

Weekly One Liners 17th to 23rd February, 2025

Government to Establish Deregulation Commission to Reduce State's Role in Governance

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the formation of a **Deregulation Commission** aimed at reducing the role of the state in governance. Speaking at the **ET Now Global Business Summit**, Modi emphasized the government's commitment to eliminating bureaucratic hurdles and promoting **ease of doing business**. This move aligns with the broader vision of transforming India into a more business-friendly and efficient economy.

Formation of the Deregulation Commission

The **Deregulation Commission** will focus on eliminating unnecessary regulations and simplifying governance structures. Modi stated that the government has already removed **hundreds of outdated compliances** and, through the implementation of **Jan Vishwas 2.0**, aims to further reduce archaic rules that hinder businesses.

Key Objectives of the Deregulation Commission:

- **Minimizing government interference** in business and economic activities.
- **Enhancing ease of doing business** by reducing bureaucratic hurdles.
- **Eliminating obsolete regulations** that slow down governance.
- **Encouraging private sector participation** in India's development.

Boosting Private Sector Participation in Economic Growth

Acknowledging the crucial role of the **private sector** in India's journey toward becoming a developed nation (**Viksit Bharat**), the Prime Minister highlighted the government's efforts to open up key industries such as:

- **Nuclear energy**
- **Space exploration**
- **Commercial mining**
- **Power distribution**

These reforms aim to bring efficiency, attract investments, and position India as a leader in the **Fourth Industrial Revolution**.

Property Rights Reform: The Svamitva Yojana

Modi emphasized the need for **property rights reforms** as a means to reduce poverty and unlock economic potential in rural areas. The **Svamitva Yojana**, launched on **April 24, 2020**, on National Panchayati Raj Day, aims to provide legal documentation for properties in village **Abadi areas**.

Key Highlights of the Svamitva Yojana:

- **Utilization of drone and GIS technology** to survey and map land parcels.
- **Legal property rights granted to villagers**, unlocking assets worth **₹100 lakh crore**.
- **Enhanced access to bank loans** for rural property owners.
- **Reduction in property disputes** through accurate land demarcation.
- **Village-level planning and economic transformation** through structured land ownership.

So far, **3 lakh villages** have been surveyed under this scheme, and **2.25 lakh property cards** have been distributed, allowing rural citizens to use their property as collateral for credit access.

Performance-Oriented Politics and Economic Transformation

Modi highlighted the shift towards **performance-driven politics**, asserting that **people now demand results from their leaders**. Comparing the present government's initiatives to the previous **UPA administration**, he pointed out key achievements:

- **25 crore individuals lifted out of poverty**, creating a new **Neo-Middle Class**.
- **Increase in zero-tax threshold** from **₹7 lakh to ₹12 lakh**, providing relief to the middle class and boosting economic activity.
- **Enhanced government sensitivity towards citizen needs**, leading to a more inclusive and growth-oriented policy framework.

Strengthening the Banking Sector

The Prime Minister addressed the **revival of India's banking sector**, which was in crisis a decade ago due to high **Non-Performing Assets (NPAs)** and limited access to credit. The government adopted a **three-pronged strategy**:

1. **Banking the Unbanked** – Expanding financial inclusion through schemes like **Jan Dhan Yojana**.
2. **Securing the Unsecured** – Strengthening financial stability and deposit security.
3. **Funding the Unfunded** – Ensuring easy access to credit for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Success of the Mudra Yojana:

- **₹32 lakh crore disbursed** to small businesses and individuals.
- **Increased profitability of public sector banks**, recording profits of **₹1.25 lakh crore** in just nine months of the current fiscal year.
- **Systemic banking reforms** that have improved financial stability and credit access.

India's Economic Growth and Future Prospects

Reflecting on India's economic journey, Modi criticized the slow pace of reforms under the previous **Congress-led UPA government**. He attributed India's rise as the **fifth-largest economy** to the **reform revolution** initiated in 2014. Expressing confidence in India's trajectory, he declared that **India will soon become the third-largest economy** in the world.

Justice Reforms: Implementation of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)

Modi emphasized that **delays in justice delivery** have long plagued India. To address this, the government has implemented **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)**, a comprehensive legal reform replacing outdated colonial-era laws.

Key Impacts of BNS:

- **Faster legal proceedings** and reduction in case backlogs.
- **Stronger legal framework** for protecting citizens' rights.
- **Greater efficiency in justice delivery** with modernized laws.

Sportstar Aces Awards 2025: Find Out The Winners

The **2025 Sportstar Aces Awards** celebrated India's finest sporting talents at the Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai, on February 14, 2025. The event recognized top athletes for their remarkable performances, with hockey legend P.R. Sreejesh and shooter Manu Bhaker clinching the top honors. Notable achievements in chess, cricket, and football were also acknowledged.

Key Highlights of the Award

Top Individual Winners

1. P.R. Sreejesh (Hockey)

- Won 'Sportstar of the Year (Male)' award.
- Key player in India's bronze medal win at the 2024 Paris Olympics.
- Retired after the Paris Olympics.
- Received the award from Binod Mishra (SBI Deputy MD) and Leander Paes (Tennis legend).
- Expressed joy at being featured on Sportstar magazine's cover.
- Highlighted the impact of Hockey India League and India's Olympic success.

2. Manu Bhaker (Shooting)

- Won 'Sportstar of the Year (Female)' and 'Sportswoman of the Year' awards.
- Secured two medals at the 2024 Paris Olympics.
- Received awards from ICC Chairman Jay Shah.
- Recalled attending the awards function in 2019 as an emerging athlete.
- Dedicated her win to her father and coach.

3. Swapnil Kusale (Shooting)

- Won 'Sportsman of the Year' award.
- Clinched bronze at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Team Awards

1. Indian Men's & Women's Chess Teams

- Won 'National Team of the Year' award.
- Both teams secured gold medals at the 45th Chess Olympiad.

2. Mumbai Cricket Team (2023-24 Ranji Trophy Champions)

- Won 'Club/State Team of the Year' award.
- MCA President Ajinkya Naik & Dhawal Kulkarni (five-time Ranji Trophy champion) received the award.

Special Recognition

Downtown Heroes FC (Srinagar Football Club)

- Won 'Chairperson's Choice (Sports for Social Good)' award.
- Recognized for promoting football in Kashmir.
- Award presented by Nirmala Lakshman, Chairperson, The Hindu Group.
- Received by co-founders Kaiser Bhat, Mushtaq Bashir, and Hinan Manzoor.

Winners List of All Category

- Special Recognition Game Changer Award** – Jay Shah
- Best State for Promotion of Sports** – Madhya Pradesh
- Best Corporate to Promotion of Sports** – Reliance
- Best PSU for Promotion of Sports** – Railway Sport Promotion Board
- Best University for Promotion of Sports** – Kalinga Institute Industrial Technology (KIIT)
- Sports Women of the Year (Non-Olympic Sport)** – Divya Deshmukh (Chess)
- Sports Women of the Year (Para Sport)** – Avani Lekhara (Shooting)
- Club/State Team of the Year** – Mumbai Cricket Team – 2023-24 Ranji Trophy Champions
- National Team of the Year** – Indian Men's & Women's Chess Teams – Gold at 45th Chess Olympiad
- Young Achiever of Year (Male)** – Parth Manek (Shooting)
- Young Achiever of Year (Female)** – Neha Sangwan (Wrestling)
- Lifetime Achievement Award (Male)** – Gurbux Singh (Hockey)
- Lifetime Achievement Award (Female)** – Mary D'Souza Sequeira (Hockey)
- Super Achievers Para Athletes** – Avani Lekhara (Shooting), Navdeep Singh (Para-Athletics), Harvinder Singh (Para-Archery)
- Sportsman of the Year (Olympic Sport)** – Swapnil Kusale and Sarabjot Singh (Shooting)
- Inspirational Icon Award** – PV Sindhu (Badminton)
- Coach of the Year** – Jaspal Rana (Shooting)
- Sportstar of the Year (Female)** – Manu Bhaker (Shooting)
- Sport Women of the Year (Olympic Sport)** – Manu Bhaker (Shooting)
- Sportstar of the Year (Male)** – PR Sreejesh (Hockey)

Gyanesh Kumar Appointed as India's New Chief Election Commissioner

On **February 17, 2025**, the **Election Commissioner of India, Gyanesh Kumar**, was officially appointed as the next **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)** by the **Law Ministry**. This appointment marks a significant milestone, as he is the first **CEC to be appointed under the new law governing the selection of Election Commission (EC) members**. His tenure will last until **January 26, 2029**, positioning him at the helm of the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** during crucial electoral events, including the upcoming **Lok Sabha elections**.

Selection and Appointment Process

Gyanesh Kumar was appointed following a **three-member committee meeting** led by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** in **New Delhi**. The appointment was confirmed two days before his official assumption of office on **February 19, 2025**. Interestingly, his selection coincides with an upcoming Supreme Court hearing challenging the **new law governing EC appointments**.

Before his promotion to **CEC**, Gyanesh Kumar was the **senior-most Election Commissioner** after **CEC Rajiv Kumar**. His vast experience in administrative and governance roles made him a suitable candidate for leading the **Election Commission**.

Profile of Gyanesh Kumar

Educational Background

Gyanesh Kumar has an impressive academic record. His educational qualifications include:

- **B.Tech in Civil Engineering** from the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur**.
- **Business Finance** studies at **ICFAI, India**.
- **Environmental Economics** at the **Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID), Harvard University, USA**.

Administrative and Government Career

Gyanesh Kumar is a **1988-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer** from the **Kerala cadre**. Throughout his career, he has held numerous key positions at both the **state and central government levels**:

Roles in the Kerala Government

- Assistant Collector of Ernakulam
- Sub-Collector of Adoor
- Managing Director of the Kerala State Development Corporation for SC/ST
- Municipal Commissioner of the Corporation of Cochin
- **Secretary to the Kerala Government**, handling departments like **finance resources, fast-track projects, and the public works department**

Key Roles in the Government of India

Gyanesh Kumar has had a distinguished career in various **central government ministries**, handling critical portfolios such as:

- Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Defence
- Joint Secretary and Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs
- Secretary in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs
- Secretary in the Ministry of Cooperation

One of his most notable contributions was his involvement in implementing key decisions following the **abrogation of Article 370** in **Jammu and Kashmir** while serving in the **Union Home Ministry**.

Gyanesh Kumar's Journey in the Election Commission

After **retiring as Union Cooperation Secretary on January 31, 2024**, Gyanesh Kumar was appointed as an **Election Commissioner on March 14, 2024**. As an Election Commissioner, he played an instrumental role in ensuring **free, fair, and transparent elections across the country**.

Upcoming Elections Under His Tenure

As the **26th Chief Election Commissioner**, Gyanesh Kumar will oversee several **major elections** in India during his tenure. These include:

Elections in 2025

- **Bihar Assembly Elections** – Scheduled later in **2025**, this will be one of his first significant electoral responsibilities.

Elections in 2026

- Kerala Assembly Elections
- Puducherry Assembly Elections
- Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections
- West Bengal Assembly Elections

2029 Lok Sabha Elections

One of the most crucial responsibilities for Gyanesh Kumar as **CEC** will be overseeing the **2029 General Elections**. His tenure is expected to end **just before the official election announcement**, making his leadership in electoral reforms and management crucial during this period.

Significance of His Appointment

Gyanesh Kumar's appointment as the **Chief Election Commissioner under the new law** signals a shift in the method of selecting EC members. This change has drawn attention due to concerns over transparency and independence in the **Election Commission of India**.

His experience in **administration, governance, and election management** is expected to play a pivotal role in maintaining the **integrity and credibility of India's electoral process**. With major state and general elections ahead, his leadership will be critical in ensuring **smooth and impartial elections** across the country.

ISRO Chairman V Narayanan Reveals India's Space Roadmap for the Next 10 Years

V Narayanan, the newly appointed Chairman of the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, unveiled the **future roadmap** of India's space missions. Narayanan, who is also the **Secretary of the Department of Space**, rocket scientist, and aerospace engineer, spoke about India's growing space capabilities and **ambitious missions** set for the coming years. His insights cover **launch vehicle technology, human spaceflight, interplanetary missions, space station developments**, and much more. Here's a detailed account of what lies ahead for ISRO, as shared by Narayanan.

Advancements in ISRO's Launch Vehicle Technology

One of the **key highlights** of the discussion was ISRO's **next-generation launch vehicles**. Narayanan detailed the **progression of ISRO's launch vehicle capabilities**, beginning with the **SLV 3** in 1979, which could carry a payload of 40 kg to Low Earth Orbit (LEO). Today, ISRO has reached significant milestones, including its **100th launch**, with the ability to send up to **8,500 kg to LEO**. Looking to the future, ISRO is developing a **next-generation launch vehicle** that will be capable of carrying a **staggering 30,000 kg** payload to LEO—an increase of **1,000 times** over the SLV 3. This vehicle will feature three stages, two solid strap-on boosters, and nine engines in the first stage, each providing **110 tonnes of thrust**. Additionally, the vehicle introduces **reusability** by recovering the first stage after launch, enhancing cost-efficiency and sustainability in **space operations**.

Gaganyaan and Chandrayaan-4: India's Human and Lunar Missions**Gaganyaan Mission: India's First Human Spaceflight**

Narayanan also discussed the **Gaganyaan mission**, set to launch in **2026**. This mission aims to send **three Indian astronauts** into **Low Earth Orbit (LEO)** at **400 km** altitude. The mission will use the **human-rated LVM 3 (HLVM 3)** vehicle, which has been upgraded with **enhanced structural and thermal margins** to ensure astronaut safety.

The Gaganyaan mission will undergo several uncrewed test flights, with the first one scheduled for later this year from **Sriharikota**. The astronaut training program is also underway, with astronauts undergoing **rigorous physical and technical training** to prepare for this historic journey.

Chandrayaan-4: Lunar Exploration

On the subject of **Chandrayaan-4**, Narayanan revealed that the mission, slated for **2027**, will be a **quantum leap** from the successful **Chandrayaan-3** mission. While **Chandrayaan-3** focused on the Moon's surface, **Chandrayaan-4** will target the **Moon's south pole**, an unexplored region, and will involve **sample collection and further experiments**.

Chandrayaan-4 will be a **9,200 kg satellite**, launched in two **Mark III rockets**. It will be assembled in five modules, with **two modules docking in lunar orbit**, and two landing on the Moon's surface to conduct experiments. The **sample return module** will return to Earth after completing its tasks in lunar orbit.

ISRO's Space Docking Achievements and Future Space Station**SpaDEX Mission: India's First Satellite Docking in Orbit**

Another significant milestone for ISRO was the **SpaDEX mission**, which successfully achieved satellite docking in **Low Earth Orbit (LEO)** on **January 16th, 2025**. India became the **fourth country** to achieve such a feat. In this complex procedure, two **20 kg satellites**, initially separated by 11 to 12 km, successfully docked after precise control and measurement. The satellites now rotate as a unified system, with power transfer between them about to begin.

This docking achievement paves the way for ISRO's future endeavors, including the development of a **five-module space station**, with the **first module** scheduled for launch in **2028**.

India's Expanding Satellite Infrastructure

Narayanan emphasized India's growing **satellite infrastructure**, with **131 satellites** currently in orbit, 56 of which are actively serving national needs such as **telecommunication, navigation, and border monitoring**. To meet the increasing demand for space-based services, ISRO has engaged **private companies** to build and launch satellites. ISRO supports these companies with **technical expertise, facilities**, and access to satellite launch opportunities, fostering **innovation and collaboration** in the space sector.

Enhancing India's Navigation Capabilities: The NavIC System

Narayanan spoke about **NavIC**, ISRO's **navigation satellite system**, which is crucial for India's strategic and civilian applications. The system's **Phase I** has already been deployed, with **five more satellites** to be launched in **Phase II**. The goal is to complete the satellite deployment within the next two years, significantly enhancing **India's global navigation capabilities**.

Space Sustainability: Addressing Space Debris

With the growing number of satellites in space, **space debris** has become a pressing issue. Narayanan discussed ISRO's **Space Situational Awareness (SSA)** program, which monitors debris in real time during satellite launches to assess potential risks. ISRO is also developing strategies to manage and remove debris, including **repositioning satellites** or refueling them for continued use, preventing them from becoming hazardous space junk.

Upcoming Scientific Missions: Venus, Mars, and the Moon**Venus and Mars Missions**

ISRO is preparing for **interplanetary missions**, including missions to **Venus and Mars**. Narayanan highlighted the **Venus mission**, which will provide insights into the planet's surface and atmosphere. Additionally, the **Mars Orbiter Mission** will continue exploring the Red Planet, enhancing our understanding of its geology and atmosphere.

Lunar Polar Exploration (LUPEX)

Another exciting mission for ISRO is the **Lunar Polar Exploration Mission (LUPEX)**, a collaboration with the **Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)**. This mission will involve a **250 kg rover**, much larger than the **25 kg rover** used in **Chandrayaan-3**, further advancing **lunar exploration**.

Future Solar Missions: Aditya-L1 and Beyond

Narayanan also discussed ISRO's **solar missions**, particularly the success of **Aditya-L1**, which provided **valuable data on the Sun's behavior**. This mission serves as the foundation for future solar research, offering insights into **space weather** and the Sun's impacts on space and Earth systems.

ISRO's Vision for the Next Decade

Looking ahead, ISRO's **key priorities for the next decade** include:

- **Gaganyaan** and **Chandrayaan-4** missions.
- **Next-generation launch vehicles** with higher payload capacity and reusability.
- **Building a space station** for scientific experiments and interplanetary exploration.
- **Enhancing India's satellite infrastructure** to support applications in **communication, navigation, and disaster management**.

Narayanan emphasized that ISRO is committed to building **low-cost access to space**, with the **Mark III vehicle** being upgraded to increase its capacity by 25%, while also reducing **launch costs**.

ISRO's Leadership in Space Exploration

Narayanan's leadership continues to elevate **ISRO's status** in the global space community. From being **70 years behind** in space technology, India has now emerged as a **global leader in space exploration**. ISRO's growing expertise and commitment to **servicing the common people** of India will ensure that the nation plays a leading role in shaping the future of **space exploration**.

As **India celebrates 100 years of independence**, ISRO's achievements, including its **human spaceflight program** and **lunar exploration**, will be key milestones in India's journey to becoming a **developed nation**.

RBI Ombudsman Called As “रिज़र्व बैंक ओम्बड्समैन योजना 2021”

The **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013** mandates the establishment of Lokpal at the Union level and Lokayuktas at the State level to investigate allegations of corruption against public officials. The term “Lokpal” is exclusively designated for the body created under this Act and came into force on January 16, 2024, under Section 3 of the Act. However, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had introduced the Reserve Bank-Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS), 2021, which was erroneously translated into Hindi as “रिज़र्व बैंक-एकीकृत लोकपाल योजना, 2021.” Since “Lokpal” is legally reserved for the anti-corruption body under the 2013 Act, corrective measures were needed.

To ensure compliance, the RBI has officially renamed its scheme in Hindi to “रिज़र्व बैंक-एकीकृत ओम्बड्समैन योजना, 2021”, replacing “लोकपाल” with “ओम्बड्समैन” across all official documents.

Key Highlights

Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013

- Establishes Lokpal at the Union level and Lokayuktas at the State level to investigate corruption cases.
- The term “Lokpal” is reserved for the body created under Section 3 of the Act.
- Came into force on January 16, 2024.

RBI's Ombudsman Scheme & Translation Issue

- RBI launched Reserve Bank-Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS), 2021 for cost-free customer complaint resolution against RBI-regulated entities.
- Initially translated into Hindi as “रिज़र्व बैंक-एकीकृत लोकपाल योजना, 2021”, which conflicted with the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.

Corrective Action Taken by RBI

- After intervention, RBI renamed its scheme in Hindi to “रिज़र्व बैंक-एकीकृत ओम्बड्समैन योजना, 2021”.
- The term “लोकपाल” was replaced with “ओम्बड्समैन” in all official documents.
- The correction aligns RBI's scheme with legal provisions to avoid misinterpretation.

Impact of the Change

- Ensures compliance with the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.
- Prevents legal and administrative confusion.
- Strengthens RBI's commitment to clear and precise regulatory communication.

BAFTA Awards 2025: Full Winners List Unveiled!

The **78th BAFTA Awards** celebrated the finest achievements in cinema, with *Conclave* and *The Brutalist* emerging as the biggest winners of the night, each securing four awards. The French musical crime drama *Emilia Pérez* continued its dominance, winning Best Film Not in the English Language, beating Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light*, marking its third major loss to *Emilia Pérez* this year. Meanwhile, director Brady Corbet (*The Brutalist*) and lead actor Adrien Brody (*The Brutalist*) secured top honors. The awards also saw *Dune: Part Two* winning in technical categories, while *Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl* took home Best Animated Film.

Key Highlights of BAFTA 2025

- **Conclave** won Best Film, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Editing, and Outstanding British Film.
- *The Brutalist* took Best Director (Brady Corbet), Best Actor (Adrien Brody), Best Cinematography, and Best Original Score.
- *Emilia Pérez* defeated *All We Imagine As Light* to win Best Film Not in the English Language and also won Best Supporting Actress (Zoe Saldaña).
- **Dune: Part Two** won for Best Sound and Best Visual Effects.
- **Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl** won Best Animated Film.
- Kieran Culkin (*A Real Pain*) and Zoe Saldaña (*Emilia Pérez*) won for supporting roles.
- **EE Rising Star Award** went to David Jonsson.
- Outstanding British Debut went to Rich Peppiatt for *Kneecap*.

Winners list in the Table

Category	Winners Name
Best Film	Conclave
Best Director	Brady Corbet (<i>The Brutalist</i>)
Best Actor in a Leading Role	Adrien Brody (<i>The Brutalist</i>)
Best Actress in a Leading Role	Mikey Madison (<i>Anora</i>)
Best Actor in a Supporting Role	Kieran Culkin (<i>A Real Pain</i>)
Best Actress in a Supporting Role	Zoe Saldaña (<i>Emilia Pérez</i>)
Best Original Screenplay	Jesse Eisenberg (<i>A Real Pain</i>)
Best Adapted Screenplay	Peter Straughan (<i>Conclave</i>)
Best Animated Film	<i>Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl</i>
Best Documentary	<i>Super/Man: The Christopher Reeve Story</i>
Best Film Not in the English Language	<i>Emilia Pérez</i>
Best Casting Anora	(Sean Baker and Samantha Quan)

Category	Winners Name
Best Cinematography	<i>The Brutalist</i> (Lol Crawley)
Best Costume Design	<i>Wicked</i> (Paul Tazewell)
Best Editing	<i>Conclave</i> (Nick Emerson)
Best Makeup & Hair	<i>The Substance</i>
Best Original Score	<i>The Brutalist</i> (Daniel Blumberg)
Best Production Design	<i>Wicked</i>
Best Sound	<i>Dune: Part Two</i>
Best Special Visual Effects	<i>Dune: Part Two</i>
Outstanding British Film	<i>Conclave</i>
Outstanding British Debut	<i>Kneecap</i> (Rich Peppiatt)
Best British Short Animation	<i>Wander to Wonder</i>
Best British Short Film	<i>Rock, Paper, Scissors</i>
Best Children's & Family Film	<i>Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl</i>
EE Rising Star Award	David Jonsson

Women Billionaires Global List 2025: Forbes Billionaire List

Top 10 Richest Women in the World (as of February 2025)

In the 2025 edition of the **Forbes' Women Billionaire List**, while most of the names have remained the same as last year, there have been some notable additions, and shifts in net worth and ranking.

Top 10 Women Billionaires (2025)

Rank	Name	Net Worth (USD)	Source of Wealth
1	Alice Walton	\$112.5 billion	Walmart
2	Francoise Bettencourt Meyers and Family	\$74.4 billion	L'Oréal
3	Julia Koch and Family	\$74.2 billion	Koch Industries
4	Jacqueline Mars	\$42.3 billion	Mars Inc
5	Rafaela Aponte-Diamant	\$39.0 billion	Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) Group
6	Abigail Johnson	\$36.0 billion	Fidelity Investments
7	Savitri Jindal & Family	\$32.3 billion	JSW Group
8	MacKenzie Scott	\$32.3 billion	Amazon
9	Miriam Adelson & Family	\$31.5 billion	Las Vegas Sands
10	Marilyn Simons & Family	\$31.0 billion	Hedge Funds

The Rise of Women Billionaires

The growing representation of women in the billionaire list reflects the changing dynamics in business, technology, and finance. Many of these women have inherited wealth, but several have also carved out their own path through entrepreneurship and investment. Their impact is felt in industries such as **retail, pharmaceuticals, finance, technology, and industrial manufacturing.**

Uttar Pradesh Budget 2025-26: Key Highlights and Summary

The **Uttar Pradesh Budget 2025-26**, presented by **State Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna** on February 20, 2025, has a total outlay of **₹8,08,736 crore**. This reflects a 9.8% increase from the ₹7,36,437 crore budget of 2024-25. The budget focuses on research and development, Information Technology, infrastructure, welfare schemes, and urban development. Special emphasis has been placed on education, agriculture, healthcare, and artificial intelligence.

Key Highlights of the Uttar Pradesh Budget 2025-26

1. Budget Overview

- Total Budget: ₹8,08,736 crore (₹8.08 lakh crore).
- Increase from Previous Year: 9.8% rise from ₹7,36,437 crore (FY 2024-25).
- New Expenditure Categories: ₹28,478 crore earmarked for new initiatives.

2. Sector-wise Allocations

Sector	Allocation
Infrastructure Development	₹1,79,921 crore (22%)
Education	₹1,06,000 crore (13%)
Agriculture & Rural Development	₹89,353 crore (11%)
Healthcare	₹50,550 crore (6%)
Social Welfare & Women Empowerment	₹7,980 crore
New Technology (AI, Cybersecurity, Data Centers, etc.)	₹5,000 crore

3. Major Announcements & Initiatives

A. Infrastructure Development (₹1.79 lakh crore, 22%)

The largest share of the budget is dedicated to building roads, expressways, smart cities, and modern urban facilities. Key allocations include,

- **Energy Sector:** ₹61,070 crore for power generation and distribution improvements.
- **Urban Development:** ₹25,308 crore for smart city projects and urban expansion.
- **Housing & Urban Planning:** ₹7,403 crore for affordable housing.
- **Irrigation:** ₹21,340 crore to enhance water management and agricultural irrigation.

- **Civil Aviation:** ₹3,152 crore to boost air connectivity and airport expansion.
- **New Expressways:** Construction of four new expressways to improve state-wide connectivity.
- **Ayodhya Solar City:** A major solar energy initiative to develop Ayodhya as a model solar city.
- **8 New Data Center Parks:** Strengthening digital infrastructure and cybersecurity.

B. Education (₹1.06 lakh crore, 13%)

- Uttar Pradesh remains one of the top states in education investment, with a focus on,
- **Smart Classrooms & Labs:** Upgrading digital learning infrastructure in schools and polytechnic institutions.
- **Laptops & Smart Devices:** ₹24 crore allocated for providing laptops/smartphones to state revenue personnel for digital governance.
- **Scholarships:** ₹900 crore allocated for pre-10th and post-10th scholarships for the general category.
- **Meritorious Student Support:** Scooties for female students who excel academically.

C. Healthcare (₹50,550 crore, 6%)

The government is strengthening public health services and medical education, with key provisions,

- **Free Medical Treatment:** Up to ₹5 lakh for home guards, PRD personnel, village watchmen, and honorarium teachers under the Chief Minister Jan Arogya Abhiyan.

New Medical Colleges

- 13 new autonomous medical colleges.
- 1,500 new medical seats added to existing institutions.
- 3 medical colleges under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.
- **Medical Infrastructure Expansion**
- 80 medical colleges across the state.
- 2 AIIMS campuses (Gorakhpur and Rae Bareli).
- Top institutions like IMS-BHU and Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College playing a crucial role.

D. Agriculture & Rural Development (₹89,353 crore, 11%)

- The state government is committed to boosting rural livelihoods and improving farm productivity. Major allocations include,
- **Farmer Welfare Fund:** ₹1,050 crore for financial assistance in case of accidental death or disability.
- **Horticulture & Animal Husbandry:** Investments in dairy, fisheries, and cooperative sectors.
- **Water Conservation:** Expansion of the Namami Gange project to ensure clean water in rural areas.
- **Rural Economy Boost:** Zero Poverty Abhiyan launched on Gandhi Jayanti (October 2, 2024) to identify poorest families and increase their annual income to ₹1.25 lakh.

E. Social Welfare & Women Empowerment

- **Chief Minister's Mass Marriage Scheme:** ₹550 crore allocated to support the marriage of daughters (all categories).
- **Destitute Women Pension Scheme:** ₹2,980 crore to ensure financial security for widows and abandoned women.
- **Chief Minister Kanya Sumangala Scheme:** ₹700 crore to support girls' education and welfare.
- **Disabled Maintenance Grant Scheme:** ₹1,424 crore for differently-abled citizens.

F. Artificial Intelligence & Cybersecurity Initiatives

- **Artificial Intelligence City:** The government will develop an AI hub to promote tech-driven growth.
- **Cybersecurity Research Park:** A dedicated facility for cyber defense and innovation.

G. Other Key Initiatives

- **Ujjwala Scheme:** Two free LPG cylinders per family.
- **Legislative Assembly Modernization:** Improving digital governance in state operations.
- **Workers' Welfare:** Building labor welfare centers at district headquarters with canteens, drinking water, and sanitation facilities.
- **Ambedkar Memorial:** Construction of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Memorial and Cultural Center in Lucknow.

4. Vision for Uttar Pradesh's Economic Growth

- **Target:** Transform Uttar Pradesh into a \$1 trillion economy.
- **Economic Growth:** The state's GDP grew from ₹12.89 lakh crore (2017-18) to ₹27.51 lakh crore (2024-25), showcasing a strong upward trend.

Strategic Development Focus,

- Trade
- Tourism
- Technology
- Tradition
- Talent

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath highlighted that **Uttar Pradesh is no longer a "BIMARU" state but a leader in economic progress**, reflecting the transformative impact of progressive policies.

Rajasthan Unveils First Green Budget: Prioritizing Bijli, Sadak, Paani

Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Diya Kumari presented the state's **first-ever Green Budget for 2025-26**, with a total outlay of ₹5.37 lakh crore. The budget focuses on Bijli (electricity), Sadak (roads), Paani (water) along with health and agriculture, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. The state government also plans to create 2.75 lakh jobs (1.25 lakh government and 1.5 lakh private) while fulfilling 73% of its first Budget announcements.

Key Budget Announcements

Green Initiatives

- ₹27,854 crore allocated (11.34% of scheme expenditure).
- Climate Change Adaptation Plan-2030 introduced.
- Centre of Excellence for Climate Change set up with ₹150 crore.
- 10 crore trees to be planted.
- Subsidies for 2.5 lakh farmers promoting natural farming.
- Water harvesting structures in 4,700+ villages (₹2,700 crore).
- Rajasthan Circular Economy Incentive Scheme & Vehicle Scrap Policy introduced.
- Waste to Wealth Parks in all district HQs.
- Clean and Green Technology Development Centre (₹250 crore).
- Green Aravali Development Project (₹250 crore).

Water & Sanitation

- 20 lakh households to get new water connections.
- ₹425 crore for drinking water in rural areas.
- CM Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban): ₹5,830 crore for water supply.
- Installation of 1,000 tubewells and 1,500 handpumps.
- 1,050 contractual technical officer posts under Jal Jeevan Mission.

Energy & Power

- Additional 6,400 MW power generation planned.
- 5,700 MW ongoing projects + 10 GW private sector production.
- 50,000 new agriculture electricity connections.
- 5 lakh domestic electricity connections.

Infrastructure & Transport

- ₹5,000 crore for highways, bypass roads, flyovers & bridges.
- 9 Greenfield Expressways (₹60,000 crore) via Hybrid Annuity Model/BOT.
- ₹6,000 crore to improve 21,000 km non-patchable roads.
- ₹500 crore Atal Pragati Path for rural towns (150 villages).

Agriculture

- ₹9,300 crore for Ram Jal Setu Link Pariyojana (modified PKC-ERCP).
- Rajasthan Water Grid Corporation (₹4,000 crore) to replace ERCP Corporation.
- ₹1,250 crore subsidy for Drip & Sprinkler Irrigation System.
- ₹900 crore for solar pumps, farm ponds, etc.
- PM Kisan Samman Nidhi increased to ₹9,000/year.
- ₹150 per quintal MSP bonus for wheat.
- Global Rajasthan Agri-Tech Meet announced.

Tourism & Culture

- ₹975 crore for tourism infrastructure.
- 10 sites to be developed as Iconic Tourist Destinations.
- Shekhawati havelis conservation announced.
- ₹100 crore Tribal Tourist Circuit & ₹20 crore for Rural Tourism.
- ₹50,000 senior citizens to get AC train & air pilgrimage travel.

Youth & Employment

- Rajasthan Employment Policy – 2025 launched.
- Vivekananda Rozgar Sahayta Kosh (₹500 crore) for job seekers.
- 1,500 new startups to be promoted.
- More CCTV cameras in schools, 1,500 Atal Tinkering Labs, Digital Planetariums, Innovation Hubs, Open Gyms.

Industry & Business

- 149 online permissions under Single Window System.
- Global Capability Centre (GCC) Policy introduced.
- Rajasthan Trade Promotion Policy launched.

Social Security & Welfare

- ₹1,250/month social security pension.
- ₹350 crore Gig & Unorganised Workers Development Fund.
- ₹20,000 for artificial limbs to 1 lakh differently-abled.
- 35,000 scooters for girl students.
- Milk for children (3-6 years) in Anganwadis increased from 3 to 5 days a week.
- 10 lakh new beneficiaries added under National Food Security Act.
- 5,000 new fair price ration shops.

Law & Order

- Rajasthan Nagrik Suraksha Adhiniyam introduced.
- 3,500 new police jobs.
- Sardar Patel Centre for Cyber Control & War Room (₹350 crore).

Health & Wellness

- ₹3,500 crore for Mukhyamantri Ayushman Arogya (MAA) Yojana.
- Interstate portability for health benefits under MAA Yojana.
- ₹1,300 crore to strengthen tertiary healthcare.
- 750 new doctor posts & 1,500 paramedics.
- Diabetic Clinics in all district hospitals.
- Fit Rajasthan Campaign (₹50 crore).
- New AYUSH Policy introduced.

Education & Research

- Ambedkar Institute of Constitutional Studies & Research in Jaipur.
- ₹1,000 crore for district-level offices in 8 new districts.

National Affairs

- The **Aadi Mahotsav**, inaugurated by **President Droupadi Murmu** on February 16, 2025, celebrates **India's tribal heritage** and culture. Held at **Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium**, it promotes tribal **entrepreneurs, artisans, and artists**, showcasing their **crafts, food, attire, and jewelry**. The festival highlights the **sustainability and environmental harmony** of tribal practices, offering a platform for them to reach national and international audiences. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **BHARAT TEX 2025**, one of the largest global textile events, will be held from **February 14-17, 2025**, at **Bharat Mandapam** in **New Delhi** and **India Expo Centre & Mart** in **Greater Noida**. With **5,000 exhibitors** and **6,000 international buyers** from 110 countries, the event will highlight sectors like **Apparel, Home Furnishings, Technical Textiles, and Sustainable Textiles**, attracting over **120,000 visitors**. Backed by the **Ministry of Textiles**, it aims to showcase India's textile industry globally. ([Click here to read article](#))
- On **Hindu College's 126th Founder's Day**, Union Minister for Education **Dharmendra Pradhan** praised the college's role in shaping **India's intellectual, cultural, and national identity**. He interacted with students and faculty, exploring an exhibition on **Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**, highlighting the importance of **innovation and entrepreneurship** for future job creation. Pradhan emphasized the college's ongoing contribution to **India's national development**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Pariksha Pe Charcha 2025**, hosted by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, featured sportspersons **M C Mary Kom, Avani Lekhara, and Suhas Yathiraj**. The session focused on **goal setting, resilience, stress management**, and life lessons from sports. It encouraged students to embrace **hard work, discipline**, and a **growth mindset** to overcome academic and life challenges. ([Click here to read article](#))

- The **CSB's International Conference – SILKTECH 2025** was inaugurated by **Shri Pabitra Margherita**, Minister of State for **Textiles & Foreign Affairs**, at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**, as part of **Bharat Tex 2025**. Organized by **CSB-Central Tasar Research & Training Institute** and **CSTRI**, the conference focused on **emerging technologies** in the **silk sector**, aiming to enhance **quality, sustainability, and global competitiveness**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Union Budget 2025** focuses on **economic growth, energy security, education, healthcare, and agricultural development**. Key measures include support for **MSMEs, full exemption of Customs Duties** on 25 critical minerals, expanded **insurance sector investments**, and a new **agricultural scheme** for low-yield districts. The budget also prioritizes **energy security**, with initiatives like the **MSME Loan Guarantee scheme** and **MoUs for critical mineral imports**, benefiting sectors like **space, defence, telecommunications, and renewable energy**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India and **Qatar** have upgraded their bilateral relations to a **strategic partnership**, focusing on **trade, investment, and energy**. During the visit of **Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani**, both nations set a goal to **double bilateral trade** from **\$14.08 billion to \$28 billion** in the next five years. Qatar also expressed interest in investing in key Indian sectors. This partnership strengthens ties with **UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Kuwait**, which share similar relations with India. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **RSS** has inaugurated its new **headquarters 'Keshav Kunj'** in **Jhandewalan, New Delhi**. The **five lakh square feet** complex includes **three high-rise towers, an auditorium, a library, a hospital, a canteen, and a Hanuman temple**. Built with a focus on **sustainability** and modern infrastructure, it surpasses the size of the **BJP headquarters**. The **₹150 crore** project was funded entirely by **public donations**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India has inaugurated its first **Open-Air Art Wall Museum** at **Mausam Bhawan, New Delhi**, marking the **150-year journey** of the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**. The museum showcases **38 murals** that depict India's meteorological advancements and **IMD's historical evolution**. Developed in collaboration with **Delhi Street Art**, the murals transform the **IMD's exterior walls** into an artistic tribute to India's weather forecasting legacy. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, Union Minister for **Rural Development and Agriculture**, launched the **NAKSHA pilot program** on February 18th in **Raisen, Madhya Pradesh**. The **₹194 crore** project, fully funded by the **central government**, aims to modernize **urban land surveys** across **152 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** in **26 states** and **3 Union Territories (UTs)**. The initiative will enhance **land record accuracy**, support **urban planning**, and reduce **land disputes**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- On **February 18, 2025**, Union Minister **Bhupender Yadav** inaugurated the **'Waste Recycling and Climate Change 2025'** conclave by the **Recycling and Environment Industry Association of India (REIAI)**. The event emphasized **waste recycling, environmental sustainability, and economic growth**. **Yadav** highlighted the need for a **circular economy** to reduce waste, improve **resource efficiency**, and create **employment**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Indian Ambassador **Harsh Kumar Jain** unveiled a statue of **Thiruvalluvar**, the renowned Tamil poet and philosopher, at **Gullas College of Medicine (GCM)** in **Cebu** on February 17, 2025. The event, celebrating the **75th anniversary of India-Philippines diplomatic relations**, was attended by dignitaries such as **former Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo**, senior officials, diplomats, and the **Indian diaspora**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoLE)** has signed an **MoU** with **APNA**, a job recruitment platform, to provide **10 lakh job opportunities annually** through the **National Career Service (NCS) Portal**. This partnership aims to **enhance employment accessibility** and connect **job seekers** with employers, supporting the government's efforts to streamline **digital hiring systems**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Dr. Jitendra Singh**, Union Minister of State for **Science & Technology**, inaugurated India's first **Open Air Art Wall Museum** at **Mausam Bhawan, New Delhi**, marking the **150th anniversary** of the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**. Developed with **Delhi Street Art**, the museum features vibrant murals showcasing **IMD's history, technological progress, and societal contributions**, blending **science and art**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **22nd Foundation Day** of the **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)** was celebrated, emphasizing its role in protecting the rights and development of **Scheduled Tribes (STs)** in India. **Union Minister Shri Jual Oram** praised the **NCST's proactive initiatives**, especially its role in implementing the **Forest Rights Act**. The event included speeches, discussions, and presentations on **tribal welfare**, highlighting key **government programs** aimed at improving the lives of **Scheduled Tribes**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Union Government** has released **Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV FC)** grants for the fiscal year **2024-25** to enhance rural governance in **Bihar, Haryana, and Sikkim**. **Bihar** received **₹821.8021 crores** (second installment) and **₹47.9339 crores** (first installment). **Haryana** got **₹202.4663 crores** (second installment) and **₹7.5993 crores** (first installment). **Sikkim** was allocated **₹6.2613 crores**. The grants, meant for **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)**, include **untied grants** for flexible use and **tied grants** for services like **sanitation and water supply**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- Bengal led the **Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) 2025** for the third consecutive year, recording **543 species** out of **1,068** observed across India. Despite fewer participants due to exam conflicts, Bengal's birdwatching community thrived, documenting rare species like the **Ibisbill** and **Common Starling**. The event highlights the state's rich **bird diversity** and commitment to **bird habitat preservation**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **IRDAI** has launched **Bima-ASBA** to simplify premium payments for **life and health insurance** policies. Starting **March 1, 2025**, policyholders can use a **one-time UPI mandate (OTM)** to block funds in their bank accounts, ensuring **transparency and security** until the insurer accepts the policy proposal. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India has launched the **Electronic Personnel License (EPL)** for flight crew, making it the second country after **China** to adopt digital licensing for pilots. Introduced by **Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu**, the initiative aims to improve **convenience, transparency, and efficiency** in the licensing process, supporting **aviation safety** and digital transformation in line with growing industry demands. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will visit **Mauritius** next month as the **Guest of Honour** at the country's **National Day** celebrations. Mauritian Prime Minister **Navin Ramgoolam** highlighted that Modi's visit reflects the **deep and historic bilateral ties** between the two nations. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India has established its first **zoo-based biobank** at the **Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park (PNHZP)** in **Darjeeling**, West Bengal. Operational since **July 2024**, the facility stores **genetic materials** from endangered species. The project, a collaboration with the **Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB)**, also includes an **animal museum**, enhancing **conservation and research** efforts in India. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Vishva Rajakumar**, a 20-year-old from **India**, has won the **Memory League World Championship**, showcasing exceptional cognitive skills. He set a record by recalling **80 digits** in just **13.5 seconds**, demonstrating his extraordinary **mental agility** in this challenging competition that tests memory recall of **numbers, images, and words**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Gujarat government**, led by **Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel**, launched **G-SAFAL** (Gujarat Scheme for Antyodaya Families for Augmenting Livelihoods) to empower underprivileged families, particularly women. The scheme will target **50,000 Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)** cardholder families across **25 talukas** in **10 districts** over five years, focusing on **livelihood creation, financial inclusion, and social development** for sustainable growth. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Madhya Pradesh has introduced India's first **Global Capability Centers (GCC) Policy 2025** to attract multinational corporations, focusing on **Tier-2 cities** like **Indore, Bhopal, and Jabalpur**. The policy aims to provide a **business-friendly environment, financial incentives, and world-class infrastructure** to transform these cities into global operational hubs. This move aligns with **regional economic decentralization**, complementing broader trends like **Karnataka's GCC expansion** to promote balanced growth across India. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Kerala is set to launch the '**nPROUD**' initiative on **February 22, 2025**, making it the first state in India to **scientifically collect and dispose of expired and unused medicines** from households. Led by the **Kerala Drugs Control Department**, this project aims to address the **environmental hazards and health risks** associated with pharmaceutical waste. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Vaibhav Singh**, an **IFoS officer** from **Uttarakhand**, developed an advanced **Forest Fire App** to combat increasing **forest fires**, inspired by technologies from **Canada, Australia, and South Africa**. The app enhances **fire detection, response efficiency, and real-time tracking** of firefighting teams. Adopted by the **Uttarakhand Forest Department**, it integrates **7,000 staff** and plans further **expansion**. Key features include **global inspiration, collaboration with a Canadian ecologist, and advanced fire mitigation tools**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Rekha Gupta**, a **BJP leader** and **Shalimar Bagh MLA**, has been appointed as the new **Chief Minister of Delhi**, succeeding **AAP's Atishi Marlena**. The **BJP** secured a majority with **44 out of 70 seats** in the **Delhi Assembly elections**. Gupta, the only **woman CM** in BJP-ruled states, will be the **4th female CM of Delhi** after **Sushma Swaraj, Sheila Dixit, and Atishi Marlena**. The swearing-in will take place at **Ramlila Maidan** on **February 20, 2025**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Jharkhand government** has imposed a **one-year ban** on the **sale, manufacture, storage, and distribution of gutkha and pan masala**. The ban is enforced under the **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006** and the **Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations, 2011**. **Health Minister Irfan Ansari** highlighted the **health risks, particularly oral cancer, associated with gutkha**, aiming to protect public health and prevent tobacco-related harm, especially among the youth. ([Click here to read article](#))

States in the News

- **Karnataka** topped the **2024 Local Governance Performance Index**, excelling in **local body management, finances, and accountability**, surpassing **Kerala**. **Uttar Pradesh (UP)** also showed significant improvement, rising from **15th to 5th place**, reflecting progress in **transparency, anti-corruption measures, and administrative structures**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi** presented the **2025-26 state budget** with a total expenditure of ₹2.90 lakh crore, focusing on **agriculture, irrigation, and rural development**. This marks the **first full-fledged budget** by the **BJP-led government**, showing a rise from the previous ₹2.65 lakh crore budget for 2024-25, highlighting the state's commitment to **economic growth**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Kerala** has launched the **nPROUD** initiative, a government-led program for the **safe disposal of expired and unused medicines**. This program aims to prevent **environmental hazards** and **health risks** from improper drug disposal, making Kerala the **first state in India** to implement such a systematic approach. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Rekha Gupta**, BJP leader and **first-time MLA** from Shalimar Bagh, became **Delhi's ninth Chief Minister**. At her first cabinet meeting, she announced the **Ayushman Bharat scheme** with a ₹5 lakh top-up and the tabling of **14 CAG reports**. Her government's focus includes **Yamuna cleaning, infrastructure, education, and women's welfare**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **2nd Simolu Festival** started on **February 15, 2025**, at **Bwisang-Na**, an eco-resort in **Assam**. The two-day event celebrated the blooming of **Shimul flowers** and aimed to promote **eco-tourism, conservation, and local culture**. Activities included **cycling, camping, ethnic cuisine, and cultural performances**. **Dr. Sonali Ghosh** of **Kaziranga National Park** emphasized the event's role in raising **environmental awareness**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Gujarat's Finance Minister, **Shri Kanu Desai**, presented the **2025-26 Budget** digitally through the **National eVidhan Application (NeVA)**, supporting the **Digital India** vision. This move promotes **paperless governance, enhancing transparency, efficiency, and accessibility** in legislative proceedings, as part of the initiative to digitize state legislatures and streamline operations. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Uttarakhand Cabinet** approved the **Bhoo Kanon (Land Law Amendment Bill)** on February 19, 2025, to regulate land purchases by non-residents. The law aims to protect **cultural heritage, natural resources, and citizens' rights**, while preserving the state's identity. It imposes a **ban on agricultural land purchases** in 11 hill districts and restrictions on residential land transactions. The bill will be presented in the ongoing **Budget session**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Hyderabad's **Srishti Art Gallery** and **Goethe-Zentrum Hyderabad** have collaborated to present the international art exhibition "**Topographies of Tents, Terracotta, and Time**". The exhibition explores themes of **identity, displacement, and transformation**, featuring works by renowned **national and international artists**. Curated by **Matthew Partridge**, this immersive experience promises to offer diverse artistic perspectives. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Kerala** has launched **Nayanamritham 2.0**, an **AI-driven eye screening initiative** in partnership with **Remidio**. It is the **world's first government-led AI-assisted screening program** for chronic eye diseases like **glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy (DR), and age-related macular degeneration (AMD)**. This program expands access to advanced eye care, integrating **artificial intelligence** into **public health** to reach more people across the state. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Mising tribe** of Assam recently celebrated the **Ali Ai Ligang festival**, marking the start of the **sowing season**. Observed on the first Wednesday of the Assamese month of **Fagun**, this festival is integral to the agricultural traditions of the Mising community, which relies heavily on farming for their livelihood. ([Click here to read article](#))

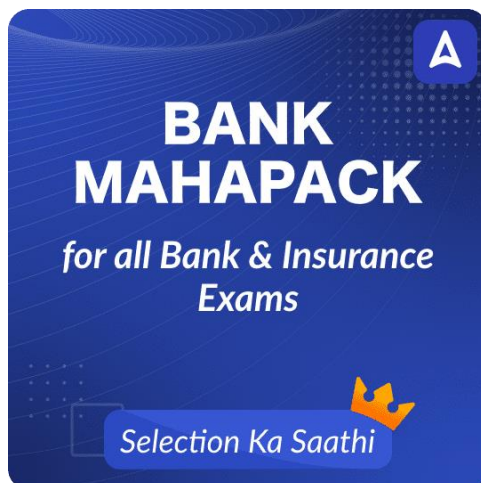
International Affairs

- UNESCO launched the "Imagine a world with more women in science" campaign for the **10th anniversary of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science** on **February 11**. The campaign highlights the importance of **diverse perspectives** in **STEMM** fields and encourages more **female participation** with the hashtag **#EveryVoiceInScience**. While **women make up one-third** of the global scientific community, only **1 in 10 STEM leadership roles** is held by women. In India, **43% of STEMM enrollments** are women, but only **18.6% of scientists** are women, with **25% of R&D projects** led by women. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India has been elected as the **Vice President** of the **International Organization of Aids to Marine Navigation (IALA)** during its inaugural **General Assembly** in **Singapore**. This election reflects India's growing influence in **global maritime affairs**, especially as IALA transitions from an **NGO** to an **IGO**. India's leadership in **maritime navigation** is expected to expand with upcoming **international events**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Brazil** has joined the **OPEC+** group as an **observer**, approved by the **National Council for Energy Policy**. This move allows Brazil to participate in strategic discussions with major oil exporters while maintaining **independence** in production. The decision aligns with Brazil's preparations for hosting the **United Nations climate summit**, reflecting a balance between **energy security** and **environmental commitments**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Mount **Dukono** in **Indonesia** erupted on **February 20, 2025**, sending an **ash cloud** up to **2,000 meters** into the air. The eruption, on **Halmahera Island** in **North Maluku province**, led to **aviation warnings** and **safety advisories** for residents. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Kash Patel**, an **Indian-origin** official, was sworn in as the **ninth Director of the FBI** on **February 21, 2025**. Known for his ties to **former U.S. President Donald Trump**, Patel took the oath on the **Bhagavad Gita**. The ceremony, held at the **Eisenhower Executive Office Building**, was administered by **U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi**. Patel succeeds **Christopher Wray**, who resigned at the end of the **Biden** administration. ([Click here to read article](#))

Agreements/MoUs Signed

- **Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy** met with **H.E. Raúl Alejandro Jalil**, Governor of **Catamarca, Argentina**, to enhance **mining sector** cooperation, focusing on **lithium exploration** and investment. A **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** was signed between **MECL** and the **Provincial Government of Catamarca**, aiming to boost collaboration in the exploration and development of critical minerals like **lithium**, essential for **electric vehicle (EV) batteries** and **renewable energy storage**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **India and Nepal** have signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between **CSIR, India** and **Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST)** on **February 18, 2025**. The agreement, signed at **CSIR-National Physical Laboratory**, aims to enhance **scientific collaboration** in fields like **biotechnology, environmental sciences, alternative energy, and material sciences**, building on their long-standing partnership. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **TRIFED** has partnered with **Meesho**, the **Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA)**, and the **Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Rural Industrialization (MGIRI)** to promote **tribal businesses** and integrate them into the **B2B sector**. The **MoUs**, signed on **February 18, 2025**, during the “**Aadi Mahotsav**” in **New Delhi**, aim to enhance **tribal entrepreneurship** and market access, fostering the growth of **tribal products**. ([Click here to read article](#))



Banking/Economy/Business News

- **Axis Bank** has committed **₹104 crore** to **Ashoka University** over the next four years to enhance its **PhD and Post-Doctoral programs**. The funding will support the establishment of advanced research centers in **Neurosciences, Behavioral Studies, and Physics**, offering **fellowships and research grants**. This initiative aims to build world-class labs, foster **interdisciplinary research**, and attract global **experts and scholars**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Indian banks** are expected to see a **decline in net interest margins (NIMs)** by 10 basis points in **FY 2025-26** due to the **RBI's rate cut** of 25 basis points to 6.25%. This cut will impact **floating rate loans** like housing, SME, and retail loans, leading to **lower interest rates** and margin compression. **Non-banking financial institutions (NBFI)**s will also face challenges, with increased **competition** and declining **yields**, affecting profitability. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Reliance Industries** and **Disney** have launched **JioHotstar**, merging **JioCinema** and **Disney+ Hotstar**. This new platform offers a **comprehensive streaming experience**, combining **live sports, premium entertainment, and exclusive international content**. Users of the original platforms will need to transition to **JioHotstar** for uninterrupted access to their favorite **shows, movies, and sports events**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **SEBI** has launched a new **RPT portal** to improve **corporate governance and transparency** in the Indian securities market. This platform enables **timely and accurate reporting of Related Party Transactions (RPTs)** by listed companies, ensuring **comprehensive disclosure** and easier monitoring by regulators and stakeholders. The initiative aims to strengthen **governance standards** and enhance market **accountability**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has approved **Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)** to open a branch in **GIFT City**, boosting its **offshore banking operations**. This move supports BoM's goal to expand its **business in Gujarat** by 25%, aiming to exceed **₹15,000 crore** by **Q2 FY 2024-25**, and strengthens its presence in key **financial hubs** across India. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Campa Cola**, owned by **Reliance Consumer Products**, has secured the **Rs 200 crore co-presenting rights** for **IPL 2025**, replacing **Coca-Cola's Thums Up**. This move signifies Reliance's strategy to scale its **market presence** and introduce new **sports drinks** during the **IPL season**, challenging global beverage giants. ([Click here to read article](#))

- Meta's **Project Waterworth** is a groundbreaking initiative to lay a **50,000-kilometer undersea cable** connecting **India, the US, Brazil, and South Africa**. The project aims to improve **high-speed internet services** and facilitate **digital inclusion**, supporting everything from **cloud computing** to **AI applications**. It is designed to meet the growing demand for fast, secure, and reliable digital infrastructure, boosting economic growth and innovation across five continents. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed **penalties** on **Shriram Finance, Ujjivan Small Finance Bank, and The Nainital Bank Limited** for non-compliance with **regulatory norms**. The penalties followed the **ISE 2023** assessment of financial health, revealing violations like non-adherence to **interest rate directives, loan documentation irregularities, and risk categorization lapses**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- IRDAI launched the **Bima Trinity** plan at the 9th **Bima Manthan** to transform India's insurance sector. The plan includes **Bima Sugam**, a unified digital marketplace aimed at simplifying the process of buying, servicing, and claiming insurance policies. This initiative seeks to make insurance **accessible, affordable, and efficient** for all, driving **inclusive growth** in the industry. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **South Indian Bank (SIB)** launched '**SIB Quick FD**', a digital solution that allows customers to invest in **Fixed Deposits (FDs)** using funds from any bank account via **UPI**. This service simplifies the investment process, making it more accessible and customer-friendly, aligning with SIB's goal to provide **easy and fast banking services**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Standard Chartered Bank** has appointed **Prabdev (P.D.) Singh** as its new **CEO for India and South Asia**, effective **April 1, 2025**. Singh, a corporate banking veteran and former CEO of **JP Morgan India**, replaces **Zarin Daruwala**, who will retire after nearly a decade of leadership. Under Daruwala's tenure, the bank expanded its **Corporate and Investment Banking** and **Wealth and Retail Banking** segments, significantly strengthening its presence in India. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Reliance New Energy Battery Limited**, a subsidiary of **Reliance Industries**, has secured a **10 GWh capacity** under the **PLI Scheme for Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery Storage**. The **Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI)** signed a **Programme Agreement** with the company on **February 17, 2025**, marking a significant step in **India's domestic battery manufacturing** and reducing **import dependence**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **N. Chandrasekaran**, Chairman of **Tata Group**, has been awarded an **honorary knighthood** by the **United Kingdom** on **February 14, 2025**. This prestigious recognition honors his exceptional role in enhancing **India-UK business relations**, particularly through his leadership in **Tata Group's investments and collaborations** in the UK. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's urban unemployment rate remained steady at **6.4%** in the October-December quarter of **FY25**, according to the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)**. This shows stability in urban employment, despite shifts in **gender-specific job trends, youth employment, and labor force participation**. The data offers crucial insights into **urban labor market conditions** for policymakers. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's **smartphone exports** hit a record **Rs 1.55 trillion** in the April 2024 to January 2025 period, a 56% rise from the previous year. This growth, driven by the **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme**, has been fueled by global giants like **Apple and Samsung**, with Apple contributing 70% of total exports. The government's push for local production has transformed India into a major smartphone manufacturing hub. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Karnataka Bank celebrated its **100th anniversary** on **February 18, 2024**, by launching two new financial products: a **children's savings account** and a **high-interest term deposit** scheme for a limited period. These initiatives aim to expand the bank's **customer base** and reinforce its market presence while emphasizing its customer-centric approach. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd** has appointed **Salila Pande** as the new **Managing Director and CEO** effective **April 1, 2025**, succeeding **Abhijit Chakravorty**, who retires on **March 31, 2025**. The company also declared an **interim dividend** of **₹2.50 per share** for the **2024-25 financial year**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **360 ONE Asset** plans to acquire a **15% stake** in **Bharti AXA Life Insurance**, bringing fresh capital to support its **expansion and innovation**. This investment will enhance **product offerings, distribution networks**, and enable the company to strengthen its position in the competitive **life insurance market**, catering to the growing demand for **tailored insurance solutions**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **LIC** has launched the '**One Man Office (OMO)**' initiative on **February 17, 2025**, aimed at enhancing the efficiency of its agents by providing **24x7 digital services**. The initiative supports **LIC's vision of 'Insurance for All by 2047'** by offering tools for **policy sales, customer service, and business management**. This digital transformation allows agents to work independently and productively without a traditional office setup, benefiting both **policyholders and LIC**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's total **exports** grew **7.2% YoY** from **April 2024 to January 2025**, driven by key industries like **electronics manufacturing and aerospace**. This growth reflects India's increased **global trade engagement**, though **U.S. tariffs** pose a potential challenge to sustaining this momentum. ([Click here to read article](#))

- The **RBI** has launched **RBIDATA**, a mobile app offering easy access to over **11,000 economic data series** related to the Indian economy. Available on **iOS** and **Android**, it caters to **researchers, students, policymakers, and the general public**, providing structured, interactive data from the **RBI's Database on the Indian Economy (DBIE)**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's economy is projected to grow at **6.4% in Q3 FY25**, up from **5.4%** in the previous quarter. This growth is driven by **higher government spending** and a **rebound in exports**. **Gross Value Added (GVA)** is expected to rise by **6.6%**, with **industry** at **6.2%**, **services** at **7.7%**, and **agriculture** at **4.0%**. A key highlight is the record **\$36.9 billion** in **service exports** in December 2024. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Tata Power** has partnered with **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** to modernize its **digital infrastructure** and support India's shift to a **smarter, sustainable energy ecosystem**. The collaboration focuses on using **cloud technology** to improve **operational efficiency**, enhance **grid resilience**, and provide consumers with advanced **energy management tools**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **State Bank of India (SBI)** has revised India's **GDP growth forecast** for **FY25** to **6.3%**, slightly below the **National Statistical Office (NSO)** projection of **6.4%**. This adjustment reflects concerns over slowing economic momentum, especially in **lending, manufacturing, and aggregate demand**. Policymakers are focusing on sustaining growth through **fiscal and monetary measures**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Zomato** has launched '**Nugget**', an **AI-powered customer support platform** that automates and streamlines customer service. Developed over three years, it now handles **15 million monthly interactions** across Zomato's ecosystem, including **Blinkit** and **Hyperpure**. This initiative underscores Zomato's focus on **AI-driven solutions** to enhance **customer experience** and **operational efficiency**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Appointments/Resignations

- **Vivek Joshi**, a **mechanical engineer** from **IIT-Roorkee** and a **1989-batch IAS officer** of the **Haryana cadre**, has been appointed as **Election Commissioner of India**. At **58**, he is one of the youngest to join the **Election Commission of India (ECI)**. His tenure will last until **February 18, 2031**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Indian government** has extended **V Anantha Nageswaran's** tenure as **Chief Economic Advisor (CEA)** until **March 2027**. His role includes advising on **economic policies** and drafting the **Economic Survey**. The extension comes as the **Economic Survey** projects a **6.3%-6.8% GDP growth** for **FY26** amid concerns over the economic slowdown. ([Click here to read article](#))

Defence News

- India is in talks for a **\$200 million deal** to supply its **Akash missile system** to the **Philippines**, marking a significant step in its defense exports. The **Akash missile** is a **medium-range surface-to-air missile** with a range of up to 25 kilometers, capable of targeting various threats. Known for its **mobility** and **cost-effectiveness**, the system has been operational with the **Indian Army** and **Air Force** since 2009, making it a reliable choice for enhancing **air defense capabilities**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Matsya-6000** is a **fourth-generation deep-ocean submersible** developed under India's **Deep Ocean Mission** and the **Samudrayan Project**. Designed by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences** and **National Institute of Ocean Technology**, it can carry three people and operates at depths of up to **500 meters**. Successfully tested for **operational efficiency**, it aims to advance India's **deep-ocean exploration capabilities**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- On **February 14, 2025**, the **Indian Navy** launched its **eighth Missile Cum Ammunition (MCA) Barge, LSAM 11**, in **Mira Bhayandar, Maharashtra**. The barge plays a key role in **logistical support**, transporting ammunition and supplies to Navy platforms, especially at **outer harbors** and **jetties**, enhancing operational capabilities during maritime missions. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **sixth edition of Exercise Dharma Guardian** will be held from **February 25 to March 9, 2025**, at **Mount Fuji, Japan**. This Indo-Japanese military exercise will focus on **urban warfare tactics** and **counter-terrorism operations** under the **UN mandate**. It strengthens **India-Japan defence ties**, following India's **Army Chief's visit to Japan** in October 2024, and underscores the commitment to **regional stability** and **security** in the Indo-Pacific. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL)** is showcasing its indigenously designed **Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs)** and **Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs)** at **NAVDEX 2025** in **Abu Dhabi**. The **FPV** is **50 meters** long, capable of reaching **35 knots**, and is designed for **patrolling, anti-smuggling, anti-terrorist operations, and wartime communication**. It features **three 2,720 kW diesel engines** for high maneuverability and can accommodate **35 personnel** in fully air-conditioned conditions. These vessels highlight **India's maritime capabilities** under the "**Make in India**" initiative. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Indian Navy's First Training Squadron (1TS)**, consisting of **INS Sujata** and **ICGS Veera**, concluded a three-day **goodwill visit** to **Sihanoukville, Cambodia** on 17 February 2025. During the visit, **Capt Anshul Kishore** and commanding officers engaged with the **Royal Cambodian Navy (RCN)**, including a meeting with **Admiral Tea Vinh**, focusing on **bilateral cross-training, interoperability, joint exercises, regional security, and enhancing maritime cooperation** in line with India's **SAGAR vision**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **India and Malaysia** have strengthened **defence cooperation**, focusing on the maintenance and operational expertise of their **Sukhoi-30 (Su-30)** fleets. During **Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh's** visit to **Kuala Lumpur**, both nations finalized key agreements between the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** and **Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF)**. The discussions, held during the **13th Malaysia-India Defence Cooperation Committee (MIDCOM)** meeting, also covered **cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, maritime security, and defence industry partnerships**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Awards and Recognitions

- **Manu Bhaker**, Olympic medal-winning shooter, has been awarded the **BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year (ISWOTY) 2024**. The award recognizes the achievements of **Indian female athletes** and is decided through expert nominations and public voting. Bhaker won among nominees like **Aditi Ashok, Avani Lekhara, Smriti Mandhana, and Vinesh Phogat**. This marks the **fifth edition** of the **ISWOTY award**, celebrating and promoting **women's sports in India**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Nita Ambani**, Founder and Chairperson of **Reliance Foundation**, has been awarded the **Governor of Massachusetts' Citation** for her significant contributions to **education, healthcare, sports, arts, culture, and women's empowerment**. This recognition acknowledges her leadership in **philanthropy** and her positive societal impact in **India and beyond**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Nagaland Forest Management Project (NFMP)** won the **SKOCH Award 2024** for its contributions to **national development**. Presented at the **100th SKOCH Summit in New Delhi**, the award was accepted by **Ango Konyak and Wennyei Konyak**. The project, supported by **JICA**, focuses on improving **forest ecosystems, rehabilitating jhum areas, and promoting sustainable livelihoods**. ([Click here to read article](#))

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Summits and Conferences News

- The **17th BRICS Summit** will be held in **Rio de Janeiro on July 6-7, 2025**, bringing together **Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa**, and invited nations. The summit will focus on **global governance reforms, economic cooperation, and shared prosperity** among **Global South** countries. With BRICS expanding to include nations like **Iran, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia**, this event will shape future global trade, **finance, and diplomatic ties**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Ajmer hosted the **first-ever All India Kinnar Mahasammelan** from February 17, 2025, at a private school in **Vaishali Nagar**. The 10-day transgender conference, organized in memory of **Anita Bai**, addresses issues faced by the transgender community. Over 2,000 members participated, engaging in religious rituals like **Kalash Puja and Chak Pujan**. The event also features stalls on medical services, banking, and travel, with strict supervision for invited members. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **SOUL (School of Ultimate Leadership) Conclave 2025**, inaugurated by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**, focuses on developing future leaders for a **Viksit Bharat (Developed India)**. The event aims to train individuals in **governance, business, technology, sports, and social sectors**, fostering **strategic decision-making** and a **solution-driven mindset**. A dedicated **SOUL campus** will be set up near **GIFT City, Gujarat** to provide world-class leadership training. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India has taken over the **Chairmanship** of the **Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO)** from **Bangladesh** during the **13th Governing Council Meeting in Malé, Maldives**. The transition occurred during the **"Policy Guidance for Mainstreaming Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) in Small-Scale Fisheries"** conference, held from **February 20 to 22, 2025**, organized by the **Ministry of Fisheries & Ocean Resources** of the Maldives in collaboration with BOBP-IGO. ([Click here to read article](#))

Ranks and Reports

- India is facing a rise in **extreme weather events** due to **climate change**, accounting for **10% of global weather-related deaths**. From 1993 to 2022, over 400 events resulted in **80,000 deaths** and **\$180 billion** in economic losses. Rising temperatures have led to **severe monsoons, heatwaves, and lightning**, with recent incidents like **floods and landslides** in northern states and **Kerala**. The increase is driven by **unpredictable weather, deforestation, and carbon emissions**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- The **BJP** is the richest political party in India for FY **2023-24**, with an income of ₹4,340.47 crore, according to the **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)** report. The **INC** follows with ₹1,225.11 crore, while other national parties like **CPI(M)**, **AAP**, **BSP**, and **NPEP** have also reported their financial standings. The report highlights the growing **financial influence** of political parties in India. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Union Minister **Prof. S.P. Singh Baghel** unveiled the report **“Status of Devolution to Panchayats in States”** in New Delhi, assessing the **devolution of power, functions, and finances** to **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)**. The report shows an increase in devolution to **Rural Local Bodies (RLBs)** from **39.9% in 2013-14** to **43.9% in 2021-22** and ranks states based on their **devolution index**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)** has achieved a major milestone by securing the **second spot** in the **FutureBrand Index 2024**, surpassing global giants like **Apple** and **Nike**. This is the first time an **Indian company** has entered the **top three** of this global ranking, highlighting **Reliance's strong brand perception** and influence. **Samsung** claimed the top spot, with **RIL** outperforming companies like **Disney**, **Netflix**, and **Microsoft**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Purnima Devi Barman**, an Indian biologist and wildlife conservationist, has been named in **TIME Magazine's Women of the Year 2025** list. She is the only Indian woman honored, recognized for her efforts in **conserving the greater adjutant stork (Hargila)**. Barman's work has positively impacted both the **environment** and **society**, alongside global figures like **Nicole Kidman** and **Gisele Pelicot**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- A **Lancet study** based on **GBD 2021** data reveals a **30% decline** in **India's suicide death rate** from 1990 to 2021, with a notable decrease among **females**. Globally, one person dies by **suicide** every **43 seconds**. The decline in India is attributed to various **mental health initiatives** and **policy reforms**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Indonesia achieved a historic **first-ever Asia Mixed Team Badminton Championship** title, defeating **defending champions China** 3-1 at the **Conson Sports Centre** in Qingdao, China. The team showcased outstanding skill and determination, securing the win with a dominant performance in the **men's doubles match**, marking a major milestone in Indonesia's badminton legacy and breaking China's stronghold in the tournament. ([Click here to read article](#))
- In July 2023, the **IOC** announced the launch of the **Olympic Esports Games**, with **Saudi Arabia** set to host the inaugural event in **2027**. The **Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee** and the **Esports World Cup Foundation** are key partners in this historic initiative. The event aims to bridge **esports** with traditional sports, expanding opportunities for global players and making a significant impact on the gaming industry. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **G Kamalini**, a 16-year-old **India U19 star**, made history as the youngest debutant in the **Women's Premier League (WPL)**. She received her **Mumbai Indians (MI)** cap on February 18, 2025, during their match against **Gujarat Giants (GG)** at Kotambi Stadium, Vadodara, surpassing her **U19 teammate Shabnam Shakil** for the record. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Mohammed Shami** became the **fastest Indian bowler** to reach **200 ODI wickets** during the **India vs Bangladesh** match in the **ICC Champions Trophy 2025**. He broke **Ajit Agarkar's** record, achieving the milestone in **133 matches**. Globally, Shami ranks joint second with **Saqlain Mushtaq**, behind **Mitchell Starc**. He also became **India's highest wicket-taker** in **ICC ODI events** with **60 wickets** in 19 matches, surpassing **Zaheer Khan's** record. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Rohit Sharma** became the **second fastest batsman** to score **11,000 runs** in **One-Day Internationals (ODIs)** during India's **Champions Trophy 2025** match against **Bangladesh** on **February 20, 2025**. He is now the **fourth Indian** and **10th player overall** to achieve this milestone in ODI cricket. ([Click here to read article](#))

Sports News

- The **9th Asian Winter Games** were held in **Harbin, China**, from **February 7-14, 2025**, with athletes from **34 countries** competing in **11 winter sports**. **China** topped the medal tally with 85 medals, followed by **Republic of Korea** and **Japan**. **India**, sending its largest-ever contingent of 59 athletes, did not win medals but saw growth in winter sports, with **Tara Prasad** achieving her **personal best** in figure skating, finishing 8th. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Jacob Kiplimo** of **Uganda** set a new **world half-marathon record** in **Barcelona**, completing the **21.0975 km race** in **56 minutes and 42 seconds**. This was **48 seconds faster** than the previous record set by **Yomif Kejelcha** of **Ethiopia** in November 2024. Kiplimo's performance is being celebrated as the **greatest single improvement** in the **men's world half-marathon record** in history. ([Click here to read article](#))

Schemes and Committees News

- The **Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA)** scheme has been extended until **2025-26** to provide better income support to **farmers**. Key components include the **Price Support Scheme (PSS)** for procurement at **Minimum Support Price (MSP)**, the **Price Stabilization Fund (PSF)** to manage price volatility, and the **Price Deficit Payment Scheme (PDPS)** to compensate for price differences, ensuring fair prices and income stability for farmers. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)**, launched on February 18, 2016, provides **crop insurance** to safeguard farmers from risks like **natural disasters, pests, and diseases**. In its nine years, it has disbursed **₹1.75 lakh crore** in claims to over **23.22 crore farmers**, stabilizing incomes and promoting **sustainable agriculture and innovation**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Arunachal Pradesh government**, led by **Chief Minister Pema Khandu**, has introduced initiatives to empower women, support youth, and drive development. The **revamped Dulari Kanya Scheme** now offers ₹50,000 for girls, with increased financial support for institutional deliveries and educational benefits for Class XI enrollment. The **Arun Parivar Patra Authority Bill, 2025** will establish a **citizen database** for better governance and welfare delivery. Additionally, the **Institute for Transforming Arunachal (ITA)** will provide research-backed policy recommendations for **governance, economic growth, and sustainable development**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Science and Technology News

- Elon Musk's **xAI** launched **Grok 3**, a highly advanced AI chatbot, hailed as the **most intelligent AI** ever developed. The launch attracted nearly **100,000 viewers** and highlighted Grok 3's exceptional capabilities. The development required **massive computing power**, with **100,000 GPUs** set up in just **122 days** and the **H100 cluster** doubled in **92 days**. This immense infrastructure has significantly enhanced Grok 3's **speed, accuracy, and reasoning abilities**, positioning it as one of the **most sophisticated AI systems**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Faecal coliform** bacteria, found in the intestines of humans and animals, indicate contamination by **sewage or animal waste** in water bodies like the **Ganga River**. Their presence signals potential health risks, including dangerous pathogens like **Salmonella** and **E. coli**, which can cause serious illnesses. The ongoing contamination in **Prayagraj** during the **Maha Kumbh Mela** raises significant **public health** concerns, with the need for urgent action to address untreated sewage discharge. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** and the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** have signed a **Letter of Intent (LoI)** to explore the potential of **AI-driven digital twin technologies**. This partnership aims to integrate advancements like **5G, IoT, AI, and AR/VR** to create virtual models for **real-time monitoring and simulations**, transforming **urban and infrastructure planning**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- Google has unveiled **Ananta**, its largest campus in **India**, located in **Mahadevpura, Bengaluru**. Named after the Sanskrit word for "infinite," Ananta is a hub of **innovation, collaboration, and sustainability**, emphasizing India's role in global **technology and AI advancements**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Microsoft** has unveiled its **Majorana 1 chip**, a quantum processor using a **novel topological core architecture**. This innovation introduces **topological qubits**, which are more **robust against errors** compared to traditional quantum chips, offering a stable and scalable solution for solving **complex industrial and scientific problems**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Chinese researchers at the **Wuhan Institute of Virology** discovered a new bat coronavirus, **HKU5-CoV-2**, which can infect human cells via the **ACE2 receptor**, similar to **SARS-CoV-2**. The virus belongs to the **merbecovirus** subgenus and shares similarities with **MERS**. While it has a lower binding efficiency, the presence of a **furin cleavage site** suggests it could still pose a risk for zoonotic transmission, highlighting the need for continuous surveillance of bat-borne viruses. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Microsoft** introduced **Magma**, a groundbreaking **multimodal AI model** that understands both **images and language** in digital and physical environments. Unlike traditional **vision-language models**, Magma integrates **verbal and spatial intelligence**, allowing it to perform **UI navigation and robotic manipulation** with greater precision. Developed by researchers from multiple universities, Magma is the first model to interpret and act on multimodal inputs in real-world tasks. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **ISRO** has developed a **10-tonne vertical planetary mixer**, the largest of its kind, for **solid propellant production**. Created in collaboration with **Central Manufacturing Technology Institute (CMTI)**, Bengaluru, the mixer enhances the efficiency and safety of **solid rocket motor manufacturing**. This milestone improves productivity, quality, and throughput in rocket motor production, reflecting India's growing **space technology** capabilities and commitment to **self-reliance**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **John McFall**, a **British astronaut and former Paralympian** with a **prosthetic leg**, has been **medically cleared** by the **European Space Agency (ESA)** for long-duration missions to the **International Space Station (ISS)**. This historic decision highlights ESA's commitment to **inclusive space exploration**. McFall, who lost his leg in a motorcycle accident at 19, is also a **trauma surgeon** and was part of an ESA study exploring astronauts with **physical disabilities**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Important Days News

- **World Pangolin Day**, celebrated annually on the **third Saturday of February**, will be observed on **February 15, 2025**. The day aims to raise awareness about **pangolins**, the world's most trafficked mammals, which face threats from **illegal wildlife trade, habitat destruction**, and high demand for their **scales** and **meat**. Conservationists and animal lovers unite to promote **conservation efforts** and advocate for **stronger protection laws**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **International Childhood Cancer Day (ICCD)**, observed on **February 15**, raises awareness about **childhood cancer** and advocates for improved **treatments** and **support** for young patients and their families. Established in **2002** by **Childhood Cancer International (CCI)**, ICCD emphasizes **early detection, healthcare accessibility**, and ongoing **medical research**, highlighting the challenges faced by children battling cancer and encouraging **community participation**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Global Tourism Resilience Day**, observed on **February 17**, celebrates the **strength** and **adaptability** of the **tourism industry**. It highlights the importance of a resilient sector capable of overcoming challenges like **pandemics, economic crises**, and **environmental changes**, ensuring continued **economic growth, cross-cultural exchange**, and **sustainability**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **World Day of Social Justice**, observed annually on **February 20**, promotes **fairness, equality**, and **inclusivity** worldwide. Established by the **United Nations (UN)**, it addresses issues like **poverty, social exclusion, gender inequality, unemployment, human rights violations**, and inadequate **social protection systems**. The 2025 observance emphasizes aligning global efforts for a **just and sustainable future** amid challenges like **climate change** and **economic transformation**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **International Mother Language Day** is observed on **February 21st** to promote **linguistic and cultural diversity**. The **2025** theme marks the **Silver Jubilee** of the day, celebrating **25 years** of efforts to preserve **endangered languages**, safeguard **cultural heritage**, and enhance **education** and **peace** through language preservation. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Arunachal Pradesh Foundation Day** is observed on **February 20th** to commemorate the state's transition from a **Union Territory** to a full-fledged state in **1987**. Known as the **Land of the Rising Sun**, it is the first place in India to receive sunlight. Located in northeastern India, Arunachal Pradesh shares borders with **Bhutan, China**, and **Myanmar**, making it strategically important. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Mizoram Foundation Day** is celebrated on **February 20** to mark the state's attainment of **statehood** in **1987**, becoming the **23rd state** of India. This occasion commemorates the transformation of the **Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council** into a full-fledged state, shared with **Arunachal Pradesh**, which also achieved statehood on the same day. ([Click here to read article](#))

Obituaries News

- Renowned Bengali **vocalist, composer**, and **lyricist Pratul Mukhopadhyay** passed away at the age of **83**. Known for his **soulful songs** like **Ami Banglar Gaan Gai** and **Dinga Bhasao Re**, Mukhopadhyay played a pivotal role in shaping **Bengali music**. His death marks the end of an era, leaving behind a lasting **legacy** that continues to inspire **musicians** and **music lovers**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Veteran **Telugu actor** and **producer C Krishnaveni** passed away at **102** in **Hyderabad** due to age-related issues. Known for her significant contributions to the **Telugu film industry**, she introduced legendary figures like **NT Rama Rao (NTR)** and **Ghantasala Venkateswara Rao**. Krishnaveni's legacy includes her roles as an **actor, singer**, and **producer**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Milind Rege**, former **Mumbai cricket captain** and a key figure in Indian domestic cricket, passed away on **February 19, 2025**, at the age of **76** due to **cardiac arrest**. Known for his profound cricketing knowledge, Rege played a crucial role in Mumbai's **five consecutive Ranji Trophy wins** and later contributed as a **selector** and **mentor**, helping discover talents like **Sachin Tendulkar** and **Yashasvi Jaiswal**. His passing marks a significant loss to Mumbai cricket. ([Click here to read article](#))

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Static Takeaways

Sr. No	Name	Static Details
Ministers in Govt. of India		
1	Union Minister of Agriculture	Shivraj Singh Chouhan
2	Union Minister of Finance	Nirmala Sitharaman
3	Union Minister of Forest, Environment and Climate Change	Bhupendra Yadav
States of India		
4	West Bengal	Governor - C.V. Ananda Bose CM - Mamta Banerjee Capital - Kolkata State Animal - Fishing Cat State Bird - White-throated Kingfisher State Flower - Night-flowering Jasmine
5	Assam	Governor - Lakshaman Prasad Acharya CM - Hemanta Biswa Sarma Capital - Dispur Silk - Muga, Eri, Pat silk Oil Industry - Digboi Refinery – birth place of the Oil Industry in India.
6	Uttarakhand	Governor - Gurmit Singh CM - Pushkar Singh Dhami Capital - Dehradun State Borders - Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh Char-Dhams - Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, Yamunotri State Animal - Himalayan Musk deer State Flower - Brahm Kamal State Tree - Burans
7	Gujarat	Governor - Acharya Devvrat CM - Bhupendra Patel Capital - Gandhinagar Largest city - Ahmedabad State Boundaries - Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, UT of Daman & Diu, Dadar & Nagar Haveli International boundary - Pakistan Sea borders Arabian Sea State Animal - Asiatic Lion State Bird - Greater Flamingo State Tree - Mango State Flower - Golgotha
8	Delhi	L. Governor - Vinai Kumar Saxena CM - Rekha Gupta Capital - New Delhi
9	Madhya Pradesh	Governor - Mangubhai Patel CM - Mohan Yadav Capital - Bhopal State Bird - Paradise Flycatcher State Animal - Swamp Deer (Barasingha) State Tree - Banyan Tree State Flower - Madonna Lilly State Fish - Mahasheer

Sr. No	Name	Static Details
10	Karnataka	<p>Governor - Thawar Chand Gehlot CM - Siddharamaiya Capital - Bengaluru State Boundaries - Maharashtra, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Goa, Tamil Nadu Principal Language - Kannada Other Language - Tulu, Hindi, Bengali, Mahi State Animal - Asian Elephant State Bird - Indian Roller</p>
11	Kerala	<p>Governor - V. Arlekar CM - Pinarayi Vijayan Capital - Thiruvananthapuram State Boundaries - Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Puducherry (Mahe) Number of Districts - 14 State Animal - Elephant State Bird - Great Indian Hornbill State Flower - Kanikonna or Indian laburnum or amaltus</p>
12	Jharkhand	<p>Governor - Santosh Gangwar CM - Hemant Soren Capital - Ranchi State Boundaries - Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, West Bengal State Animal - Elephant State Bird - Koel State Tree - Sal</p>
13	Odisha	<p>Governor - Hari Babu Kambhupati CM - Moham Majhi Capital - Bhubneshwar State Border - Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bay of Bengal State Animal - Sambhar State Bird - Blue Jay / Indian Roller</p>
14	Rajasthan	<p>Governor - Haribhau Bagde CM - Bhajanlal Sharma Capital - Jaipur State Border - Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat International Border - Pakistan State Flower - Rohida (Tecomella undulate) State Bird - Godawan or Great Indian Bustard State Animal - Camel, Chinkara</p>
Countries of World		
15	Qatar	<p>Head of State - Sheikh Tamim Bin AL Thani Capital - Doha Currency - Qatari Riyal Neighbouring Countries - Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE</p>
16	Brazil	<p>President - Lula Da Silva Capital - Brasilia Currency - Brazilian Riyal Neighbouring Countries - Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Colombia, Suriname, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru</p>

Sr. No	Name	Static Details
17	Mauritius	PM - Navin Ramgoolam Capital - Port Louis Currency - Mauritian Rupee
18	Indonesia	President - Prabowo Subianto Capital - Jakarta Currency - Indonesian Rupiah Neighbouring Countries - Malaysia, PNG, Timor-leste, Singapore, Philippines
19	USA	President - Donald Trump Capital - Washington D.C. Currency - American Dollar Neighbouring Countries - Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Bahamas
20	China	President - Xi Jinping Capital - Beijing Currency - Chinese Yuan Neighbouring Countries - India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, North Korea, Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan, Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan
21	Argentina	President - Javier Milei Capital - Buenos Aires Currency - Argentina Peso Neighbouring Countries - Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay
22	Saudi Arabia	President - Mohammed Bin Salman Capital - Rlyadh Currency - Saudi Riyal Neighbouring Countries - Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, UAE, Oman, Yemen
Banking Corporations/Companies/Big Platforms		
23	Axis Bank	MD - Amitabh Chaudhary Head office - Mumbai
24	SEBI	Chairman - Madhabi Buch Head office - Mumbai
25	RBI	Governor - Sanjay Malhotra Head office - Mumbai
26	Meta	CEO - Mark Zuckerberg Head office - California
27	South Indian Bank	MD - P R Seshadri Head office - Thirissur, Kerala
28	Standard Chartered Bank	MD - Pankaj Walia Head office - Mumbai
29	Karnataka Bank	MD - Srikrishana Hari Head office - Mangaluru
30	Tata Motors	CEO - Marc Lilstosella Head office - Mumbai
31	Tata Power	CEO - Praveer Sinha Head office - Mumbai
32	Zomato	CEO - Deepinder Goyal Head office -Gurugram, Haryana
33	Reliance Industries Limited	Chairman - Mukesh D Ambani Head office - Mumbai
34	Google	CEO - Sundar Pichai Head office - California
35	ISRO	Chairman - V Narayanan Head Office - Bengaluru