benefit equally from digital access.



## Tamil Nadu UN Women Collaboration for Inclusive Governance

- The **Tamil Nadu Government** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **UN Women in Chennai**, marking an important step in strengthening institutional mechanisms for women-centric governance.
- The primary aim of the MoU is to enhance **women's welfare**, promote **gender equality**, and ensure **inclusive development** across social and economic sectors.

- Special emphasis is placed on aligning State policies with the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly those related to gender justice and reduced inequalities.
- A core component of the collaboration is the promotion of **gender-responsive governance**, planning, and budgeting.
- Under the MoU, **UN Women** will provide **technical support** to the Government of Tamil Nadu.
- **Key departments include the Social Welfare and Women's Rights Department, Home, Prohibition and Excise Department, and Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department.**

## Ungal Kanavai Sollungal Household Survey

The Tamil Nadu Government has launched a State-wide household survey titled **Ungal Kanavai Sollungal**, meaning Share Your Aspirations. The initiative aims to directly capture the voices of citizens regarding governance and development priorities. This survey reflects a shift towards participatory governance, where policy inputs come directly from households rather than only institutional channels.

- The survey will be conducted for a period of **one month** across all districts of **TamilNadu**.
- It is designed to reach approximately **1.91 crore families**, ensuring near-universal household coverage.
- The survey will be implemented through the **Mudhalvarin Mugavari** department.
- This department already handles public grievance redressal and citizen petitions at the State level
- Around **50,000 trained volunteers** will conduct door-to-door visits during the survey period.
- These volunteers will interact directly with families to record responses and aspirations.
- Each family will provide feedback on **existing government schemes**.
- In addition, households will list **three priority aspirations** they expect the government to focus on in the future.
- All collected details will be **digitised using a mobile application**.



- Every participating family will receive a **unique tracking code** for future reference.

## Tamil Nadu's Deep Tech Startup Push

Tamil Nadu has unveiled India's first exclusive Deep Tech Startup policy during UImagineTN 2026 held in Chennai. The policy is officially titled Tamil Nadu Deep Tech Startup Policy 2025-2026 (TNDTSP) and marks a strategic shift from general startup support to science-driven and research-intensive entrepreneurship

- Deep tech startups are built on **fundamental scientific research and advanced engineering**, not incremental digital solutions
- They typically operate in areas like **Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, robotics, biotechnology, advanced materials, semiconductors, and clean technologies**
- The **iTNT Hub** has been designated as the **nodal implementing agency** for TNDTSP.
- The policy aims to **support 100 deep tech startups** during the 2025-26 period. It also seeks to **mobilise ₹100 crore** through a mix of **public funding and private capital participation..**
- A key feature of TNDTSP is its emphasis on technology transfer from academic and R&D institutions.
- The policy targets at least 10 technology transfer or licensing deals during its implementation period.
- The policy plans to train over 10,000 students and professionals in deep tech domains.
- Training will focus on Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, robotics, and biotechnology, which are core growth sectors.

## UNICEF Tamil Nadu Innovation Partnership

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has entered into a landmark partnership with the Government of Tamil Nadu, marking a historic moment in global development cooperation. This agreement makes Tamil Nadu the first-ever sub-national government partner of UNICEF anywhere in the world.

- Under this agreement, UNICEF will work **directly with a state government**, rather than operating only through the national government framework.
- **Tamil Nadu** becomes a global pilot for this approach, potentially shaping how UNICEF collaborates with other states and regions worldwide.
- UNICEF's **Office of Innovation** will play a central role in this collaboration. It will provide **technical expertise**, digital tools, and innovation frameworks to strengthen Tamil Nadu's public systems.
- The partnership aims to scale evidence-based solutions that directly benefit children and communities.
- Key sectors include healthcare delivery, nutrition, education systems, child protection, and social inclusion.

### Namma Arasu WhatsApp Chatbot Initiative.

The Tamil Nadu Government has launched the Namma Arasu WhatsApp Chatbot to simplify access to public services through a familiar digital platform. The initiative aims to bridge the gap between citizens and government departments using instant messaging technology.

- The chatbot was officially introduced during the **UmagineTN 2026** event, a flagship platform showcasing digital innovations in governance.
- Citizens can access the **Namma Arasu** chatbot by sending a message to **+91 7845252525** on WhatsApp.
- The service does not require additional app downloads or registrations, making it accessible even to first-time digital users.
- The **Namma Arasu WhatsApp Chatbot** currently provides access to **51 government services**. These services span across revenue, social welfare, civic administration, and public utilities.
- Key services include **certificate downloads, utility bill payments, tax payments**, and **status tracking** of applications. Citizens can also access information related to **welfare schemes** and eligibility criteria.
- A major feature of the chatbot is the **grievance filing mechanism**, allowing citizens to lodge complaints directly through WhatsApp.



## UmanageTN 2026 and Tamil Nadu's Technology Vision

UmanageTN 2026 marked the fourth edition of Tamil Nadu's flagship global technology and innovation summit. The event was hosted in Chennai, reinforcing the city's role as a major technology and policy hub in South India.

- The summit focuses on aligning **emerging technologies** with governance and industrial growth.
- The central theme of UmanageTN 2026 revolves around frontier technologies shaping the future economy.
- These include **Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Quantum Technology, Cybersecurity, and AVGC-XR.**
- AVGC-XR covers **Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality**, sectors with high global demand.
- A key pillar of the summit is **Deep Tech start-up scaling.**

Deep Tech refers to start-ups based on **advanced scientific research and engineering innovations.**

- UmanageTN 2026 highlights Digital Public Infrastructure as a foundation for inclusive growth.
- This includes digital identity systems, payment platforms, and service delivery frameworks.
- The summit places strong emphasis on **Global Capability Centres (GCCs).**



## Tamil Nadu State Indicator Framework 2.0

Tamil Nadu has released the State Indicator Framework 2.0 (SIF 2.0) to systematically monitor progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the year 2030. The framework acts as a data-driven tool to assess development outcomes across sectors.

- The updated framework has **reduced the number of indicators from 314 to 244**, making monitoring more focused and outcome-oriented. These indicators are mapped across all **17 SDGs.**

- A total of **28 Tamil Nadu State departments** are responsible for data collection and reporting. This promotes inter-departmental coordination and accountability in achieving SDG targets.
- SIF 2.0 is fully aligned with the **UN Global Indicator Framework**, ensuring international comparability of data.
- It also corresponds with India's **National Indicator Framework (2025)**, strengthening Centre-State policy coherence.
- The **under-five mortality rate stands at 13 per 1,000 live births**, reflecting improvements in child healthcare and nutrition.
- The State has achieved **99.98% institutional deliveries**, indicating near-universal access to formal maternal healthcare services. This significantly reduces maternal and infant mortality risks.
- According to **NITI Aayog**, Tamil Nadu's **multidimensional poverty rate is 2.2%**, which is substantially lower than **Bihar (33.76%)** and **Uttar Pradesh (22.93%)**. This reflects effective social welfare coverage and inclusive growth.
- Tamil Nadu ranks **second in the SDG India Index 2023-24** with a score of **78**. This places the State among the top performers in sustainable development outcomes
- SIF 2.0 strengthens Tamil Nadu's capacity for **outcome-based governance**. By tracking precise indicators, it enables timely policy corrections and targeted interventions.

### iTNT-XeedQ Quantum Partnership in Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu has taken a major step towards emerging technologies through a quantum computing collaboration between iTNT Hub and XeedQ GmbH. A **Letter of Intent (LoI)** was signed at **Umagine 2026**, marking the beginning of structured quantum programmes in the State.
- This initiative positions Tamil Nadu as an early mover in India's quantum ecosystem. It also reflects the State's policy focus on deep-tech innovation and future-ready skills.



- The first phase of the programme focuses on **capacity building and exposure**. Students and startups in Tamil Nadu will receive **remote access to a 4-qubit quantum computer** developed by XeedQ.
- This access allows learners to experiment with real quantum hardware instead of simulations. Such hands-on exposure is crucial for understanding **quantum algorithms, qubits, and quantum logic operations**.

## World Tamil Diaspora Day 2026

- World Tamil Diaspora Day 2026 is being organised on 11-12 January 2026 in Chennai.
- The event is hosted by the Tamil Nadu Government through the Department of Non-Resident Tamils Welfare.
- It is designed as a global platform to engage and reconnect with Non-Resident Tamils (NRTs) living across different continents.
- The observance reflects Tamil Nadu's long-standing efforts to maintain strong cultural and emotional bonds with the global Tamil community.
- The state has consistently positioned itself as the cultural anchor for Tamils worldwide.
- The primary aim of the event is to strengthen global Tamil unity. It seeks to promote the Tamil language, preserve cultural heritage, and highlight the shared identity of Tamils across nations.
- The programme also focuses on building sustained engagement between the state and overseas Tamils.
- Another major objective is to recognise the social, economic, academic, and cultural contributions of the Tamil diaspora.
- By showcasing these achievements, the event reinforces the global relevance of Tamil identity.



## Tamil Nadu Circular Economy Investment Policy 2026

- The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu officially released the Tamil Nadu Circular Economy Investment Policy 2026 in Chennai.

- The policy positions Tamil Nadu as a national leader in sustainable industrial transformation by integrating economic growth with environmental responsibility.
- It focuses on building a structured circular economy ecosystem that reduces waste, improves material reuse, and strengthens industrial sustainability. The policy directly supports India's broader green growth and climate action goals.
- The policy promotes recycling industries, resource efficiency technologies, and circular production systems. Priority sectors include waste recycling, industrial reuse systems, clean technology, and material recovery industries.
- Companies investing a minimum of ₹20 crore and generating at least 25 net new jobs qualify for incentives. This threshold ensures that only serious industrial investments benefit from policy support.
- Eligible firms receive a capital subsidy of 10% of Eligible Fixed Assets (EFA), subject to a maximum limit of ₹3 crore. The subsidy structure supports both infrastructure creation and long-term industrial stability.
- The capital subsidy is disbursed over five years in equal annual instalments after the start of commercial operations.
- This ensures accountability, performance tracking, and sustained business operations.



### **Semmozhi Literary Recognition Mission**

**The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister announced a new annual literary award scheme to honour excellence in seven non-Hindi Indian languages. This initiative reflects a strong cultural policy focus on linguistic diversity and regional literary traditions.**

- The Chief Minister stated that the remarks violated the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly. The resolution clarified that only members of the Assembly have the right to suggest amendments during the Bill's consideration stage.

- The Chief Minister highlighted that the Bill falls under the category of a Finance Bill, which requires the Governor's recommendation under Article 207(3) of the Constitution. Instead of following this procedure, the Governor expressed views on specific provisions, which the Assembly considered unconstitutional.
- The Bill was drafted by the Health and Family Welfare Department and examined by the Law Department and the Minister for Health and Family Welfare. After preparation, it was sent to the Governor, who raised procedural objections rather than constitutional recommendations.
- The Tamil Nadu Siddha Medical University will be established in Chennai to provide instruction and training in Indian Medicine and Homeopathy. The Chief Minister will serve as the Chancellor, while the Minister for Health and Family Welfare will be the Pro-Chancellor.



## Tamil Nadu Translation Grants Catalogue

**The Tamil Nadu Translation Grants Catalogue is a structured effort by the Tamil Nadu government to expand the reach of Tamil literature beyond linguistic boundaries.**

- This initiative is part of the **Tamil Nadu Translation Grant Scheme**, which provides institutional backing for the translation of Tamil books into **Indian and foreign languages**.
- The scheme is implemented through the **Tamil Nadu Textbook and Educational Services Corporation (TNTEESC)**. TNTEESC acts as the nodal agency for managing rights, coordination, and institutional execution of the translation programme.
- The programme positions Tamil Nadu as a cultural knowledge exporter rather than only a consumer of global content. It shifts the state's cultural identity into the domain of international intellectual exchange.
- By institutionalising translation, the government converts literature into a long-term cultural asset for diplomacy, education, and heritage preservation.

This aligns with broader goals of cultural globalisation and identity preservation.

## TNWeSAFE and the Global Woman Summit 2026

- The **Global Woman Summit 2026** is scheduled to be organised in **Chennai**, positioning the city as a global platform for women-centric dialogue.
- The summit is being convened under the TNWeSAFE framework to highlight best practices in safety, leadership, and inclusion.
- It is expected to bring together policymakers, civil society leaders, and international delegates.
- Chennai's selection reflects its administrative importance and global connectivity.
- The event aims to elevate Tamil Nadu's role in shaping **international gender discourse** through sub-national leadership.
- A key objective of the summit is to promote **women-led development models** and share scalable policy innovations.
- Another major focus is the integration of **technology and governance** in ensuring women's safety.

## Mamallan Reservoir on East Coast Road

**Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin laid the foundation stone for the Mamallan Reservoir along the East Coast Road (ECR). The project marks a significant step in strengthening Chennai's long-term drinking water security amid recurring water stress.**

- The **Mamallan Reservoir** has been proposed as **Chennai's sixth drinking water source**. Currently, the city depends on reservoirs such as **Poondi, Cholavaram, Red Hills, Chembarambakkam, and Veeranam Lake**.
- The Mamallan project is notable as **Tamil Nadu's first coastal freshwater reservoir**. Unlike inland reservoirs, it is designed to store freshwater close to the coastline without salinity intrusion.
- The Mamallan Reservoir is planned as a **climate-resilient infrastructure asset**.

## Kuppai Thiruvizha 2026

**Kuppai Thiruvizha 2026 is a three-day statewide garbage collection drive announced by the Tamil Nadu Government. The initiative aims to improve waste segregation, disposal, and recycling practices across urban and rural local bodies. The drive will be conducted from 21 to 23 January 2026. All municipal corporations, municipalities, town panchayats, and village panchayats are required to participate**

- The programme is part of the **Thooymai Iyakkam**, a broader cleanliness campaign announced in **2025**. This campaign focuses on institutional sanitation, public participation, and sustainable waste handling
- Between **June and December 2025**, four phases of garbage collection were carried out in government offices. These phases targeted old records, e-waste, plastics, and unused materials.
- A total of **2,877 tonnes of waste** was collected during these phases. The waste was scientifically processed instead of being dumped.
- The recycled waste generated a revenue of **₹3.79 crore** for the state. This highlights the economic potential of systematic waste segregation.
- In the **Greater Chennai Corporation**, **200 garbage collection centres** have been established. These centres will act as nodal points for waste aggregation during the festival.

# NATIONAL

## India's First Bullet Train Likely by August 2027

India is set to enter the era of high-speed rail with its first bullet train operations targeted for August 15, 2027.

- The announcement has renewed policy and public attention on the **Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Corridor**, India's first project of this scale.
- The **Surat-Bilimora stretch** is expected to be the first operational segment.
- This will be followed by **Vapi-Surat** and then **Vapi-Ahmedabad** sections. In the later stages, the corridor will be extended from **Thane to Ahmedabad**, eventually completing the full **Mumbai-Ahmedabad route**.
- The project spans approximately **508 kilometres**, making it one of the largest infrastructure corridors under construction in India.
- The bullet train is designed for a **maximum operational speed of 320 kmph**, cutting travel time between Mumbai and Ahmedabad to **under two hours**.
- The project is being implemented by the **National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL)** with strong technical and financial cooperation from **Japan**.



## Land Stack and Digital Land Governance

The launch of **Land Stack** and the **Glossary of Revenue Terms (GoRT)** marks a significant step in strengthening land administration. Both initiatives are implemented under the **Digital India Land Record Modernisation Programme**, which aims to modernise land records and make them accessible, accurate, and reliable.

- **Land Stack** is an integrated, GIS-based digital platform designed to bring together land and property records from multiple departments into a unified system.

- One of the most important features of **Land Stack** is **single-window access** to land-related data across departments.
- Per capita milk availability has risen from 124 grams daily in 2014 to 471 grams in 2024.
- The **Glossary of Revenue Terms (GoRT)** complements Land Stack by standardising land-related terminology used across states and departments.

### India Becomes World's Largest Rice Producer

- India has emerged as the **world's largest producer of rice**, overtaking China in total output. The announcement was made by **Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, highlighting a major milestone for Indian agriculture.
- India's rice production reached **150.18 million tonnes**, surpassing China's **145.28 million tonnes**.
- This achievement reflects consistent improvements in farming practices and technology adoption. It also strengthens India's role in ensuring domestic food availability.
- Rising output has enhanced India's credibility as a stable global food supplier. The steady rise in rice production is linked to **high-yielding seed varieties**, expanded irrigation coverage, and better access to agricultural inputs.
- Government-backed extension services have improved awareness among farmers. These efforts have helped bridge yield gaps across regions.

### NITI Aayog released *A Comprehensive Framework to Promote Affordable Housing*

- **NITI Aayog** released *A Comprehensive Framework to Promote Affordable Housing* to address persistent gaps in urban housing supply.
- The report positions affordable housing as a key driver of **inclusive urban growth** rather than a standalone welfare measure.
- Rising land prices, construction costs, and urban migration have made affordability a major policy concern.
- The report provides a **clear functional definition** to ensure policy uniformity across states. In **metropolitan cities**, affordable housing is defined as dwelling units with a carpet area of up to **60 sq. m** and a value not exceeding **₹60 lakh**.
- In **non-metropolitan cities**, the limit is **90 sq. m** with a value cap of **₹45 lakh**.

## UIDAI Introduces Aadhaar Mascot U dai

**The Unique Identification Authority of India has launched the Aadhaar mascot named U dai to make Aadhaar services more people-friendly and accessible.**

- The primary objective of U dai is to bridge the gap between complex technology and everyday citizens. The mascot will help explain Aadhaar services in a simple and visual manner.
- The mascot was selected through open national-level design and naming competitions conducted on the **MyGov platform**
- The mascot design competition saw **Arun Gokul from Thrissur, Kerala**, winning the first prize. The second and third prizes were awarded to **Idris Dawaiwala from Pune** and **Krishna Sharma from Ghazipur**, respectively.
- For the mascot naming competition, **Riya Jain from Bhopal** secured first place. The name **U dai**, meaning rise or progress, symbolises empowerment and growth linked to Aadhaar.
- The mascot was officially unveiled by Neelkanth Mishra, Chairman of UIDAI, at a function held in Thiruvananthapuram.



## India Ranks 80th in World's Strongest Passport Index

- India has been ranked **80th globally** in the **Henley Passport Index 2026**. Indian passport holders currently have **visa-free, visa-on-arrival, or e-visa access to 55 destinations**.
- This marks an improvement from **85th position in 2025**, indicating gradual progress in international mobility.
- The Henley Passport Index is compiled annually by Henley & Partners. It is widely regarded as the global benchmark for measuring passport strength.
- The index ranks passports based on the number of destinations accessible without a prior visa.
- It relies on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association, ensuring credibility and accuracy.
- **Singapore** holds the **top rank**, offering access to **192 destinations**, the highest globally.
- **Japan and South Korea** share the **second position** with access to **188 destinations**.

- India shares its **80th rank** with **Nigeria and Algeria**.

## **Synthetic Cattle Breeds Strengthening India's Dairy Sector**

**The Government of India has officially registered two high-yielding synthetic cattle breeds, namely Karan Fries and Vrindavani.**

- Alongside synthetic breeds, new **indigenous cattle and buffalo breeds** such as **Medini** from Jharkhand, **Rohikhandi** from Uttar Pradesh, and **Melghati** from Maharashtra have also been recognised.
- **Karan Fries** is a well-established synthetic dairy cattle breed developed at the **National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI), Karnal, Haryana**.
- This breed is a **cross between indigenous Tharparkar cows and Holstein-Friesian bulls**. The genetic combination results in higher milk yield along with tolerance to heat and tropical diseases.
- **Vrindavani** is a composite synthetic breed developed by the **ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh**. It represents a more complex genetic blend compared to Karan Fries.
- The breed combines **Holstein-Friesian, Brown Swiss, and Jersey** exotic cattle with the **Haryana** indigenous breed. Haryana cattle are valued for their hardiness, draft ability, and disease resistance.

## **National Campaign on Entrepreneurship under Rural Development Mission**

**The National Campaign on Entrepreneurship has been launched by the Ministry of Rural Development to strengthen enterprise promotion in rural India. The campaign focuses on creating a structured ecosystem for rural entrepreneurship through capacity building and community-level support.**

- A key objective is to train 50,000 Community Resource Persons (CRPs) on enterprise promotion.
- Additionally, around 50 lakh SHG members will be trained under the framework of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).
- Rural enterprises have shown a direct impact on **poverty alleviation**.
- An **SBI report** highlights that **65% of rural SHG members** moved upward in relative income between **FY19 and FY24**.

## A Decade of Startup India Transformation

The Startup India Initiative is a flagship programme aimed at strengthening India's entrepreneurial ecosystem. It was launched on 16 January 2016, a date now observed annually as National Startup Day.

- The initiative marked a policy shift from a job-seeking economy to a **job-creating nation**, with startups positioned as engines of innovation and growth.
- The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** acts as the nodal agency under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- The initiative is built on **three foundational pillars** that guide policy design and implementation. (**Simplification and Handholding , Funding Support , Incubation and Industry-Academia Partnership**)
- The **BHARAT Startup Knowledge Access Registry (BHASKAR)** improves discovery and collaboration across the ecosystem.
- The **Startups Intellectual Property Protection (SIPP) Scheme** enables faster patent and trademark filings at reduced costs.

After ten years, India has emerged as the third-largest startup ecosystem globally. Around 2.09 lakh startups have been officially recognised by DPIIT during this period. The country is home to 120+ unicorns with a combined valuation exceeding \$350 billion. Startups have generated over 21 lakh direct jobs, creating strong multiplier effects across sectors.

Inclusivity has been a notable outcome. Nearly 45% of recognised startups have at least one woman director, while about 50% operate from Tier-II and Tier-III cities.

- Startup India is supported by parallel initiatives such as **Atal Innovation Mission, NIDHI, GENESIS, and ASPIRE**.

## Womaniya Initiative and Women-Centric Public Procurement

The Womaniya Initiative is a flagship programme launched under the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) framework to strengthen the participation of women in public procurement. It reflects India's policy shift towards inclusive economic growth and gender-responsive governance.

- The primary objective of the Womaniya Initiative is to enable **women entrepreneurs and women-led Self Help Groups (SHGs)** to directly access government buyers.
- The initiative offers a **fully digital, paperless platform** where women sellers can register, list products, and receive payments transparently.
- The Womaniya Initiative has emerged as a key enabler for **women-led Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs)**. It provides assured demand through government orders, which enhances business stability and income security.
- As of **14 January 2026**, the impact of the Womaniya Initiative has been substantial.
- More than **two lakh women-led MSEs** have registered on the GeM portal. These enterprises have collectively secured public procurement orders worth over **₹80,000 crore**
- This accounts for approximately **4.7% of GeM's total order value**, highlighting the growing economic footprint of women entrepreneurs in government procurement.

## National Capacity Building Drive for Tribal Healers

The National Capacity Building Programme for Tribal Healers was launched on January 16-17, 2026, marking India's first structured national initiative to formally recognise tribal healers within the public health framework. The programme is being organised in Hyderabad, Telangana, reflecting a focused outreach to tribal-dominated regions

- The initiative aims to strengthen **community-level healthcare delivery** by integrating indigenous healers as trusted partners.
- It aligns with the broader vision of **inclusive and culturally rooted tribal development**.

- A key outcome of the programme is the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for establishing the **Bharat Tribal Health Observatory**.
- This observatory will function under **Project DRISTI**, focusing on tribe-disaggregated health data.
- The observatory aims to institutionalise **health surveillance, implementation research, and disease monitoring** specific to tribal populations.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has emerged as a nodal agency for targeted health missions in tribal areas. Key focus areas include **sickle cell anaemia, tuberculosis, malaria**, and other vector-borne diseases.
- Since inception, over ₹4,300 crore has been disbursed as VGF, and ₹4,638 crore has been invested in airport infrastructure. These figures underscore UDAN's critical role in supporting India's ambition of balanced regional development.

### **PESA Rules Rolled Out in Jharkhand After Long Delay**

**After nearly 25 years of statehood, Jharkhand has notified rules under the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act. The move is being presented as a long-pending reform to ensure self-governance in Scheduled Areas, which are predominantly inhabited by tribal communities.**

- PESA was enacted in 1996 to extend the principles of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment to Fifth Schedule areas.
- Its core idea is to make the Gram Sabha the central authority in local governance, rather than the bureaucracy
- The newly framed rules apply fully in 13 districts, including Ranchi, Khunti, Gumla, Simdega, Dumka and Singhbhum regions.
- Partial implementation has begun in districts like Palamu and Garhwa.
- Jharkhand has a tribal population of about 26.3%, spread across more than 12,000 villages, making the scale of implementation significant.
- Under the notified rules, the Gram Sabha is declared the supreme institution in Scheduled Areas.
- Its head is to be chosen according to traditional customs, not electoral politics.
- Gram Sabhas can manage minor minerals, small water bodies, community resources, and resolve local disputes.
- They are also empowered to impose fines up to ₹2,000 for certain social offences.

- However, the authority to officially notify Gram Sabha boundaries rests with the district administration

### India's First Open Sea Marine Fish Farming Initiative

- India has launched its **first open-sea marine fish farming project**, marking a critical shift in how marine resources are utilised.
- The pilot initiative is located in the **Andaman Sea**, moving beyond traditional near-shore aquaculture practices.
- This development reflects India's growing emphasis on ocean-based economic activities.
- The project represents a practical step in strengthening the **Blue Economy**, where oceans are treated as productive economic assets.
- It also signals a transition from coastal dependence to deep-sea resource utilisation.

### India's First Tailings Policy and Critical Mineral Recovery

- India has introduced its **first Tailings Policy**, marking a strategic shift in mineral governance.
- The policy focuses on recovering **critical and strategic minerals** from mine waste such as tailings, mine dumps, overburden, slags, anode slimes, and red mud.
- This initiative directly supports **domestic mineral security**, reduces import dependence, and strengthens supply chains for **green energy technologies**.
- It also aligns with India's broader goals of **self-reliance** and industrial sustainability.

### ECINET and India's Digital Election Architecture

The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** launched the **ECINET digital platform** at the **International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM) 2026**.

- The **beta version of ECINET** was successfully piloted during the **2025 Bihar Assembly Elections**.

- ECINET functions as a **single unified digital platform** integrating all major electoral services. It replaces multiple fragmented portals with one consolidated digital interface.
- This integration enables **end-to-end management of the electoral process**, from voter onboarding to post-election grievance handling. Administrative workflows, citizen services, and monitoring tools now operate within one digital framework.
- ECINET offers multiple citizen-centric and administrative services through a single platform. These include voter registration, electoral roll search, and Track Your Application services.
- It also integrates Know Your Candidate, Connect with Election Officials, and grievance redressal mechanisms. Digital identity services such as e-EPIC download are also embedded.
- A key feature of ECINET is real-time election monitoring. It allows election authorities to track applications, complaints, and field-level updates digitally.



# STATE

## Goa Creates Third District Kushavati

- Goa has announced the creation of its **third district named Kushavati**, marking a significant administrative reorganisation..
- Until now, Goa functioned with only **North Goa and South Goa** as its two districts.
- The new district has been named after the **ancient Kushavati river**, which holds historical and geographical significance in the region. Naming districts after rivers is often intended to reflect regional identity and cultural heritage.

## Surat on the Path to Becoming India's First Slum-Free City

- Surat is close to achieving the status of **India's first slum-free city**, marking a major milestone in urban governance.
- The transformation is the result of sustained policy focus, administrative efficiency, and large-scale housing redevelopment.
- Rapid urbanisation in India has long resulted in informal settlements, but Surat is demonstrating that this challenge can be systematically addressed.
- The city's progress reflects a shift from temporary solutions to **permanent, dignified housing** for economically weaker sections.
- This approach aligns with national goals of inclusive urban development. The Surat Municipal Corporation adopted a mission-oriented approach to eliminate slums.
- Instead of relocating residents to distant locations, the city prioritised in-situ redevelopment, rebuilding housing at the same site.
- This ensured social continuity and reduced livelihood disruption.

## Haryana Sex Ratio at Birth Touches Five-Year Peak

- Haryana recorded a Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) of 923 in 2025, marking the highest level in the last five years. This reflects a 13-point rise from 910 in 2024, indicating sustained improvement.

- The progress highlights the impact of administrative vigilance and law enforcement measures against gender-biased practices. The state had long struggled with adverse sex ratios, making this rise significant.
- In 2025, Haryana registered 5,19,691 total births across the state. These included 2,70,281 male births and 2,49,410 female births.
- The SRB figure of 923 females per 1,000 males shows a clear recovery after a decline in 2024. Officials noted that this value is higher than all annual SRB figures from 2020 to 2024.
- This upward movement suggests that policy interventions are beginning to produce measurable demographic outcomes.

### Andhra Pradesh Emerges as India's Leading Investment Hub in FY26

- Andhra Pradesh has emerged as the **top investment destination in India during FY26**, marking a major shift in the country's investment geography.
- The state secured the **largest share of proposed capital investments**, surpassing traditionally dominant industrial states.
- This development reflects **rising investor confidence**, policy stability, and faster administrative processes. According to recent assessments, Andhra Pradesh accounted for **25.3% of India's total proposed investments** in the first nine months of FY26.
- This placed the state ahead of Odisha and Maharashtra in attracting fresh capital proposals.
- Total investment announcements across India touched **₹26.6 lakh crore**, recording an **11.5% year-on-year increase**.
- The combined share of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Maharashtra exceeded **51%**, indicating a growing concentration of investments in select high-growth states.
- This trend highlights the **eastward and southward movement of India's investment momentum**.

### Karnataka Spots Its First 'Sandalwood Leopard'

- Karnataka has recorded its **first-ever sighting of a strawberry-coloured leopard**, informally named the **Sandalwood Leopard**.
- This ultra-rare colour morph was documented in **Vijayanagara district**, marking a major milestone in India's wildlife records.

- The discovery has drawn national and global attention due to its extreme rarity.
- This is only the **second recorded instance in India**, with the first sighting reported from Rajasthan in **2021**.
- The event reinforces Karnataka's position as a critical landscape for **big cat conservation**.
- Leopards typically possess a **tawny-yellow coat with black rosettes**, which aids camouflage in forested habitats.
- The Sandalwood Leopard, however, exhibits a **pale reddish-pink or strawberry-coloured coat with light brown rosettes**.
- This striking appearance sets it apart from typical leopard phenotypes.

### Sagar Island Bridge Project in West Bengal

- The **Sagar Island Bridge Project** was launched in West Bengal with the laying of the foundation stone for a **5-kilometre-long bridge** over the **Muriganga River**. The project aims to connect **Sagar Island** directly with the mainland.
- It represents a major infrastructure initiative in the fragile and strategically important **Sundarbans region**.
- The bridge is designed as a **four-lane structure**, ensuring smooth and high-capacity movement of vehicles.
- Once completed, it will permanently replace the region's long-standing dependence on ferry services.
- The bridge will connect **Lot 8 in Kakdwip** with **Kachuberia on Sagar Island**. The total estimated cost of the project is **₹1,670 crore**. The construction contract has been awarded to **Larsen & Toubro**, a major Indian infrastructure company.



### India's First Fully Paperless District Court in Kerala

- On **January 6, 2026**, Chief Justice of India **Surya Kant** inaugurated **India's first fully paperless district court** at **Kalpetta** in **Wayanad district** of Kerala.

- The inauguration was conducted virtually. This initiative marks a decisive shift towards end-to-end digital functioning at the district judiciary level.
- The court operates without physical files.
- Every stage, from **case filing to judgment delivery**, is carried out electronically.
- This makes it a first-of-its-kind initiative in the Indian judicial system.

### Keyi Panyor as India's First Bio-Happy District

- The newly created **Keyi Panyor district** in **Arunachal Pradesh** is set to become **India's first Bio-Happy District**.
- The initiative aims to integrate **biodiversity conservation** with **human well-being**, creating a development model rooted in ecology.
- This approach treats nature as a development asset rather than a limitation. It represents a shift from growth-centric planning to **well-being-centric sustainability**.
- The idea of **Biohappiness** was originally conceptualised by **M S Swaminathan**, a pioneer of sustainable agriculture.
- The initiative is now being implemented by the **M S Swaminathan Research Foundation** along with the district administration.
- The project focuses on understanding how biodiversity directly supports **nutrition, income security, and health outcomes**.
- It seeks to revive ecological wisdom through practical governance models.

### Bengaluru Emerges as Best Indian City for Women in 2025

**Bengaluru** has been ranked as the **best Indian city for women in 2025**, securing the top position in a nationwide assessment of urban inclusion. The ranking reflects city's strong balance between social **infrastructure** and **industrial opportunities**, creating a favourable environment for women's safety and career growth

- The study assessed **125 cities across India**, making it one of the most comprehensive evaluations of women-centric urban development in recent years.
- Bengaluru recorded a **City Inclusion Score of 53.29**, the highest among all surveyed cities.
- The ranking is based on the **City Inclusion Index**, a composite measure designed to assess how well cities support women across multiple dimensions.

- The **Social Inclusion Score** evaluates the quality of everyday life and safety for women. Key parameters include **personal safety, access to healthcare, educational opportunities, urban mobility, and overall liveability.**
- The **Industrial Inclusion Score** measures women's participation in the formal economy. It includes indicators such as **availability of formal jobs, skilling and upskilling opportunities, corporate diversity practices, and women's workforce participation..**
- **Chennai** ranked second overall, supported by strong social inclusion performance. **Pune** and **Hyderabad** displayed balanced outcomes across both social and industrial indicators.
- **Mumbai**, despite its economic scale, ranked lower due to challenges in liveability and urban stress factors.

### Meghalaya's First Woman Chief Justice

- Meghalaya witnessed a **historic judicial milestone** with the appointment of **Justice Revati Mohite Dere** as the **first woman Chief Justice** of the Meghalaya High Court
- Meghalaya witnessed a **historic judicial milestone** with the appointment of **Justice Revati Mohite Dere** as the **first woman Chief Justice** of the Meghalaya High Court.
- **Justice Revati Mohite Dere** served as a judge of the **Bombay High Court**. She is widely regarded for her judicial work in **constitutional law and criminal jurisprudence.**

### Chhattisgarh Leads Big States in APAAR ID Creation

**Chhattisgarh has emerged as the top-performing large state in the creation of APAAR IDs for students. As of early January 2026, the state has achieved nearly 89% student coverage, placing it ahead of other large states.**

- **APAAR (Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry) ID** is a **permanent digital academic identity** assigned to every student.
- It stores academic records such as marks, certificates, learning outcomes, and credit history in a secure digital format..
- The system allows students to carry their academic history seamlessly across schools, boards, states, and institutions.

## Rajasthan's Organic Village Milestone

Rajasthan has marked a significant step in sustainable agriculture with Bamanwas Kankar Panchayat becoming the state's first fully organic village body. The declaration covers seven hamlets, where all farming activities now follow organic principles.

- This achievement signals a shift towards **chemical-free farming** in a region known for harsh climatic conditions.
- The recognition means that farmers in Bamanwas Kankar have completely eliminated **synthetic fertilisers, chemical pesticides, and genetically modified inputs**. Agricultural production is now based entirely on natural methods
- Farmers in the panchayat rely on farmyard manure, compost, green manuring, crop rotation, and biological pest control. These practices improve soil fertility while maintaining ecological balance.

## Kochi Hosts Global Dialogue on Future of Spice Trade

Kochi is set to host the **9th International Spice Conference** from February 23 to 26, 2026. The conference is organised by the **All India Spices Exporters Forum (AISEF)**, the apex body representing Indian spice exporters.

- The International Spice Conference is the flagship global platform of **AISEF**. Over the years, it has evolved into a key meeting point for the entire spice value chain.
- The **2026 edition** is planned as a **four-day global conference**. It will examine both structural challenges and future growth opportunities for the spice industry.
- The theme for ISC 2026 is "**Spice 360 - Getting Future Ready.**" It reflects the need for a comprehensive and forward-looking approach to the spice economy.
- The conference will be inaugurated by **Amitabh Kant**, former **G20 Sherpa**. His keynote will focus on **innovation, inclusion, and global leadership in agro-based industries**.

## Ponduru Khadi Earns Geographical Identity Status

Ponduru Khadi, a traditional hand-woven cotton fabric from Andhra Pradesh, has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag. This recognition formally acknowledges the fabric's unique geographical origin and traditional production process.

- The GI registration has been awarded in favour of the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** by the **Geographical Indications Registry**. This ensures exclusive rights over the use of the name “Ponduru Khadi”.
- Ponduru Khadi is produced only in **Ponduru village** of **Srikakulam district** in Andhra Pradesh. Locally, the fabric is known as **Patnulu**, reflecting its cultural roots in the region.
- The fabric is woven entirely by hand using **locally grown cotton varieties** such as **Hill cotton, Punasa cotton, and Red cotton**. Every stage, from cotton cleaning to spinning and weaving, is done manually.
- A distinctive feature of Ponduru Khadi is the use of the **jawbone of the Valuga fish** to clean cotton fibres. This rare technique is unique to the region and enhances fibre softness

### Maharashtra's Pioneering Menopause Healthcare Initiative

- **Maharashtra** has become the **first Indian state** to launch dedicated menopause clinics within the public healthcare system
- These clinics operate inside **government hospitals** and **urban health facilities**, marking a historic shift towards structured mid-life healthcare for women.
- The menopause clinics provide multi-disciplinary services under one roof. Women receive medical consultations, mental health counselling, and lifestyle guidance without the need for multiple referrals.
- Screenings include bone density assessment, cardiovascular health checks, and hormonal evaluation. Essential medicines and nutrition advice are also provided to ensure long-term continuity of care.
- The state government views the clinics as a **replicable policy model**. Other states can adapt the framework using existing hospital infrastructure.

### Dhamtari Pioneers Digital Property Tax Collection

**Dhamtari district in Chhattisgarh has become the first district in India to collect property tax through the SAMARTH Panchayat portal. This marks a major milestone in technology-driven rural governance.**

- **The launch was formally carried out at Sankara gram panchayat in the Nagri block.**
- **A local resident successfully paid property tax using a UPI-enabled online payment gateway, making it a nationally significant first.**
- **The SAMARTH Panchayat portal enables complete digitisation of property tax collection.**
- **The system also helps in real-time tracking of payments and reduces pending arrears.**
- **The online property tax system has been rolled out across all gram panchayats in Dhamtari district. Nearly 400 panchayats are now covered under this digital framework.**



# SCHEMES

## Swadesh Darshan Scheme

- The **Swadesh Darshan Scheme** has completed **75 tourism infrastructure projects** across India, marking a major milestone in destination-based development.
- These projects focus on improving tourism facilities while preserving cultural, natural, and spiritual heritage.
- The achievement reflects steady progress in strengthening domestic tourism circuits.
- The scheme is implemented by the **Ministry of Tourism**, Government of India, with the aim of creating world-class tourist infrastructure.
- Completion of these projects supports regional balance and promotes lesser-known destinations.
- Launched in **2015**, the Swadesh Darshan Scheme is a flagship programme for **theme-based tourism development**.
- It focuses on integrated development of tourist circuits rather than isolated destinations. Circuits include **Buddhist, Heritage, Eco, Coastal, and Himalayan** themes.



## One Station One Product

- The **One Station One Product (OSOP) Scheme** has transformed railway stations into platforms for **local economic empowerment**.
- Implemented by **Indian Railways**, the initiative connects grassroots producers directly with millions of daily passengers.

- Railway stations are no longer only transit spaces. They now function as **micro-markets** for regional products, strengthening rural-urban economic linkages. The OSOP scheme was launched in **2022** as part of India's local enterprise promotion strategy. By **January 2026**, OSOP outlets were operational at **2,002 railway stations** with **2,326 functional outlets** across the network.
- High passenger footfall ensures continuous consumer exposure. This transforms stations into permanent marketing spaces rather than temporary exhibition platforms.



## NPS Vatsalya Scheme 2025

**The NPS Vatsalya Scheme 2025 is a newly notified pension-oriented savings initiative aimed at children. It has been introduced following guidelines issued by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) in 2025.**

- The nodal ministry for the scheme is the Union Ministry of Finance.
- The regulatory oversight, operational framework, and investment norms are governed by **PFRDA**, ensuring consistency with existing NPS regulations.
- The primary objective of the **NPS Vatsalya Scheme** is to **inculcate a disciplined long-term savings habit among children**.
- By encouraging pension contributions from an early age, the scheme aims to enhance **retirement preparedness** over a longer investment horizon.
- The scheme is **open to all Indian citizens below 18 years of age**, including **NRI and OCI children**. This broad eligibility ensures inclusivity across resident and overseas Indian families.
- The **minor child is the sole beneficiary** of the account. No third-party or joint beneficiary structure is permitted under the scheme.
- The **account is opened in the name of the minor**, but it is **operated by the parent or legal guardian** until the child attains adulthood.
- The **minimum initial contribution is ₹250**, and the **minimum annual contribution is also ₹250**. Importantly, there is **no maximum limit on contributions**, allowing families to invest as per their financial capacity.
- The scheme strengthens **pension inclusion at the household level** and aligns with India's long-term demographic planning.

## Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0 and the 90-Day Saturation Mission

Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0 is a 90-day national campaign launched on January 28, 2026 by NITI Aayog. The campaign is designed as a time-bound saturation drive to ensure that every eligible citizen in selected regions receives essential government services.

- It targets **112 Aspirational Districts** and **513 Aspirational Blocks** across India. The core philosophy is not gradual improvement, but **complete coverage**, where no beneficiary is excluded.
- This initiative reflects a shift towards **outcome-based governance**, focusing on visible field-level change instead of administrative reporting.
- The campaign concentrates on **health, nutrition, sanitation, education, and animal healthcare**. These sectors represent the most critical **human development indicators** in underserved regions.
- Six **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** have been identified for **Aspirational Blocks**. These include **supplementary nutrition under ICDS, growth monitoring at Anganwadi Centres, functional toilets and drinking water in Anganwadis, girls' toilets in schools, and bovine vaccination against Foot and Mouth Disease**.
- Five KPIs guide implementation in **Aspirational Districts**. These include **newborn weighing, tuberculosis case notification, Village and Urban Health Sanitation and Nutrition Days, functional girls' toilets in schools, and animal vaccination coverage**.
- Each district and block prepares a **three-month micro-action plan**. Progress is tracked through **monthly data dashboards** and performance reviews. Community engagement activities promote **behaviour change and awareness**. Regular **field inspections** ensure ground verification of results.

## Assam's Mukhya Mantrir Eti Koli Duti Paat Scheme

The Government of Assam launched the Mukhya Mantrir Eti Koli Duti Paat Scheme as a focused welfare initiative for tea garden workers. The scheme recognises the historic role of tea communities in building Assam's economy and cultural identity.

- The scheme was formally launched by **Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma** at **Doomdooma** in **Tinsukia** district.
- The state government ensured **budgetary provisioning** for smooth implementation and timely disbursement.
- Under the scheme, **₹300+ crore** is allocated for **one-time financial assistance**.

- Each eligible tea worker will receive **₹5,000** as direct support.
- The coverage includes **over six lakh beneficiaries**, consisting of permanent and casual labourers.
- Workers belong to **836 tea gardens** across **27 districts** and **73 Assembly constituencies**.
- Along with financial assistance, the government introduced **mobile creches** and **mobile toilet services** in tea garden regions.
- These facilities address childcare, sanitation, safety, and workplace dignity.
- Special focus is given to **women workers**, recognising their dual burden of labour and caregiving.
- The welfare approach integrates human development with labour welfare.



# COURT VERDICT

## Thamirabarani River Pollution and Judicial Oversight

- The **Thamirabarani River** is one of the few perennial rivers in Tamil Nadu and serves as a crucial lifeline for drinking water, irrigation, and local livelihoods.
- In recent years, concerns have increased regarding **pollution caused by sewage discharge, industrial effluents, and solid waste dumping**. These activities have affected water quality and aquatic biodiversity.
- In response to growing environmental concerns, the **Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court** intervened to assess the seriousness of pollution in the river. On **January 3, 2026**, the court issued a significant order aimed at ensuring scientific and independent evaluation of the river's condition.
- The court's intervention reflects the expanding role of the judiciary in enforcing **environmental protection under Article 21**, which links a clean environment to the right to life.

# INDIA & OTHER COUNTRIES

## India UAE Desert Cyclone II Military Exercise

**Desert Cyclone II is a bilateral army-level exercise conducted between the Indian Army and the UAE Land Forces.**

- The exercise was held from **December 18 to 30, 2025**, at **Al-Hamra Training City**, a modern combat training facility in Abu Dhabi. **Desert Cyclone II** is a bilateral army-level exercise conducted between the **Indian Army** and the **UAE Land Forces**.
- The exercise was held from **December 18 to 30, 2025**, at **Al-Hamra Training City**, a modern combat training facility in Abu Dhabi.

## India, Pakistan exchange lists of nuclear installations, prisoners

**The list exchange took place under the provisions of an agreement on the prohibition of attack against nuclear installations and facilities**

- India and Pakistan exchanged lists of nuclear installations on January 1, continuing a long-standing diplomatic practice.
- This annual exchange was carried out simultaneously in **New Delhi and Islamabad** through official diplomatic channels.
- The exercise marks the **35th consecutive year** of compliance with a key bilateral nuclear safety agreement.
- This development is significant because it reflects continuity in **nuclear risk reduction mechanisms**, even when broader political relations remain strained. The exchange helps ensure transparency regarding sensitive nuclear facilities.
- The exchange is mandated under the **Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities**.
- The agreement was **signed on December 31, 1988**, and later **came into force on January 27, 1991**. Since then, both countries have committed to annual information sharing.

## DOSTI-17 and Indian Ocean Maritime Cooperation

- **Exercise DOSTI-17** marks a renewed phase of maritime cooperation among **India, Maldives, and Sri Lanka**.
- The trilateral exercise is being conducted in **Malé**, the capital of Maldives, reflecting deepening regional trust and coordination.
- The drill strengthens **collective security mechanisms** in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**, one of the world's most strategically significant maritime zones. The region carries a major share of **global trade routes and energy transportation corridors**, making maritime stability critical.

## India-UAE LNG Partnership and Strategic Energy Expansion

- India and the United Arab Emirates signed a long-term LNG supply agreement during the January 2026 official visit of UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to New Delhi.
- Under the agreement, the UAE will supply 0.5 million metric tonnes of LNG annually to India.
- This deal has elevated the UAE to the position of India's second-largest LNG supplier, after Qatar.
- It represents a structural shift in India's energy diplomacy from oil dependence towards diversified gas-based energy security.

# CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

## MeitY Hosts BHASHINI Samudaye for Language AI Collaboration

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) will host BHASHINI Samudaye: Strengthening India's Language AI Ecosystem on 13 January 2026 in New Delhi. The workshop is organised by the Digital India BHASHINI Division.

- **BHASHINI Samudaye** is a collaborative platform-led initiative that brings together language experts, academic institutions, civil society organisations, and data practitioners.
- It functions as a participatory ecosystem rather than a closed technology programme.
- The initiative supports BHASHINI's mandate under the **National Language Translation Mission**.
- Its goal is to remove language barriers in access to digital and public services.
- A walkthrough of **BhashaDaan**, the citizen contribution platform, will highlight community-led data creation. Citizens contribute language data to strengthen AI models.

# DEFENCE

## Pralay Missile Strengthens India's Tactical Strike Capability

DRDO has successfully conducted a salvo launch of two Pralay missiles in quick succession from the same launcher off the Odisha coast, marking a key milestone in user evaluation trials.

- India recorded a significant advancement in its missile programme with the **successful salvo launch of two Pralay missiles**.
- The test involved **back-to-back launches from the same launcher**, a demanding operational requirement. This achievement confirms the missile system's **precision, reliability, and battlefield readiness**.
- The trial was conducted on **December 31, 2025**, off the **Odisha coast**. It marked an important step towards the missile's **induction into the Indian Armed Forces**. The salvo launch tested the missile system under near-operational conditions. **Two missiles were fired in quick succession**, validating the launcher's robustness and command-control coordination. The launch took place at around **10:30 AM** during user evaluation trials.
- Both missiles **followed the intended trajectory** and achieved all mission objectives. Data from **tracking sensors at the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur**, along with onboard telemetry systems, confirmed **accurate terminal performance**.



## Integrated Security Hub in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

- India has strengthened its island security architecture with the inauguration of a high-tech Integrated Command and Control Centre in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The project reflects a coordinated approach where national security, disaster preparedness, and developmental governance move together. Island territories, due to their isolation and vulnerability, require faster coordination than mainland regions.

- The project also aligns with India's larger maritime and coastal security priorities in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Islands act as forward assets for surveillance and response, especially in geopolitically sensitive sea routes. The Integrated Command and Control Centre has been developed at a cost of ₹229 crore.
- It functions as a centralized platform integrating surveillance systems, communication networks, and emergency coordination under one roof. Multiple departments can now operate in real time during security threats or natural disasters.
- The facility is designed on par with similar command centres operating in major Indian metropolitan cities.
- This reflects the government's intention to bring urban-level governance infrastructure to remote island territories.

### **Bhairav Force and India's Shift to Drone-Centric Warfare**

- In January 2026, the Indian Army announced the creation of a new modern warfare force named Bhairav, marking a decisive shift toward technology-driven combat.
- This initiative reflects India's effort to adapt its land forces to evolving battlefield realities shaped by drones and network-centric operations.
- The Bhairav force is envisioned as a next-generation combat arm where every soldier is trained in drone operations.
- With this move, the Army aims to integrate aerial intelligence and strike capability directly at the unit level.
- A defining feature of the Bhairav force is its unprecedented scale.
- The force will consist of over one lakh trained drone operatives, making it among the largest dedicated drone warfare formations globally.

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- **Exercise DOSTI-17** marks a renewed phase of maritime cooperation among **India, Maldives, and Sri Lanka**.
- The trilateral exercise is being conducted in **Malé**, the capital of Maldives, reflecting deepening regional trust and coordination
- The exercise focuses on **operational coordination, communication interoperability, and mutual trust-building**. Core activities include **search and rescue operations, maritime surveillance drills, and communication exercises**

# ECONOMY

## Government Launches Market Access Support Intervention under Export Promotion Mission to Strengthen Global Market Access for Indian Exporters

- The Government of India has launched the **Market Access Support (MAS) Scheme** with a total outlay of **₹4,531 crore** for the period **FY 2026-31**.
- The scheme is aimed at strengthening India's export ecosystem by improving **global visibility, market penetration, and competitiveness** of Indian exporters.
- The initiative reflects a clear policy shift from **direct export subsidies** to **market-linked support mechanisms**.
- The focus is on building long-term export capacity rather than offering short-term financial relief.
- The MAS Scheme is a component of the **₹25,060 crore Export Promotion Mission** approved by the Union Cabinet in **November 2025**. This mission aims to diversify export markets, expand India's export basket, and improve resilience against global trade disruptions.
- Unlike earlier schemes, MAS follows a **structured and outcome-oriented approach**, with advance planning of international market access activities.

## Two Credit Linked Sub Schemes Under Export Promotion Mission

**In January 2026, the Government of India launched two pilot credit-linked sub schemes under the Niryat Protsahan component of the Export Promotion Mission.**

- These schemes aim to reduce the cost of export finance and improve credit access, especially for **MSMEs and labour-intensive sectors**. The launch aligns with India's long-term strategy of strengthening export competitiveness.
- The first scheme provides an **interest subvention of 2.75%** as a base rate on **rupee-denominated export credit**. This applies to both **pre-shipment and post-shipment** export loans.

- An **additional incentive** is offered for exports to **notified under-represented or emerging markets**, encouraging market diversification.
- The **annual financial cap** under this scheme is **₹50 lakh per exporter** for FY 2025–26. Eligibility is restricted to exports listed under a **notified positive list of tariff lines** at the **HS 6-digit level**, covering nearly **75% of India's tariff lines**.
- The second scheme focuses on **collateral-free export credit support**. It is implemented in partnership with the **Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises**.
- Under this scheme, **guarantee coverage** is provided up to **85% for Micro and Small exporters** and **65% for Medium exporters**. This reduces lender risk and improves credit flow to smaller exporters.
- The **maximum guaranteed exposure** is capped at **₹10 crore per exporter per financial year**. Eligibility conditions remain the same as the interest subvention scheme.

The **Export Promotion Mission** was launched in **November 2025** with a **six-year duration** from **FY 2025–26 to FY 2030–31**. The mission has a total **financial outlay of ₹25,060 crore**.

Its primary objective is to provide **affordable trade finance**, particularly for **MSMEs, first-time exporters, and labour-intensive sectors** such as textiles, leather, and food processing.

## CAG State Finances Report and Fiscal Stress in States

The **Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)** released the **State Finances 2023-24** report, presenting a consolidated assessment of the finances of **all 28 Indian States** for FY 2023-24.

- The report flags a sharp increase in the Public Debt of States, which stood at **₹67.87 lakh crore** as of March 31, 2024.
- This amounts to nearly **23% of the combined GSDP**, indicating sustained borrowing pressures.
- The Fiscal Deficit benchmark of **3% of GSDP**, recommended by the 15th Finance Commission, was exceeded by **18 states** in FY 2023-24.

- The report highlights extreme fiscal rigidity across states. Around 60% of revenue expenditure is absorbed by committed expenditures such as salaries, pensions, and interest payments.
- The report highlights extreme fiscal rigidity across states. Around 60% of revenue expenditure is absorbed by committed expenditures such as salaries, pensions, and interest payments.
- The report observes a persistent dominance of **revenue expenditure**, accounting for nearly **83%** of total spending.
- In contrast, **Capital Expenditure (Capex)** remains low at around **16%**, limiting long-term asset creation.
- In states such as **Punjab and Andhra Pradesh**, borrowings are increasingly used to finance **day-to-day expenses** rather than productive investments.

## MSME Technology Centres Boost Industrial Growth in Himachal Pradesh

The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has approved the establishment of two new MSME Technology Centres in Himachal Pradesh. These centres will be set up at Pandoga in Una district and Parwanoo in Solan district.

- The initiative aims to promote **industrial growth**, enhance **skill development**, and generate **employment opportunities** in the state
- The **MSME Ministry** plays a central role in strengthening India's small business ecosystem. It supports enterprises through **policy support, infrastructure creation, financial facilitation, and skill training**.
- The Technology Centre at **Parwanoo** is strategically significant due to its proximity to **Chandigarh** and its existing industrial base.
- **Pandoga**, located in Una district, represents a relatively new industrial location. The establishment of a Technology Centre here is expected to stimulate industrial activity in underdeveloped pockets.
- Each MSME Technology Centre will be developed at an estimated cost of **₹10 crore**.
- These centres are part of 13 new Technology Centre Extension Centres approved across India. The national expansion focuses on strengthening technical infrastructure and innovation capacity of MSMEs.

## India Emerges as the World's Fourth Largest Economy

India achieved a historic milestone in 2025 by becoming the world's fourth-largest economy in nominal GDP terms. With an estimated GDP of \$4.18 trillion, India has moved ahead of Japan in the global economic hierarchy. Only the United States, China, and Germany now rank above India.

- India's rise has been supported by consistent real GDP growth across recent quarters. The economy **expanded by 7.4% in Q4 of the previous fiscal year, followed by 7.8% in Q1 of FY 2025-26. Growth further accelerated to 8.2% in Q2 of FY 2025-26, marking a six-quarter high.**
- Japan has traditionally been among the world's largest economies for decades.
- India surpassing Japan represents a significant **shift in global economic power** toward emerging markets.
- This transition reflects India's demographic advantage, expanding consumer base, and reform-led growth model.
- India is expected to surpass Germany and become the **third-largest economy by 2030**, with projected GDP nearing **\$7.3 trillion**.
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## Economic Survey 2025-26 and the State of Indian Economy

The Union Ministry of Finance tabled the Economic Survey 2025-26 in Parliament on 30 January 2026. The Survey provides a comprehensive assessment of the Indian economy at a time of heightened global uncertainty.

- India continued its position as the **fastest-growing major economy** globally. The First Advance Estimates placed FY26 real GDP **growth at 7.4%**, while **Gross Value Added (GVA) growth** stood at 7.3%.
- On the supply side, the **services sector** emerged as the primary growth driver. It was estimated to grow at **9.1%** during the fiscal year, supported by trade, transport, finance, and digital services.
- On the demand side, **domestic consumption** remained the backbone of economic expansion. **Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE)** reached **61.5% of GDP**, the highest level since **2012**.

- Investment activity showed healthy expansion during FY26. Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) grew by 7.8%, with its share steady at 30% of GDP.
- The Survey flagged growing pressure on **State government finances**. The combined fiscal deficit of States rose to **3.2% of GDP in FY25**, compared to around **2.8%** in the post-pandemic years
- India achieved notable progress in managing public debt. The **general government debt-to-GDP ratio** declined by about **7.1 percentage points** since **2020**.
- India remained the **world's largest recipient of remittances** in FY25. Remittance inflows reached **USD 135.4 billion**, strengthening external stability.
- Foreign exchange reserves increased to **USD 701.4 billion** by mid-January. Strong reserves provided a buffer against global financial volatility.



# APPOINTMENT

## Vijender Singh's Entry into Asian Boxing Governance

Indian boxing legend Vijender Singh has been appointed as a member of the Asian Boxing Council, marking a significant shift from elite athlete to sports administrator.

- This appointment reflects India's expanding footprint in international sports governance and recognises Vijender's long-standing contribution to boxing across multiple competitive levels.
- Vijender Singh made history by becoming **India's first Olympic medallist in boxing** at the **2008 Beijing Olympics**, winning a bronze medal.
- Over nearly two decades, he represented India at the **Asian Games, Commonwealth Games**, and world championships.

# AWARDS

## Nritya Kalanidhi award

- Renowned **Bharatanatyam** dancer **Urmila Satyanarayanan** was conferred the prestigious **Nritya Kalanidhi** award, one of the highest recognitions in the field of Indian classical dance.
- The award acknowledges decades of dedication to preserving and propagating Bharatanatyam in its traditional and scholarly form.
- This honour places her among an elite group of artistes who have made lasting contributions to India's cultural heritage.
- The recognition also underlines the continued relevance of classical dance in contemporary India. The **Nritya Kalanidhi** title is conferred annually by the **Madras Music Academy**, Chennai.
- It is traditionally awarded to senior dancers who demonstrate excellence in performance, teaching, and scholarship.
- The award is considered the dance equivalent of the Sangeetha Kalanidhi title in Carnatic music. It is usually presented during the Academy's annual music and dance conference held in December.
- **Urmila Satyanarayanan** is known for her rigorous adherence to classical grammar and expressive depth.
- Her performances reflect a strong foundation in **abhinaya**, rhythmic precision, and narrative clarity.
- She has also contributed significantly as a **teacher and mentor**, training several students in the traditional **guru-shishya parampara**. Her work bridges performance and pedagogy, ensuring continuity of classical knowledge.

## Tamil Nadu State Awards 2026

Category	conferred on	Given Award For
Thiruvalluvar Award 2026	Dr. Sathiyavel Muruganar	Contributions towards the <b>promotion of ethical values, Tamil philosophy, and classical Tamil thought.</b>
Kamarajar Award 2025	Idhayathulla	Contributions to <b>public life and social development.</b> This award is associated with ideals of <b>simplicity, integrity, and inclusive governance.</b>
Mahakavi Bharathiyar Award 2025	Nellai Jayantha	Contributions to <b>Tamil poetry and nationalist literary thought.</b>
Thamizh Thenral Thiru. Vi. Ka. Award 2025	Iraiyambu	Contributions to <b>administrative ethics, Tamil literature, and public intellectual discourse.</b>
Ayyan Thiruvalluvar Award	M.P. Sathiyavel Muruganar	Spreading the ideals of <b>Thiruvalluvar's philosophy.</b>
Thanthai Periyar Award	Advocate A. Arulmozhi	Work in <b>social justice and equality,</b> reflecting the rationalist and reformist legacy of Periyar.
Annal Ambedkar Award	M. Sinthanai Selvan	Service to <b>Adi Dravidar and tribal communities,</b> strengthening social inclusion policies.
Perarignar Anna Award	Duraimurugan	<b>long-standing public service and political leadership.</b>

- Each awardee will receive ₹5 lakh in cash and a one-sovereign gold medal, to be presented by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin. This reflects the state's commitment to material recognition and symbolic honour.

## UN Secretary-General's Award 2025

Indian Army Major Swathi Shantha Kumar received the UN Secretary-General's Award 2025 in the Gender Category for her outstanding contribution to gender-inclusive peacekeeping.

- This award is one of the highest recognitions within **United Nations peacekeeping operations**, given for initiatives that demonstrate innovation and measurable impact on the ground.
- Major Swathi served with the **United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)**, one of the UN's most complex peacekeeping missions.
- The award-winning project was titled "**Equal Partners, Lasting Peace**".
- The award was announced by **UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres**, highlighting the UN's broader push toward gender-responsive peacekeeping.

## Sukhatme National Award in Statistics

The **Sukhatme National Award in Statistics** is a prestigious national-level recognition in the field of statistics. It is instituted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). The award aims to acknowledge outstanding contributions made by individuals towards strengthening the system of official statistics in India.

- The core objective of the award is to recognize **high-quality research work** that enhances the credibility and effectiveness of official statistical systems.
- The Sukhatme National Award carries both symbolic and professional recognition. The award consists of a **citation**, a **shawl**, and a **memento**.
- The award has been given **in alternate years since 2000**. This biennial frequency ensures that recognition is selective and meaningful.
- The award is open to **Indian statisticians aged 45 years and above**. It is specifically meant for **lifetime contributions and achievements** in the field of statistics.
- The award will be presented on Statistics Day, i.e. on 29th June every year, with an award in each of the two categories being given in alternate years.

## SKOCH Award 2025

- The **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)** has received the **SKOCH Award 2025** for its life-saving **Cell Broadcast Solution**. The award was presented at the **104th SKOCH Summit**, recognising excellence in governance and public-interest technology.
- The recognition highlights India's growing capability in building **indigenous, citizen-centric digital infrastructure**. It also reflects the strategic importance of reliable emergency communication during disasters. India is highly vulnerable to **cyclones, floods, heatwaves, landslides, and earthquakes**. Timely alerts play a crucial role in reducing casualties and economic losses.
- The **Cell Broadcast Solution** strengthens national disaster preparedness by ensuring that warnings reach people **within seconds**, even in congested networks. This directly supports disaster risk reduction and resilience-building efforts.

## Semmozhi Literary Recognition Mission

**The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister announced a new annual literary award scheme to honour excellence in seven non-Hindi Indian languages. This initiative reflects a strong cultural policy focus on linguistic diversity and regional literary traditions.**

<b>Award name</b>	Semmozhi Illakiya Virudhu
<b>Announced by</b>	Tamil Nadu Chief Minister
<b>Nature of award</b>	Annual literary recognition
<b>Languages covered</b>	Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odiya, Bengali, Marathi
<b>Total languages</b>	Seven
<b>Prize money</b>	₹5 lakh per language
<b>Objective</b>	Promote multilingual literary excellence
<b>Cultural focus</b>	Linguistic diversity and heritage
<b>Policy model</b>	Cultural federalism

## Tamil Nadu Diaspora Awards 2026

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister urged the global Tamil diaspora to preserve their Tamil identity, language, and cultural roots. The message focused on cultural continuity across generations living outside India

<b>Countries represented</b>	Delegates from over 70 countries
<b>Tamil Mamani Award</b>	Dr. Annamalai
<b>Organisation</b>	Periyar Ambedkar Thoughts Circle Australia
<b>Kaniyan Poongundranar Award (Education)</b>	Mohamed Haniffa bin Abdullah
<b>Community Development</b>	Saravanan Padmanabhan, Senthilkumar Ramalingam
<b>Women category</b>	Gokilavani Prakashdevan
<b>Trade category</b>	Ansari Wahid
<b>Science and Technology</b>	Thirumalaisamy Velavan
<b>Medicine</b>	Kabilan Dharmarajan
<b>Cultural Ambassador Award</b>	Depa Rani (Chaw Su Thu Zar)
<b>Policy focus</b>	Global Tamil identity and cultural diplomacy

# PERSONALITIES

## Madhav Gadgil

- one of India's most influential ecologists, passed away in **January 2026**. His death marks the end of an era in Indian environmental thought shaped by science, community participation, and ecological ethics.
- He was widely respected for combining **academic ecology** with **policy advocacy**, especially in fragile ecological regions.
- Born in 1942 in Pune, Madhav Gadgil developed an early interest in natural sciences. His academic career was rooted in ecology, with a strong emphasis on field-based research.
- Madhav Gadgil played a critical role in establishing the **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve** in **1986**, India's first biosphere reserve. The reserve spans Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka.
- This initiative highlighted the importance of landscape-level conservation rather than isolated protected areas. In 2010, he chaired the Western Ghats Expert Ecology Panel (WGEEP). The panel recommended declaring the entire Western Ghats as an Ecologically Sensitive Area with graded protection.
- These recommendations sparked national debate on balancing development and conservation

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

### From Volga to Ganga Tamil Translation

- *From Volga to Ganga* is a landmark work in Indian historical literature. It was written by **Rahul Sankrityayan**, one of India's foremost scholars and intellectuals of the twentieth century. The book reflects his deep engagement with history, anthropology, and human civilisation.
- The book has now been translated into Tamil for the **seventh time**, reflecting its lasting relevance. Multiple translations indicate sustained academic and cultural interest in the work among Tamil readers.
- The latest Tamil translation has been done by **A. Mangai**, a noted theatre practitioner and English teacher. Her background in literature and performing arts adds depth to the translation.
- The Tamil edition has been published by **Seer Vasagar Vattam**, a publishing house known for bringing important literary and ideological works to Tamil audiences.

### "Agni Sarassulo Vikasinchina Kamalam Droupadi Murmu".

- It has been authored by **Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad**, a former Member of Parliament and the president of the Viswa Hindi Parishad.
- The title carries deep metaphorical meaning. It compares President Murmu's life to a **lotus blooming in fire-filled waters**, symbolising resilience amid adversity.
- A sanitation worker named **Lakshamma**, who cleans roads on the university campus, was invited to release a book on the life of **Droupadi Murmu**, the President of India.
- the book was released **under a tree on the Andhra University campus**. This unconventional setting represented **simplicity, grounded values, and closeness to everyday life**, mirroring President Murmu's own journey.

# SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

## India Develops Open-Source Tool PathGennie to Boost Drug Research

The Ministry of Science and Technology has developed PathGennie, an open-source software that speeds up drug discovery by accurately predicting how drugs unbind from protein targets, reducing distortions and strengthening India's computational biology and biotech research ecosystem.

- India has taken an important step in advanced biomedical research. The Ministry of Science and Technology has developed PathGennie, a new open-source software designed to fast-track drug discovery.
- The tool uses advanced computational techniques to improve the accuracy and speed of identifying effective drug candidates. PathGennie is a **computational biology software** designed to study how drug molecules interact with protein targets in the human body.
- A key strength of the platform lies in its ability to predict **drug unbinding pathways** accurately.
- Conventional simulations often apply artificial forces or distortions to speed up calculations. PathGennie avoids these distortions, producing results that are closer to **natural biological processes**.



## Skilling for AI Readiness SOAR

Skilling for AI Readiness (SOAR) is a national-level skilling initiative launched in July 2025 under the Skill India Mission. The programme is anchored by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and reflects India's push towards future-ready human capital.

- The central objective of SOAR is to **integrate AI competencies into India's education and skilling ecosystem**.
- It focuses on building **foundational AI understanding**, ethical awareness, and applied problem-solving skills.
- It targets **school students from Classes 6 to 12**, covering both **government and private schools**.

- In addition, the programme includes **educators and teachers**, recognising that effective AI learning depends on trained instructors. Teacher capacity-building ensures **long-term sustainability** of AI education in schools.
- This dual focus on students and educators differentiates SOAR from earlier digital literacy programmes.

### Parvati-Arga Bird Sanctuary Declared Eco-Sensitive Zone

- The Parvati-Arga Bird Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh has been declared an **Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ)**, strengthening the legal framework for wetland conservation in northern India.
- The sanctuary spreads across **1,084 hectares** in the **Indo-Gangetic floodplain** of eastern Uttar Pradesh.
- It consists of two permanent freshwater oxbow lakes, Parvati Lake and Arga Lake, formed from abandoned river channels.
- Parvati-Arga serves as an important wintering and stopover habitat for migratory birds arriving from **Central Asia and the Tibetan region**.
- The site has been recognised internationally as a **Ramsar Site**, highlighting its global wetland significance.

### Staphylococci and Urban Antibiotic Resistance

**Recent scientific investigations have reported high levels of antibiotic-resistant staphylococci in both indoor and outdoor environments across parts of Delhi.**

- One of the most alarming features of staphylococci is their **tolerance to penicillin**. Over the decades, they have developed resistance to multiple **clinically useful antibiotics**.
- These include **erythromycin, tetracycline, and aminoglycosides**, which were once effective frontline treatments
- The resistance emerges through **genetic mutations and horizontal gene transfer**.

### India's First Bullet Train to Run by August 2027

**India is stepping into a historic phase of modernization with the announcement that the country's first bullet train will begin operations by August 2027.**

- The Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR), popularly known as India’s bullet train project, spans approximately 508 kilometers, connecting the financial hub Mumbai in Maharashtra with Ahmedabad in Gujarat.
- The train will operate at speeds reaching 320 km/h, drastically cutting travel time between the two major cities to nearly two hours.

### E-Bill System and Fertiliser Subsidy Governance

- The E-Bill System is a fully digital, end-to-end platform for processing fertiliser subsidy bills. It replaces the earlier system of physical files, manual scrutiny, and multiple offline approvals.
- Under the new mechanism, subsidy claims are submitted, verified, approved, and cleared through an integrated online workflow.
- It is expected to process nearly **₹2 lakh crore** worth of claims annually.

### Human Spaceflight Milestones of 2026

**The year 2026 is emerging as a pivotal moment for global human spaceflight. Two major missions – India’s Gaganyaan Mission and the United States’ Artemis-II – are set to validate critical technologies required for sustained human presence in space**

- The first uncrewed test mission, **Gaganyaan G1**, is planned for **March 2026**. This mission will act as a systems-validation flight before astronauts are sent to space.
- The G1 mission will be launched using the **LVM3 (Gaganyaan-Mk3)** rocket. This launch vehicle has been **human-rated**, meaning it meets stringent safety, reliability, and redundancy standards required for carrying astronauts.
- Human rating includes fault tolerance, crew escape systems, and enhanced mission monitoring, all of which are crucial for future crewed launches.
- The **Artemis-II** mission represents the next phase of the US-led Artemis programme under **NASA**. Scheduled no earlier than **February 2026**, it will carry **four astronauts** aboard the Orion spacecraft.
- This will be the **first human mission beyond low-Earth orbit since Apollo-17 in 1972**, marking a return to deep-space human exploration after more than five decades.

## Battery Pack Aadhaar Number System

The Government has released draft guidelines for the Battery Pack Aadhaar System, signalling a major shift in battery governance. The system aims to bring digital traceability and accountability to India's fast-growing battery ecosystem. This move aligns with India's broader push towards a clean energy transition and sustainable mobility.

- The **Battery Pack Aadhaar System** is an indigenous digital identification and data storage framework. It assigns a **unique identification number** to every registered battery pack. This number functions as a permanent electronic record, similar to a digital passport.
- The draft guidelines mandate Battery Pack Aadhaar registration for specific battery categories. These include **Electric Vehicle batteries** and **Industrial batteries** with a capacity **greater than 2 kWh**.
- The core strength of BPAN lies in **end-to-end lifecycle tracking**. Information is recorded at each stage, including **manufacture, sale, repurposing, reuse, and recycling**. This ensures transparency across supply chains.

## Hyderabad Start-ups Power India's Mini Satellite Leap

India's private space sector has crossed another milestone with Hyderabad-based start-ups successfully preparing a compact Earth observation satellite for launch. The satellite has completed testing and integration and is now ready for deployment as a co-passenger on an upcoming PSLV mission in early January 2026.

- The mission, named **MOI-1**, has been developed by **TakeMe2Space**, with advanced electro-optics support from **EON Space Labs**. The satellite will operate in **Low Earth Orbit** at an altitude of around **500 km**.
- Its projected operational life is **three to five years**, making it suitable for sustained commercial and strategic use. The satellite is designed to serve both civilian and defence-oriented applications.
- The satellite weighs only **14 kg**, which is significantly lighter than traditional Earth observation satellites that often weigh between **100 and 200 kg**. Despite its small size, it delivers robust imaging performance.
- It offers a **9.2-metre spatial resolution** with an **18.7 km swath width**. The satellite supports **multispectral imaging across nine spectral bands**, enabling detailed surface analysis.

- The satellite is integrated with **MIRA**, a miniaturised space telescope developed locally. Most components are **indigenously built**, with only one foreign element used for high-performance computing.
- The total build cost stands at **₹2.5 crore**, making it **40-70% cheaper** than comparable global satellites. This demonstrates India's growing capability to deliver high-tech space solutions at competitive costs

## Param Shakti Supercomputing Facility Launched

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has launched Param Shakti at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras. The launch marks a major addition to India's academic high performance computing ecosystem. The facility has been funded under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).

- **Param Shakti** is an indigenously developed **3.1 Petaflop** supercomputing system.
- The system is built using Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)'s **RUDRA series of servers**.
- It runs on an open-source software stack, including **AlmaLinux**, ensuring flexibility and security.
- The computational capacity of **Param Shakti** is expected to support advanced research across multiple domains.
- Key areas include **aerospace engineering, materials science, climate modelling, drug discovery, and advanced manufacturing**.

## Aralam Becomes Kerala's First Butterfly Sanctuary

The Kerala government has officially renamed Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary as Aralam Butterfly Sanctuary. With this decision, it has become the first butterfly sanctuary in Kerala. The move reflects a shift towards focused conservation of insect biodiversity.

- Aralam is located in **Kannur district** and is known for its **dense tropical forests** and stable microclimatic conditions..
- These factors support a **high diversity of butterfly species**, including rare and endemic varieties. The availability of host plants and nectar sources makes it an ideal breeding ground.
- The sanctuary is expected to become a hub for **butterfly documentation and education programmes**, supporting academic and conservation institutions..

- The Forest Department has proposed the development of a **butterfly village** by linking four panchayats – **Kelakam, Kanichar, Aralam, and Muzhakunnu**. The plan focuses on awareness, habitat-friendly livelihoods, and eco-sensitive tourism.

## SCORP and India's Leap into Legged Robotics

**India has unveiled SCORP, its first legged mobile manipulator, marking a significant step in advanced robotics.**

- The system has been developed by **xTerra Robotics**, a deep-tech startup incubated at **IIT Kanpur**.
- Legged mobile manipulators merge two capabilities. One is **legged mobility**, which enables movement over uneven or hazardous terrain.
- The other is **manipulation**, which allows interaction with objects using a robotic arm.
- SCORP is designed to operate in **unstructured and complex environments**.

## India's Entry into Article 6 Carbon Markets and the Climate Finance Shift

**Article 6 of the Paris Agreement creates a framework for international cooperation in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It allows countries to trade verified emissions reductions while maintaining accounting integrity.**

- At **COP29**, long-pending operational rules for Article 6 were finalised. This included detailed guidance for **Article 6.2** (bilateral or plurilateral cooperation) and **Article 6.4** (centralised crediting mechanism)
- India entered the **Article 6.2 framework** in August 2025 by signing the **Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM)** with Japan. This marked India's first formal step into regulated international carbon trading.
- India has identified 13 eligible activity areas for early Article 6 engagement. Priority sectors include renewable energy with storage, offshore wind, solar thermal power, and **green hydrogen**.
- Article 6 also opens pathways for carbon removal activities. Technologies such as biochar and enhanced rock weathering are gaining global attention
- India's engagement under Article 6 creates scope for **South-South collaboration**. Shared platforms for technology transfer and blended finance can amplify development outcomes.

## Andhra Pradesh Emerges as Global Green Ammonia Hub

Andhra Pradesh is set to host the world's largest green ammonia project at Kakinada, marking a major milestone in India's clean energy journey. The project strengthens India's ambition to become a global hub for green fuels while advancing climate and energy security goals.

- The project is being developed by **AM Green**, with a planned investment of **\$10 billion**
- It involves the conversion of an existing **ammonia-urea complex** at Kakinada into a large-scale green ammonia facility.
- Once completed, the project will have a production capacity of **1.5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA)**, making it the largest of its kind in the world.
- The project follows a **phased commissioning plan** to scale production steadily. Capacity is expected to reach **0.5 MTPA by 2027, 1.0 MTPA by 2028, and the full 1.5 MTPA by 2030.**
- The Kakinada facility will operate entirely on renewable energy, ensuring **carbon-free ammonia production**. It will be supported by nearly **7.5 GW of solar and wind capacity** and about **1,950 MW of electrolyser capacity**.
- Round-the-clock power will be ensured through close to **2 GW of firm renewable supply**, supported by pumped hydro storage.
- The project will enable **India's first-ever green ammonia exports**. Planned export destinations include **Germany, Japan, and Singapore**, all of which are seeking clean fuel imports to meet decarbonisation targets.

## Kaziranga Elevated Corridor And Wildlife-Sensitive Infrastructure

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the ₹6,957 crore Kaziranga Elevated Corridor in January 2026.

- The **Kaziranga Elevated Corridor** is a **34.5 km long elevated road** planned as part of the widening of **National Highway-715**.
- This highway runs along the **southern boundary of Kaziranga National Park**, separating it from the **Karbi Anglong hills**.
- The elevated design allows **vehicles to move above**, while **animals pass freely underneath**, restoring traditional migration routes.
- The corridor represents a **model of wildlife-sensitive infrastructure**.

## Second Range Wide Dolphin Survey Under Project Dolphin

India has launched the **Second Range Wide Dolphin Survey** under **Project Dolphin**, starting from **Bijnor in Uttar Pradesh**

- The initiative reflects India's growing focus on **aquatic biodiversity conservation**.
- **Project Dolphin** is a flagship conservation programme of the **Government of India**, coordinated by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**. Its core objective is to protect riverine and marine dolphin species through habitat conservation and scientific monitoring.
- The dolphin survey is structured into **two distinct phases** to ensure comprehensive coverage. The first phase covers the **main stem of the Ganga from Bijnor to Ganga Sagar**, along with the **Indus River system**.
- The second phase expands to the Brahmaputra basin, **major Ganga tributaries**, the **Sundarbans region**, and **select riverine and estuarine areas of Odisha**. This wide spatial spread enables ecosystem-level assessment.
- The survey assesses multiple dolphin species, including the **Gangetic River Dolphin**, **Indus River Dolphin**, and **Irrawaddy Dolphin**

## Hope Island Spaceport and India's Expanding Commercial Space Ecosystem

- **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu** announced the establishment of a new spaceport at **Hope Island** in January 2026.
- The project is part of the state's **Space City initiative**, aimed at building a future-ready space and aerospace ecosystem.
- This facility is designed mainly for **private launch missions**, marking a shift from purely government-led space infrastructure to a **public-private space development model**. It reflects India's transition towards a **commercialised space economy**.
- The **Space City initiative** seeks to integrate launch infrastructure, research facilities, startups, and industrial ecosystems into a single growth corridor. Hope Island is planned as a specialised launch hub within this broader vision.

## India's First Private Earth Observation Satellite Constellation

- India has entered a new phase in space governance with the signing of an agreement between the **Pixxel-led Consortium** and **IN-SPACE** to design, build,

and operate the country's **first national private Earth Observation (EO) satellite constellation**.

- This marks a strategic shift from a **government-built model** to an **industry-operated national EO system**, reflecting India's evolving space economy framework.
- The consortium includes **Pixxel, Piersight Space, Satsure Analytics India, and Dhruva Space**, combining satellite manufacturing, analytics, and downstream data processing capabilities into a single ecosystem.
- **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe)** functions as India's nodal body for regulating and enabling private space activities.
- It authorises projects, ensures regulatory compliance, and promotes non-government participation in space missions.

### India's First Integrated Private Satellite Manufacturing Unit in Sanand

**India marked a historic milestone with the launch of its first integrated private satellite manufacturing unit at Sanand (Khoraj), Gujarat.**

- The facility is being established by **Azista Space**, a private aerospace company focused on advanced satellite systems.
- The manufacturing unit, named **Palmnaro**, is designed as an **end-to-end integrated satellite production plant**.
- It will manufacture complete satellites along with **high-end electro-optical payloads** under one roof.
- This integration reduces fragmentation in production and strengthens domestic value chains.
- The foundation stone ceremony represents a decisive shift from a purely government-led space ecosystem to a **public-private collaborative model**.

### India's Global Leadership in Renewable Energy Transition

**At World Economic Forum 2026, India received strong global recognition for its Renewable Energy Transition Roadmap. India achieved 50% of its cumulative installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources, five years ahead of the 2030 target.**

- This milestone positioned India as a **global energy transition leader**. It reflects policy stability, infrastructure growth, and large-scale public-private participation.
- India's **renewable energy manufacturing capacity** has expanded to **144 GW**.
- **Solar tariffs declined by nearly 80%**, making solar power one of the cheapest energy sources globally. Renewable energy with **storage solutions** is now cost-competitive with fossil fuel power.
- **Green hydrogen and green ammonia prices discovered in India** are among the **most competitive globally**. This positions India as a future exporter of clean fuels.
- India's **Ethanol Blending Programme** has reduced **813 lakh metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**.
- The country is scaling up **biofuels, green hydrogen, sustainable aviation fuels, and low-carbon technologies**.

## Blue Category of Industries

The **Blue Category of Industries** is a recent classification introduced by the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** to recognize facilities that play a direct role in **environmental protection**. Unlike conventional industrial categories, this classification focuses on services that **reduce pollution rather than generate it**. The move reflects a **policy shift toward strengthening pollution control infrastructure**.

- The categorisation places **Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs)** under this new Blue Category.
- The Blue Category primarily covers **Essential Environmental Services (ESS)**. These services are critical for controlling, abating, and mitigating pollution arising from **domestic and industrial activities**. They operate as environmental safeguards rather than polluting units
- The Blue Category includes a range of pollution-control and waste-management facilities. **Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) Waste-to-Energy plants biomining units, composting units**

## ISRO Confirms Gaganyaan Mission Timeline for Launch

India's first human spaceflight programme, **Gaganyaan**, has entered a decisive phase with a **confirmed launch timeline**. **ISRO Chairman V Narayanan** has stated that the human mission is planned for **2027**, following a sequence of **uncrewed validation flights**.

- Before astronauts fly, **three uncrewed missions** will be conducted to validate mission-critical systems.
- The first mission, **G1**, is scheduled for **March 2026** and is nearly **90 per cent complete**. Over **8,000 ground and structural tests** have already been carried out.
- These tests focus on **structural integrity, avionics, propulsion systems, and mission software**.
- Each system must meet absolute safety standards before human launch approval is granted.
- The **G1 mission** will carry **Vyommitra**, ISRO's humanoid robot designed for human mission simulation.
- Vyommitra will assess **life-support systems, crew module environment, re-entry behaviour, and recovery operations**.

### Patna Bird Sanctuary and Chhari-Dhand Gained Ramsar Status

**Patna Bird Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh and Chhari-Dhand in Gujarat have received international recognition for their ecological value. With this inclusion, India's total Ramsar sites have risen to 98, reflecting sustained efforts in wetland conservation**

- **Patna Bird Sanctuary**, located in **Etah district of Uttar Pradesh**, is a freshwater wetland ecosystem. It plays a crucial role in supporting a large number of resident and migratory bird species.
- **Chhari-Dhand** lies in the **Kutch region of Gujarat**, an area known for arid climatic conditions. Unlike typical wetlands, it is a **seasonal saline wetland**, making it ecologically distinctive.

### Sunabeda Sanctuary as an Emerging Leopard Landscape

**Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary in western Odisha has recently gained attention as an emerging habitat for leopards. The sanctuary lies in Nuapada district and spreads over nearly 600 square kilometres of forested terrain.**

- forest officials estimate that more than 70 leopards may inhabit the sanctuary. Nearly 90 per cent of camera traps installed recorded leopard images or indirect signs.
- Sunabeda supports species such as spotted deer, sambar, chowsingha, wild boar, and Indian bison. This prey base forms the ecological foundation for sustaining large carnivores.

# SPORTS

## New Sports Law Reshaping India's Sports Governance

India's sports administration has entered a reform phase with select provisions of the **National Sports Governance Act 2025** coming into force from **January 1, 2026**.

- The Act, notified in **August 2025**, seeks to regulate the internal functioning of sports bodies across the country. It applies to institutions such as **National Sports Federations**, the National Olympic framework, and paralympic sports bodies.
- A key feature of the Act is the establishment of permanent oversight institutions. The **National Sports Board** has been created as a three-member body with wide regulatory powers.
- **National Sports Tribunal** has been set up to resolve disputes related to sports administration.
- The Act mandates structural changes within sports federations. Executive Committees at national and regional levels are **now capped at 15 members**.
- A significant reform is the compulsory inclusion of **at least two Sportspersons of Merit** in each Executive Committee.

## IOA National Olympic Education Reform Drive

The **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** has announced two major institutional reforms aimed at strengthening India's Olympic ecosystem. These reforms focus on long-term capacity building, ethical governance, and athlete-centric development.

- The **National Olympic Education and Development Programme (NOEDP)** is a structured national framework designed to deliver education across the Olympic ecosystem.
- It will be implemented in partnership with **National Sports Federations** and **State Olympic Associations**.
- A key feature of NOEDP is its emphasis on **athlete welfare and post-career transition**.

## Aaryan Varshney Joins India's Grandmaster League

Indian chess witnessed another landmark moment as **Aaryan Varshney** earned the prestigious **Grandmaster (GM)** title, becoming India's **92nd GM**. The achievement

came after a dominant performance at the **Andranik Margaryan Memorial Tournament held in Armenia.**

- Varshney clinched the GM title by winning the tournament outright. His crucial **eighth-round draw** against **FM Tyhran Ambartsumian** ensured the completion of his **third and final GM norm.**
- The **Grandmaster title** is the highest recognition in competitive chess and is awarded by **FIDE**. Players must achieve **three GM norms** in international tournaments and cross a prescribed **Elo rating threshold.**

### **Indian Women's Hockey Finish 2025 With Asia Cup Silver**

- The **Indian women's hockey team** concluded **2025** on a positive continental note by securing **silver at the Women's Asia Cup.**
- India entered **2025** with confidence after winning the **2024 Women's Asian Champions Trophy** at Rajgir.
- The **1-0** final victory against China highlighted India's defensive organisation and composure in high-stakes matches.
- That title raised expectations for sustained success in the following season..
- India lost the opening matches **2-0** and **3-2**, reflecting the intensity of playing against the Hockeyroos.
- A narrow **1-0 win**, scored by **Navneet Kaur**, offered confidence and tactical lessons.

# REPORT

## Global Risk Report 2026

Topic	Detail
Report Name	Global Risk Report 2026
Released By	World Economic Forum
Short-Term Top Risk	Geoeconomic confrontation
Long-Term Major Risks	Extreme weather, biodiversity loss
India-Specific Risks	Cyber insecurity, inequality
Key Economic Tools	Sanctions, trade controls, subsidies
Global Impact	Supply chain disruption
Strategic Focus	Reinforcing multilateralism

## Convergence Drive for MSME Scheme Efficiency

The '**Achieving Efficiencies in MSME Sector through Convergence of Schemes**' report was released by NITI Aayog in January 2026. It examines how better coordination among government schemes can improve policy delivery for **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**.

- The **Ministry of MSME** currently administers **18 different schemes**. Many of these schemes have **overlapping objectives**, multiple implementing agencies, and varied eligibility criteria
- Convergence enables **better translation of financial inputs into measurable outcomes**. Simplified scheme architecture reduces procedural burden and improves beneficiary participation.
- Two-Pronged Convergence Approach.- **Information Convergence, Process Convergence**
- One major recommendation is the **integration of cluster development schemes**. The report proposes convergence of SFURTI with **MSE-Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP)** to strengthen local value chains.
- Another focus area is **skill development convergence**. Skill initiatives should be rationalised into a **three-tier structure** covering entrepreneurship skills, MSME technical skills, and rural and women artisan training.
- The report also suggests an **AI-powered centralized digital platform** to integrate all MSME schemes. This platform would enable beneficiary mapping, fund tracking, and performance analytics.

# RANKING

## India Ranks Eighth Globally in Pharmacovigilance

- India has achieved a major milestone by ranking **8th globally in pharmacovigilance contributions** to the **World Health Organization**.
- This marks a dramatic improvement from **123rd position a decade ago**, highlighting sustained progress in drug safety surveillance.
- The rise reflects stronger regulatory oversight, improved adverse drug reaction reporting, and better coordination across healthcare systems.

## States Powering India's Export Readiness Surge

**NITI Aayog released the Export Preparedness Index 2024, a comprehensive assessment of how well sub-national regions are positioned to drive exports.**

- The Export Preparedness Index 2024 is built on a robust analytical framework. It uses 4 pillars, 13 sub-pillars, and 70 indicators, ensuring a balanced evaluation of policy intent and on-ground performance.
- The four pillars are Export Infrastructure, Business Ecosystem, Policy and Governance, and Export Performance.
- Among Large States, Maharashtra emerged as the top performer, followed closely by Tamil Nadu and Gujarat.
- Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh also featured in the leaders' category, reflecting improvements in infrastructure and industrial depth.
- In the combined group of Small States, North Eastern States, and Union Territories, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, and Goa were classified as leaders.
- States such as Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Bihar, and Jharkhand were classified as aspirers, highlighting early-stage export ecosystems that require focused policy support and investment.
- Among Union Territories, Delhi ranked lower and was placed in the challenger category, alongside Meghalaya, Ladakh, and Himachal Pradesh.
- In the combined group of Small States, North Eastern States, and Union Territories, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, and Goa were classified as leaders.

## Responsible Nations Index 2026

- India has been ranked 16th among 154 countries in the Responsible Nations Index 2026, marking a strong global acknowledgment of its responsible national conduct. The index evaluates how countries exercise power responsibly beyond mere economic strength.
- This ranking reflects India's performance across governance quality, environmental stewardship, and contribution to global stability. It underlines that responsibility is not limited to high-income nations alone.
- The Responsible Nations Index is a global assessment framework launched by the World Intellectual Foundation.
- It aims to measure how responsibly nations act towards their citizens, the environment, and the international community.

## Asia Manufacturing Index 2026

- India ranked sixth among 11 Asian countries in the Asia Manufacturing Index 2026.
- The ranking reflects India's steady progress in manufacturing capacity but also highlights gaps in competitiveness compared to faster-reforming Asian economies.
- The index underlines the urgency for structural reforms, faster execution, and deeper industrial transformation.
- The Asia Manufacturing Index (AMI) is an annual assessment released by Dezan Shira & Associates, a pan-Asian advisory firm.
- It evaluates the manufacturing strength of major Asian economies through a structured, data-driven framework.
- Countries are ranked across eight pillars: economy, political risk, business environment, international trade, tax policy, infrastructure, workforce, and innovation.

## IMPORTANT DAYS JANUARY 2026

Date	Day	Theme
January 01	Global Family Day	"Embracing Our Global Family"
January 4	World Braille Day	"Bridging Accessibility in a Digital-First World"
January 6	World Day of War Orphans	"Protection and Rehabilitation in a Changing Global Landscape"
January 6	Siddha day	"Siddha for Global Health."
January 9	Pravasi Bharatiya diwas	"Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat"
January 10	World Hindi day	"Hindi in a Global Digital Era"
January 12	National youth day	"Ignite the Self, Impact the World"
January 15	Indian army day	"Year of Networking and Data Centricity"
January 16	National startup day	"A Decade of Startup India,"
January 18	World religion day	"Faith in Action: Uplifting the Needy"
January 12	National youth day	"Fund Resilience, Not Disasters"
January 23	Birth anniversary of nethaji subash Chandra bose/national day of patriotism/Parakram divas	"Netaji: Courage, Determination, and Patriotism"
January 24	National girl child day	"Let Girls Learn and Lead"
January 25	National tourism day	"Rural and Community Centric Tourism"
January 25	National voter's day	"My India, My Vote"
January 25	World leprosy day	"Leprosy is curable, the real challenge is stigma"
January 26	Republic day	"150 Years of Vande Mataram".
January 27	International Holocaust Remembrance Day	"Holocaust Remembrance for Dignity and Human Rights,"
January 28	Data Privacy Day	"Take Control of Your Data" and fostering a "Privacy by Design"