

Weekly One Liners 10th to 16th February, 2025

Government Initiatives to Support Women Employees and Entrepreneurs in India

The Government of India has launched several initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in the workplace and supporting women entrepreneurs. These initiatives focus on creating a safe, secure, and non-discriminatory environment for women employees while also fostering women-owned enterprises. Through legislative measures and various programs, the government seeks to ensure that women have equal opportunities for career growth, business development, and social security.

Legal Framework for Women's Empowerment in the Workplace The Companies Act, 2013: Ensuring Gender Diversity in Corporate Boards

The **Companies Act, 2013**, administered by the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs**, contains provisions designed to ensure a gender-equal environment in corporate India. One key provision under the Act mandates that **listed companies** and other **public companies** with a **paid-up share capital of Rs. 100 crore** or more, or **turnover of Rs. 300 crore** or more, must appoint at least one **woman director** on their boards. This requirement is outlined in **Section 149** of the Companies Act, which is complemented by **Rule 3** of the **Companies (Appointment and Qualification of Directors) Rules, 2014**.

In addition, companies must include a statement in their **Board Report**, which is attached to the **annual financial statement**, confirming compliance with the **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**. This ensures that companies have a **mandatory Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)** to address any grievances related to workplace harassment.

Government Schemes Supporting Women Entrepreneurs

The Government of India has introduced a variety of schemes aimed at empowering **women entrepreneurs** by offering financial support, training, and capacity building.

Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGS)

Under the **Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGS)**, women entrepreneurs receive **additional benefits** compared to other entrepreneurs. This initiative is designed to provide **financial support** and **guarantees** to small businesses, helping women access capital to start or grow their enterprises.

Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)

The **Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)** is a significant credit-linked subsidy scheme designed to generate employment opportunities in rural and urban areas. This program has a **substantial focus on women beneficiaries**, who receive higher subsidies compared to other non-special category applicants. PMEGP has been instrumental in promoting

women entrepreneurship in India, especially in small-scale manufacturing and service sectors.

Stand-Up India Scheme (SUI)

The **Stand-Up India Scheme (SUI)** encourages entrepreneurship among women, Scheduled Caste (SC), and Scheduled Tribe (ST) borrowers. The scheme facilitates loans ranging from **Rs. 10 lakh to Rs. 1 crore** for **greenfield enterprises**. Each bank branch is mandated to provide loans to at least **one woman borrower** and **one SC/ST borrower** to promote **economic inclusion** and **entrepreneurship** in these communities.

Yashasvini Initiative

Launched on **27 June 2024**, the **Yashasvini** initiative focuses on empowering **women entrepreneurs**, especially those in **Tier-II/III towns**. This program aims to enhance the **capacity building** of women entrepreneurs and to provide them with the necessary tools and support to establish and grow their businesses.

Legislative Provisions for Women's Protection and Welfare

In addition to promoting entrepreneurship, the Government of India has enacted several laws to ensure **safe, secure, and non-discriminatory workplaces** for women. These provisions also extend to **maternity benefits** and protection against **sexual harassment** at the workplace.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

The **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013** (commonly known as the **SH Act**) provides a comprehensive legal framework for the prevention and redressal of sexual harassment in the workplace. The law mandates the constitution of an **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)** in organizations with **10 or more employees**. In cases where the workplace has fewer than 10 employees, or when the complaint is against the employer, a **Local Committee (LC)** must be formed by the **District Officer**.

To facilitate the filing of complaints, the **revamped Sexual Harassment electronic-Box (SHe-Box)** was launched by the government on **29 August 2024**. This initiative provides a **centralized platform** for women to file complaints related to sexual harassment, regardless of their employment status or the sector they work in.

Maternity Benefits and Workplace Equality

The **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017** requires establishments with **50 or more employees** to provide a **creche facility** for women employees. This measure ensures that working mothers have access to **childcare facilities** while maintaining their professional responsibilities. Additionally, the **Code on Social Security, 2020** and the **Code on Wages, 2019** provide **maternity benefits** and emphasize the need for **gender equality** in the workplace.

Supporting Working Mothers

To support working mothers, the government introduced the “Palna” scheme on **1 April 2022**. This **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** provides **daycare facilities** to ensure that working mothers can balance their professional and parental responsibilities while their children receive **care and protection** during working hours.

Govt Adds 10 New Commodities to e-NAM for Better Market Access

The Indian government has expanded the scope of the **National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)** by **adding 10 new agricultural commodities** for trading. With this inclusion, the total number of commodities on the **e-NAM platform has reached 231**. The move is aimed at improving price realization for farmers and ensuring a more transparent and efficient trade system.

What Are the 10 New Commodities Added to e-NAM?

The newly introduced commodities include both raw and value-added agricultural products:

- **Dried Tulsi Leaves**
- **Besan (Chickpea Flour)**
- **Wheat Flour**
- **Chana Sattu (Roasted Chickpea Flour)**
- **Water Chestnut Flour**
- **Asafoetida**
- **Dried Fenugreek Leaves**
- **Water Chestnut**
- **Baby Corn**
- **Dragon Fruit**

Among these, items like Chana Sattu, Water Chestnut Flour, Asafoetida, and Dried Fenugreek Leaves are categorized under secondary trade. Their inclusion is expected to help Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) gain better market access for processed and value-added products.

Why Was This Expansion of e-NAM Needed?

e-NAM, launched in 2016, is an online trading platform designed to create a unified national agricultural market. It connects farmers to **Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC)** mandis, ensuring a competitive and transparent price discovery system. The addition of new commodities aligns with the government’s efforts to:

- Increase **market opportunities for farmers** by allowing more products to be traded online.
- Improve **price transparency and efficiency** through a standardized grading system.
- Support **FPOs and small-scale producers** in selling value-added products.

This initiative follows extensive consultations with stakeholders to ensure better price realization and market access for farmers across the country.

How Will These New Commodities Benefit Farmers?

The Directorate of Marketing and Inspection (DMI) has introduced tradable parameters for these commodities, helping farmers secure fair pricing based on standardized quality checks. This move is expected to:

- Provide **greater market reach** by enabling farmers to sell beyond local mandis.
- Ensure **better income generation** through transparent price discovery.
- Promote **agriculture diversification** by encouraging the production and trade of high-value crops like baby corn and dragon fruit.

The **Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC)** under the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare** manages the e-NAM platform, ensuring smooth operations and policy implementation.

Aero India 2025: India’s Largest Defence Expo Begins

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated **Aero India 2025**, the **15th edition of India’s premier aerospace and defence exhibition**, on **February 10, 2025**, at **Yelahanka Air Force Station, Bengaluru**. This **five-day event**, regarded as **Asia’s largest** in the sector, is a key platform showcasing **India’s advancements in defence technology, aerospace innovations, and global collaborations**.

What Makes Aero India 2025 the Largest Edition Yet?

The scale of **Aero India 2025** is unprecedented, spanning **42,438 square meters** with participation from **30 defence ministers, 43 military chiefs, and representatives from 90 countries**. The exhibition features an extensive display of **70 fighter jets, transport aircraft, and trainer aircraft**, along with **30 helicopters performing aerial maneuvers**.

One of the major highlights is the presence of **Russian and American fifth-generation stealth fighter jets**, including the **Russian Su-57 and Lockheed Martin’s F-35 Lightning II**. Their participation signals **India’s growing stature as a global defence and aerospace hub**.

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Selection Ka Saathi

Another key attraction is the **India Pavilion**, which showcases over **275 cutting-edge defence exhibits**. Notable innovations on display include the **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)**, **Combat Air Teaming System (CATS)**, and **Twin-Engine Deck-Based Fighter (TEDBF)**. Alongside, the **iDEX Pavilion**, dedicated to Indian defence startups, features **indigenously developed advanced technologies**, reinforcing India's push for self-reliance in defence.

How is the Indian Government Supporting Defence Growth?

The Indian government has made a strong commitment to defence modernization. The **Union Budget 2025-26** allocated **₹6.81 lakh crore** to the **Ministry of Defence**, with **₹1.80 lakh crore set aside for capital acquisition**. Importantly, **75% of this modernization budget is earmarked for domestic procurement**, strengthening the Indian defence ecosystem.

Rajnath Singh also emphasized **public-private collaboration** in boosting India's defence manufacturing capabilities. A notable example is the **Tata Advanced Systems Limited-Airbus joint venture** for manufacturing **C-295 transport aircraft in Gujarat**. Such initiatives highlight the growing synergy between the **government, private companies, and international defence firms**.

How is India's Defence Industry Growing in Manufacturing and Exports?

India's **domestic defence production** is set to **exceed ₹1.25 trillion (\$14.24 billion) by March 2025**, a major boost to its **Make in India** initiative. This growth is driven by **indigenous production of advanced fighter jets, missiles, drones, and defence systems**. On the export front, **India's defence exports are expected to cross ₹210 billion**, setting a new record. The Indian government has been **aggressively promoting defence exports**, securing deals with countries in **Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa**.

Aero India's Journey from 1996 to 2025

Since its launch in **1996**, **Aero India** has grown into one of the **world's most significant aerospace exhibitions**. The **2023 edition** recorded over **seven lakh visitors**, representatives from **98 countries**, and **809 exhibitors**, resulting in **over ₹75,000 crore in MoUs and technology transfers**. The **2025 edition** aims to **exceed these milestones**, reinforcing India's **strategic position in global aerospace and defence**.

Aero India 2025 is not just about showcasing military strength; it represents **India's ambitions to become a global defence hub**, attract foreign investments, and **strengthen international defence collaborations**. The event reflects **India's vision for self-reliance, technological innovation, and strategic global partnerships** in the aerospace sector.

Henley Passport Index 2025: Singapore Ranks No. 1, India at 80th

The **2025 Henley Passport Index**, compiled by Henley & Partners, **ranks 199 passports** based on their visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to global destinations. The rankings are based on International Air Transport Association (IATA) data, highlighting global mobility trends. **Singapore holds the top spot**, while **India ranks 80th**, sharing the position with Algeria, Equatorial Guinea, and Tajikistan. The report also highlights countries gaining or losing mobility privileges over the years.

Key Highlights of the Henley Passport Index 2025

Top-Ranking Passports

- **1st Place: Singapore**
- Visa-free access to 193 out of 227 destinations.
- **2nd Place: Japan & South Korea**
- Visa-free access to 190 countries.
- Japan regained visa-free access to China, lost during Covid-19.
- **3rd Place: European Nations**
- Finland, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Ireland
- Access to 189 destinations.

India's Position (Rank 80)

- Shared with Algeria, Equatorial Guinea, and Tajikistan.
- Indian passport holders can travel to **62 countries visa-free** or with visa-on-arrival.

Bottom Ranking Passports

- **99th (Last): Afghanistan** – Access to 25 destinations.
- **98th: Syria** – Access to 27 destinations.
- **97th: Iraq** – Access to 30 destinations.
- Countries Showing Growth & Decline

Significant Gainers

- **UAE (Rank 8, 185 destinations)**
- Gained access to 72 more destinations in the past decade.
- Only Arab nation in the top 10.
- **China (Rank 59, 58 destinations)**
- Improved from 94th in 2015 to 59th in 2025.
- Secured 29 new visa-free access destinations in the past year.

Significant Decliners

- **Venezuela** – Suffered the biggest drop in rankings over the past decade.
- **USA** – Experienced an unexpected decline in its ranking.
- **Afghanistan** – Widening mobility gap, losing access to two more destinations.

Top 10 Rankers in Index

- **1st.** Singapore
- **2nd.** Japan, South Korea
- **3rd.** Finland, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Ireland
- **4th.** Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden

- **5th.** Greece, New Zealand, Switzerland
- **6th.** Australia, United Kingdom
- **7th.** Canada, Czechia, Hungary, Malta, Poland
- **8th.** Estonia, UAE
- **9th.** Croatia, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia, United States
- **10th.** Iceland, Lithuania

Note: Many Countries are tied with same number of score in the index and they have same number of position in the index.

India and Its Neighbor Country Rankings

- **China** – 59th
- **India** – 80th
- **Bhutan** – 83rd
- **Sri Lanka**- 91st
- **Bangladesh** – 93rd
- **Nepal** – 94th
- **Pakistan** – 96th
- **Afghanistan** – 99th

NITI Aayog Unveils Report on State Higher Education

NITI Aayog has launched a policy report titled ‘**Expanding Quality Higher Education through States and State Public Universities**’. Released by Vice Chairman Suman Bery, along with key officials from NITI Aayog and the Department of Higher Education (DHE), the report is a first-of-its-kind policy document focused on State Public Universities (SPUs). It provides detailed quantitative analysis on key aspects such as quality, funding, governance, and employability over the past decade. The report presents nearly 80 policy recommendations and a strategic roadmap to enhance India’s higher education landscape, aligning with the goals of NEP 2020 and India’s vision for Viksit Bharat 2047.

Key Highlights of the Report

1. Launch and Key Stakeholders

- The report was released by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery, Dr. Vinod Kumar Paul (Member, NITI Aayog), CEO BVR Subrahmanyam, Secretary DHE Vineet Joshi, and AIU Secretary General Dr. Pankaj Mittal.
- It is the first policy document specifically focusing on States and SPUs.
- Based on extensive stakeholder consultations with State Government Officials, Vice-Chancellors of 50 SPUs, and State Higher Education Councils.

2. Role of SPU’s in Higher Education

- 80% of India’s higher education takes place in State Public Universities.
- SPUs must transition from just providing access to delivering world-class education.
- By 2035, enrolment in SPUs is projected to rise to 7 crore students as per NEP 2020 targets.

3. Challenges Identified in SPUs

- **Funding Limitations** – Need for increased investment and better financial management.
- **Governance Issues** – Need for structural reforms and leadership capacity building.
- **Capacity Building** – Training for Vice-Chancellors, teachers, and staff.

4. Policy Recommendations and Key Strategies

- The report includes nearly 80 recommendations covering,
- **Improving Quality:** Enhancing research, pedagogy, and curriculum development.
- **Boosting Funding & Financing:** Strengthening institutional financial capacity.
- **Governance Reforms:** Upgrading governance structures for better accountability.
- **Industry-Academia Linkages:** Enhancing employability through stronger partnerships.

5. Financial Commitments & Government Initiatives

- PM-USHA scheme allocates ₹13,000 crores (2023-26) for SPUs.
- ₹100 crores per SPU for transitioning into Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs).
- 10,000 PMRF research fellows, 6,500 new IIT seats, and the Bharatiya Bhasha textbook scheme to boost higher education.

6. Alignment with National Goals

- Supports NEP 2020 implementation and India’s goal of becoming a knowledge hub.
- Essential for developing human capital and achieving the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision.

India’s Rank in Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2024

Corruption remains a significant global challenge, affecting governance, democracy, and development. **The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2024**, released by Transparency International, ranks India at 96th position out of 180 countries, with a score of 38—a decline from 39 in 2023 and 40 in 2022. The CPI evaluates nations based on perceived levels of public sector corruption, using a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).

Key Findings of CPI 2024

India’s Ranking and Score

- **India** ranked **96th** out of 180 countries.
- **Score:** 38 (down from 39 in 2023 and 40 in 2022).
- India ranked 93rd in 2023 and 40th in 2022.

Global and Regional Rankings

- **Denmark (1st)** is the least corrupt nation, followed by **Finland (2nd)** and **Singapore (3rd)**.
- South Sudan, Somalia, Venezuela, and Syria are ranked among the most corrupt nations.

India's neighbors

- **Pakistan:** 135th
- **Sri Lanka:** 121st
- **Bangladesh:** 149th
- **China:** 76th

Most Corrupt Nations (Bottom Rankings)

- **South Sudan** – Lowest score (8 points), displacing Somalia.
- **Somalia** – 9 points.
- **Venezuela** – 10 points.
- **Syria** – 12 points.

Corruption and Climate Action

- Corruption threatens climate initiatives, hindering emission reductions and adaptation efforts.
- Misuse of funds meant for climate action worsens global heating effects.
- Undue influence and bribery obstruct policies aimed at environmental protection.

Global Corruption Trends

- **United States dropped** from 69 to 65 points, ranking 28th (down from 24th).
- **France fell** from 71 to 67 points, ranking 25th (down from 20th).
- **Germany dropped** from 78 to 75 points, ranking 15th (down from 9th).
- **Mexico** dropped five points to 26 due to judicial inaction on corruption.
- **Russia** fell from 26 to 22 points, further impacted by its invasion of Ukraine.
- **Ukraine** declined one point to 35, but showed progress in judicial independence and anti-corruption efforts.

Trends in Corruption Levels

- 32 countries have reduced corruption levels since 2012.
- 148 countries have either stagnated or worsened in the same period.
- The global average CPI score remains at 43, indicating limited improvement.
- More than two-thirds of countries score below 50, showing widespread corruption issues.

Challenges and Recommendations

- Corruption fuels democratic decline, instability, and human rights violations.
- Developed nations with high CPI scores often protect fossil-fuel interests rather than fighting corruption.
- Financial hubs in wealthy nations facilitate illicit funds, worsening corruption worldwide.
- Urgent global action is required to combat corruption for a sustainable and democratic future.

Key Takeaways From PM Modi's Address at AI Summit 2025
France

At the **AI Paris Summit**, co-hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized the transformative impact of artificial intelligence on economies, security, and society.** He underscored the urgency of global collaboration to establish fair AI regulations, mitigate risks, and foster trust. Highlighting India's achievements, Modi showcased the country's robust digital public infrastructure, which serves 1.4 billion people at low cost, and its emergence as a global leader in AI talent and innovation.

Key Takeaways from the Speech of Prime Minister

1. AI's Impact and the Need for Governance

- AI is transforming governance, economy, security, and society.
- Unlike previous technological advancements, AI is developing and being adopted at an extraordinary pace.
- Global collaboration is essential to establish governance frameworks that promote trust and uphold shared values.

2. AI Governance: Beyond Risk Management

- Governance should not only address risks but also promote innovation.
- Access to AI must be ensured for all, especially the Global South, which lacks compute power, talent, and financial resources.
- Open-source AI systems are necessary for trust and transparency.

3. AI for Global Good and Sustainable Development

- AI can drive progress in healthcare, education, and agriculture.
- Collaboration is required to build unbiased datasets and develop AI applications rooted in local ecosystems.
- Addressing cybersecurity, disinformation, and deep fakes is crucial for AI's responsible use.

4. AI and the Future of Jobs

- AI’s impact on employment is a concern, but history shows that technology reshapes rather than eliminates jobs.
- Investment in skilling and re-skilling is essential to prepare for an AI-driven future.

5. Sustainability and Energy Challenges in AI

- AI is highly energy-intensive, requiring green energy solutions.
- India and France’s partnership in the International Solar Alliance showcases sustainable innovation.
- AI models must be efficient in size, data usage, and resource consumption.

6. India’s Leadership in AI and Digital Transformation

- India has successfully developed a Digital Public Infrastructure for 1.4 billion people.
- The Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture ensures secure data use.
- India’s National AI Mission promotes inclusive and responsible AI.
- AI adoption and techno-legal solutions on data privacy position India as a leader in AI governance.
- India is developing its own Large Language Model and a public-private partnership model for AI resources.

7. The Human Centric AI Future

- AI should serve humanity, not dominate it.
- Ethical responsibility must guide AI development and deployment.
- India is ready to share its AI expertise to ensure an inclusive, responsible AI future for all.

10 Key Takeaways from the New Income Tax Bill Every Taxpayer Must Know

The new Income Tax Bill is expected to be tabled in Parliament on **February 13, 2025**. It aims to simplify the existing **Income Tax Act, 1961**, making tax laws more understandable for the common taxpayer and reducing litigation. Over the years, the **Income Tax Act, 1961** has undergone modifications through **66 Budgets** (including two interim Budgets), making it increasingly complex. While the new tax bill intends to bring clarity, many taxpayers are concerned about its actual impact.

Overview of the New Income Tax Bill

Why the Changes?

The government has introduced the **new Income Tax Bill, 2025**, to modernize and streamline taxation laws. The new bill focuses on **simplifying language, restructuring sections, and improving compliance** for individual taxpayers and businesses alike.

Key Highlights

- **Simplification of tax laws** to enhance ease of understanding.
- **Reduction of litigation** through clear and structured provisions.
- **Integration of modern compliance mechanisms** like AI-based tax scrutiny.
- **No change in tax slabs, residency laws, or ITR filing deadlines.**

10 Key Takeaways from the New Income Tax Bill

1. Introduction of the ‘Tax Year’ Concept

The new Income Tax Bill is expected to introduce the concept of a **Tax Year**, merging the terms **Assessment Year (AY)** and **Financial Year (FY)**. This aims to reduce confusion among taxpayers when filing their **Income Tax Returns (ITRs)** and depositing taxes.

2. Financial Year Remains Unchanged

While the **Tax Year** concept is new, the **Financial Year (FY)** will continue to run from **April 1 to March 31**. The new tax bill will not align the tax year with the **calendar year**.

3. Changes in Section Numbers

To improve readability, the **section numbers in the Income Tax Act** will change. For instance:

- **ITR filing (previously under Section 139)** may be renumbered.
- **New tax regime (previously under Section 115BAC)** may have a different reference. This restructuring aims to create a more **logically ordered** tax code.

4. No Changes in Residency Laws

The **residency laws** determining whether an individual is an **Ordinarily Resident, Non-Ordinarily Resident, or Non-Resident** remain unchanged. However, tax experts believe these laws should be reformed, as they currently require looking back **10 years** to determine residential status.

5. Comprehensive Tax Law Expansion

The **new Income Tax Bill** is significantly more detailed than the **1961 Act**:

- **Current Income Tax Act:** 298 sections, 14 schedules.
- **New Income Tax Bill:** 536 sections, 16 schedules (over 600 pages). This restructuring enhances clarity while integrating **digital governance and compliance mechanisms**.

6. Simplified Interpretation for Taxpayers

- Removal of **complex legal jargon** such as explanations and provisos.
- Introduction of a **single section for all salary deductions** (e.g., standard deduction, gratuity, leave encashment).
- **Straightforward depreciation formula** for businesses.

7. Easier TDS Compliance

- All TDS-related provisions are consolidated under one clause.
- While this simplifies compliance, businesses may need to **update their tax reporting systems** to align with the new structure.

8. No Changes in ITR Filing Deadlines, Tax Slabs, or Capital Gains
Despite expectations, the new bill **does not alter tax slabs, ITR filing deadlines, or capital gains taxation**. This ensures **stability and predictability** in tax planning.

9. Stricter Penalties for Non-Compliance

- **Higher fines for late tax filings and non-compliance.**
- **Improved AI-based scrutiny** to detect tax evasion.

10. Implementation from April 1, 2026

The new Income Tax Bill is expected to be **implemented from FY 2026-27 (April 1, 2026)**.

- **Tax calculations for FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26** will still be governed by the **existing Income Tax Act, 1961**.

How These Changes Will Impact You

Who Benefits the Most?

- **Salaried employees:** Easier understanding of deductions.
- **Businesses:** Streamlined tax compliance procedures.
- **Taxpayers in general:** Simplified interpretation of tax laws.

Potential Challenges

- **Adapting to new section numbers and compliance requirements.**
- **Software updates needed for businesses handling TDS and tax filings.**
- **Need for awareness campaigns to help taxpayers transition smoothly.**

Tips for Taxpayers to Adapt to the New Bill

- **Stay Updated:** Follow government notifications and expert analyses.
- **Use AI-Based Tax Tools:** Leverage digital tax platforms for smooth compliance.
- **Seek Professional Help:** Consult tax experts for clarity on the new sections.
- **Prepare for TDS Changes:** Businesses must update their compliance systems.
- **File Taxes on Time:** With stricter penalties, timely filing is more critical than ever.

PM Narendra Modi's 2025 Visit to France

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to **France in February 2025** marked a significant step in strengthening bilateral relations between **India and France**. The visit was packed with strategic discussions, high-level diplomatic engagements, and agreements aimed at boosting cooperation in **artificial intelligence, nuclear energy, and trade**. Modi's trip also emphasized historical ties and people-to-people connections, highlighting India's growing global influence.

What Were the Major Highlights of PM Modi's France Visit?

AI Action Summit and Technological Cooperation

A key highlight of the visit was PM Modi co-chairing the third **International Summit on Artificial Intelligence (AI Action Summit)** with **French President Emmanuel Macron**. The summit focused on responsible AI development, ensuring equitable access to AI technologies, and promoting transparency through open-source AI systems. The discussions emphasized AI's potential in innovation, economic growth, and bridging the digital divide. Leaders from various countries participated, highlighting the importance of global collaboration in AI.

Inauguration of Indian Consulate in Marseille

PM Modi and President Macron jointly inaugurated the Indian Consulate General in Marseille, a move symbolizing India's strengthening diplomatic footprint in France. This marked a historic moment as it was the first time a French President participated in the inauguration of a foreign consulate. The new consulate is expected to improve consular services, enhance trade relations, and boost cultural and educational exchanges between the two nations.

Tribute to Indian Soldiers in World Wars

During his visit, **PM Modi paid homage at the Mazargues War Cemetery in Marseille**, where Indian soldiers who fought in the World Wars are buried. This act of remembrance underscored the historical ties between India and France and highlighted the sacrifices made by Indian soldiers in global conflicts. President Macron also participated in the tribute, further strengthening the shared history between the two countries.

How Did the Visit Advance India-France Nuclear and Energy Cooperation?

Partnership in Nuclear Fusion Technology

PM Modi visited the **International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER)** facility in Cadarache, where India is a key partner. ITER is one of the world's most ambitious nuclear fusion research projects, aimed at developing clean and sustainable energy. The visit reinforced India's commitment to advanced scientific collaboration and highlighted France's role in helping India expand its energy capabilities.

Declaration on Small Modular Reactors

A major outcome of the visit was the signing of a declaration between India and France to establish a partnership on advanced and small modular nuclear reactors. The agreement aims to enhance cooperation in nuclear energy, particularly in developing innovative solutions for sustainable power generation. This marks a crucial step in India's efforts to expand its nuclear energy capacity while maintaining strong international partnerships.

What Was the Economic and Business Impact of the Visit?

India-France CEOs Forum

PM Modi and **President Macron** participated in the **14th India-France CEOs Forum**, engaging with business leaders from key sectors such as aerospace, defense, innovation, energy, and infrastructure. Discussions focused on strengthening economic ties, fostering investment opportunities, and exploring new collaborations in defense and civil nuclear energy. The forum served as a platform for major French and Indian companies to explore long-term partnerships.

PM Modi's visit to France in 2025 reinforced India's deepening ties with France across multiple sectors, from AI and nuclear energy to business and trade. The visit not only strengthened strategic cooperation but also paved the way for long-term collaborations that will shape the future of India-France relations.

One Year of PM Surya Ghar: A Bright Milestone

The **PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSGMBY)** marks its **first anniversary on February 13, 2025**, celebrating a year of promoting affordable solar energy for Indian households. Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 13, 2024, the scheme aims to install rooftop solar panels in one crore households by March 2027, reducing electricity costs and promoting sustainability. The scheme has significantly boosted India's renewable energy sector and contributed to environmental conservation.

Key Highlights of the Scheme

- **Largest Rooftop Solar Initiative:** The world's largest domestic rooftop solar scheme, aiming to benefit one crore households by 2027.
- **Current Progress:** As of January 27, 2025, over 8.46 lakh households have installed solar panels.
- **Increased Installation Rate:** Monthly installations have surged tenfold, reaching 70,000 per month.
- **Financial Support:** ₹4,308.66 crore in Central Financial Assistance (CFA) has been disbursed to 5.54 lakh households.
- **Subsidy Benefit:** Up to 40% subsidy, with an average subsidy of ₹77,800 per household.
- **Zero Electricity Bills:** 45% of beneficiaries now receive zero electricity bills, depending on usage.
- **Top 5 States:** States with the highest number of beneficiaries (data awaited).

Key Benefits

- **Free Electricity for Households** – Reduced energy bills through subsidized solar panels.
- **Government Savings** – ₹75,000 crore saved annually in electricity costs.

- **Renewable Energy Growth** – Boosts solar power adoption in households.
- **Reduced Carbon Emissions** – Supports India's climate goals.

Subsidy Structure

Monthly Consumption (Units)	Recommended Solar Capacity	Subsidy Amount
0-150 units	1-2 kW	₹30,000 – ₹60,000
150-300 units	2-3 kW	₹60,000 – ₹78,000
Above 300 units	> 3 kW	₹78,000

- **Application Process:** Households can apply via the National Portal for subsidy and vendor selection.
- **Collateral-Free Loans:** Loans at 7% interest for systems up to 3 kW.
- **Processing Time:** CFA disbursed within 15 days after consumer redemption request.

Impact of the Scheme

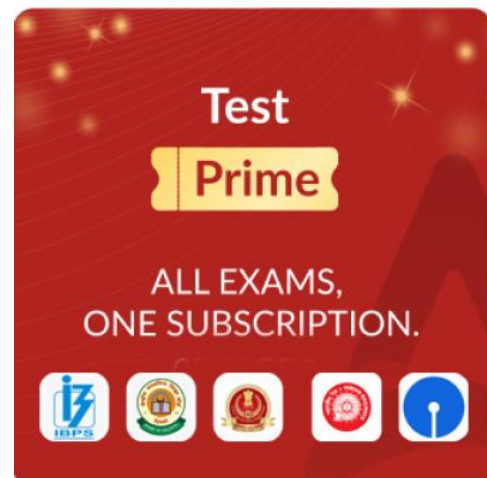
- **Household Savings & Income:** Households save on bills and can sell excess power to DISCOMs.
- **Solar Capacity Expansion:** The scheme will add 30 GW of rooftop solar capacity by 2027.

Environmental Impact

- 1,000 BUs of electricity generated over 25 years.
- 720 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions reduced.
- **Employment Boost:** 17 lakh new jobs created in installation, manufacturing, and maintenance.

Model Solar Village Initiative

- **Goal:** Establish one Model Solar Village per district to promote energy self-reliance.
- **Funding:** ₹800 crore allocated; each selected village receives ₹1 crore.
- **Selection Criteria:** Revenue villages with >5,000 population (or >2,000 in special category states).



Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for January 2025: Inflation Rate and Key Highlights

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has released the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for January 2025, reporting an annual inflation rate of **2.31% (provisional)** compared to January 2024. The increase in inflation is primarily due to the rising prices in the categories of **manufactured food products, food articles, non-food articles, and textiles**. The **month-over-month (MoM) WPI change** for January 2025 stood at (-) **0.45%** compared to December 2024, indicating a marginal decline in wholesale prices.

Key Trends in WPI Components for January 2025

The WPI is broadly categorized into three major groups: **Primary Articles, Fuel & Power, and Manufactured Products**. The trends in these categories for January 2025 are as follows:

1. Primary Articles (Weight: 22.62%)

- The index for **Primary Articles** declined by **2.01%**, decreasing from **193.8 (December 2024)** to **189.9 (January 2025, provisional)**.
- **Food Articles:** Prices saw a **decline of 3.62%** in January 2025 compared to December 2024.
- **Crude Petroleum & Natural Gas:** Prices increased by **6.34%**, indicating rising energy costs.
- **Non-Food Articles:** Prices increased by **0.66%**.
- **Minerals:** A marginal increase of **0.22%** was recorded.

2. Fuel & Power (Weight: 13.15%)

- The index for **Fuel & Power** increased by **0.47%**, rising from **149.9 (December 2024)** to **150.6 (January 2025, provisional)**.
- **Mineral Oils:** Prices increased by **0.71%**.
- **Electricity:** Prices rose by **0.20%**.
- **Coal:** Prices remained unchanged compared to the previous month.

3. Manufactured Products (Weight: 64.23%)

- The index for **Manufactured Products** increased by **0.14%**, from **143.0 (December 2024)** to **143.2 (January 2025, provisional)**.
- Out of **22 manufacturing sub-sectors, 15 groups recorded price increases, 5 groups recorded declines, and 2 groups remained unchanged.**

Sectors with price increases:

- **Other manufacturing**
- **Manufacture of food products**
- **Machinery & Equipment**
- **Chemicals & Chemical Products**
- **Pharmaceuticals, Medicinal Chemical & Botanical Products**

Sectors with price declines:

- **Basic Metals**
- **Fabricated Metal Products (except machinery & equipment)**
- **Wearing Apparel**
- **Beverages**
- **Other Transport Equipment**

WPI Food Index and Inflation Trends

WPI Food Index (Weight: 24.38%)

The **WPI Food Index**, which includes **food articles from Primary Articles and food products from Manufactured Products**, declined from **195.9 (December 2024)** to **191.4 (January 2025)**.

Annual Inflation Rate in the WPI Food Index

The **inflation rate for WPI Food Index** declined from **8.89% (December 2024)** to **7.47% (January 2025)**, indicating a slowdown in food inflation.

Final Index for November 2024

- The **final WPI for November 2024** was revised to **156.4**, with an annual inflation rate of **2.16%**.
- The final figures are based on **updated data sources and response rates.**

Compilation and Revision Policy

- The **response rate for WPI compilation** in January 2025 stood at **90.4%**.
- The **final WPI for November 2024** was compiled at a **95.5% response rate.**
- **Provisional figures undergo revision after 10 weeks** as per the DPIIT revision policy.

Future WPI Releases

- The **WPI for February 2025** is scheduled for release on **March 17, 2025.**
- DPIIT releases WPI data **monthly on the 14th** (or the next working day if the 14th is a holiday).
- The WPI is **compiled using data from institutional sources and selected manufacturing units across India.**

National Affairs

- The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, has approved the **extension of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK)** for three more years, until **March 31, 2025**. Established in **1993**, the NCSK promotes the welfare of **Safai Karamcharis** (sanitation workers) by addressing their challenges and recommending programs to eliminate inequalities. It also monitors working conditions, health, safety, wages, and investigates grievances related to the non-implementation of welfare schemes. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla** announced the extension of translation services to six additional languages—Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, Manipuri, Sanskrit, and Urdu. This initiative aims to improve accessibility and democratic participation in Parliament. It is part of a broader plan to eventually offer translation for all 22 languages in Schedule 8 of the Indian Constitution. However, the inclusion of Sanskrit sparked debate over its communicability and official status in states. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- During his visit to France, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** presented thoughtful gifts to **French President Emmanuel Macron** and **First Lady Brigitte Macron**. A standout gift was a **Dokra artwork**, showcasing Indian folk traditions and tribal craftsmanship, symbolizing India's tribal heritage and musical culture. Dokra, an ancient metal-casting technique, is renowned for its detailed craftsmanship. For **Brigitte Macron**, PM Modi gifted an exquisite silver hand-engraved mirror from Rajasthan, highlighting the state's renowned metalwork and design skills. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- On **February 13, 2025**, **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** introduced the **Income Tax Bill, 2025** in the Lok Sabha. The bill aims to replace the **Income Tax Act, 1961**, simplifying tax provisions, using clearer terminology, and expanding sections and schedules. Despite opposition protests, the bill passed after a voice vote. The Lok Sabha was adjourned until **March 10, 2025**, for the second half of the Budget session. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- **President Droupadi Murmu** attended the **International Women's Conference** in Bengaluru on February 14, 2025, organized by **The Art of Living**. She highlighted the growing contributions of Indian women (Nari Shakti) in science, sports, politics, arts, and culture. Murmu praised their achievements, emphasizing the need for mental strength to break barriers and challenge stereotypes, urging women to continue advancing with confidence. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- On **February 13, 2025**, **PM Modi** met **Elon Musk** in **Washington, D.C.** at the **Blair House**, where Musk gifted him a **hexagonal ceramic heatshield tile** from **SpaceX's Starship test flight** (October 2024). The tile, used for atmospheric re-entry protection, symbolized the growing collaboration between India and Musk's ventures. **PM Modi** reciprocated with classic Indian books: *The Crescent Moon* by **Tagore**, *The Great RK Narayan Collection*, and *Panchatantra*. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- The **Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS) 3.0** will be held from **February 15-24, 2025** in **Varanasi**, celebrating the bond between **Tamil Nadu** and **Kashi**. Organized by the **Ministry of Education** and **Uttar Pradesh Government**, it promotes knowledge exchange among scholars, artists, and professionals. Participants will also visit the **Mahakumbh** in **Prayagraj** and the **Ram Mandir** in **Ayodhya**. The event highlights **Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)** in line with NEP

2020, fostering cultural unity and Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)

- **Dr. Jitendra Singh**, Minister of State for **Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions**, will chair the **12th All India Pension Adalat** in **New Delhi** on **February 13, 2025**. Organized by the **Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW)**, the event aims to resolve long-pending pension grievances of retired **Central Government employees**. With **180 cases** under review, it focuses on resolving issues pending for over **120 days**, enhancing the efficiency of **pension dispute settlements** since its launch in 2017. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)

States in the News

- Assam will host the world's largest **Jhumur dance performance** on **February 24, 2025**, as part of the **Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment Summit**. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will attend, and Assam aims to set a **Guinness World Record** with over **7,500 dancers**. The event showcases Assam's **cultural heritage** and serves as a platform to attract investors. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- **Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh** resigned on **February 9, 2025**, amid escalating **ethnic violence** and **political pressure**. His decision follows nearly two years of unrest between the **Meitei** and **Kuki** communities, resulting in loss of lives and displacement. The resignation also comes after opposition calls for **accountability** and a planned **no-confidence motion**. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- **THDC India Ltd (THDCIL)** has started commercial operations of a **660-MW unit** at its **Khurja Super Thermal Power Plant (STPP)** in **Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh**, marking its entry into the **domestic thermal energy sector**. The **1,320 MW** project, costing **₹13,000 crore**, incorporates **modern technologies** like **Flue Gas Desulfurization (FGD)**, aiming to boost India's power generation while ensuring **environmental sustainability**. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- **Thaipusam 2025**, a major festival in **Tamil Nadu**, is dedicated to **Lord Murugan**. The celebration includes **devotion, special prayers, kavadi offerings**, and grand festivities at **Murugan temples**, especially the **Aarupadai Veedu** (six abodes of Murugan). Thousands of devotees have gathered to partake in the spiritual events. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- The **Haryana government** launched the '**Har Khet-Swasth Khet**' campaign to improve **soil health** and promote **sustainable farming**. The initiative involves collecting **soil samples** from every acre of farmland in the state, with **70 lakh samples** already collected and **55 lakh analyzed**. Over **86 lakh soil health cards** have been issued to help farmers make informed decisions on **soil fertility, nutrient management, and crop productivity**. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)

- On **February 11, 2025**, PETA India introduced Ellie, Asia's first life-sized **animatronic elephant** in **Bengaluru**, voiced by **Dia Mirza**. Ellie is designed to educate children about the **harsh realities of elephant captivity**. The **hyper-realistic animatronic** elephant moves and interacts, narrating a story of **cruelty** in circuses and her rescue to a **sanctuary**, teaching kids about **animal welfare, compassion**, and the importance of not using elephants for **entertainment**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Rajasthan government** has renamed two British-era landmarks in **Ajmer** to honor Indian heritage. **Foy Sagar Lake** is now **Varun Sagar**, and **King Edward Memorial Bhawan** has become **Maharishi Dayanand Vishrant Grih**. The renaming, confirmed by **Rajasthan Assembly Speaker Vasudev Devnani**, reflects India's efforts to **erase colonial remnants** and embrace **cultural pride**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Haryana government** has introduced new **Wildlife (Protection) Rules** permitting the shooting of **male Nilgais** (blue bulls) to address **human-wildlife conflict** and agricultural damage. However, the decision has faced protests from **environmentalists** and the **Bishnoi community**, who view Nilgais as sacred. Critics argue that **culling** is neither **ethical** nor a sustainable solution to the issue. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Lam Research**, a leading **semiconductor equipment manufacturer**, has announced an investment of over **₹10,000 crore** in **Karnataka**. The investment, unveiled at the **Global Investors Meet: Invest Karnataka 2025**, aims to boost **India's semiconductor ecosystem** and align with the government's push for **domestic chip manufacturing**. Lam Research has signed an **MoU** with **KIADB** for land in **Whitefield, Bengaluru**, to expand operations, enhance **R&D**, and grow its **supply chain** in India. ([Click here to read article](#))
- In a significant political development, the **Ministry of Home Affairs** has imposed **President's Rule in Manipur** following the **resignation of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on February 9**. The decision was taken under **Article 356 of the Indian Constitution**, which empowers the President to assume direct control of a state's administration in case of a breakdown of constitutional machinery.

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International Affairs

- India and **Nicaragua** have signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to implement **Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)**. The agreement, signed in **Managua**, aims to enhance **physical and social infrastructure** in Nicaragua, benefiting local communities. The MoU was formalized by **Indian Ambassador Sumit Seth** and **Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Valdrack Jaentschke**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- US President **Donald Trump** has officially recognized **February 9** as "**Gulf of America Day**", following a significant name change to the **Gulf of Mexico**. This marks the first time such a day has been established, after Trump signed an executive order to rename the Gulf. The proclamation was signed aboard **Air Force One** while en route to the **Super Bowl** in **New Orleans**, located on the Gulf. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **French President Emmanuel Macron** inaugurated India's second diplomatic mission in **France**, the **Indian Consulate in Marseille**, on **February 12, 2025**. This move strengthens **Indo-French relations**, focusing on **economic, cultural, and strategic cooperation**. **Marseille**, France's second-largest city, holds strategic significance due to its location on the **Mediterranean coast** and its role as a vital **trade gateway** with **Africa, Asia, and the Middle East**, with the **Port of Marseille-Fos** handling significant imports and exports. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Bangladesh** has launched "**Operation Devil Hunt**", a large-scale security operation targeting **loyalists of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina** after attacks on protesters linked to her regime. The **interim government** under **Muhammad Yunus** aims to restore order and uphold **democratic values**. The unrest, fueled by rumors of Hasina's return from **exile in India**, led to violent protests and the destruction of buildings connected to her family. Tensions between **India and Bangladesh** have escalated following **India's condemnation** of the **Bangabandhu Memorial Museum** demolition. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India and **South Korea** have signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** on **February 10, 2025**, to strengthen **logistics and infrastructure collaboration**. The agreement, signed by **Mr. Youngchan Kim** of **KOTI** and **H.E. Amit Kumar** (Indian Ambassador to South Korea), aims to improve **logistics efficiency**, enhance **infrastructure planning**, and promote **sustainable economic development** through **knowledge exchange and technical collaboration**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Ahead of Prime Minister **Narendra Modi's** visit to the U.S. and France, India plans to amend the **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (CLNDA)** and **Atomic Energy Act**. These amendments aim to address concerns of **foreign nuclear companies**, boosting investment and resolving stalled projects like **EDF's reactors in Maharashtra** and **Westinghouse's reactors in Andhra Pradesh**. The changes support India's goal of achieving **100 GW nuclear power capacity by 2047**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- U.S. President **Donald Trump** has announced a **25% tariff** on all **steel** and **aluminum imports**, effective from **March 4, 2025**. The decision removes **country-specific exemptions**, impacting major exporters like **Canada, Brazil, Mexico, and South Korea**. This move aims to simplify tariff policies, boost **domestic production**, and address **foreign dumping**, marking a return to **protectionist trade policies**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Romania's President Klaus Iohannis** resigned ahead of an **impeachment vote** linked to the **cancellation of last year's presidential election**. The election was annulled over alleged **Russian interference**, sparking protests and political turmoil. Critics claimed Iohannis's actions undermined **democracy**. **Senate President Ilie Bolojan** will serve as **interim president** until the **May 2025 elections**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- On **February 10, 2025**, **President Donald Trump** signed an **executive order** reversing federal policies promoting **paper straws** over **plastic ones**, calling paper straws **ineffective**. He stated, "These things don't work," highlighting issues like breakage. This decision marks a significant **policy shift**, sparking debates on **consumer convenience, environmental impact, and regulatory control**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Tulsi Gabbard** has made history as the **first Hindu** to lead the **US intelligence community**, confirmed as the **Director of National Intelligence (DNI)**. She now oversees **18 intelligence agencies**, coordinating national security. A former **Democratic Congresswoman, Iraq War veteran, and 2020 presidential candidate**, Gabbard has had a controversial career with **independent stances**, ties with **India**, and critiques of **US foreign policy**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Jotham Napat** was elected as **Vanuatu's new Prime Minister** unopposed. His nomination was proposed by **Charlot Salwai**, the leader of the Reunification Movement for Change. **Ishmael Kalsakau**, former prime minister, confirmed no other nominations and congratulated Napat. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Ilie Bolojan, President of the Senate**, has been sworn in as **Romania's interim President** following **Klaus Iohannis's resignation**. This transition occurs amid political uncertainty, with **presidential elections** scheduled for **May 2025**. Bolojan, a seasoned politician, aims to maintain stability during this period. ([Click here to read article](#))
- On **February 12, 2025**, **Constantine Tassoulas**, former parliamentary speaker and senior member of the **New Democracy party**, was elected as **Greece's new president** with 160 votes in the **Hellenic Parliament**. He will succeed **Katerina Sakellariopoulou**, Greece's first female president, whose term ends in March. The **presidential position** in Greece is largely **ceremonial**, but the selection reflects the **political direction** of the country. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit** to the **US** strengthened **India-US relations**, focusing on **trade, defense, and strategic cooperation**. His meeting with **President Donald Trump** emphasized **economic growth, global stability, and agreements on trade expansion, defense deals, counterterrorism, and regional security**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- China has approved the construction of a **deep-sea research facility** in the **South China Sea**, dubbed a "**deep-sea space station**". Located 2,000 meters below the ocean surface, the station aims to advance **marine exploration** and strengthen China's **geopolitical presence** in the region. Expected to be operational by **2030**, it will host six scientists for **month-long missions**, conducting real-time experiments in extreme underwater conditions. ([Click here to read article](#))

Agreements/MoUs Signed

- India and **Israel** are set to strengthen their **economic and trade relations** with the **India-Israel Business Forum and CEO Forum** on **February 11, 2025**, in **New Delhi**. These forums will focus on **technological collaboration, investment opportunities, and cross-sector partnerships**. Organized by **DPIIT, CII, and the Embassy of Israel**, the Business Forum aims to expand trade and foster collaborations between businesses from both countries. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India and the **European Free Trade Association (EFTA)**, comprising **Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein**, have launched the **India-EFTA Desk** to deepen **economic collaboration**. This follows the **India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA)**, making EFTA the first European bloc to formalize a **trade pact** with India. The desk will enhance **transparency, trust, and ease of doing business** between the two regions, strengthening their growing **economic ties**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **IITDM Kancheepuram** has partnered with **ERNET India**, an autonomous scientific society under **MeitY**, to enhance research in **cutting-edge technologies**. The collaboration, formalized through a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**, will establish a **joint research laboratory** focused on the **Internet of Things (IoT)** functionality validation sandbox project. ([Click here to read article](#))

Books and Authors

- '**I Am a Soldier's Wife: The Life and Love of Toni Lidder**', written by **Geetika Lidder**, honors the legacy of **Brigadier LS Lidder**, a distinguished Indian Army officer. The memoir celebrates his **dedication to the nation, compassionate nature, and inspirational character**. Launched in the presence of **Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi**, the book highlights his extraordinary **humanity and professional grace**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Arun Shourie** has released his significant book, **'The New Icon: Savarkar and the Facts'**, on **January 31, 2024**. The book critically examines the controversial legacy of **Vinayak Damodar Savarkar**, challenging historical narratives, similar to his 1997 work on **B R Ambedkar**. With **Savarkar** lacking political protection, the book is expected to significantly influence national discourse. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Vice President Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar** launched the book **"I Am?"**, compiled by **Gopichand P. Hinduja**, Chairman of the **Hinduja Group**. The event was attended by an elite gathering of **political leaders, business magnates, and diplomats**, marking it as a prestigious occasion. ([Click here to read article](#))

Banking/Economy/Business News

- Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) celebrated its 89th Foundation Day on February 10, 2025, by committing to sustainability and responsible banking. The bank became a signatory of the **Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials (PCAF)**, aiming to enhance **transparency** in measuring **greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions** related to its **lending and investment** activities. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **IDFC FIRST Bank**, in partnership with **Ikonz Studios**, has launched an **AI-powered holographic avatar** of brand ambassador **Amitabh Bachchan** in five cities. Using **Holographic Extended Reality (HXR)** technology, the avatar creates lifelike 3D projections that interact with customers. It provides an immersive experience, offering information on products like **Zero Fee Banking, Monthly Interest Credits, Mobile Banking, and the Current Account BRAVO**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has introduced **Additional Factor Authentication (AFA)** for cross-border **Card Not Present (CNP)** transactions to enhance **digital payment security**. This measure aims to secure international transactions with Indian-issued cards, ensuring they are as safe as domestic transactions. **AFA** is a multi-step process requiring cardholders to verify transactions through more than one method, reducing **fraud** and improving **consumer protection** in online shopping. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has approved the voluntary **amalgamation** of **Twin Cities Co-operative Urban Bank Ltd.** with **Kranti Co-operative Urban Bank Ltd.** in **Hyderabad, Telangana**. Effective from **August 23, 2023**, this merger aims to strengthen the **urban co-operative banking sector** by improving **financial stability, risk management, and customer service**. Post-merger, Twin Cities' branch will operate under **Kranti Bank**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has set up a **nine-member Working Group** to review **trading and settlement timings** in India's financial markets, aiming to enhance **market**

efficiency and align with global standards. This move responds to factors like the rise of **electronic trading, 24x5 Forex trading, increased foreign investor participation, and the round-the-clock availability of payment systems**. The report is expected by **April 30, 2025**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has **postponed** the implementation of **Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR)** and **project financing guidelines** by a year, now set for **March 31, 2026**. The delay addresses concerns from **banks** about potential **liquidity challenges**. The LCR norms, originally set for **April 1, 2025**, would have required banks to maintain more **high-quality liquid assets (HQLAs)**, impacting **credit availability**. The postponement aims to avoid disruptions to **lending activities** and ensure financial stability. ([Click here to read article](#))
- As of **January 15, 2025**, the **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)** has reached over **54.58 crore** bank accounts, with **55.7%** of them belonging to **women**, highlighting its role in **financial inclusion**. Launched in **August 2014**, PMJDY has evolved into a key platform for **government welfare programs, social security schemes, and digital transactions**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India is introducing new **HSN codes** for **Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged rice** varieties like **Red Rice, Black Rice, and Kalanamak Rice** to improve export processes. These distinct codes will help **recognize** specialty rice varieties, avoid trade barriers, and ensure fair pricing and **global recognition** for premium rice. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Reliance Consumer Products Ltd (RCPL)** has launched a **sports hydration drink** brand, **Spinner**, co-created with **Muttiah Muralitharan**. Priced at ₹10 for a 150 ml bottle, it offers an affordable alternative to brands like **Gatorade** and **Powerade**. **Spinner** plans to collaborate with **IPL teams** and aims to create a **\$1 billion** sports beverage category within three years. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed penalties on **Federal Bank Ltd (₹27.30 lakh)** and **Karur Vysya Bank Ltd (₹8.30 lakh)** for **non-compliance** with regulatory guidelines. The fines were a result of violations identified in **account management and credit delivery systems** during RBI's inspections, underscoring its firm stance on **banking compliance**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** launched **MITRA (Mutual Fund Investment Tracing and Retrieval Assistant)** to help investors **track, trace, and reclaim inactive or unclaimed mutual fund folios**. MITRA addresses issues like outdated contact details and lack of **KYC compliance**. It offers a **searchable database** for investors to locate **inactive folios** that have not had transactions for over **ten years**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- India's **retail inflation**, measured by the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**, eased to **4.31%** in **January 2025**, its lowest in five months, down from **5.22%** in December. This decline is primarily due to a sharp drop in **food prices**, especially **vegetables**, which saw a rise of only **11.35%** compared to **26.6%** in December, driven by fresh **winter supplies**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's **industrial output growth** slowed to **3.2%** in **December 2024**, down from **5%** in November, according to the **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**. The slowdown was mainly due to weaker performance in the **manufacturing sector**, which grew only **3%**, while **electricity generation** saw strong growth. This decline raises concerns about the country's **economic momentum** heading into **2025**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has announced new **₹50 denomination banknotes** featuring the signature of **Sanjay Malhotra**, the newly appointed **RBI Governor**. These notes, part of the **Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series**, maintain the existing design and ensure continuity in India's currency framework. **Previously issued ₹50 notes** will remain valid and legal tender. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Canara Bank** appointed **Dr. Madhavankutty G** as its new **Chief Economist** in **January 2025**. With over **two decades** of experience in **economic research**, **banking**, and the **corporate sector**, Dr. Madhavankutty will shape the bank's **economic strategy** and guide decision-making with expertise in **financial trends** and **macroeconomic analysis**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has allowed **Small Finance Banks (SFBs)** to offer **pre-sanctioned credit lines** through **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**. This move aims to boost **financial inclusion** by making credit more accessible, especially for individuals and small businesses with limited access to formal banking. The decision supports RBI's push to integrate **credit** into **digital payment systems**, benefiting millions in **rural** and **semi-urban areas**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has lifted restrictions on **Kotak Mahindra Bank**, allowing it to resume **onboarding new customers online** and issuing **new credit cards**. The restrictions were imposed in **April 2024** due to critical **IT infrastructure shortcomings** identified in audits from **2022** and **2023**, including issues with **IT inventory management**, **data security**, and **vendor risk assessment**. The bank has now implemented corrective measures to restart its **digital operations**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Tata Elxsi** and **Garuda Aerospace** have partnered to create a **Centre of Excellence** for **drone design**, **engineering**, and **certification**. The **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**, signed at **Aero India 2025**, supports India's **self-reliance** in

UAV technology and aligns with the **'Make in India' initiative**. The collaboration aims to develop **indigenous drone solutions** for **defence**, **agriculture**, and **smart city applications**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Easebuzz** has received **RBI authorization** to operate as an **online payment aggregator (PA)**. This approval allows the company to provide **secure and seamless payment processing** for businesses in **India**, reinforcing its **compliance** and expanding its role in the **fintech sector**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **RBI** has injected **₹2.5 lakh crore** into the banking system through a **Variable Rate Repo (VRR) auction** to address **liquidity shortfall**. This move aims to stabilize the **banking sector**, ensure smooth **credit flow**, and prevent disruptions in **financial markets**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has approved **Zulia Investments** (a **Temasek Holdings** subsidiary) to increase its stake in **AU Small Finance Bank** to **7%**. This move underscores **Temasek's growing interest** in India's financial sector and the **rising prominence** of **AU Small Finance Bank**, India's largest small finance bank, serving **retail** and **MSMEs** across the country. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** has secured a major IT transformation deal with **UPM**, a Finland-based sustainable materials company. The partnership will focus on **cloud migration**, **digital transformation**, and enhancing **operational efficiency**. TCS will manage IT functions such as **data center operations**, **network services**, and **end-user support** for UPM's 19,000 employees, ensuring a seamless technology-driven ecosystem. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Actor **Pankaj Tripathi** has co-founded **Velvet**, a **cinematic audio storytelling platform** launched in **October 2024**. The platform, which focuses on **Hindi audio content**, aims to deliver immersive storytelling experiences. Velvet has already gained significant traction, attracting over **10,000 listeners** on its platform and over **1 million** through distribution partners like **Josh App** in India and **Future Today Group** in the US. Tripathi aims to elevate India's rich **storytelling tradition** into an engaging audio experience. ([Click here to read article](#))

Appointments/Resignations

- **Nokia** has announced **Justin Hotard** as its new **CEO**, effective **April 1, 2025**, replacing **Pekka Lundmark**. Hotard, currently **Intel's EVP for Data Center & AI Group**, brings expertise in **AI** and **data centers**, vital for Nokia's growth. **Sari Baldauf**, Nokia's Chair, praised Hotard's ability to accelerate growth in tech firms. Lundmark, who led Nokia since 2020, will serve as an advisor until the end of the year for a smooth transition. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Maimun Alam**, a 2007-batch **Indian Revenue Service (IRS)** officer, has been appointed as **Director in the Ministry of Steel** under the **Central Staffing Scheme**. Her appointment, approved by the Government of India, is based on the **Department of Revenue's** recommendation. She will serve a **five-year tenure** or until further orders. The **Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT)** has issued an order for her to assume her new role immediately. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **ICAI** has appointed **CA. Charanjot Singh Nanda** as its 73rd **President** and **CA. Prasanna Kumar D** as **Vice-President** for the 2025-26 term, starting on **February 12, 2025**. Their leadership will focus on upholding **high professional standards** in India's **accounting profession**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Defence News

- The joint military exercise '**Cyclone 2025**' between **India** and **Egypt** has begun at the **Mahajan Field Firing Range** in **Rajasthan**, lasting 14 days. The exercise aims to enhance **defense cooperation**, focusing on improving **interoperability** of special forces in **counter-terrorism**, reconnaissance, and specialized operations. Key areas include **sniping, combat free fall, surveillance, and target designation** under harsh desert conditions, boosting operational capabilities in challenging environments. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's **domestic defense production** has surpassed **₹1.27 lakh crore**, marking a historic milestone in its defense sector. This accomplishment highlights India's growing **self-reliance** and prominence in global defense manufacturing. The announcement was made by **Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** ahead of **Aero India 2025**, Asia's largest aerospace and defense exhibition in **Bengaluru**, showcasing India's **defense capabilities** and inspiring innovation in the sector. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** has renamed its **HJT-36** jet training aircraft to '**Yashas**' after extensive upgrades to improve **flight characteristics**. Unveiled at **Aero India 2025**, the aircraft now features enhanced **departure characteristics, spin resistance, advanced avionics, and a modern cockpit** for better **pilot training and operational use**. The renaming marks a significant milestone in HAL's development of advanced training systems. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Indian Army** and **Indian Air Force (IAF)** conducted the '**Winged Raider**' joint military exercise in the **Eastern Theater** to enhance coordination and improve rapid deployment capabilities. The exercise focused on **special airborne operations**, using both **fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft**, including the **Chinook helicopter** for the first time in the region. The drill emphasized **airborne insertion techniques, special forces, and tactical maneuvering**, showcasing **inter-service synergy** and mission readiness. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India and Egypt have launched the **CYCLONE-III** joint special forces exercise in Rajasthan, from **February 10 to 23, 2025**. This exercise enhances **military cooperation** by focusing on **special operations tactics, counter-terrorism drills, and advanced military strategies**. The Indian and Egyptian contingents consist of 25 personnel each, with Indian troops from **Special Forces Battalions** and Egyptian personnel from the **Special Forces Group**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** successfully concluded the **Mehar Baba Competition-II (MBC-II)**, focused on advancing India's **unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)** capabilities. Launched on April 6, 2022, the competition aimed to develop **swarm drone-based systems** for detecting foreign objects on aircraft surfaces. The initiative, which wrapped up on July 29, 2024, strengthened collaboration between **Indian industry, academia, and end-users**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Saab** and **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** on **February 13, 2025**, to collaborate on the **Electronic Warfare Laser Warning System-310 (LWS-310)**. This partnership aims to strengthen **India's defense sector**, supporting the '**Make in India**' initiative by enabling HAL to domestically manufacture and maintain the advanced system. **Technology transfer** under a **Maintenance Transfer of Technology (ToT)** agreement will enhance **self-reliance** in critical **defense technology**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Awards and Recognitions

- **Deepak Kumar Kedia**, **Inspector General** at **NSG**, received the '**CA in Public Service**' Award from the **Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)** on **February 1, 2025**. The award recognizes his contributions to **public service**, especially in **law enforcement and national security**. Kedia, known as the '**CA in Uniform**', has made significant impacts in **counter-terrorism and national security**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Sahitya Akademi Award 2024** in **Dogri** will be posthumously awarded to **Chaman Arora** for his book **Ik Hor Ashwthama**, a collection of short stories. The book was unanimously selected by a three-member jury. The award will be presented to his family or nominee at a ceremony in **New Delhi** on **March 8, 2025**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Varsha Bharath's** directorial debut, **Bad Girl**, has won the prestigious **NETPAC Award** at the **International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) 2025**. Presented by **Anurag Kashyap** and **Vetrimaaran**, the film initially faced mixed reactions due to its bold themes but has now gained critical recognition. This win places **Bad Girl** alongside notable Indian films like **Nasir** (2019), **Naukar ki Kameez** (1999), and **Vidheyan** (1995), all previous recipients of the award. ([Click here to read article](#))

- Three **Indian computer science students** from **Maharaja Agrasen Institute of Technology, New Delhi** won the **Bronze Award** at the **Global Best M-Gov Award 2025** at the **World Government Summit** in **Dubai**. Their **AI-powered app, AccessWay**, was recognized for enhancing **mobile government services** and promoting **social inclusion** for individuals with disabilities. The award, presented by **Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan**, included a **\$10,000 cash prize**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Tom Cruise** has been awarded the **Grande Médaille**, the highest honor from the **Aero-Club de France**, in recognition of his contributions to **aviation** and his inspiration to future pilots. The award, presented by **Catherine Maunoury**, highlights Cruise's passion for flying, performing his own stunts, and incorporating aviation in films like **Top Gun: Maverick** and **Mission: Impossible**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Rakesh Roshan** will receive the '**Outstanding Achievement in Indian Cinema**' award at **IIFA 2025** for his significant contributions as a **director, producer, and actor**. The award will be presented during **IIFA's 25th anniversary celebrations** on **March 8-9, 2025**, in **Jaipur, Rajasthan**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **NTPC Ltd.**, India's largest power utility, won the **Forward Faster Sustainability Award 2025** in the **Water Resilience** category. Presented by the **UN Global Compact Network India** in **Chennai** on **February 13, 2025**, this award highlights NTPC's dedication to **sustainable water management, conservation, and environmental stewardship**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **President Droupadi Murmu** inaugurated an international conference on **Unani medicine** on **February 11, 2025**, at **Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi**, organized by the **Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM)**. The event, titled "**Innovations in Unani Medicine for Integrative Health Solutions – A Way Forward**", coincided with **Unani Day**, which honors **Hakim Ajmal Khan**. The day celebrates his contributions to **Unani medicine** in India and focuses on the **innovation** of Unani practices for **modern healthcare**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **14th Asian Fisheries and Aquaculture Forum (14AFAF)** will be held from **February 12-14, 2025**, at **ICAR Convention Centre, New Delhi**, with the theme "**Greening the Blue Growth in Asia-Pacific**." Organized by the **Asian Fisheries Society (AFS)**, **ICAR, Department of Fisheries (DoF)**, and **AFS Indian Branch (AFSIB)**, the forum will focus on **sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development**. With over **1,000 delegates** from 24 countries, the event will address issues like **resource management, climate change, aquaculture sustainability, and policy advancements**. **Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh** will inaugurate the event. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **India Energy Week (IEW)** has emerged as a major global platform for **energy professionals**, enabling **business deals and international collaboration**. With participation from over **120 countries**, the event covers the entire **energy value chain**, showcasing **innovative technologies** and promoting **sustainable energy solutions**. It facilitates **networking, dialogue, and strategic partnerships** for the future of energy. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** announced that **India** will host the next **Global AI Summit**, following discussions at the **AI Action Summit** in **Paris**. Co-chaired by **PM Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron**, the summit focused on **global cooperation in AI**. India's leadership in **AI**, commitment to **inclusivity**, and key **AI initiatives** were highlighted. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India is hosting the **IIAS-DARPG India Conference 2025** in **New Delhi** from **February 10-14, 2025**, marking the first time it's held in the country. The conference brings together **experts from over 55 countries** to discuss **public administration, governance, and policymaking** innovations, and includes the **annual General Assembly** of the **International Institute of Administrative Science (IIAS)**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **World Government Summit (WGS) 2025** was held in **Dubai** from **February 11-13**, focusing on "**Shaping Future Governments**." **India**, represented by **Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav**, highlighted its commitment to **green growth and climate resilience**. **Yadav** discussed **clean technology, electric vehicles, and climate-resilient infrastructure**, emphasizing the need for **financial resources** to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and tackle **climate change**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Summits and Conferences News

- The "**Summit for Action on Artificial Intelligence**" has started in **Paris**, co-chaired by **Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **French President Emmanuel Macron**. The summit brings together **world leaders, industry experts, and researchers** to discuss **AI ethics, regulation, and responsible development**, aiming to shape the future of AI as it transforms industries, economies, and governance globally. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India will host the inaugural **World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES)** at the **Jio World Convention Centre** in **Mumbai** from **May 1 to 4, 2025**. The summit aims to establish India as a **global media and entertainment hub**, bringing together industry leaders, **CEOs, professionals, and creative minds** to foster **collaboration, investment, and technological advancements** in the entertainment sector. ([Click here to read article](#))

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** delivered a video message at the **SAMVAD** programme in **Thailand**, emphasizing **India's cultural ties** with Thailand and Asia. He recalled **SAMVAD's origins** with former Japanese PM **Shinzo Abe** in 2015 and its role in promoting **debate** and **understanding**. His speech focused on **shared Asian heritage**, **conflict avoidance**, **environmental harmony**, and the teachings of **Bhagwan Buddha** for a peaceful, prosperous future. ([Click here to read article](#))

Ranks and Reports

- India has secured **third position** globally in the **US Green Building Council's (USGBC)** annual ranking for **LEED-certified green buildings**. With **370 projects** covering **8.50 million GSM** of certified space, India highlights its commitment to **sustainable construction** and **environmentally responsible development**, marking significant progress in global **sustainability** goals. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India ranked **22nd** in the **International Shipments** category and **38th overall** in the **World Bank's Logistics Performance Index (LPI) 2023**, marking significant progress. This rise is due to **policy reforms**, **technology-driven initiatives**, and **improved infrastructure**, enhancing **logistics efficiency** and **global trade competitiveness**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Asia's wealthiest families continue to dominate global industries, with **Mukesh Ambani** and the **Ambani family** holding the top position, as per **Bloomberg's 2025 rankings**. **India** stands out, with **six Indian families** in the top 20, including the **Shapoorji Pallonji Group**, **O.P. Jindal Group**, **Aditya Birla Group**, **Bajaj Group**, and **Hinduja Group**, reflecting India's strong industrial impact. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Forbes India 30 Under 30 list 2025** highlights 42 young achievers across 19 categories, with a new **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** category reflecting AI's growing influence. The list includes professionals, entrepreneurs, and artists making significant contributions in fields like **healthcare**, **entertainment**, **finance**, and **technology**, with a strong focus on **social impact**, **sustainability**, and **community-driven ventures**. This year's edition underscores the evolving trends in **AI** and **social entrepreneurship**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Sports News

- At **33 years and 164 days**, **Varun Chakravarthy** became India's second-oldest cricketer to make an **ODI debut**, after **Farokh Engineer**. The **Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR)** spinner made an impact by dismissing **Phil Salt** in his opening spell. His performance could influence his selection for the upcoming **Champions Trophy**, possibly replacing a specialist **spinner**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Dimuth Karunaratne**, former **Sri Lankan captain** and veteran opener, retired from **international cricket** after his 100th **Test** against **Australia** in **Galle**. The 36-year-old scored 36 and 14 in his farewell match, which Australia won. The **ICC**, led by Chairman **Jay Shah**, praised his exceptional career, with Karunaratne retiring as one of Sri Lanka's most accomplished **Test openers**, scoring **7,222 Test runs** and **16 centuries**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Rohit Sharma** delivered a stellar performance in the second **ODI** against **England** in **Cuttack**, scoring **119 runs** off 90 balls, with **12 fours** and **7 sixes**. His knock helped India secure a **four-wicket win**. Rohit surpassed **Chris Gayle** to become the second-highest **six-hitter** in **ODI history**, behind **Shahid Afridi**, and overtook **Sachin Tendulkar** as the second-highest run-getter for India as an **opener** in international cricket. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** has launched the '**Donate Organs, Save Lives**' campaign to raise **organ donation awareness**. The initiative will kick off on **February 12, 2025**, ahead of the third ODI between **India and England** in Ahmedabad. The campaign aims to leverage cricket's influence to encourage people to **pledge organ donation** and save lives. **ICC Chief Jay Shah** emphasized the role of sports in driving positive **social change**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Marcelo**, the legendary **Brazilian footballer**, announced his retirement at 36 after a stellar career. He won **25 major trophies** during his **15 years at Real Madrid**, including **five UEFA Champions League** titles. Marcelo also played for **Fluminense** and **Olympiacos**. **Real Madrid** president **Florentino Perez** praised him as one of the greatest left-backs in football. Marcelo expressed gratitude and hinted at staying involved in football in the future. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Carlos Alcaraz** won his first **indoor hardcourt title** at the **Rotterdam Open**, defeating **Alex de Minaur** 6-4, 3-6, 6-2. This victory, his **17th ATP Tour title**, made him the first **Spanish champion** in the tournament's 52-year history. Despite battling a cold and tough three-set matches, Alcaraz demonstrated resilience and adaptability, further enhancing his tennis legacy. ([Click here to read article](#))

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- **Reliance Industries**, through its subsidiary **RISE Worldwide**, has acquired a **49% stake** in **Oval Invincibles**, a franchise in the ECB's **The Hundred** league. This deal expands **Mumbai Indians' (MI)** global cricket presence. **Surrey County Cricket Club** remains the primary stakeholder, sharing ownership and decision-making with Reliance. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Jil Teichmann**, from **Switzerland**, won the **2025 Mumbai Open** singles title by defeating **Mananchaya Sawangkaew** of **Thailand** in the final. The **WTA 125** event, held at the **Cricket Club of India** from **February 3-9, 2025**, marked Teichmann's second **WTA 125** title, following her 2024 **Ljubljana** victory. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Kyrian Jacquet** of **France** won his first **ATP title** by clinching the **2025 Chennai Open** men's singles title, defeating **Elias Ymer** of **Sweden** in the final on **February 9, 2025**. The **ATP 100 Challenger** event took place at the **SDAT Tennis Stadium** in **Nungambakkam**, Tamil Nadu, from **February 3-9, 2025**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Meghalaya** will host the **39th National Games** in **February/March 2027**, as officially announced by the **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)**. **IOA President PT Usha** conveyed the decision to **Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma**. Meghalaya will receive the **IOA flag** during the closing ceremony of the **38th National Games** in **Uttarakhand**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Pankaj Advani**, India's most decorated cueist, won his **36th national title** and **10th men's snooker championship** by defeating **Brijesh Damani** in the final. This victory, following an earlier group-stage loss, solidifies his legacy and secures his place in **upcoming international championships**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **ICC** announced the **Players of the Month** for **January 2025**, awarding **Jomel Warrican** (West Indies) and **Beth Mooney** (Australia). **Warrican** won the **Men's Player of the Month** for his key role in West Indies' historic **Test victory** in Pakistan, while **Mooney** was named **Women's Player of the Month** for her explosive batting in **Australia's Ashes triumph**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **ICC Champions Trophy** will take place from **February 19 to March 9, 2025**, in **Pakistan** and **Dubai**. **Shikhar Dhawan**, former India opener, has been named one of the **official event ambassadors**, adding excitement to the tournament. The event promises thrilling cricket action, with Dhawan's involvement further engaging fans. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Shohely Akhter** of **Bangladesh** has become the first **woman cricketer** banned by the **ICC** for **corruption**. The **36-year-old** was found guilty of attempting to **fix matches** during the **2023 Women's T20 World Cup** and has received a **five-year ban** from all forms of cricket. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Kevin Durant** became the **eighth NBA player** to surpass **30,000 career points** during a game against the **Memphis Grizzlies**, reaching the milestone with two free throws in the third quarter. He finished the game with **34 points**, despite the **Phoenix Suns** losing 119-112. Durant joins NBA legends like **LeBron James**, **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar**, **Kobe Bryant**, and **Michael Jordan** in the **30,000-point club**, achieving the feat in his **1,101st game**, tying Abdul-Jabbar for the third-fastest. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Babar Azam**, Pakistan's star batter, became the **joint-fastest player** to score **6,000 ODI runs** in just **123 innings**, matching **Hashim Amla's** record. He achieved this milestone during the **final of the ODI tri-series** against **New Zealand** at the **National Stadium**, further cementing his place in cricket history. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Cristiano Ronaldo** tops the 2025 list of **highest-paid athletes**, earning **\$285 million**, with **\$200 million** from **Al Nassr** and **\$65 million** from endorsements. Other top earners include **Jon Rahm** (\$218 million), **Lionel Messi** (\$135 million), **LeBron James** (\$128.7 million), and **Neymar** (\$110 million). This highlights the rising commercial value of football, especially with Middle Eastern investments. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **38th National Games 2025** concluded in **Haldwani, Uttarakhand**, showcasing India's growing sports culture. Held from **January 28 to February 14, 2025**, the Games focused on **sustainability** with the theme '**Green Games**'. Over **10,000 athletes** participated in **35 sports disciplines**, making it one of India's largest sports events. **Prime Minister Modi** emphasized the alignment with '**Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat**' and the event's eco-friendly approach, highlighting efforts to reduce environmental impact. ([Click here to read article](#))

Schemes and Committees News

- The **West Bengal government** has launched the "**Nodi Bandhan**" scheme and allocated funds for the **Ghatal Masterplan** in the 2025-26 budget. The **Nodi Bandhan** scheme focuses on **riverine development, erosion prevention** along the **Ganga-Padma**, and enhancing livelihoods through **pisciculture** and irrigation. A **₹200 crore** allocation is dedicated to combat **riverbank erosion** in **Murshidabad** and **Malda**. The **Ghatal Masterplan**, with **₹500 crore** for flood prevention in **West Midnapore**, requires a total investment of **₹1,500 crore**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Science and Technology News

- Israeli researchers from the **University of Haifa** have discovered brain mechanisms involved in recognizing others' **emotional states**. Their study, published in **Current Biology**, highlights the **medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC)**'s role in **emotional recognition** and behavior. This breakthrough could have implications for treating **social disorders** like **autism**, where emotional perception and social interaction are often challenging. ([Click here to read article](#))

- ISRO and IIT Madras have developed the **IRIS** (Indigenous RISC-V Microprocessor for Space Applications), an **indigenous semiconductor chip**. This achievement supports India's **Atmanirbhar Bharat** initiative, aiming for **self-reliance in space technology** and reducing reliance on **foreign tech**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India launched 'Srjanam', the first **automated biomedical waste conversion system**, at AIIMS Delhi on **February 10, 2025**. Inaugurated by **Dr. Jitendra Singh**, this **eco-friendly** and **cost-effective** innovation, developed by **CSIR-NIIST**, aims to reduce environmental hazards by eliminating the need for **incineration**, offering an alternative to traditional **biomedical waste disposal** methods. ([Click here to read article](#))
- A research team led by **Professor Wang Min** from the **Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology** has discovered two **Jurassic-era bird fossils** in **Fujian Province, China**, dated to about **149 million years ago**. The findings, published in **Nature**, challenge prior assumptions about bird evolution and show greater **diversification** by the end of the **Jurassic period**. The discovery of **Baminornis zhenghensis**, the oldest **short-tailed bird**, extends the origin of this feature by **20 million years**, refining the understanding of **avian evolution**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **European Space Agency's (ESA) Euclid telescope**, launched on **July 1, 2023**, began its six-year mission to explore the **dark Universe**. In **September 2023**, during initial testing, **Euclid** discovered a rare **Einstein Ring** in **NGC 6505**, located **590 million light-years** away. The ring, formed by **gravitational lensing** from a distant galaxy **4.42 billion light-years** away, underscores **Euclid's** capabilities in uncovering cosmic secrets, advancing our understanding of **gravity, dark matter, and dark energy**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER)**, under construction in **France**, is the world's largest tokamak-based fusion reactor. A collaborative project involving **35 nations**, including the **US, China, India, and EU**, ITER aims to develop **magnetic confinement fusion** as a sustainable, carbon-free energy source. Its main goal is to achieve **burning plasma**, where the fusion reaction sustains itself. While not generating electricity, ITER will be a critical step toward future **commercial fusion power plants**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **United Nations** declared **February 10** as the **International Day of the Arabian Leopard** in resolution **77/295**, first celebrated in **2024** at the **UN Headquarters**. The **Arabian leopard (Panthera pardus nimr)**, a **critically endangered** subspecies, faces threats pushing it to the brink of extinction. The day emphasizes the need for **conservation** and **global awareness** to protect this iconic species. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **International Day of Women and Girls in Science (IDWGS) 2025**, celebrated on **February 11**, promotes **gender equality** and **women's empowerment** in **STEM** fields. The day recognizes the contributions of women and girls in science and advocates for their equal access to opportunities. The theme for 2025 is "**Unpacking STEM Careers: Her Voice in Science**", highlighting the dynamic and collaborative nature of science in addressing global challenges. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **International Epilepsy Day (IED)**, observed on the **2nd Monday of February** since 2015, raises awareness about **epilepsy**, its **diagnosis, treatment**, and the experiences of those affected. The **2025 theme, "MyEpilepsyJourney,"** highlights personal stories and fosters a sense of community. This global healthcare event brings together patients, caregivers, and professionals to discuss the neurological disorder and offer support. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Anti-Smuggling Day** is observed annually on **February 11** by the **FICCI CASCADE** to raise awareness about the risks of **cross-border smuggling** along India's borders with **Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Nepal**. The day focuses on combating the smuggling of **drugs, arms, gold, fake currency**, and other illicit goods, aiming to engage **government agencies** and the public in protecting India's security and economy. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Violent extremism is a global threat that transcends regions, religions, and ideologies. Groups like **ISIL, Al-Qaida, and Boko Haram** use **terror tactics, territorial control, and digital propaganda** to spread their ideologies. The **UN** stresses that extremism fosters **intolerance**, leading to **humanitarian consequences** such as **mass displacement, instability, and global security** concerns. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **World Radio Day** is celebrated annually on **February 13** to honor **radio** as a key medium for **communication, information, and entertainment**. Recognizing its role in fostering **dialogue**, promoting **democratic values**, and amplifying **diverse voices**, the day was established by **UNESCO** in **2011** and adopted by the **United Nations** in **2013**. It underscores radio's importance, especially in **remote and underserved communities**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Important Days News

- World Pulses Day, celebrated on **February 10**, raises global awareness about the **sustainability** and **nutritional value** of **pulses**. Recognized by the **United Nations (UN)**, the day emphasizes pulses' role in **food security**, improving **human health**, and enhancing **soil fertility**, contributing to a sustainable agricultural system. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **National Productivity Day** is observed annually on **February 12** in India to raise awareness about **productivity's** role in **economic growth, sustainability, and innovation**. Organized by the **National Productivity Council (NPC)**, it kicks off a week-long celebration from **February 12 to 18**, focusing on improving **efficiency** across **industries, startups, and businesses**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **National Women's Day** is celebrated on **February 13** in India to honor the birth anniversary of **Sarojini Naidu**, a freedom fighter, poet, and **social reformer**. Known as the **Nightingale of India**, Naidu was a key figure in the **freedom struggle** and a strong advocate for **women's rights and gender equality**. The day highlights her contributions and promotes **women's empowerment, leadership, and equal opportunities**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Darwin Day** is celebrated on **February 12** to honor **Charles Darwin**, the pioneer of the **theory of evolution and natural selection**. It commemorates his groundbreaking work in reshaping our understanding of **biology and species evolution**, promoting **scientific thinking, curiosity, and rational thought**, while encouraging advancements in **science education and research**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Obituaries News

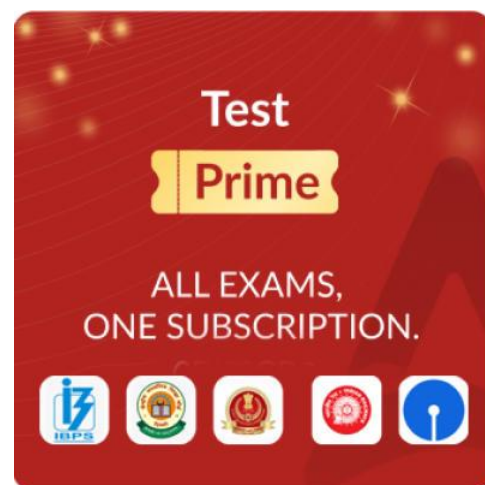
- **Sam Nujoma**, Namibia's first president and key figure in the country's **independence movement**, passed away at 95. Known as the **"Father of the Namibian Nation"**, Nujoma played a pivotal role in leading Namibia to freedom from apartheid South Africa in **1990**. Serving as president for 15 years, he ensured **democracy, reconciliation, and stability**, though his tenure was also marked by **controversial policies and statements**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Shyam Benegal**, a visionary filmmaker and pioneer of **Indian parallel cinema**, passed away on **December 23, 2024**, at the age of 90. Known for redefining storytelling with **realistic and socially relevant narratives**, his death marks the end of an era, leaving behind an unmatched legacy in **Indian cinema**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Acharya Satyendra Das**, the chief priest of the **Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple** in **Ayodhya**, passed away at 85 on **February 7, 2024**. He had been serving as the head priest since the age of 20, dedicating over six decades to **religious service**, and his death has left the **Hindu community and devotees of Lord Ram** in deep mourning. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Gyalo Thondup**, the **elder brother** of the 14th **Dalai Lama**, passed away on **February 8, 2025**, at 97 in **Kalimpong**, West Bengal. Born in **Taktser, Tibet** in 1928, he was a key figure in **Tibetan politics** and worked tirelessly for **Tibet's freedom**.

Thondup also represented his brother in global **diplomatic engagements**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- Renowned **Hindustani classical vocalist Pandit Prabhakar Karekar** passed away at 80 in **Mumbai** after a brief illness. Born in **Goa**, Karekar was known for his devotional renditions like **Bolava Vithal Pahava Vithal** and **Vakratund Mahakay**. He received prestigious awards including the **Tansen Samman, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, and Gomant Vibhushan Award**. **Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant** condoled his death, praising his contributions to preserving **classical music** in Goa. His legacy lives on through his **disciples and admirers**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Renowned **folk singer and Padma Shri awardee Sukri Bommagowda** (Sukrajji) passed away on **February 13, 2025**, at the age of 88 in **Manipal**, Karnataka. She was a respected figure in the **Halakki Vokkaliga** community, celebrated for her role in preserving **folk traditions** through music. ([Click here to read article](#))

Miscellaneous News

- The **'Culinary, Crafts & Clicks – Moods & Magic'** festival, organized by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** and **MyGov**, celebrates India's **cultural richness** through **food, traditional arts, and photography**. A major highlight is the **'Moods and Magic' photography contest**, inviting participants to capture the essence of India's **public spaces** through candid moments and artistic expressions, showcasing vibrant **cultural interactions**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- In honor of **Mohammed Rafi's 100th birth anniversary**, the **Indian government** has announced the release of a **₹100 commemorative coin** celebrating his monumental contributions to **Indian music and culture**. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** praised Rafi as a "musical genius," emphasizing his **versatility** and lasting cultural impact across generations. ([Click here to read article](#))



Static Takeaways

Sr. No	Static Topic	Static Details
Banking Organization		
1	Indian Overseas Bank	MD/CEO - Ajay Kumar Srivastava Head Office - Chennai, India Estd. Year - 1937 July
2	Reserve Bank of India	Governor - Sanjay Malhotra Estd. Year - 1st April, 1935 Head Office - Mumbai, India
3	IDFC First Bank	MD/CEO - V Vaidyanathan Head Office - Mumbai, India Estd. Year - October 2015
4	Federal Bank	MD/CEO - Krishnan Venkat Subramanian Head Office - Kerala Estd. Year - 1931 April
5	Karur Vaishya Bank	MD/CEO - B Ramesh Babu Head Office - Karur Estd. Year - 1916
6	Canara Bank	MD/CEO - Shri K. Satyanarayana Raju Head Office - Bengaluru Estd. Year - 1906 July
7	Kotak Mahindra Bank	MD/CEO - A. Vswani Head Office - Mumbai Estd. Year - 1985
8	RBL Bank	MD/CEO - R Subramaniakumar Head Office - Mumbai Estd. Year - 1943
9	AU Small Finance Bank	MD/CEO - Sanjay Agarwal Head Office - Jaipur Estd. Year - 1996
Ministers in Government of India		
10	Finance Minister	Nirmala Sitharaman
11	Defense Minister	Rajnath Singh
12	Housing and Urban Affairs	Manohar Lal Khattar
13	External Affairs	S. Jaishankar
14	Agriculture Minister	Shivraj Singh Chouhan
15	Education Minister	Dharmendra Pradhan
16	Home Minister	Amit Shah
17	Speaker Loksabha	Om Birla
Countries		
18	United States of America	President - Donald Trump Capital - Washington D.C. Currency - American Dollar Neighbouring Countries - Canada, Mexico and US also shares maritime boundaries with Russia, Cuba, Bahamas Key Facts - World's Longest border shared between Canada and USA.

Sr. No	Static Topic	Static Details
19	France	<p>President - Emmanuel Macron Capital - Paris Currency - Euro Neighbouring Countries - Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, UK(Maritime Borders) Key Facts - France hosts one of the four Grand Slam tennis tournaments, the French Open, also known as Roland-Garros</p>
20	Nicaragua	<p>President - Daniel Ortega Capital - Managua Currency - Nicaraguan Cordoba Neighbouring Countries - Between Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea</p>
21	China	<p>President - Xi Jinping Capital - Beijing Currency - Neighbouring Countries - India, Mongolia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Russia, North Korea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan Key Facts - China is also officially known as the People's Republic of China. It is a part of Asia and lies in the eastern region of the Asian continent.</p>
22	Vanuatu	<p>President - Jotham Napat Capital - Port Vila Currency - Vanuatu Vatu Neighbouring Countries - Solomon Islands</p>
23	South Korea	<p>President - Yoon Suk Yeol Capital - Seoul Currency - S. Korean Won Neighbouring Countries - North Korea Key Facts - Surrounded by water on 3 sides i.e. East Sea or Sea of Japan (East), East China Sea (South), Yellow Sea (West).</p>
24	Romania	<p>President - Ilie Bolojan (Incumbent) Capital - Bucharest Currency - Romanian Leu Neighbouring Countries - Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary</p>
25	Greece	<p>President - Katerina Sakellaropoulou Capital - Athens Currency - Euro Neighbouring Countries - Albania, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Turkey Key Facts - The country is in Southeast Europe, located on the southern tip of the Balkan peninsula. The Aegean Sea lies to the east of the mainland, the Ionian Sea to the west, and the Sea of Crete and the Mediterranean Sea to the south. It has the longest coastline on the Mediterranean Basin, featuring thousands of islands.</p>
26	Israel	<p>PM - Benjamin Netanyahu Capital - Jerusalem Currency - Israeli New Shekel Neighbouring Countries - Lebanon to North, Syria and Jordan to the east, Egypt in South Key Facts - Israel has two official languages: Hebrew and Arabic</p>

Sr. No	Static Topic	Static Details
27	Switzerland	<p>President - Karin Keller Sutter Capital - Bern Currency - Swiss Franc Neighbouring Countries - France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Liechtenstein Key Facts - Switzerland is a landlocked country in Central Europe. Major Rivers include Rhône which flows into the Mediterranean Sea, and Rhine empties into the North Sea.</p>
Orgn. Bodies		
28	ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization)	<p>Chairman - V. Narayan Head Office - Bengaluru</p>
29	ICC (International Cricket Council)	<p>Chairman - Jay Shah HQ - Dubai, UAE</p>
Indian States		
30	Uttar Pradesh	<p>Governor - Anandiben Patel CM - Yogi Adityanath Capital - Lucknow Important Rivers - Ganga, Yamuna, Ghaggar, Gomti, Gandak, Sone, Sarada Neighboring States - MP, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Jharkhand State Animal - The Swamp Deer Other Facts - UP has Bicameral Legislature. Tiger Reserve - Dudhwa National Park, Pilibhit Tiger reserve, Amangarh Tiger Reserve</p>
31	Karnataka	<p>Governor - Thawar Chand Gehlot CM - Siddharamiyya Capital - Bengaluru Important Rivers - Kaveri, Sharavati, Krishna, Tungabhadra Neighboring States - Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh State Animal - Asian Elephant Other Facts - The state forms a part of the Deccan Plateau, it lies on the western edge of the plateau.</p>
32	Manipur	<p>Governor - Ajay Kumar Bhalla CM - Biren Singh (Recently Resigned) Capital - Imphal Important Rivers - Khuga, Barak, Imphal Neighboring States - Nagaland, Assam, Mizoram State Animal - The Sangai Deer Other Facts - Surrounded by blue hills with an oval shaped valley at the centre, rich in art and tradition and surcharged with nature's pristine glory. Manipur lies on a melting pot of culture.</p>
33	Haryana	<p>Governor - Bandaru Dattatreya CM - Nayab Singh Saini Capital - Chandigarh Important Rivers - Yamuna, Ghaggar, Markanda, Sahibi Neighboring States - Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand State Animal - The Black Buck Other Facts - Haryana came into existence on 1st November 1966. Haryana is a state in Northern India.</p>

Sr. No	Static Topic	Static Details
34	Assam	<p>Governor - Lakshaman Prasad CM - Hemanata Biswa Sarma Capital - Dispur Important Rivers - Brahmaputra, Barak, Subansiri, Manas Neighboring States - West Bengal, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura, Nagaland State Animal - One-Horned Rhinoceros Other Facts - Its topographical asymmetry is underscored by the Barail hill range sandwiched between 2 valleys – Brahmaputra & Barak – named after dominant rivers.</p>
35	Meghalaya	<p>Governor - C. Vijayshankar CM - Conrad Sangma Capital - Shillong Important Rivers - Digaru, Umiam Neighboring States - Assam State Animal - The Clouded Leopard Other Facts - Meghalaya was formed by carving out two districts from the state of Assam: the United Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills, and the Garo Hills.</p>
36	Madhya Pradesh	<p>Governor - Mangubhai Patel CM - Mohan Yadav Capital - Bhopal Important Rivers - Narmada, Son, Chambal, Betwa, Ken Neighboring States - Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Maharashtra, UP, Rajasthan State Animal - Barasingha Other Facts - The state straddles the Narmada River, which runs east and west between the Vindhya and Satpura ranges; these ranges and the Narmada are the traditional boundary between the north and south of India.</p>
37	West Bengal	<p>Governor - CV Ananda Bose CM - Mamta Banerjee Capital - Kolkata Important Rivers - Ganga, Teesta, Mahanadi, Hoogly Neighboring States - Sikkim, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa State Animal - The Fishing Cat Other Facts - The Sundarbans form the largest mangrove forest in the world and are most notably known for housing the majestic and highly endangered species of Royal Bengal tigers.</p>