

FEBRUARY 2026



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New Appointments & Resignations

1. Major Judicial Appointments: New Chief Justices for Kerala, Patna & Meghalaya High Courts (2026)

Context

- The **Government of India** has **notified the appointment and transfer of Chief Justices** for three High Courts — **Kerala, Patna and Meghalaya** — following recommendations by the **Supreme Court Collegium** headed by **Chief Justice of India Surya Kant**.
- These changes were formalised in **early January 2026** under constitutional provisions.

New Appointments & Transfers

1. Kerala High Court

- **Justice Soumen Sen** (formerly Chief Justice of the Meghalaya High Court) has been **transferred and appointed as Chief Justice of Kerala High Court**.
- He will assume office after the **retirement of Chief Justice Nitin Madhukar Jamdar on 9 January 2026**.

2. Patna High Court

- **Justice Sangam Kumar Sahoo**, a veteran judge of the **Orissa High Court**, has been **appointed as Chief Justice of the Patna High Court**.

3. Meghalaya High Court

- **Justice Revati Prashant Mohite Dere**, a judge of the **Bombay High Court**, has been **appointed as Chief Justice of the Meghalaya High Court** following Justice Sen's transfer.

Constitutional Basis

- The appointments and transfers were made under:
 - **Article 222** of the Constitution — empowers the President to **transfer High Court judges**, including Chief Justices, **after consultation with the CJI**.
 - **Article 217** — governs **appointment of High Court judges and Chief Justices** by the President in consultation with the CJI and other authorities.



2. A.K. Balasubrahmanian Assumes Charge as Chairman of AERB (2026)

Event Overview

- **What:** Distinguished scientist **A.K. Balasubrahmanian** was appointed as the **Chairman of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)** for a tenure of three years.
- **When:** Effective **1 January 2026**.
- **Where:** **AERB Headquarters, Mumbai** (head office of India's nuclear regulatory authority).
- **Significance:** The appointment ensures continued leadership of India's **apex nuclear safety regulator**, reinforcing focus on nuclear safety, regulation, and radiation control



About the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)

- AERB was constituted on **15 November 1983** under the **Atomic Energy Act, 1962** to regulate nuclear and radiation safety in India.
- Its mission is to **ensure that the use of ionising radiation and nuclear energy in India does not pose undue risk to people's health and the environment**.
- AERB's regulatory authority covers **nuclear power plants, fuel cycle facilities, radiation equipment and radiation practices** across sectors.

3. Shatrुjeet Singh Kapoor Takes Charge as ITBP DG; Praveen Kumar Named BSF Chief

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Shatrुjeet Singh Kapoor appointed as Director General of ITBP

- **Event:** Senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer **Shatrुjeet Singh Kapoor** has been appointed as the **Director General (DG)** of the **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)**.
- **Tenure:** He will serve as DG ITBP *up to 31 October 2026*, the date of his superannuation.
- **Background:** Kapoor is a **1990-batch IPS officer** from the Haryana cadre.
- **Relevance:** ITBP is a Central Armed Police Force responsible for guarding India's border with China.



Praveen Kumar appointed Director General of BSF

- **Event:** **Praveen Kumar**, a **1993-batch IPS officer** of the West Bengal cadre, has been appointed as the **Director General of the Border Security Force (BSF)**.
- **Tenure:** He will serve as BSF DG *up to 30 September 2030* (his retirement date).

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- **Role of BSF:** BSF is responsible for guarding India's borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh.

About

Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)

- A Central Armed Police Force under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- Formed in **1962**, primarily guarding the **India-China border**.
- **About**

Border Security Force (BSF)

- Major border guarding force protecting borders with **Pakistan and Bangladesh**.
- Plays key roles in anti-infiltration and border movement control.

4. Government Appoints Rakesh Aggarwal as Director General of NIA.

- **Name:** Rakesh Aggarwal
- **Post:** Director General (DG), National Investigation Agency (NIA)
- **Appointing Authority:** Government of India (Appointments Committee of the Cabinet) approved the appointment.
- **Tenure:** Until **31 August 2028**, the date of his superannuation, or until further orders.

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Service Details:

- Senior **Indian Police Service (IPS)** officer
- **1994-batch**, Himachal Pradesh cadre.

Previous Role: Special Director General (SDG) of NIA and holding additional charge as interim NIA chief prior to formal appointment.

About NIA (National Investigation Agency) –What it is: **NIA is India's** central counter-terrorism and national security investigation agency, **functioning under the** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

- **Legal basis & start:** Established under the **National Investigation Agency Act, 2008** (commonly linked to the post-26/11 security reforms).
- **Mandate:** Investigates and prosecutes **“Scheduled Offences”** that affect **sovereignty, security and integrity of India**, security of State, friendly relations with foreign states, and treaty-linked offences listed in the Schedule of the Act.

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- **Jurisdiction:** NIA officers have powers to investigate **across India** for scheduled offences as provided under the Act; states are informed through a defined procedure in the Act.
- **Special Courts:** The Act provides for **Special Courts** for trial of scheduled offences.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi

5. Shri Praveen Vashista Appointed Vigilance Commissioner

- **Shri Praveen Vashista** has been appointed as a **Vigilance Commissioner** in the **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)**, India's apex anti-corruption and vigilance body.
- The **President of India** made the appointment via a warrant dated **12 December 2025** under **Section 4(1) of the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003**.
- He **took the oath of office on 16 January 2026** before the Central Vigilance Commissioner



About the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)

- The CVC is the **apex vigilance institution** in India, tasked with **promoting integrity, transparency and accountability in public administration** and **preventing corruption** in central government departments.
- It was **established in 1964** and granted **statutory status in 2003** under the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003.

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Sports Updates

1. India's Game Changer: New Sports Law Reforms Sports Governance (2026)



Context & Background

From **1 January 2026**, key provisions of the **National Sports Governance Act, 2025** have come into force, marking a significant reform in India's sports governance framework.

What Is the New Sports Law?

- The **National Sports Governance Act, 2025** is a landmark legislation passed by the Indian Parliament to regulate and oversee the functioning of national sports bodies in a transparent, accountable, and athlete-centric manner.
- It replaces earlier non-binding codes with a **statutory governance framework** aligned with international best practices like the **Olympic and Paralympic Charters**.

Key Provisions

1. Oversight & Regulation:

The Act empowers the **National Sports Board (NSB)** to recognise, register, and monitor national sports bodies and enforce compliance with governance standards.

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2. Athlete Representation & Ethics:

Sports federations must ensure **athlete representation**, a **Code of Ethics**, and internal **grievance redressal mechanisms**.

3. Dispute Resolution:

- Creation of a **National Sports Tribunal** (a specialised quasi-judicial body) to handle disputes and governance issues efficiently.
- **4. Transparency & Accountability:**
- The new law enhances financial and administrative oversight of sports federations to curb mismanagement and unethical practices.

5. Alignment with Global Norms:

It mandates compliance with international standards for fair play, governance, and ethical conduct, helping Indian sports bodies meet global expectations.

2. Sjoerd Marijne Reappointed as Chief Coach of Indian Women's Hockey Team (2026)

Context

- **Event:** Reappointment of **Sjoerd Marijne** as the **chief coach** of the **Indian women's hockey team**.
- **Date of News:** Early January 2026.
- **By:** Hockey India (HI).

Key Facts

- **Coach Appointed:** **Sjoerd Marijne**, a seasoned Dutch hockey coach.
- **Role:** Chief coach of the **India women's national hockey team**.
- **Objective:** To strengthen team performance ahead of **FIH Women's Hockey World Cup Qualifiers in March 2026**.



About Sjoerd Marijne

- Marijne is a **Dutch field hockey coach** with significant international experience.
- Previously coached the **Indian women's team (2017–2021)** and led them to their **best-ever 4th place finish at the Tokyo Olympics 2021**.

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- This is his **second major stint** with the Indian women's team, returning after **about 4.5 years**.

3. National Sports Governance Rules, 2026

The **Government of India** has notified the **National Sports Governance (National Sports Bodies) Rules, 2026** under the **National Sports Governance Act, 2025**. These rules came into effect on **12 January 2026** and aim to reform sports administration in India by introducing a **statutory governance framework** for national sports organizations.



Ensuring Transparency and Athlete Representation: National Sports Governance (National Sports Bodies) Rules, 2026



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Major Provisions of the Rules

1. Representation of Athletes

- Every National Sports Body (NSB) must include **at least four Sportspersons of Outstanding Merit (SOMs)** in its **General Body**.
- Of these SOMs, **50% must be women** to ensure gender balance.

2. Executive Committee Composition

- NSBs must ensure that at least **four women members** are part of the **Executive Committee**.
- To ensure compliance, bodies may **reserve specific posts for women** through their bye-laws.

3. Eligibility Criteria for SOMs

- SOMs must be **at least 25 years old, retired from active sports, and not have participated in competitive selection events for at least one year** prior to applying.

4. Tiered Criteria System

- A **10-tiered system** is prescribed to classify and select SOMs based on sporting achievements — from **Olympic medallists** to **national champions**.

5. Election Procedures

- The rules detail **transparent election procedures** for NSB bodies:
 - Elections must follow specific timelines.
 - A **National Sports Election Panel** with at least **20 qualified members** will oversee elections.
 - Fees for election officials are capped (e.g., up to **₹5 lakh**).

6. Disqualification Criteria

- Individuals **convicted and sentenced to imprisonment** are disqualified from contesting elections or holding posts in General Bodies or committees.

7. Compliance and Bye-laws

- Every National Sports Body must **amend its bye-laws** to align with these rules within **six months**.
- The government may **relax some rules for up to 12 months** on written request to ensure smooth transition.

4. Vijay Hazare Trophy 2026

- The **Vijay Hazare Trophy** is India's **premier domestic one-day (List A) cricket tournament** organized by the **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)**.
- Named after **Vijay Hazare**, a legendary Indian cricketer, it features **50-over matches** similar to One Day Internationals.
- It is a **key pathway for players** aiming for selection into the **Indian national cricket team**.

2025-26 Final & Results

- **Champions: Vidarbha Cricket Team** won their **maiden Vijay Hazare Trophy title**.
- **Runner-up: Saurashtra.**
- **Final Match:**
 - Held at **BCCI Centre of Excellence, Bengaluru.**
 - Vidarbha defeated Saurashtra **by 38 runs** in the final.

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- **Match Highlights:**

- **Atharva Taide** played a crucial knock (century) anchoring Vidarbha's innings in the final.
- Vidarbha posted a strong total and disciplined bowling helped secure the historic win



Key Performers of the Season

- **Most Runs: Aman Mokhade (Vidarbha)** — top scorer of the season.
- **Player of the Series: Aman Mokhade (Vidarbha)** for consistent batting across matches.
- **Most Wickets: Ankur Panwar (Saurashtra)** — leading wicket-taker of the season..

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Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) & Agreements

1. India's AYUSH System Secures Global Recognition via Oman & New Zealand Trade Pacts

Context & Background

- India's **traditional medicine systems** — **AYUSH** (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Homoeopathy) have received **formal recognition** in major **bilateral trade agreements** with **Oman** and **New Zealand** finalized in **December 2025**.
- The recognition comes through **dedicated annexures** on **health-related services and traditional medicine** within:
 - **India–Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**
 - **India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**

Key Highlights

- **Formal Trade Recognition:** For the first time, AYUSH systems are **explicitly acknowledged** in bilateral trade frameworks, making India's traditional medicine part of global commerce agreements.
- **Export Growth:** Exports of **AYUSH and herbal products** have registered a **6.11 % increase**, climbing from **USD 649.2 million in 2023–24** to **USD 688.89 million in 2024–25**, indicating rising international market interest.
- **Market Access & Regulation:** The inclusion in trade pacts creates **structured pathways for market access, regulatory clarity and co-operation** for AYUSH services and products in Oman and New Zealand, reducing non-tariff barriers.

2. Bulgaria Adopts the Euro, Becomes 21st Eurozone Member

What's New?

- **Date:** 1 January 2026
- **Event:** **Bulgaria officially adopted the euro** as its **official currency**, replacing the Bulgarian lev and becoming the **21st member of the eurozone** — the monetary union of EU countries that use the euro.

Background

- Bulgaria joined the **European Union in 2007** and committed to adopting the euro as part of its deeper integration into the EU.
- To qualify, the country had to meet strict **convergence criteria** covering inflation control, sound public finances, exchange rate stability, and long-term

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interest rates — all overseen by the **European Commission and European Central Bank (ECB)**.

- In **June–July 2025**, EU institutions confirmed that Bulgaria met the criteria and adopted the required legal acts to enable the transition.

Key Features of the Transition

- **Euro as Official Currency:** The **euro replaced the lev on 1 January 2026**, marking Bulgaria's full entry into the eurozone.
- **Dual Currency Phase:** During **January 2026**, both the lev and the euro will be accepted in payments, with **change given only in euros**. From **1 February 2026**, the **euro becomes the sole legal tender**.
- **Conversion Rate:** A fixed conversion rate was used (BGN 1.95583 = €1), maintaining continuity with Bulgaria's previous currency system.
- **Euro Coins:** Special **Bulgarian euro coins** with national symbols (e.g., Madara Rider, Saint Ivan of Rila) entered circulation from the same day.

3. India-Germany Strategic Deals

- **India and Germany signed 19 strategic agreements/MoUs** to strengthen cooperation across **defence, technology, critical minerals, trade, energy, education, and people-to-people ties**.
- The deals were finalised during the **visit of German Chancellor Friedrich Merz** to India for high-level talks with **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.



Main Focus Areas of Agreements

1. Defence & Security Cooperation

- **Joint Declaration of Intent** to strengthen **bilateral defence industrial cooperation** through **co-development, co-production, training, and technology sharing**.
- Expanded cooperation in **naval engagements and defence exercises**; moves towards **joint defence manufacturing** and modernisation.

2. Technology & Critical Minerals

- Agreements on **semiconductor ecosystem partnership** to foster chip technology and supply chain resilience.
- Cooperation in **critical minerals** (like lithium, rare earth elements) essential for **green energy, battery manufacturing, and advanced tech**.

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- Collaboration in **telecommunications and digital technologies** to boost strategic tech cooperation.

3. Trade, Energy & Green Partnerships

- Enhancing **economic ties** with a Joint Declaration focusing on trade and investment cooperation.
- Deals include **green energy initiatives**, such as green ammonia agreements and renewable energy cooperation under the **Green and Sustainable Development Partnership (GSDP)** framework.

4. Education, Skills & Mobility

- **Indo-German roadmap for higher education** to boost academic exchanges.
- Agreements for **global skill partnerships**, renewable energy skilling, and healthcare workforce mobility.
- Germany announced **visa-free airport transit** for **Indian passport holders**, facilitating easier travel.

5. People-to-People & Cultural Ties

- MoUs on **sports cooperation, postal services, maritime heritage development (e.g., Lothal)** and youth exchanges.
- Emphasis on strengthening **cultural and societal linkages** between the two nations.

4. India-EU Strategic Leap: First Ever Comprehensive Defence & Security Partnership

India and the **European Union (EU)** signed their **first comprehensive Security and Defence Partnership** on **27 January 2026**, coinciding with the **India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** announcement during the 16th India-EU Summit in **New Delhi**.



Background

- India and the EU share a **long-standing strategic partnership**, covering trade, climate, counterterrorism and more.
- Defence cooperation discussions have gradually evolved through annual dialogues and sectoral exchanges prior to this formal framework.

Key Features of the Defence & Security Partnership

- **First comprehensive defence and security framework** between India and the EU.
- **Major areas of cooperation:**
 - Maritime security
 - Cyber security & cyber defence
 - Defence industry collaboration
 - Counter-terrorism cooperation
 - Space security and emerging technologies
 - Hybrid threat response & resilience
 - Information sharing and strategic coordination

Security of Information Agreement (SOIA)

Initiated negotiations for a **Security of Information Agreement** to enable exchange of **classified data** under legally protected conditions — a crucial trust-building measure.

Strategic Significance

- Reflects a **shared response to global security challenges**, including terrorism, cyber threats and maritime vulnerabilities.
- Elevated cooperation signals India's transition from an "issue-based partner" to a **key strategic collaborator** for the EU in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.
- Opens up **defence industry cooperation avenues**, including Indian defence firms potentially participating in European procurement frameworks.

Complementing Agreements

This defence pact was signed alongside the **India–EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** — dubbed the "**mother of all deals**" — which aims to reduce tariffs on most goods and expand trade links.

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Summits, Conferences & Events

National Textiles Ministers' Conference 2026 — Guwahati

1. What is the Event?

A **two-day National Textiles Ministers' Conference** organised by the **Ministry of Textiles** in collaboration with the **Government of Assam** was held in **Guwahati, Assam** from **8 – 9 January 2026**.

2. Theme of the Conference

The event was held under the theme: **“India’s Textiles: Weaving Growth, Heritage & Innovation”** — focusing on growth coupled with cultural heritage and technological innovation in the textile sector.

3. Participation & Leadership

Attended by **Textiles Minister Giriraj Singh, Assam CM Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Minister of State for Textiles Pabitra Margherita** and ministers & officials from various States and Union Territories.

4. Purpose & Broad Focus

- To provide a **platform for policy dialogue, investment strategies, sustainability, export growth, infrastructure development and tech advancement** in India’s textile sector.
- Aimed at aligning **Centre-State policies** to strengthen the textile ecosystem nationwide.

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Awards & Honours

1. Indian Railways Confers 70th Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar

Event Overview

- **What:** Indian Railways conferred the **70th Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar (AVRSP)** to outstanding railway personnel.
- **When:** 9 January 2026.
- **Where:** Yashobhoomi (India International Convention & Expo Centre), New Delhi.
- **Presented by:** Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister for Railways.
- **Significance:** The awards recognise **exceptional service, innovation, courage, and operational excellence** within Indian Railways.

What Was Awarded

- **Individual Recognition:** 100 railway officers and employees were honoured for exemplary performance across various departments.
- **Institutional Recognition:** 26 shields were awarded to **best-performing railway zones and production units.**

About Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar

- **Nature:** One of the **highest service awards** of Indian Railways.
- **Objective:** To motivate railway personnel by recognising **dedication, integrity, professionalism, and innovation.**
- **Occasion:** Conferred during **Railway Week celebrations** every year.
- **Impact:** Promotes a culture of **accountability, excellence, and service orientation** across the railway system.

2. Golden Globes 2026: Stars, Surprises & the Road to Oscars

Date: 11–12 January 2026

Event: 83rd Golden Globe Awards

Venue: The Beverly Hilton, Beverly Hills, USA

Host: Nikki Glaser

Significance: Prestigious ceremony recognising excellence in **global film and television**; often considered a precursor to the Oscars.



Biggest Winners (Film Categories)

- **Best Motion Picture – Drama** : *Hamnet* – Recognised for its powerful storytelling and emotional depth.
- **Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy** : *One Battle After Another* – A multi-award winner dominating comedy categories.
- **Best Director (Film)** : **Paul Thomas Anderson** – *One Battle After Another*.
- **Best Actor & Actress (Film)**
 - *Drama – Male*: **Wagner Moura** – *The Secret Agent* (first Brazilian actor win).
 - *Drama – Female*: **Jessie Buckley** – *Hamnet*.
 - *Musical/Comedy – Male*: **Timothée Chalamet** – *Marty Supreme*.
 - *Musical/Comedy – Female*: **Rose Byrne** – *If I Had Legs I'd Kick You*.
 - **Supporting Actor & Actress (Film)**
 - **Stellan Skarsgård** – Supporting role *Sentimental Value*.
 - **Teyana Taylor** – Supporting actress *One Battle After Another*.
- Other Major Film Honors
 - **Best Original Score**: *Sinners* (Ludwig Göransson).
 - **Best Original Song**: “Golden” – *KPop Demon Hunters*.
 - **Best Animated Motion Picture**: *KPop Demon Hunters*.
 - **Best Non-English Language Film**: *The Secret Agent*.

Television Highlights

The Pitt — Best Drama Series

The Studio — Best Musical or Comedy Series

Adolescence — Multiple wins including acting categories

- Stand-up TV award and ensemble performances also recognised, showing **diversity in television content**.

Special Awards

- **Cecil B. DeMille Award**: *Helen Mirren* — Lifetime achievement.
- **Carol Burnett Award**: *Sarah Jessica Parker* — Outstanding TV contributions.

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3. SKOCH Award 2025

What is the SKOCH Award?

- The **SKOCH Award** is one of **India's most credible independent honours** recognising excellence in **governance, technology, development, social impact and inclusive growth**.
- It is conferred on governments, institutions, organisations and projects that contribute significantly to social and economic development.

Recent SKOCH Award 2025 Highlights

1. C-DOT Wins SKOCH Award 2025

- The **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)** received the **SKOCH Award-2025** at the **104th SKOCH Summit**.
- Awarded for its **indigenous Cell Broadcast Solution (CBS)** – a national disaster early-warning system that sends real-time alerts directly to mobile phones.
- CBS enhances disaster preparedness by integrating real-time alerts from agencies like the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and supports **geo-fencing and multilingual messaging**.

2. Municipal Corporation Dharamshala

- **Municipal Corporation Dharamshala** was conferred the **SKOCH Award 2025** for promoting **e-governance** through the **“Digital Dharamshala Mission”**.
- The initiative integrated civic services on a digital platform, improving urban governance.

3. Ambala Agriculture Department

- The **Ambala (Haryana) Agriculture Department** received the **SKOCH Silver Award-2025** for innovation in **crop residue management**, which helped reduce farm fires and protect the environment.

4. UP Police — Maha Kumbh ICCC

- The **Uttar Pradesh Police** won the **SKOCH Award-2025 (Gold Category)** for the **Integrated Command & Control Centre (ICCC)** and the **Meta Suicidal Alert initiative** used during **Mahakumbh-2025**, showcasing tech-driven public safety innovation

4. Ashoka Chakra Awarded to Astronaut Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla

President Droupadi Murmu approves gallantry awards on the eve of **India's 77th Republic Day**; includes the Ashoka Chakra for Group Captain **Shubhanshu Shukla**

- **Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla**, an Indian Air Force officer and astronaut with the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, has been conferred the **Ashoka Chakra**, India's **highest peacetime gallantry award**.
- The award was approved by **President Droupadi Murmu** and presented during the **77th Republic Day** celebrations at **Kartavya Path, New Delhi**.
- This marks a **historic moment**, as Shukla becomes the **first astronaut** to receive the Ashoka Chakra and the **second Indian space traveller** after Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma (1984) to be recognised at this level.



5. “Honouring India’s Changemakers: Padma Awards 2026 Announced”

On the eve of **India's 77th Republic Day (26 January 2026)**, the **Government of India** announced the recipients of the **Padma Awards 2026** — the country's **highest civilian honours** after the Bharat Ratna. These awards recognise **exceptional and selfless service** across diverse fields, celebrating both renowned figures and grassroots heroes whose contributions have shaped Indian society.

Notable Padma Vibhushan Honourees

The highest honours in this category for 2026 include:

- **Dharmendra Singh Deol** (Posthumous) – Legendary actor with lasting cultural impact.
- **K. T. Thomas** – Distinguished figure in public affairs.
- **N. Rajam** – Renowned musician.
- **P. Narayanan** – Scholar in literature & education.
- **V. S. Achuthanandhan** (Posthumous) – Veteran public affairs leader.

These recipients represent **exceptional service and national influence** in their respective domains.

Padma Bhushan & Padma Shri Highlights

Padma Bhushan awardees include leading contributors such as:

- **Mammootty** – Malayalam cinema icon.
- **Alka Yagnik** – Influential playback singer.
- **Vijay Amritraj** – Celebrated sportsperson and global ambassador of Indian tennis.
- **Dr. Nori Dattatreyyudu** – Medical innovator.
- **Uday Kotak** – Prominent figure in trade & industry.

Padma Shri honours a broad array of achievers, from arts and science to social service and sports — including young para-athlete **Praveen Kumar** for inspiring athletic excellence.

6. Mozambican Humanitarian Graça Machel Awarded Indira Gandhi Peace Prize for 2025

Mozambican rights activist and humanitarian **Graça Machel** has been selected for the **Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2025**, announced in January 2026 by the **Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust**.

About the Award

- Officially known as the **Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development**, this honour recognises **exceptional contributions to peace, disarmament, and equitable development worldwide**.
- The prize was **instituted in 1986** in memory of former Indian Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi** and is administered by the **Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust** in New Delhi.
- The award includes a **cash prize of ₹1 crore**, a **trophy**, and a **citation** presented to the recipient.
- An **international jury**, chaired this year by former National Security Advisor **Shivshankar Menon**, selects the awardee based on global impact.



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Important Days & Observances

S.No.	Important Days	Date	Extra Information
1.	International Mind-Body Wellness Day	January 3, 2026	Theme “Holistic Health: Connecting Mind and Body for Overall Well-Being”
2.	National Bird Day	January 5, 2026	Theme “Celebrating and protecting birds — raising awareness about their ecological importance and the urgent need for conservation.”
3.	World Braille Day	January 4, 2026	Theme “Celebrating Braille as a vital tool for communication, accessibility, inclusion, independence, and human rights for blind and visually impaired people.”
4.	World Day of War Orphans	January 6, 2026	This day is dedicated to raising awareness about the plight of children who have lost one or both parents due to war and armed conflict
5.	World Hindi Day	January 10, 2026	It has been officially observed since 2006 to promote Hindi on the international stage.
6.	Pravasi Bharatiya Divas	January 9, 2026	Theme “Diaspora’s Contribution to a Viksit Bharat”
7.	Earth’s Rotation Day	January 8, 2026	It marks the anniversary of Léon Foucault’s 1851 pendulum experiment , which gave clear experimental evidence that the Earth rotates on its axis
8.	National Youth Day	January 12, 2026	Theme “Ignite the Self, Impact the World”
9.	Indian Army Day	January 15, 2026	Theme “Shaurya Aur Balidaan Ki Parampara”
10.	National Startup Day	January 16, 2026	Theme “A Decade of Startup India: India’s Innovation-Led Growth”

11.	Kokborok Day	January 19, 2026	The day commemorates the recognition of Kokborok as an official language of Tripura by the state government on 19 January 1979 .
12.	Tripura, Manipur & Meghalaya Foundation Day	January 21, 2026	On January 21, 1972 , all three northeastern regions — Tripura, Manipur, and Meghalaya — were granted full statehood under the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 .
13.	International Customs Day	January 26, 2026	Theme “Customs protecting society through vigilance and commitment”
14.	National Tourism Day	January 24, 2026	This day recognises the importance of tourism in boosting economic growth, employment, cultural exchange, and sustainable development
15.	National Voters’ Day	January 25, 2026	Theme “My India, My Vote”
16.	International Day of Education	January 24, 2026	Theme “The power of youth in co-creating education” Powered By S CHAND
17.	National Girl Child Day	January 24, 2026	-----
18.	Parakram Diwas	January 23, 2026	This day marks the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose , one of India’s most revered freedom fighters.
19.	National Geographic Day	January 27, 2026	The day marks the founding anniversary of the National Geographic Society , established on 27 January 1888 in Washington, D.C. with the mission to increase and spread geographic knowledge.

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Reports & Indexes

Responsible Nations Index (RNI)

What is the Responsible Nations Index?

The **Responsible Nations Index (RNI)** is a **global evaluative framework** launched to **measure how responsibly nations act** in governance, social development, environmental stewardship and global cooperation, shifting focus beyond traditional measures like GDP or military strength.

Launch Details

- **Date of Launch: 19 January 2026**
- **Location:** Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, **New Delhi**.
- **Chief Guest: Ram Nath Kovind**, former President of India.
- The RNI launch included expert discussions on redefining responsibility, prosperity and peace in a globalized world.

Who Developed It?

- **World Intellectual Foundation (WIF)** — a global intellectual think tank
- Academic partners:
 - **Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)**
 - **Indian Institute of Management Mumbai (IIM Mumbai)**
 - **Dr. Ambedkar International Centre**
- The index is the result of a **three-year academic and policy research initiative**.

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1. DRDO Achieves Milestone with Consecutive Salvo Launch of Pralay Missiles (2025-26)

Event Overview

- **What:** The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully conducted a **salvo launch of two Pralay missiles** in quick succession from **the same launcher**.
- **When:** **31 December 2025** (flight-tests reported end of year).
- **Where:** **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha.**
- **Significance:** This test marks a key step in user evaluation trials and demonstrates enhanced missile system capabilities ahead of induction into the armed forces.

What Was Tested

- **Consecutive Salvo Launch:** Two Pralay missiles were fired **one after the other from a single launcher**, showcasing **rapid-fire capability**. Previously, launches were conducted from separate platforms.
- **Mission Objectives Met:** Both missile flights followed their **intended trajectories** and met **all flight test objectives**, as monitored by tracking sensors and telemetry systems.

About Pralay Missile

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- **Type:** **Solid-propellant quasi-ballistic surface-to-surface missile** with advanced guidance and navigation.
- **Range:** Approx. **150 km to 500 km** (tactical battlefield role).
- **Payload:** Can carry **multiple types of warheads**, suitable for precision strikes against strategic targets.
- **Developed by:** DRDO labs led by **Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad**, with support from Defence Public Sector Undertakings and industry partners.

2. India-UAE Desert Cyclone II Joint Military Exercise Concludes in Abu Dhabi

Overview

- **Event:** **Exercise Desert Cyclone II** — second edition of the **India-UAE Joint Military Exercise**.
- **Location:** **Al-Hamra Training City, Abu Dhabi**, United Arab Emirates.
- **Duration:** **18 – 30 December 2025**.

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- **Conclusion:** Successfully concluded on **30 December 2025** with a formal closing ceremony.

Participating Forces

- **Indian Contingent:** 45 personnel, mainly from a battalion of the **Mechanised Infantry Regiment**.
- **UAE Contingent:** Members of the **53rd Mechanised Infantry Battalion** of the UAE Land Forces.

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Government Schemes & Initiatives

1. Centre Introduces Higher Excise Duty on Tobacco Products from February 1, 2026



Context & Implementation

Powered By **S CHAND**

- The **Government of India** has **notified 1 February 2026** as the date from which an **additional excise duty on tobacco products** and a **new Health and National Security Cess on pan masala** will be levied.
- Levies will be charged **in addition to the existing GST** and will **replace the GST compensation cess** previously applicable to these products.

Key Features of the Tax Changes

- 1. Additional Excise Duty on Tobacco:** Tobacco products — including **cigarettes, chewing tobacco and similar items** — will attract **additional excise duty** over and above GST.
- 2. Health & National Security Cess on Pan Masala:** A **new cess** is introduced for **pan masala products** apart from GST.
- 3. GST Rates:**
 - **Pan masala, cigarettes, tobacco and similar products:** 40% GST
 - **Biris:** 18% GST (On top of these, the new excise duty and cess apply.)

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2. PM Modi Inaugurates Grand International Exposition of Sacred Piprahwa Relics (2026)

Event Overview

- **What:** Grand International Exposition of Sacred Piprahwa Relics, titled “*The Light & the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One*”.
- **Who:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the exposition.
- **When:** 3 January 2026.
- **Where:** Rai Pithora Cultural Complex, New Delhi.

About the Piprahwa Relics

- The **Piprahwa relics** were discovered in **1898** at Piprahwa in Uttar Pradesh and are **among the earliest archaeological remains associated with Gautama Buddha**.
- These relics include **bone fragments, gem relics, reliquaries and artifacts** linked to Lord Buddha and early Buddhism.
- The exhibition showcases relics **repatriated to India after more than a century**, now reunited with other authenticated pieces preserved in major museums like the **National Museum (New Delhi)** and the **Indian Museum (Kolkata)**.

3. EU Leaders to Headline Republic Day 2026 as India–EU Summit Nears

Event Overview

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- **Occasion:** 77th Republic Day of India — 26 January 2026.
- **Significance:** This year’s celebrations are set to carry **strong diplomatic weight** with key international guests attending.

Chief Guests: EU Leadership

- **Expected Chief Guests:**
 - Ursula von der Leyen – President of the European Commission.
 - António Costa – President of the European Council.
- **Notable Aspect:** Their joint invitation is symbolic — **representing the European Union (EU) as a unified strategic and economic partner** rather than individual EU member states.

Link with India–EU Summit

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- The visit is expected to *coincide with* the **India–EU Summit**, tentatively planned for **27 January 2026**, just after Republic Day.
- The summit will focus on **reviving and advancing the long-pending India–EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations**, which have been in progress for years

4. MoSPI Unveils New Logo & ‘Sankhyiki’ Mascot to Champion Data-Driven Governance (2026)

Context

The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** unveiled a **new official logo** and its first-ever **mascot “Sankhyiki”** in **early January 2026** in New Delhi.

Theme & Vision

Theme: “Data for Development” — emphasizing the central role of **credible, transparent and timely data in evidence-based policymaking, governance and national development.**

Purpose:

- To **modernise MoSPI’s institutional identity**
- Strengthen **public outreach and trust** in official statistics
- Make data **accessible and relatable** to citizens.

New Logo: Symbolism & Design

The new logo integrates meaningful symbols to reflect MoSPI’s mission and national values:

- **Ashoka Chakra:** Symbolises **truth, transparency and good governance.**
- **Rupee (₹) Symbol:** Highlights the **role of statistics in economic planning and national growth.**
- **Numerical & Statistical Elements:** Represent modern data systems, **analytical rigour** and evidence-based insights.
- **Upward Growth Bar:** Indicates **progress and development supported by reliable data.**



- **Colour Palette (Saffron, White, Green, Deep Blue):** Reflects **growth, truth, sustainability, stability and knowledge** — resonating with national identity and governance values.

Mascot “Sankhyiki (संख्यिकी)”



Meaning: Derived from the Sanskrit word for **statistics/data**, symbolising **accuracy, inclusiveness and scientific rigour**.

Role & Design: A **friendly, citizen-centric character** created to **simplify complex statistical concepts** and make them engaging for the public.

Usage:

- National Sample Surveys (NSS)
- Awareness programmes
- Educational material

Digital platforms and public events
This will help increase **statistical literacy and participation**.

5. Union Minister Annpurna Devi Launches PANKHUDI Portal for Women & Child Welfare



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1. **PANKHUDI** is an **integrated digital platform** launched by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)**, Government of India, to streamline **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** contributions and voluntary partnerships for women and child development.
2. **Launch Details** : Launched on **8 January 2026** in **New Delhi** by **Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt. Annpurna Devi**.
3. **Objective / Aim** : To **strengthen coordination, transparency, and structured participation** of stakeholders in initiatives related to women and children. To foster collaboration among government, citizens, NRIs, NGOs, corporate entities and CSR contributors.
4. **Single-Window Platform** : The portal provides a **single-window, digital interface** where contributors can **register, identify initiatives, submit proposals and track contribution status**. All contributions are accepted via **non-cash modes** for financial transparency.
5. **Thematic Focus Areas** : PANKHUDI focuses on key sectors of social development such as:
 - Nutrition and health
 - Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
 - Child welfare, protection and rehabilitation
 - Women's safety, empowerment and livelihood support

6. UIDAI Launches Aadhaar Mascot 'Udai



- The **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** has launched an **official Aadhaar mascot named Udai (उदय)** to make Aadhaar-related information and services more **people-friendly and relatable**.

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- *Udai* will act as a **resident-facing communication companion** to simplify explanation of Aadhaar services such as updates, authentication, offline verification, selective data sharing, responsible usage, and new tech adoption.
- It aims to **bridge the gap between complex digital identity processes and citizens**, especially first-time users, senior citizens and rural populations.
- UIDAI organised a **national design and naming competition** on the **MyGov platform** to crowd-source the mascot's design.
- The process received **hundreds of entries** from across India, reflecting public engagement with Aadhaar.

7. MSTRIPES App to Drive Tiger Census in Anamalai Tiger Reserve

1. **What's the News?** Forest staff in the **Anamalai Tiger Reserve** will use the **MSTRIPES app** during the upcoming **tiger and wildlife census** under the **All India Tiger Estimation (AITE) Survey 2026**.
2. **What is MSTRIPES?** M-STRIPES stands for **Monitoring System for Tigers: Intensive Protection and Ecological Status** — a **software-based wildlife monitoring system** used to enhance protection, patrols and ecological assessments in tiger reserves.
3. **How It Works :** The app allows **real-time digital data entry** using **GPS-enabled devices**, streamlining field data on tigers, other wildlife, habitat parameters and patrol routes. Forest staff have been trained to **enter all census information directly** into the app, reducing manual work and improving accuracy.
4. **Why This Matters**
 - **Accurate Data Collection:** Ensures reliable and efficient wildlife census figures.
 - **Tech-Driven Conservation:** Reflects India's shift to **technology-enabled ecological protection** and scientific wildlife management.
 - **Stronger Monitoring:** Helps identify patterns in wildlife presence and threats for better planning.

8. Paripoorna Mediclaim Ayush Bima

What is it?

- **Paripoorna Mediclaim Ayush Bima** is a **new optional health insurance scheme** launched by the **Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance**.
- It is designed for beneficiaries of the **Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS)** to enhance their healthcare coverage and financial protection.



Eligibility & Coverage

- Available **exclusively to CGHS beneficiaries**, including central government employees and pensioners.
- **One policy can cover up to six members** of a family.
- Offers **indemnity-based in-patient hospitalisation coverage** within India.
- Two **sum insured options: ₹10 lakh and ₹20 lakh**.

Key Features

- **Treatment & Hospitalisation**

- **Cashless treatment** at a wide network of hospitals across India.
- **Pre-hospitalisation coverage:** 30 days before hospitalisation.
- **Post-hospitalisation coverage:** 60 days after discharge.
- **Room rent caps:**
 - ❖ Normal room: **1% of sum insured per day**
 - ❖ ICU: **2% of sum insured per day**.

- **AYUSH & Modern Treatments**

- Covers **AYUSH treatments** (like Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy) **up to 100%** of sum insured.
- **Modern medical treatments** covered up to **25%** of sum insured with an optional rider to extend coverage to **100%**.

- **Co-payment & Discounts**

- Beneficiaries can choose between **70:30 or 50:50 co-payment** (insurer:subscriber).
- Premiums are **discounted by 28%** (70:30) and **42%** (50:50) compared to regular policies.
- **No GST** on the premium, ensuring affordability.

- **Bonus & Benefits**

Cumulative bonus: 10% increase in sum insured for every claim-free year, up to a maximum of **100%** of base sum insured.

9. International Year of Cooperatives 2025

- The **United Nations General Assembly** officially declared **2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives** to recognise and celebrate the vital role of cooperatives in society.

- This is the **second time** the UN has devoted a year to cooperatives — the first was in 2012.
- The idea is to spotlight how cooperatives contribute to **sustainable development, poverty reduction, employment, social inclusion, and economic resilience**.

Theme of IYC 2025

“**Cooperatives Build a Better World**” — emphasises the **positive impact of cooperatives** in bringing inclusive and equitable growth across communities worldwide.

Objectives of IYC 2025

1. **Raise public awareness** about the role of cooperatives in development.
2. **Promote the growth and development** of cooperative enterprises globally.
3. **Advocate supportive policies** and legal frameworks for cooperative ecosystems.
4. **Inspire leadership and youth engagement** in the cooperative movement.

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Miscellaneous (One Liner Current Affairs)

- **Volleyball Tournament:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 72nd National Volleyball Championship to promote sports culture and youth participation.
- **Sadanand Date Appointed Maharashtra Police Chief:** Senior IPS officer Sadanand Date has been appointed as the new Director General of Police (DGP) of Maharashtra.
- **Integrated Security Hub Launched in Andaman & Nicobar:** India inaugurated an Integrated Security Hub in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to enhance maritime and strategic security.
- **Mamady Doumbouya Elected President of Guinea:** Guinea's junta leader Mamady Doumbouya has been elected as the country's President following political transition.
- **Justice Manoj Kumar Gupta Appointed Uttarakhand CJ:** Justice Manoj Kumar Gupta has been appointed as the Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court.
- **Ida Liu Appointed CEO of HSBC Private Bank:** HSBC has appointed Ida Liu as the new Chief Executive Officer of its Global Private Banking division.
- **Ramesh Kumar Juneja Becomes CLE Chairman:** Ramesh Kumar Juneja has taken charge as Chairman of the Council for Leather Exports (CLE).
- **Usman Khawaja Retires from International Cricket:** Australian cricketer Usman Khawaja announced his retirement from international cricket after a notable career.
- **Jinson Johnson Retires from Professional Athletics:** National record holder Jinson Johnson has announced retirement from professional athletics.
- **India's First Paperless District Court Inaugurated:** CJI Surya Kant inaugurated India's first fully paperless district court in Kalpetta, Kerala.
- **India Becomes First to Produce Bio-Bitumen Commercially:** India has become the world's first country to commercially produce bio-bitumen for road construction.
- **Haryana to Launch India's First Hydrogen Train:** Haryana will launch India's first hydrogen-powered train as part of green transport initiatives.
- **UN Declares 2026 as Year of Rangelands & Pastoralists:** The United Nations has declared 2026 as the International Year for Rangelands and Pastoralists.
- **Gujarat Launches ASHA Van for Cancer Detection:** Gujarat CM launched the ASHA Van mobile unit to boost early detection of cancer in rural areas.
- **MS Dhoni Appointed Pune Grand Tour Ambassador:** MS Dhoni has been named the Goodwill Ambassador for Pune Grand Tour 2026.
- **Thierry Sabbagh Appointed Nissan India President:** Nissan Motor India appointed Thierry Sabbagh as its new President to strengthen leadership.
- **Laura Wolvaardt Named ICC Player of the Month:** South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt won ICC Women's Player of the Month for December 2025.

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- • **Yemen PM Resigns, Foreign Minister Appointed:** Yemen's Prime Minister resigned and the Foreign Minister was appointed as the new Prime Minister.
- • **Andhra Pradesh to Host World's Largest Green Ammonia Project:** Andhra Pradesh will host the world's largest green ammonia project at Kakinada.
- • **Dr Jitendra Singh Releases Books at NAMO Book Fest:** Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh released 'Gen-V', 'Bano' and 'Mahatma' at India's first NAMO Book Festival.
- • **India Launches First Sleeper Vande Bharat Train:** Indian Railways launched the country's first sleeper version of the Vande Bharat Express.
- • **Ilaiyaraaja to Receive Padmapani Award:** Music maestro Ilaiyaraaja will be honoured with the Padmapani Award at Ajanta-Ellora Film Festival 2026.
- • **233-Year-Old Valmiki Ramayana Gifted to Ayodhya Museum:** A 233-year-old manuscript of Valmiki Ramayana was gifted to Ram Katha Museum in Ayodhya.
- • **India Introduces First Tailings Policy:** India launched its first Tailings Policy to recover critical minerals from mining waste.
- • **India Launches First Open-Sea Fish Farming Project:** India has launched its first open-sea marine fish farming project to boost blue economy.
- • **Abu Dhabi Ranked World's Safest City:** Abu Dhabi was ranked the world's safest city for the 10th consecutive year.
- • **Saina Nehwal Retires from Badminton:** Olympic medalist Saina Nehwal announced retirement from badminton due to injuries.
- • **National Paralympic Powerlifting Championship Begins:** The National Paralympic Powerlifting Championship was inaugurated in Uttarakhand.
- • **Indian Doctor Wins Wiley Research Heroes Prize:** An Indian doctor won the Wiley Research Heroes Award 2025 for outstanding research contribution.
- • **ASC Arjun: Indian Railways' Humanoid Security Robot:** ASC Arjun is a new humanoid security robot introduced by Indian Railways for station safety.

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