

JANUARY 2026



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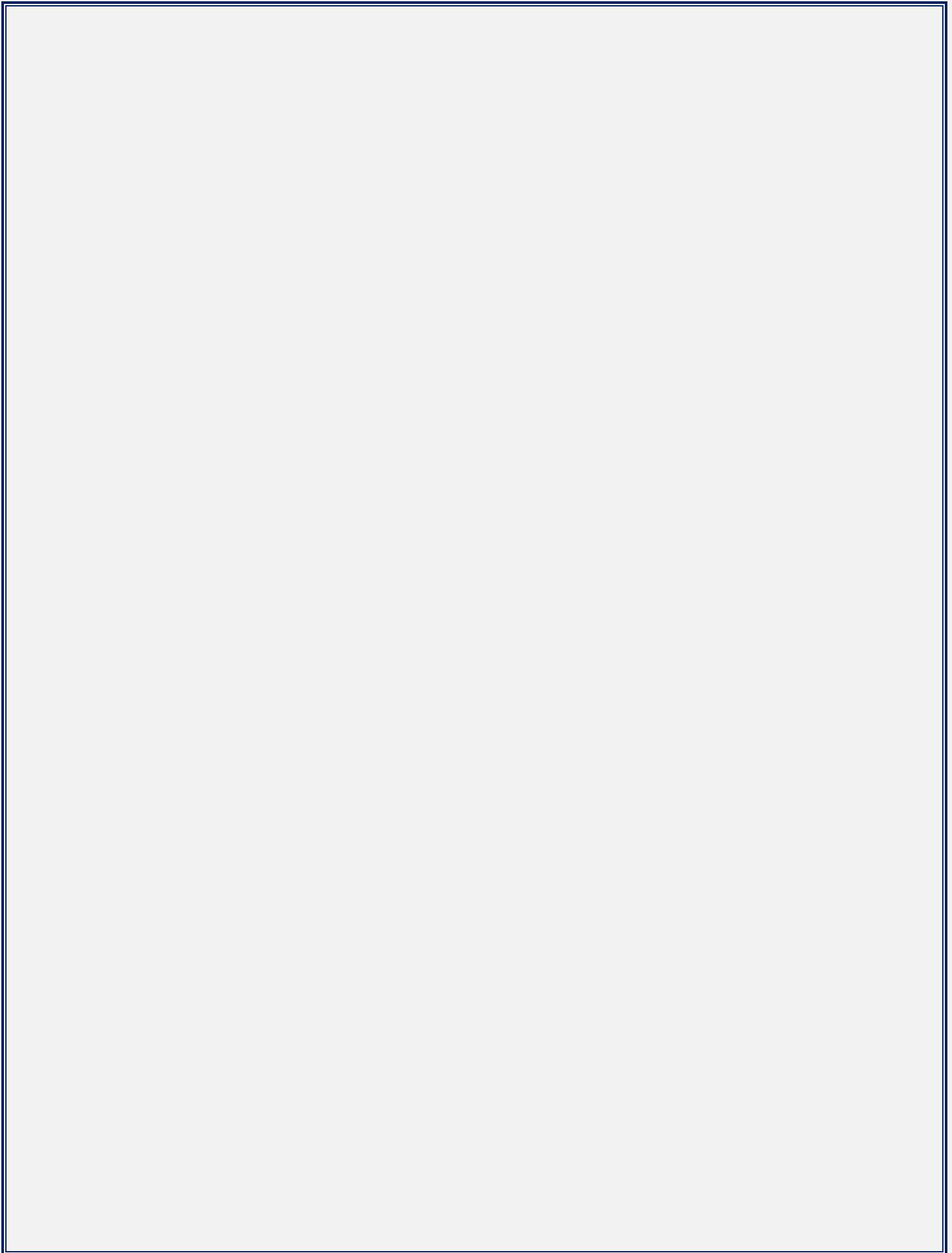
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New Appointments & Resignations

1. India Wins Another Term on UNESCO Executive Board for 2025–29



- India has been **re-elected** to the UNESCO Executive Board for the **2025–29 term**.
- The announcement came from India's Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, marking the international community's renewed trust in India's commitment to multilateral cooperation.

About UNESCO Executive Board

- The Executive Board is one of the **three constitutional organs** of UNESCO (along with the General Conference and the Secretariat).
- It consists of **58 member-states**, each serving a **four-year term**.
- The Board's main functions include: reviewing UNESCO's programme of work & budget proposals, setting strategic priorities, guiding implementation of global initiatives in education, culture, science, communication, and information.

2. India Re-Elected to IMO Council

- India has been **re-elected** to the IMO Council (Category B) for the **2026–27 biennium**.
- It secured **154 out of 169 valid votes**, the **highest** in its category.

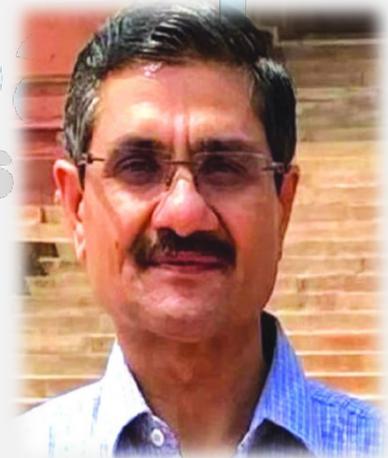
About IMO & the Council

- The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is a United Nations-linked body tasked with regulating international shipping, maritime safety, security, and environmental standards.
- The IMO Council is the executive organ, elected every two years by the Assembly and composed of 40 member states divided across three categories (A, B, C) based on maritime interest.
- Category B comprises 10 countries with the largest interest in **international seaborne trade** — India is part of this group.



3. Government Names Vivek Chaturvedi as New Head of CBIC

- The government has appointed Vivek Chaturvedi as the new Chairman of Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), effective **1 December 2025**.
- He replaces Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, who retired on 28 November 2025 after superannuation.



About CBIC (Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs)

- **Full form:** Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).
- **Parent ministry:** Functions under the **Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India**.
- **Role:** Apex body for **administration of indirect taxes** in India – including **GST, Customs, Central Excise, and IGST**.
- **Key functions:**
 - Formulation and implementation of **policy on GST and customs**.
 - Administration of **customs laws, border control** related to goods, and prevention of smuggling.
 - Overseeing **GST, customs and excise** administration through field formations across India.
- **Status of head:** The **Chairman of CBIC** is a senior civil servant with the rank of **Secretary to the Government of India**.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi, India.

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4. ITBP Chief Praveen Kumar Given Additional Charge as BSF Director General

- The government has given Praveen Kumar — currently the head of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) — **additional charge** as Director General of Border Security Force (BSF), effective **1 December 2025**.
- This follows the superannuation of the previous BSF DG Daljit Singh Chaudhary, who retired on 30 November 2025.

About BSF (Border Security Force)

- **Full form:** Border Security Force (BSF)
- **Type:** Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) of India
- **Established:** **1 December 1965** (after the 1965 India–Pakistan war to strengthen border guarding)
- **Parent ministry:** **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India**
- **Primary role:**
 - Guarding **India's international borders** with **Pakistan and Bangladesh**
 - Preventing **infiltration, smuggling, illegal migration** and cross-border crimes
- **Other duties:**
 - Counter-insurgency and internal security duties (when deployed)
 - Assistance during elections and disaster relief, when required
- **Head of BSF:** **Director General (DG), BSF** – a senior IPS officer
- **Headquarters:** **New Delhi, India**

5. Andrej Babiš Takes Oath as Czech Republic's Prime Minister, Marking Political Return

- **Andrej Babiš**, leader of the **ANO (YES) party**, was sworn in as **Prime Minister of the Czech Republic** on **9 December 2025** by President Petr Pavel.
- Babiš returns to power after winning the **October 2025 parliamentary elections** and forming a **majority coalition** with the **Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD)** party and **Motorists for Themselves**.
- The coalition holds **108 of 200 seats** in the Lower House of Parliament.
- His government is expected to **shift Czech foreign policy**, including reduced support for Ukraine and a **critical stance on EU environmental and migration policies**.
- To address conflict-of-interest concerns, Babiš **placed his Agrofert business empire into an independent trust** prior to taking office.
- Babiš previously served as Prime Minister from **2017 to 2021** and is a **well-known populist billionaire politician**

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6. Raj Kumar Goyal Takes Charge as India's New Chief Information Commissioner

On **15 December 2025**, **Raj Kumar Goyal**, a retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, was **sworn in as the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) of India** by **President Droupadi Murmu**.

His appointment fills the CIC post vacant since **13 September 2025**, after the retirement of **Heeralal Samariya**



About Central Information Commission (CIC)

- **Central Information Commission (CIC)** is a **statutory body** set up under the **Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005** to handle RTI matters for **Central Government public authorities**.
- It mainly deals with **complaints (Section 18)** and **second appeals (Section 19)**, and can impose **penalties (Section 20)**

Composition

- CIC consists of **1 Chief Information Commissioner + up to 10 Information Commissioners** (appointed by the President).

Key Powers/Functions (Exam-use)

- **Decides second appeals** when information is denied/not properly given.
- **Inquires into complaints** (e.g., RTI not accepted, no PIO appointed, refusal/delay).
- Can **impose penalty on CPIO: ₹250 per day** of delay (maximum **₹25,000**) and can recommend disciplinary action.
- CIC's decisions are **final and binding** within the RTI framework.

Tenure (as per CIC portal)

- **Term: 3 years** from the date of entering office (as stated on CIC website).

7. Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty Becomes First Woman President of Press Club of India

Senior journalist **Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty** was **elected as the first woman President** of the **Press Club of India (PCI)** in the elections held on **13 December 2025**. This marks a **historic first in the 67-year history** of PCI.

About Press Club of India (PCI)

- The **Press Club of India** is one of the **largest and most prestigious bodies of journalists and media professionals** in India**, based in **New Delhi**.
- Founded in **1957**, it serves as a platform for **journalistic dialogue, professional networking, workshops, debates and press freedom advocacy**.
- The executive team is elected annually and includes a **President, Vice-President, Secretary-General, Joint Secretary, Treasurer and Managing Committee members**.

8. Three New Additional Solicitors General Appointed

The **Central Government** has appointed **three senior advocates** as **Additional Solicitors General of India (ASGIs)** to represent the **Union of India** before the **Supreme Court**.

Appointees

1. Senior Advocate **Davinder Pal Singh**
2. Senior Advocate **Kanakamedala Ravindra Kumar**
3. Senior Advocate **Anil Kaushik**

These appointments were **notified by the Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (Department of Personnel & Training)** on **22 December 2025** and have been approved by the **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)**.

What are Additional Solicitors General (ASGs)?

Additional Solicitors General are senior law officers of the Union of India appointed under the **Law Officers (Conditions of Service) Rules**. They support the **Solicitor General of India** and the **Attorney General for India** by representing the Government of India in significant legal matters. ASGs mainly appear before the **Supreme Court and High Courts**, dealing with cases involving constitutional interpretation, central legislations, disputes between governments, and important public interest litigations.

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Sports Updates

1. Rohit Sharma — New ODI Sixes Record (2025)

- Rohit Sharma has become the **top six-hitter in One-Day International (ODI) history**.
- He surpassed the previous record held by Shahid Afridi (351 sixes), by hitting his **352nd six** during the first ODI match against South Africa national cricket team — in Ranchi.

Rank	Player	Country	ODI Sixes	Notes
1	Rohit Sharma	India	352+	Broke Afridi's record in 2025; fastest to 350 sixes.
2	Shahid Afridi	Pakistan	351	Held the world record for over a decade.
3	Chris Gayle	West Indies	331	One of the greatest power-hitters in cricket history.
4	Sanath Jayasuriya	Sri Lanka	270	Pioneer of aggressive opening in ODIs.
5	MS Dhoni	India	229	Finisher legend; known for helicopter shot.

2. “Duplantis & McLaughlin-Levrone Crowned Global Athletics Icons of 2025”

- At the 2025 World Athletics Awards in Monaco (November 30), Duplantis and McLaughlin-Levrone were declared the overall **World Athletes of the Year** — male and female respectively.
- Duplantis also won **Men's Field Athlete of the Year**, while McLaughlin-Levrone took **Women's Track Athlete of the Year**



Other notable 2025 Award Winners

At the same Awards ceremony:

- Men's Track Athlete of the Year:** Emmanuel Wanyonyi (Kenya)
- Women's Field Athlete of the Year:** Nicola Olyslagers (Australia)
- Men's Out-of-Stadium Athlete:** Sabastian Sawe (Kenya)
- Women's Out-of-Stadium Athlete:** María Pérez (Spain)
- Rising Stars of 2025:** Edmund Serem (Kenya, men) & Zhang Jiale (China, women)

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3. Lando Norris Clinches 2025 Formula-1 World Championship in Abu Dhabi Thriller

- **Lando Norris** won the **2025 Formula-1 World Drivers' Championship**, his **first career title**.
- Secured the championship by finishing **P3 at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix**.
- Beat **Max Verstappen** by **just 2 points** in the final standings.
- Becomes the **first British F1 World Champion since Lewis Hamilton (2020)**.
- Helped **McLaren** secure the **Constructors' Championship** as well.
- Title fight went down to the **final race of the season**, making it one of the closest finishes in recent F1 history.

4. Germany Wins FIH Men's Junior Hockey World Cup 2025



Germany defeated Spain to win the FIH Men's Junior Hockey World Cup 2025, held in Chennai, Tamil Nadu (India).

Winner

- **Champion:** DE **Germany**
- **Runner-up:** ES **Spain**

Host City & Country

- **City:** Chennai
- **State:** Tamil Nadu
- **Country:** India IN

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Organising Body

- **FIH** – *Fédération Internationale de Hockey* (International Hockey Federation)

Category

- **Men's Junior (Under-21)**

Germany's Achievement

- Germany clinched the **FIH Men's Junior Hockey World Cup 2025** title by defeating Spain in the **final match**
- Reinforced Germany's position as a **strong powerhouse in junior hockey**

5. FIFA Best Football Awards 2025 — Global Stars Crowned in Doha

 **Major Winners** — The Best FIFA Football Awards 2025

The Best FIFA Men's Player

Ousmane Dembélé (Paris Saint-Germain / France)
— Recognised as the standout male footballer of the year.

The Best FIFA Women's Player

Aitana Bonmatí (FC Barcelona / Spain) — Awarded best female player, continuing her elite global form.

Top Coaches

- **Men's Coach of the Year: Luis Enrique** (PSG)
- **Women's Coach of the Year: Sarina Wiegman** (England)

Best Goalkeepers

- **Men's Goalkeeper: Gianluigi Donnarumma** (PSG / Manchester City)
- **Women's Goalkeeper: Hannah Hampton** (Chelsea)

Special Awards

-  **FIFA Puskás Award: Santiago Montiel** — Best men's goal of the year (Independiente).
-  **FIFA Marta Award: Lizbeth Ovalle** — Best women's goal of the year.
-  **FIFA Fan Award:** Awarded to **Zakho SC (Iraq) fans** for charitable support to ill children.
-  **FIFA Fair Play Award: Andreas Harlass-Neuking** — For saving a fan's life during a match



6. Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy Triumph in 2025

The **Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy** is India's premier domestic **Twenty20 (T20)** championship organised by the **BCCI** and named after legendary cricketer Syed Mushtaq Ali. It features teams from all 38 Ranji Trophy state sides competing in a round-robin and knockout format

Champions — Jharkhand (1st Title)

- **Jharkhand** clinched their **maiden Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy title** in the 2025-26 edition, becoming only the **12th team to win** this prestigious T20 domestic crown.
- They defeated **Haryana** by a convincing **69-run margin** in the final.

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Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) & Agreements

1. “India–Russia 2025: A New Era of Strategic Convergence”

- The 2025 State Visit marked a major milestone in the 77-year diplomatic relationship between India and Russia.
- High-level meetings focused on defence, energy, trade, connectivity, and space cooperation.
- Both countries reaffirmed the “Special & Privileged Strategic Partnership,” originally established in 2010, with a renewed long-term roadmap.



Major Agreements Signed

(A) Defence & Security

- Extended cooperation on joint production of defence equipment under *Make in India*.
- Agreement on long-term spare-parts supply and maintenance for Russian-origin platforms in India.
- Collaboration on advanced weapons systems, cybersecurity, and counterterrorism intelligence-sharing.

(B) Nuclear & Energy Sector

- Roadmap to expand units at the **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant**.
- New partnership framework on **nuclear fuel supply**, reactor components, and safety technologies.
- Enhanced cooperation in **oil & gas exploration**, LNG shipments, and long-term energy security planning.

(C) Trade & Economic Partnerships

- Target set to raise **bilateral trade to USD 100 billion by 2035**.
- India and Russia committed to improving payment mechanisms, including national currency settlement systems.
- Agreements on pharmaceuticals, agriculture, mining, and digital technology.

(D) Connectivity & Logistics

- Push to accelerate the **International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**.
- Agreement to boost **Chennai–Vladivostok Maritime Corridor** for faster Eastern trade.
- Joint working group formed on customs harmonisation and multimodal logistics.

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(E) Space & High-Technology

- Collaboration on **satellite navigation**, space situational awareness, and launch-vehicle components.
- Expansion of Indian astronaut training partnerships with Russia.
- Joint projects in quantum computing, AI, and advanced materials research.

Strategic Roadmap 2030

India and Russia released a **Comprehensive Strategic Roadmap 2030** including:

- Defence manufacturing and technology transfer.
- Shared vision for a stable multipolar world order (BRICS, SCO cooperation).
- Strengthening energy security and renewable collaboration.
- Expansion of tourism, education, and cultural exchanges.
- Focus on cyber resilience and digital public infrastructure.

Key Outcomes of the Visit

High-Level Outcomes

1. **Reaffirmation of Special & Privileged Strategic Partnership** with future-oriented commitments.
2. Strengthening of defence cooperation with clear timelines for joint production.
3. Agreement to secure India's long-term access to discounted Russian energy supplies.
4. Decision to expand nuclear energy cooperation for India's clean-energy goals.
5. Major push for trade diversification and resilient supply chains.
6. Boost to connectivity projects like INSTC and the Chennai-Vladivostok corridor.
7. New technological clusters for AI, quantum science, space tech, and digital economy.

2. MSME Ministry Signs MoU with Amazon to Boost Market Access for PM Vishwakarma Artisans

The **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Amazon Seller Services Private Ltd.** to enable artisans registered under the **PM Vishwakarma Scheme** to sell their products online and expand their market reach.

Who signed the MoU?

- **Ministry of MSME** (Office of the Development Commissioner)
- **Amazon Seller Services Pvt. Ltd.**
- **Location:** *Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi*

Purpose of the Partnership

- Facilitate **onboarding of eligible Vishwakarma artisans onto Amazon's online marketplace.**
- **Enhance visibility** of handmade and traditional craft products.
- **Expand customer reach** across India using e-commerce.
- Support listing, branding and digital marketing under Amazon's **Karigar initiative.**

About the PM Vishwakarma Scheme

- **Launched on:** 17 September 2023 (Vishwakarma Day) by the Government of India.
- Objective: Provide **end-to-end support** (skill training, toolkit incentives, credit access, market linkages) to artisans and craftspeople of **18 traditional trades.**
- Focus: Strengthening heritage skills and improving livelihoods through modern tools and digital access.

Key Features of the MoU

- ✓ Amazon will help the **onboarding and listing** of artisans' products on its marketplace.
- ✓ MSME Ministry will assist in **obtaining approvals, registrations, and clearances** required for digital selling.
- ✓ Traditional crafts include trades such as **carpentry, pottery, metalsmithing, goldsmithing, tailoring, locksmithing, coir work, toy making, garland making, cobbler services**, etc.
- ✓ The collaboration strengthens digital inclusion and supports wider **market access** for grassroots artisans.

3. "India-Netherlands MoU Boosts Lothal Maritime Heritage & Global Cultural Cooperation"

India and the **Netherlands** have signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to strengthen cooperation in **maritime heritage** by collaborating on the **National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)** at **Lothal** in **Gujarat**

The National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)

- **What it is:** A flagship **heritage and museum complex** being developed to showcase India's **4,500-year-old maritime legacy**, from ancient seafaring traditions to the modern era.
- **Developed by:** Ministry of **Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW)**, Government of India.
- **Significance:** Lothal was *one of the world's earliest dockyards* and a major centre of maritime trade in the Indus Valley Civilisation.



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Key Components of the MoU

The India–Netherlands cooperation will focus on:

- ✦ **Exchange of expertise** in maritime museum design, **curation**, and **conservation**.
- ✦ **Joint exhibitions, research projects**, and **cultural exchange programmes**.
- ✦ **Innovative visitor engagement, education, and public outreach** initiatives.

4. “Thailand-Cambodia Border Tensions: Immediate Ceasefire Brings Fragile Peace After Weeks of Fighting”

Context of the Clash

Thailand and Cambodia, two neighbouring Southeast Asian countries, were involved in **intense border clashes that lasted for several weeks** in late 2025 due to a **long-standing territorial dispute** along their shared border.

Ceasefire Agreement

On **27 December 2025**, both countries agreed to an **immediate ceasefire** to halt ongoing hostilities along the disputed boundary. The ceasefire was agreed upon in a **joint statement**, effective from local noon on the day of signing.

Terms of the Truce

- Both sides agreed to **freeze current troop positions** and **halt all military movements and attacks**, including the use of weapons and artillery.
- A confidence-building measure in the agreement includes the **possible release of 18 Cambodian soldiers** detained by Thailand if the ceasefire holds for at least **72 hours**.
- **Humanitarian Impact**
 - The border clashes resulted in **dozens of deaths, injuries to both military personnel and civilians, and large-scale displacement** of people living in border areas.
 - The ceasefire includes commitments to allow **displaced civilians to return home safely**.

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Summits, Conferences & Events

1. 18th plenary meeting of the Global Forum

- The Nirmala Sitharaman, India's Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister, inaugurated the **18th plenary meeting** of the Global Forum in New Delhi on **2 December 2025**.
- The meeting runs from **2–5 December 2025**, under the theme: **“Tax Transparency: Delivering a Shared Vision Through International Cooperation.”**
- The Global Forum — with **172 member jurisdictions** (including all G20 nations) — is the main international body implementing standards for tax transparency, such as **Exchange of Information on Request (EOIR)** and **Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information (AEOI)**

2. IIT Madras & IndiaAI Mission to Host Global AI Conclave in Chennai on Safe and Trusted AI

- **IIT Madras** and the **IndiaAI Mission** (under MeitY) are hosting a **Global AI Conclave on Safe & Trusted AI in Chennai (10–11 Dec 2025)**.
- The event is a **Pre-Summit** for the upcoming **India-AI Impact Summit 2026** (to be held in **New Delhi, 15–20 Feb 2026**) — the first time this summit is in the **Global South**.
- Focus is on **AI safety, governance, ethics, inclusion and trustworthiness** in AI systems as they become integral to public and private life.
- The conclave will explore building an **“AI Safety Commons”** — shared datasets, benchmarks and governance resources to support responsible AI development, especially for the Global South.
- It brings together **government officials, policymakers, industry leaders, researchers and civil society experts** to shape practical frameworks for AI regulation and governance.

3. Armenia Introduces Official Butterfly Logo for COP17 Conference

Armenia has officially unveiled the **logo for the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17)** to the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, which it will host in **Yerevan in October 2026**.

Logo & Symbolism

- The emblem features the **Erivan Anomalous Blue butterfly** (*Polyommatus eriwanensis*), a rare species **endemic to Armenia's highlands around Yerevan**.
- The butterfly's life stages and colours reflect **continuity, diversity, resilience, and interconnectedness of ecosystems**.
- The logo incorporates **23 blended colours**, representing the **23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**, underscoring the need for integrated action on biodiversity goals.

Conference Focus

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- COP17 will bring together world governments to review and accelerate implementation of global biodiversity targets.
- The slogan unveiled alongside the logo — **“Taking action for nature”** — emphasises moving from commitment to *concrete results* in biodiversity conservation

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Awards & Honours

1. Trump Receives Inaugural FIFA Peace Prize at 2026 World Cup Draw



At the 2026 FIFA World Cup Draw Ceremony held in Washington, D.C. (5 December 2025), **former U.S. President Donald J. Trump** received the **first-ever FIFA Peace Prize** — a newly created award meant to honour individuals whose actions promote peace and unify people worldwide.

Key Facts at a Glance

Aspect	Details
Award	FIFA Peace Prize – “Football Unites the World”
Recipient (2025)	Donald J. Trump (First ever)
When Announced?	During FIFA World Cup 2026 Draw Ceremony
Where?	Washington, D.C., USA
Presented By	Gianni Infantino, FIFA President
Purpose of Award	To honour exceptional contributions toward peace and global unity

2. “Demography in Focus: IUSSP Wins 2025 UN Population Award”

- International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) has been awarded the 2025 United Nations Population Award — Institutional Category.
- The honour was bestowed during the 46th annual Indian Association for the Study of Population (IASP) conference held in Kolkata (27–29 November 2025).
- The award was presented by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) India, recognising IUSSP’s global contributions to population science and evidence-based policymaking.

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What is the UN Population Award

- The UN Population Award was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1981 via Resolution 36/201, and first awarded in 1983.
- It is presented annually to either individuals or institutions (or both) for outstanding contributions to raising awareness, research, action or solutions on population issues, including reproductive health, demographic research, policy-oriented population studies, and population-related development challenges.
- The laureates receive a gold medal, a diploma, and a monetary prize.

3. A'ja Wilson – TIME 2025 Athlete of the Year

Key Points

- **A'ja Wilson**, American basketball player (Las Vegas Aces, WNBA), named **TIME's Athlete of the Year 2025**.
- Award given for **historic 2025 season**.



Major Achievements (2025)

- **First player in WNBA/NBA history** to win in one season:
 - ✓ Championship
 - ✓ League MVP
 - ✓ Finals MVP
 - ✓ Defensive Player of the Year
- Won **4th WNBA MVP** (most in WNBA history).
- Led Aces to **3rd championship in 4 years**.
- Fastest player to reach **5,000 career points**.

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4. Leonardo DiCaprio being named TIME's 2025 Entertainer of the Year

- Hollywood actor **Leonardo DiCaprio** was named **TIME Magazine's 2025 Entertainer of the Year** — a distinction recognizing the most influential figure in entertainment for the year.
- DiCaprio received this honour primarily for his **acclaimed performance** in the 2025 film *One Battle After Another* directed by **Paul Thomas Anderson**
- The film has become a major **award season contender** with multiple nominations and critical praise
- TIME acknowledged DiCaprio's **cultural impact and enduring influence** in cinema across decades

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About “Entertainer of the Year”

- *Entertainer of the Year* is an annual recognition by **TIME Magazine** highlighting an individual whose work **defined the cultural and entertainment landscape** over the preceding year

5. Raveena Tandon Honoured with PETA India’s 2025 Person of the Year Award

Bollywood actor **Raveena Tandon** was named **PETA India’s 2025 Person of the Year** by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA India)

Raveena was chosen for her:

- **Commitment to a meat-free (vegan) lifestyle.**
- **Tireless advocacy for wildlife and animal rights** through public campaigns.
- **Support for humane education**, especially PETA India’s *Compassionate Citizen Programme* for children.
- **Hands-on rescue work** — including personally saving animals in need.



About the Award

- PETA India’s **Person of the Year** is a top annual honour recognising individuals who:
 - Promote animal welfare and compassion.
 - Advocate for protection of wildlife and community animals.
 - Inspire empathy and ethical treatment of all living beings

6. Deepavali Added to UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage List, Elevating India’s Cultural Prestige

- **Deepavali (Diwali)** inscribed on **UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity List (2025)**.
- Announced during the **20th UNESCO ICH Committee Meeting** held at **Red Fort, New Delhi**.
- Becomes **India’s 16th cultural element** on the UNESCO list.
- Recognition highlights Deepavali’s message of **light over darkness** and **community bonding**.
- Strengthens India’s **global cultural influence and soft power diplomacy**.
- Expected to boost **international visibility** of Indian festivals and traditions.

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7. Supriya Sahu Wins UNEP Champions of the Earth Award 2025

Supriya Sahu, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer and Additional Chief Secretary (Environment, Climate Change and Forests) of **Tamil Nadu**, has been honoured with the **2025 Champions of the Earth** award by the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** — the UN's highest environmental recognition.



Award Category

She received the award in the “**Inspiration and Action**” category.

Significance of Champions of the Earth Award

- Established by **UNEP in 2005**, it honours **exceptional environmental leaders** whose work addresses critical issues like climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and ecosystem protection.
- It highlights **global leadership in climate action and sustainability solutions**.

8. President Droupadi Murmu Presents Shilp Guru & National Handicrafts Awards (2023 & 2024)

The **President of India, Droupadi Murmu**, presented the **Shilp Guru Awards** and **National Handicrafts Awards** for the years **2023 and 2024**, recognising outstanding contributions of artisans and craftspersons to India's rich handicrafts heritage.

About Shilp Guru Award

- One of the **highest national honours for master artisans**
- Given to craftsmen who have:
 - Preserved **traditional craft forms**
 - Played a key role in **training younger generations**
- Recognises **lifetime contribution** to Indian handicrafts

About National Handicrafts Awards

- Conferred to honour **excellence in handicrafts**
- **Categories include:**
 - Master craftsmen
 - Outstanding women artisans
 - Young and emerging artisans
- Encourages **innovation while preserving tradition**

Organising Ministry

- **Ministry of Textiles**, Government of India

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9. Filmfare OTT Awards 2025

The **Filmfare OTT Awards 2025** ceremony was held on **15 December 2025 in Mumbai**, celebrating excellence in Indian digital streaming content — including series, web original films, and short films. The awards recognised outstanding performances, direction, narrative, technical excellence and creative storytelling across OTT platforms.



Major Highlights

- **Black Warrant** (Netflix) emerged as the **biggest winner of the night**, securing the **Best Series award** along with multiple major honours.
- The ceremony honoured top talents across acting, directing, writing, and technical categories, highlighting the **booming OTT ecosystem in India**.

Key Winners — Series Categories

Best Series

✓ *Black Warrant* (Netflix) — Most awarded series of the evening.

Best Series (Critics)

✓ *Paatal Lok* Season 2 — Critically acclaimed thriller series.

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Best Director (Series)

✓ Vikramaditya Motwane, Satyanshu Singh, Arkesh Ajay, Ambiecka Pandit & Rohin Raveendran (*Black Warrant*).

Best Director, Series (Critics)

✓ Anubhav Sinha (*IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack*)

✓ Nagesh Kukunoor (*The Hunt: The Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case*).

Acting Honours — Series

Best Actor, Series (Male): Drama

◆ Jaideep Ahlawat (*Paatal Lok* Season 2).

Best Actor, Series (Male), Critics (Drama)

◆ Zahan Kapoor (*Black Warrant*).

Best Actor, Series (Female): Drama

◆ Monika Panwar (*Khauf*).

Best Actor, Series (Female): Comedy

◆ Ananya Panday (*Call Me Bae*).

Supporting Actor Wins

✓ Rahul Bhat — Best Supporting Actor (Drama, *Black Warrant*)

✓ Vinay Pathak — Best Supporting Actor (Comedy, *Gram Chikitsalay*).

Comedy Series (Series/Specials)

✓ *Raat Jawaan Hai* — Best Comedy.

Web Original Films — Key Winners

- **Best Film, Web Original:** *Girls Will Be Girls*.
- **Best Actor (Male), Web Original Film:** Abhishek Banerjee (*Stolen*).
- **Best Actor (Female), Web Original Film:** Sanya Malhotra (*Mrs*).
- **Best Supporting Actor (Male), Web Film:** Deepak Dobriyal (*Sector 36*).

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- **Best Supporting Actor (Female), Web Film:** Kani Kusruti (*Girls Will Be Girls*).

Other Notable Awards

- **Best Story & Screenplay:** Recognised for excellence in storytelling across both series and web films.
- **Technical Awards:** Recognitions in production design, editing, cinematography, sound, music and VFX highlighted the depth of talent behind OTT content.
- **Breakthrough Performances:** New talents were honoured, signalling growth of fresh actors and directors on OTT platforms.

10. Powering Innovation — NTPC NETRA & CSIR Scientists Shine at First DV Kapur Energy Innovation Awards

The **First DV Kapur Foundation Energy Innovation Awards** were held on **12 December 2025** at the SCOPE Complex in **New Delhi** to recognise **technological innovations** in the energy sector. These awards aim to **promote research and development**, particularly in energy technologies that support India's growth and sustainability goals

Key Awardees & Innovations

Category 1 — Young Innovators (Under 38)

Dr Achu Chandran

- **Affiliation:** Principal Scientist, **CSIR-NIIST**
- **Innovation: Nano Electricity Generator** — a cutting-edge technology focusing on generating electrical power at the nanoscale.
- **Award:** Citation + Trophy + **₹1 Lakh** prize.
- **Significance:** Highlights emerging **nano-technology solutions** in energy research.

Category 2 — Established Innovation

NETRA (NTPC R&D Wing)

- **Innovation: Green Use of Coal Technologies** — aimed at making coal-based power cleaner and more sustainable.
- **Team Lead:** Shri **Shaswattam** (Executive Director, NETRA)
- **Award:** Citation + Trophy + **₹10 Lakhs** prize.
- **Significance:** Encourages cleaner energy practices in conventional power sectors.

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11. PM Modi Makes History: First World Leader to Be Conferred Ethiopia's Top Honour

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was recently conferred Ethiopia's highest civilian honour, the *Great Honour Nishan of Ethiopia*, by Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed Ali during a special ceremony in Addis Ababa.
- This significant event occurred during PM Modi's official bilateral visit to Ethiopia in December 2025.



Historic Milestone

- Modi became the *first global Head of State or Government* to receive Ethiopia's top national award — a historic diplomatic first.
- The honour recognises his **exceptional contribution to strengthening India-Ethiopia bilateral relations** and his role as a **global statesman**.
- It is also noted as **his 28th foreign state honour**, underscoring India's rising global engagement.

About the Award

- The *Great Honour Nishan of Ethiopia* is the **highest civilian honour** conferred by the Government of Ethiopia.
- It is bestowed on individuals who have made **outstanding contributions in diplomacy, international partnership, and strengthening bilateral ties**.
- Past recipients include notable global leaders and contributors to Ethiopia's international relations

12. PM Modi Awarded Oman's Highest Civilian Honour — A Milestone in India-Gulf Diplomacy

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred “**The First Class of the Order of Oman**”, the **highest civilian honour of the Sultanate of Oman**. This award was presented by **Sultan Haitham bin Tarik** during PM Modi's **official visit** to the Gulf nation.
- This honour became **his 29th international civilian award**, reflecting **global recognition of his diplomatic leadership and strategic engagements**.

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About the “Order of Oman”

- The **Order of Oman** is Oman’s **topmost national award**, usually conferred on **heads of state/government and eminent global figures** for exceptional contributions to **bilateral relations and international cooperation**.
- Past recipients include globally respected leaders, placing PM Modi among a **distinguished group of international figures** recognised for fostering goodwill and strategic partnerships.

13. Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2025

Date of Award Ceremony: 26 December 2025 (Veer Bal Diwas)

📍 Venue: New Delhi

🏆 Presented By: President of India, Droupadi Murmu

✦ Occasion: Awarded during Veer Bal Diwas, a day remembering the courage of Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Sahibzada Fateh Singh.

About the Award

- The **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar** is **India’s highest civilian honour for children** (ages ~5–18) who have shown *exceptional achievements or exemplary conduct* across various fields.
- Awards are given in **six main categories**:
 - **Bravery**
 - **Social Service**
 - **Environment**
 - **Sports**
 - **Art & Culture**
 - **Science & Technology**

This recognises outstanding contributions and acts that *inspire others and build national pride*.

2025 Award Highlights

- ✓ **20 children** from **18 states and Union Territories** were honoured in 2025.
- ✓ These young achievers include winners across bravery, innovation, sports, social impact, environment and more.

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14. Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025

 **Date of Ceremony:** 23 December 2025

 **Venue:** Gantantra Mandap,
Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi

 **Presented by:** **President of India,**
Droupadi Murmu

 **Occasion:** Annual national awards to honour excellence in science, technology, and innovation across India.



About the Award

- The **Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar** recognises **notable contributions by scientists, researchers, technologists, and R&D teams** whose work has advanced science and technology in India.
- It promotes **scientific research, innovation and interdisciplinary excellence** across various domains.

2025 Award Details

- A total of **24 awards** were conferred in the **second edition** of the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (first edition was in 2024).
- Awards were presented across **four major categories:**
 1. **Vigyan Ratna** – Lifetime achievement / extraordinary contribution
 2. **Vigyan Shri** – Distinguished scientific contributions
 3. **Vigyan Yuva** – Outstanding young scientists
 4. **Vigyan Team Award** – Collaborative research teams and innovation groups

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Important Days & Observances

S. No.	Important Days	Date	Extra Information
1.	World AIDS Day	December 1, 2025	Theme "Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response"
2.	Nagaland Statehood Day	December 1, 2025	Nagaland became a separate state of India on 1 December 1963
3.	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery	December 2, 2025	Theme "Acknowledge the past. Repair the present. Build a future of dignity and justice."
4.	World Computer Literacy Day	December 2, 2025	Theme "Digital Skills for an Inclusive Future"
5.	International Day of Banks	December 4, 2025	Theme "Banks Powering a Livable Planet"
6.	International Cheetah Day	December 4, 2025	Theme "India's Cheetah Comeback: Sparking Global Hope for Conservation"
7.	World Soil Day	December 5, 2025	Theme "Healthy Soils for Healthy Cities"
8.	International Volunteer Day	December 5, 2025	Theme "Every Contribution Matters"
9.	International Civil Aviation Day	December 7, 2025	Theme "Safe Skies. Sustainable Future: Together for the next 80 years."
10.	Armed Forces Flag Day	December 7, 2025	Theme "Welfare and Gratitude"
11.	Human Rights Day	December 10, 2025	Theme "Human Rights, Our Everyday Essentials"
12.	International Day of Commemoration and	December 9, 2025	It commemorates the adoption of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (also known as the

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	Dignity of Genocide Victims		Genocide Convention), which defines genocide as an international crime and obligates states to prevent and punish it.
13.	International Anti-Corruption Day 2025	December 9, 2025	Theme “Uniting with Youth Against Corruption: Shaping Tomorrow’s Integrity”
14.	National Energy Conservation Day	December 14, 2025	It is organized by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Ministry of Power (Government of India)
15.	International Mountain Day	December 11, 2025	Theme “Glaciers matter for water, food and livelihoods in mountains and beyond.”
16.	International Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day	December 12, 2025	Theme “Unaffordable health costs? We’re sick of it!”
17.	UNICEF Foundation Day	December 11, 2025	UNICEF was established on 11 December 1946 by the United Nations General Assembly.

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Reports & Indexes

1. Global Indices for Reforms and Growth (GIRG)

- India has launched the GIRG initiative to track and review **26 global indices** — covering themes like economy, governance, development and industry.
- The central coordinating body for GIRG is the NITI Aayog's Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO).
- The 26 indices to be monitored are distributed among **17 nodal ministries**, each responsible for monitoring and improving India's performance on their assigned indices.

Objectives & Why It Matters

- **Benchmarking & Gap Analysis:** GIRG will help India benchmark its global standing — by comparing performance on international indices and identifying where reforms are needed.
- **Data Quality & Policy Alignment:** Ministries under GIRG must review index methodologies, ensure Indian data is up-to-date, and align domestic policies to improve scores — leading to better governance, transparency and growth.
- **Holistic Development Focus:** Since the indices span economy, governance, development and industry, GIRG reflects a holistic approach — aiming not just at economic growth but also governance standards, social indicators and industrial development.

2. India Rises to 3rd in Global AI Competitiveness — Behind Only US and China

India has been ranked **third globally** in artificial intelligence competitiveness according to **Stanford University's 2025 Global AI Vibrancy Index**, placing it **behind the United States and China**.

About the Global AI Vibrancy Index

- The Index is published by **Stanford University** and measures how nations are positioned in the **global AI ecosystem**.
- It evaluates countries across **seven pillars**:
 - ✓ **Research and Development**
 - ✓ **Responsible AI**
 - ✓ **Economy**
 - ✓ **Talent**
 - ✓ **Policy & Governance**
 - ✓ **Public Opinion**
 - ✓ **Infrastructure**
- The ranking reflects **overall AI readiness, innovation strength and ecosystem vibrancy**.

India's Performance

- **Ranking: 3rd globally** in the **2025 AI Vibrancy Index** based on data through 2024.
- **Score: 21.59** points in the index.
- India moved up sharply from **7th place in 2023** to **3rd place** in 2024 rankings, surpassing the **United Kingdom, South Korea, Singapore and Japan**.
- The top two positions are held by the **United States** and **China** respectively.

3. India Ranks Third in Asia Power Index 2025 — Attains 'Major Power' Status

Key Highlight

According to the **Asia Power Index 2025**, released by the **Australian think tank Lowy Institute**, **India has secured the 3rd position** in the ranking of global powers, placing it **just behind the United States and China**.

About the Asia Power Index

- The **Asia Power Index** is an annual analytical ranking published by the **Lowy Institute** that assesses the **relative power of states in the Indo-Pacific region**. It evaluates **27 countries and territories** based on multiple indicators of capability and influence.
- Power is measured across **eight thematic measures**, including **economic capability, military capability, resilience, future resources, economic relationships, defence networks, diplomatic influence and cultural influence**.

📌 India's Performance (2025)

- **Rank: 3rd** among 27 countries.
- **Score: 40.0 out of 100**, crossing the **40-point threshold** that classifies a country as a **"Major Power"** in the index.
- **Classification: Major Power** (first time officially achieving this status in the Asia Power Index).
- **Countries ahead of India:**
 - **1st — United States** (Superpower)
 - **2nd — China** (Superpower).
- **Countries just behind India:** Japan (4th), Russia (5th).

4. Global Food City Rankings 2025–26

The **Global Food City Rankings 2025–26**, released as part of the **TasteAtlas World Food Awards**, have spotlighted the world's top culinary cities based on food culture, local dishes, authenticity, and popularity among food lovers. A total of **18,828 cities worldwide were evaluated** to compile this list.

Top 10 Best Food Cities in the World (2025–26)

1. **Naples, Italy**
2. **Milan, Italy**
3. **Bologna, Italy**
4. **Florence, Italy**
5. **Mumbai, India**
6. **Genoa, Italy**
7. **Paris, France**
8. **Vienna, Austria**
9. **Rome, Italy**
10. **Lima, Peru**

Indian Cities in the Top 100

Beyond Mumbai, several Indian cities also made it into the **Top 100 Best Food Cities** of the world, highlighting India's **diverse regional cuisines**:

- **Delhi**
- **Amritsar**
- **Hyderabad**
- **Kolkata**
- **Chennai**

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Defence & Security

1. Harimau Shakti 2025

- The **5th edition** of Harimau Shakti began on **5 December 2025** at **Mahajan Field Firing Range, Rajasthan (India)**.
- It will run from **5 to 18 December 2025**.
- **Indian contingent:** troops from the Dogra Regiment.
- **Malaysian contingent:** soldiers from the 25th Battalion of the Royal Malaysian Army.
- The focus remains on **sub-conventional operations under the United Nations (UN) Chapter VII mandate** — implying readiness for peace-enforcement and counter-terrorism operations.
- Training modules include: cordon & search, search-and-destroy, heliborne operations, casualty evacuation, securing helipads, combat reflex shooting, tactical drills — aiming to build joint operational synergy.

2. India Expands Operation Sagar Bandhu: Four More Naval Ships Reach Cyclone-Hit Sri Lanka

- The **Indian Navy** has deployed **four additional warships** to **Sri Lanka** as part of **Operation Sagar Bandhu**, India's humanitarian response to **Cyclone Ditwah**.
- The deployed vessels — **INS Gharial, LCU 54, LCU 51, and LCU 57** — are carrying around **1,000 tonnes of relief material** to cyclone-affected coastal areas.
- These supplies include **essential Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) stores** such as food, medical items and emergency equipment.
- The mission underscores India's role as a **first-responder in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** and reflects strong **India-Sri Lanka bilateral ties**.
- Operation Sagar Bandhu was launched under India's **Neighbourhood First and SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) policies** to assist Sri Lanka after severe cyclone impact.

3. "Operation Hawkeye Strike (2025) — US & Jordan Hit ISIS in Syria After Deadly Attack"

What Happened?

- **Operation Hawkeye Strike** was launched on **19 December 2025** by the **United States**, with **Jordanian support**, against **Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL) targets in Syria**.
- The airstrikes hit **over 70 ISIS positions and infrastructure sites**, including weapons depots, training facilities, drone sites, and logistics hubs.

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- The operation involved **US and Jordanian fighter jets, attack helicopters, and precision munitions.**

Operational Details

- **Name:** *Operation Hawkeye Strike*
- **Date:** **19 December 2025**
- **Area of Operations:** **Central and Eastern Syria**
- **Targets:** ISIS fighters, command centers, weapons storage, infrastructure
- **Forces Involved:**
 - **United States:** F-15 and A-10 jets, Apache helicopters, HIMARS systems
 - **Jordan:** F-16 fighter jet support
- **Precision Munitions:** More than **100 guided weapons** were used in the strikes

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Science & Technological Developments

1. “ISRO’s Baahubali Rocket Soars Again — BlueBird Block-2 Satellite Launched Successfully”

Mission Overview

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** successfully launched the **BlueBird Block-2** communications satellite using its heavy-lift **Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3-M6)** — popularly nicknamed the “*Baahubali*” rocket.
- The mission was part of a **commercial agreement** with **AST SpaceMobile** (USA), carried out by **NSIL (NewSpace India Ltd)**, the commercial arm of ISRO.

About BlueBird Block-2 Satellite

- Also referred to as **BlueBird 6**, it is a **next-generation communication satellite** built by **AST SpaceMobile**.
- The satellite is designed to provide **direct-to-smartphone broadband connectivity** (4G/5G) from space without special user hardware, enabling voice, text, and data services globally.

Record Achievement

- The **BlueBird Block-2** satellite, weighing **about 6,100 kg**, is the **heaviest payload ever launched into Low Earth Orbit (LEO)** by an Indian rocket to date.
- This launch marks a **major milestone in ISRO’s commercial space capabilities**, highlighting growth in international collaboration and market presence.

The Baahubali Rocket (LVM3-M6)

- **Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3)** is ISRO’s **most powerful launch vehicle**, capable of placing heavy payloads into orbit.
- The **LVM3-M6 mission** was the **sixth operational flight** and the **third dedicated commercial mission** of this vehicle.

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Government Schemes & Initiatives

1. SIM Linking Mandatory for Messaging Apps



1. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has made SIM-linking mandatory for all major messaging apps under the Telecommunication Cybersecurity Amendment Rules 2025.
2. Apps like WhatsApp, Telegram and Signal must remain continuously linked to the same active SIM used at registration; removing the SIM will disable the app.
3. Web and desktop versions will now auto-logout every 6 hours, requiring re-authentication via the linked mobile device.
4. The move aims to boost cybersecurity, curb fraud, and ensure stronger user-identity verification.
5. Messaging platforms have been given a 90-day deadline for full implementation and 120 days to submit compliance reports.

2. Sanchar Saathi

What is Sanchar Saathi

- Sanchar Saathi is a state-owned cybersecurity & telecom safety platform launched by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India.
- It is available as a **mobile app** (Android / iOS) and also as a **web portal** — aiming to help mobile users manage their telecom identity, safety and fraud prevention.



Key Features / Services of Sanchar Saathi

Through Sanchar Saathi, users can:

- **Report suspected fraud communications** (call, SMS, WhatsApp) — e.g., phishing, scam calls, impersonation, fake KYC, loan/lottery/job-offer scams.
- **Report and block lost or stolen handsets** — if a phone is stolen, the owner can block it so that it becomes unusable on any network.
- **Check genuineness of a handset using IMEI number** — helps in detecting counterfeit devices, blacklisted phones, or phones with fake/duplicate IMEI.
- **See all mobile connections registered in one's name** — helps detect unauthorized connections taken without consent.
- **Report unwanted commercial communication / spam calls & messages** (as per regulatory rules), and check trusted contact details of banks and financial institutions.

3. MGNREGA to Be Renamed; Annual Guaranteed Employment Increased to 125 Days

The **Government of India** has announced plans to **rename the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** and **increase the guaranteed employment days from 100 to 125 days per year** under the scheme.

About MGNREGA

- Full form: **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act**
- Launched in: **2005**
- Objective:
 - Provide **wage employment** to rural households
 - Enhance **livelihood security**
 - Create **durable rural assets**
- Current guarantee: **100 days of wage employment per household per year**

Key Announcements

- **Renaming of MGNREGA**
 - Aimed at **modernising and rebranding** the scheme
 - Exact new name to be officially notified
- **Increase in Employment Days**
 - Guaranteed workdays increased from **100 → 125 days**
 - Intended to provide **greater income security** to rural workers

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Objectives of the Move

- Strengthen **rural employment and income support**
- Address **rural distress and seasonal unemployment**
- Improve **purchasing power** in rural areas
- Support **inclusive and sustainable rural development**

4. Cabinet Approves CoalSETU Window for Fair Coal Access & Efficient Resource Use

The **Union Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, has approved a new **CoalSETU window** to improve coal allocation through transparent auctions and ensure fair access for diverse industrial uses and export.

Full Form & Meaning

- **CoalSETU** stands for **Policy for Auction of Coal Linkage for Seamless, Efficient & Transparent Utilisation**.
- It introduces a dedicated **auction window** under the **Non-Regulated Sector (NRS) Linkage Auction Policy** of 2016.

Key Features

- ✓ **Auction-based allocation:** Long-term coal linkages will be allocated through auctions for any industrial use.
- ✓ **No end-use restrictions:** Coal buyers can participate regardless of the sector they belong to.
- ✓ **Export allowed:** Linkage holders can **export up to 50%** of their coal allocation.
- ✓ **Flexible use:** Coal can be used for own consumption, export, coal washing, or shared among group companies.
- ✓ **Coking coal excluded:** Coking coal *will not* be offered under this window.
- ✓ **Traders excluded:** Only genuine industrial consumers are eligible; traders cannot bid.

Objectives

- Promote **transparent, efficient and market-driven allocation** of domestic coal resources.
- Enhance **ease of doing business** in the coal sector.
- Reduce **dependence on imported coal** by boosting domestic availability.
- Support **coal exports and washed coal production**.

5. Vigyanika 2025: Promoting Science Through Literature & Creative Communication

Vigyanika 2025 is a national initiative aimed at **popularising science through literature, storytelling, and creative communication**, making scientific knowledge

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more accessible and engaging for the general public, especially students and young learners.

Organising Body

- **Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)**
- Supported by scientific and academic institutions

Main Objective

- To **bridge the gap between science and society**
- Encourage **scientific temper** through:
 - Literature
 - Creative writing
 - Storytelling
 - Popular science communication

Key Features of Vigyanika 2025

- Focus on **science communication in Indian languages**
- Encourages scientists, writers, educators, and students to:
 - Explain complex scientific ideas in **simple, creative formats**
- **Promotes:**
 - Essays
 - Articles
 - Stories
 - Popular science literature

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6. Parliament Passes VB-G RAM G Bill, Replacing MGNREGA”

- The **Lok Sabha** passed the **Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025 (VB-G RAM G)** on **18 December 2025**, amid **Opposition protests** and debates over the bill’s provisions and procedural process. **Parliament (Rajya Sabha)** also approved the bill shortly after Lok Sabha clearance.
- **President Droupadi Murmu has given assent**, making it the **Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025** — a major shift in rural employment policy.

What Is the VB-G RAM G Act?

- **Full Name:** *Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025.*
- It **replaces the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005**, India’s flagship rural employment law.
- It is designed to **transform rural employment and livelihood security**, aligning them with the government’s **Viksit Bharat @2047** vision.



Key Features & Changes

1. Enhanced Employment Guarantee

- The Act provides a statutory guarantee of **125 days** of wage employment per financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer for unskilled manual work.

2. Replacement of MGNREGA

- MGNREGA's *100-day guarantee* is replaced by this new framework focused on **broader rural development** and employment enhancement.

3. Implementation & Planning

- The Act emphasises **planning through Panchayats and Gram Sabhas**, encouraging local governance to drive rural development plans and employment.

4. Funding Pattern

- Changes in **central-state cost-sharing** have been introduced, with states taking on a share of the employment wage burden (e.g., **60:40** central-state pattern for most states).

5. Agriculture Pause Provision

- The new law includes provisions for **pausing guaranteed work during peak agricultural periods** (like sowing and harvesting) to ensure labour availability for farming.

6. Technology & Governance

- Emphasis on **digital systems, biometric attendance, GPS tracking, and transparency mechanisms** to improve delivery and reduce leakages.

7. Focus on Assets & Livelihoods

- Shifts focus from purely relief work towards **creation of durable rural assets** (roads, water infrastructure, storage facilities) and livelihood enhancement.

7. First Indian Standard for Agarbattis Unveiled by BIS (2025)

On **National Consumer Day (24 Dec 2025)**, the **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** notified **IS 19412:2025**, India's **first dedicated national standard for agarbattis (incense sticks)**. This historic move aims to **ensure safety, product quality, and environmental responsibility** for one of India's traditional and widely used consumer products.

Key Features of IS 19412 : 2025

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- It is **India's first Indian Standard specifically for incense sticks**, covering machine-made, hand-made, and traditional masala agarbattis.
- The standard lays down **comprehensive norms on raw materials, burning performance, ash behavior, and fragrance quality** to ensure consistent product quality.
- **Chemical safety provisions** are a major highlight — the standard **prohibits several harmful substances** (including certain insecticides and synthetic fragrance intermediates) linked to health and environmental concerns.

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Miscellaneous (One Liner Current Affairs)

- **PMO to Be Renamed Seva Teerth:** The Prime Minister's Office will be renamed *Seva Teerth* as part of the government's governance reform initiative.
- **IGI Becomes India's First Water-Positive Airport:** Indira Gandhi International Airport became India's first airport to achieve water-positive status.
- **Scromiting Syndrome Explained:** Scromiting syndrome refers to severe vomiting caused by frequent and prolonged cannabis use.
- **Manali Kshirsagar Creates History at Nagpur University:** Manali Kshirsagar became Nagpur University's first woman Vice-Chancellor in its 100-year history.
- **Sunil Narine Reaches Historic T20 Milestone:** Sunil Narine became the first cricketer to take 600 wickets in T20 cricket.
- **Paperless Passport Verification via DigiLocker:** MeitY and MEA enabled paperless passport verification using DigiLocker.
- **Asim Munir Appointed Pakistan's First Chief of Defence Forces:** Pakistan formally appointed General Asim Munir as its first Chief of Defence Forces.
- **Russia Gets First Naval Base in Africa:** Sudan approved an agreement allowing Russia to establish its first naval base on African soil.
- **Neal Mohan Named TIME 2025 CEO of the Year:** Indian-origin Neal Mohan was named TIME Magazine's CEO of the Year 2025.
- **Anant Ambani Honoured for Animal Welfare:** Anant Ambani became the youngest recipient of the Global Humane Society's Animal Welfare Award.
- **Indian Toddler Becomes Youngest FIDE-Rated Player:** A 3-year-old Indian boy became the world's youngest FIDE-rated chess player.
- **Ghaziabad Ranked India's Most Polluted City:** Ghaziabad emerged as India's most polluted city in November 2025, according to CREA.
- **Lithuania Declares Emergency Over Balloon Incursions:** Lithuania declared a state of emergency due to balloon incursions from Belarus.
- **DBS Named Global Bank of the Year 2025:** DBS Bank was awarded Global Bank of the Year 2025 by *The Banker*.
- **70-Foot Lionel Messi Statue Unveiled in Kolkata:** A 70-foot iron statue of football legend Lionel Messi was unveiled in Kolkata.
- **India to Host First Commonwealth Kho-Kho Championship:** India will host the first Commonwealth Kho-Kho Championship in March 2026.
- **Ajai Kumar Shukla Appointed MD & CEO of PNB Housing Finance:** PNB Housing Finance appointed Ajai Kumar Shukla as its new MD & CEO.

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- **Henrique Braun Becomes CEO of Coca-Cola Company:** Henrique Braun was appointed as the new CEO of The Coca-Cola Company.
- **BMW Appoints Milan Nedeljkovic as CEO:** BMW appointed Milan Nedeljkovic as its new Chief Executive Officer.
- **India's First Hydrogen Fuel Cell Passenger Vessel Launched:** India's first indigenous hydrogen fuel cell passenger vessel began commercial service in Varanasi
- **Deepavali Gets UNESCO Cultural Heritage Status:** Deepavali was added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List.
- **Chhattisgarh Gets Its First Ramsar Site:** Kopra Reservoir was declared Chhattisgarh's first Ramsar wetland site.
- **TIME Names 'Architects of AI' Person of the Year 2025:** TIME Magazine named "Architects of AI" as Person of the Year 2025.
- **Miyana Railway Station Wins Energy Conservation Award:** Miyana Railway Station received the National Energy Conservation Award 2025.
- **B. Sairam Appointed CMD of Coal India:** B. Sairam was appointed Chairman-cum-Managing Director of Coal India Limited.
- **Suresh Goyal Appointed NCAER Director-General:** Suresh Goyal was appointed as Director-General of NCAER.
- **India's First Wildlife-Safe Road Launched:** NHAI introduced India's first wildlife-safe road on NH-45 in Madhya Pradesh.
- **Italy Gets UNESCO Recognition for National Cuisine:** Italy became the first country to receive UNESCO recognition for its national cuisine.
- **Air India Wins Best Domestic Airline Award 2025:** Air India won the Best Domestic Airline title at the Travel + Leisure Awards 2025.
- **Singapore Changi Named World's Best Airport 2025:** Singapore Changi Airport won the World's Best Airport award for 2025.
- **Ravi DeeCee Receives French Chevalier Award:** Ravi DeeCee was honoured with France's Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.
- **Shashwat Sharma Appointed MD & CEO of Airtel India:** Shashwat Sharma became the Managing Director & CEO of Airtel India.
- **Param Vir Dirgha Inaugurated at Rashtrapati Bhavan:** President of India inaugurated *Param Vir Dirgha* at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- **PM Releases Postal Stamp on Ashwagandha:** Prime Minister released a commemorative postal stamp on Ashwagandha at the WHO Global Summit.
- **Jose Antonio Kast Becomes Chile's President:** Right-wing leader Jose Antonio Kast was elected President of Chile.

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- **Oman Introduces Polymer One-Rial Banknote:** Oman will introduce its first polymer one-rial banknote from January 2026.
- **Advocate Shubham Awasthi Wins 40 Under 40 Award:** Advocate Shubham Awasthi received the prestigious 40 Under 40 Lawyer Award 2025.
- **Anu Garg to Become Odisha's First Woman Chief Secretary:** Anu Garg will become Odisha's first woman Chief Secretary from January 1.
- **Sudarsan Pattnaik Sets World Record with Sand Santa:** Sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik set a world record by creating a giant Santa Claus sculpture.
- **Rashtra Prerna Sthal Inaugurated in Lucknow:** Rashtra Prerna Sthal was inaugurated in Lucknow to honour Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- **China Opens World's Longest Expressway Tunnel:** China inaugurated the world's longest expressway tunnel in Xinjiang.
- **Japan to Restart World's Largest Nuclear Plant:** Japan announced plans to restart the world's largest nuclear power plant after Fukushima shutdown.
- **Gujarat Declared a Tiger State:** Gujarat became a tiger state after 33 years, as declared by NTCA.
- **RRU to Host World Police & Fire Games 2029:** Rashtriya Raksha University will host the World Police and Fire Games 2029
- **President Murmu Undertakes Submarine Mission:** President Droupadi Murmu joined the elite group of Indian leaders to undertake a submarine mission.
- **Israel Recognises Somaliland:** Israel officially recognised Somaliland as an independent state.

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