



## Current Affairs Supplement

February 2025

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## National

### ISRO's Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla to Pilot NASA's Private Axiom Mission 4, Marking 1st Indian Astronaut to travel to ISS

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s astronaut and the fighter pilot of Indian Air Force (IAF), **Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla**, has been named the **pilot** for Axiom Mission 4(**Ax-4**), a private spaceflight for International Space Station (ISS).



- With this announcement, he will become the **1st Indian astronaut** to go to the ISS on a private mission and also the 1st Indian to go to space in the last 40 years.

#### About Shubhanshu Shukla:

- i.Group Captain **Shubhanshu Shukla** was commissioned into IAF on **17th June, 2006**.
- ii.He is a fighter combat leader and a test pilot with approximately 2000 hours (hrs) of flying experience.

- He has an extensive experience of flying variety of aircraft including Su-30 MKI, MiG-21, MiG-29, Jaguar, Hawk, Dornier, among others.

- iii.He was promoted to wing commander in June 2019 and group captain of the IAF in 2024.
- iv.He is also one of the 4 astronaut-designates selected for India's ambitious Gaganyaan mission.

#### About Axiom-4 Mission:

- i.In 2023, NASA signed a mission of order with Texas (the USA)-based **Axiom Space**, American space infrastructure developer for the **4th** private astronaut mission named Axiom mission (Ax-4) to the ISS.

- Axiom Space has contracted with SpaceX as a launch provider for transportation to and from the space station for this mission.

- ii.The mission is scheduled to be launched from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, USA in 2025.
- iii.It is expected to dock with ISS for **14 days**, conducting a range of scientific experiments, educational outreach, and commercial activities, as part of their collaboration with NASA and ISRO.

#### Other Crew Members of Ax-4 mission:

- i.Peggy Whitson from the United States of America (USA), former astronaut of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and director of human spaceflight at Axiom Space, named as mission commander.
- ii.Sławosz Uznański-Wiśniewski of the European Space Agency (ESA) from Poland, and

Tibor Kapu of Hungary, have been named as mission specialist.

#### 4 New Wetlands, 2 from Tamil Nadu, 1 from Jharkhand, and 1 from Sikkim Added to Ramsar List

Union Minister **Bhupender Yadav**, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) announced the inclusion of **four new wetlands** from India in **Ramsar Convention list**, bringing the total number of internationally recognized Ramsar sites in **India to 89**.



- The newly added sites are the **Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary** and **Therthangal Bird Sanctuary** in Tamil Nadu (TN), **Khecheopalri Wetland** in Sikkim, and **Udhwa Lake** in Jharkhand. This also marks the first Ramsar sites for both Sikkim and Jharkhand.
- Tamil Nadu now has 20 Ramsar sites, the highest number in India, followed by Uttar Pradesh (UP) with 10.

**Note:** Globally, there are **2,529** Ramsar wetlands. Wetlands are unique ecosystems that play a crucial role in supporting diverse species of plants and wildlife, both aquatic and terrestrial.

#### About Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC):

**Union Minister**– Bhupender Yadav ( Constituency- Alwar, Rajasthan)

#### Maharashtra to Set up India's 1st AI University

Maharashtra is set to establish India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) University, to become a Center of Excellence(CoE) for AI education and innovation. The university will focus on AI research, innovation, and skill development.

- Maharashtra government has formed a **task force** chaired by **Parrag Jaïin Nainutia**, the Principal Secretary (Information Technology, IT), Government of Maharashtra, has been formed for planning and implementation.

#### Objectives of the AI University:

- i.The establishment of the AI University promotes research and development in AI and related fields .
- ii.It aims to make Maharashtra a leading hub for technology and AI-driven innovation.
- iii.It also drives technological innovation and formulates policies in AI and emerging technologies.

#### Task Force Members:

- i.The task force is designed to be a collaborative effort bringing together expertise from academia, industry, and government to create an institution focused on AI education, research, and innovation.
- ii.The task force members include:



- Directors of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, Mumbai, Maharashtra, and the Indian Institutes of Management-Mumbai(IIM-M), Mumbai.
- Representatives from Google India Private Limited (GIPL), Mahindra Group, and Larsen & Toubro Limited(L&T) .
- Officials from the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) .
- Experts from the Rajiv Gandhi Science and Technology Commission (RGSTC) of the Government of Maharashtra, and the Data Security Council of India (DSCI).

### **MEA Declares IBCA as Inter-Governmental International Organization**

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced that the New Delhi (Delhi) based International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) and its Secretariat have officially become a full-fledged treaty-based inter-governmental international organization and international legal entity with effect from **January 23, 2025**.

- The MEA acting as the Depository of the Framework Agreement on behalf of the Government of India (GoI), confirmed that **5 countries**-Republic of India, Republic of Nicaragua, Kingdom of Eswatini, Federal Republic of Somalia, and Republic of Liberia-have officially deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, or approval under Article VIII (1) of the Framework Agreement.

**Note:** Currently, **27 countries**, including India, have agreed to join IBCA, along with several international and national organizations dedicated to wildlife conservation.

### **Background of IBCA:**

**i.**On April 9, 2023, Narendra Modi, Prime Minister (PM) of India launched IBCA during the ‘Commemoration of 50 Years of India’s Project Tiger’ event.

- In February 2024, the Government of India(GoI) approved the establishment of IBCA with its headquarters in New Delhi and one-time budgetary support of **Rs.150 crore** for IBCA, covering five years from 2023-24 to 2027-28.

**ii.**It was established through the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), the nodal organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC).

**iii.**It aims to conserve **seven big cat** species—Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma.

### **About International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA):**

Director General(DG) – S P Yadav

**Headquarters** – New Delhi(Delhi)

**Established** – 2023

### **IA’s Eastern Headquarters ‘Fort William’ Renamed as ‘Vijay Durg’**

The Indian Army’s (IA) Eastern Headquarters, Fort William in Kolkata, West Bengal (WB) was renamed as ‘**Vijay Durg**’ to eliminate colonial influences. The fort was built by the British in **1781**, originally named after King William III of England. The new name draws inspiration

from an ancient Vijaydurg fort in **Maharashtra**, that was a key naval base for the Marathas under **Chhatrapati Shivaji**.

- The fort, covering over **170 acres** has 6 gates including Chowringhee, Plassey, Calcutta (now Kolkata), Water Gate, St. George's, and Treasury Gate.
- Fort William became the Eastern Army Command's headquarters in **1963** after the Sino(China)-India War.

i. Additionally, 'Kitchener House' within the fort was renamed as **Manekshaw House**, and the South Gate, previously known as St. George's Gate was renamed as **Shivaji Gate**.

ii. These changes, initiated in December 2024, reflect the ongoing efforts to "Indianize" military customs, a movement supported by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi.

iii. The renaming aligns with broader efforts to distance India from colonial legacy, with the Indian Navy (IN) already adopting a new ensign in September 2022.

### **Zomato Rebrands as 'Eternal' to Reflect Expanded Vision, Unveils New Logo**

Leading Indian food and grocery delivery giant **Zomato** announced that it will rename its parent company to **Eternal Limited.**, accompanied by a **new logo**. The move underscores the company's evolution beyond its core food delivery service into a diversified conglomerate, driven by its quick-commerce arm **Blinkit** and other ventures. **Eternal** will oversee four major divisions:

- Zomato**: Core food delivery vertical.
- Blinkit**: Quick-commerce unit (10-minute deliveries).
- District**: Live events and B2B logistics.
- Hyperpure**: Restaurant supply chain services.

i. The **Zomato app** remains unchanged for users. Existing services, including food delivery and subscriptions, continue uninterrupted.

ii. Zomato becomes first new-age tech firm to join Bombay Stock Exchange Sensex in December 2024.

iii. **A Journey from Foodiebay to Eternal**: Founded in 2007 as Foodiebay, a platform for uploading restaurant menus, Zomato's rebranding to Eternal caps an 18-year journey. **CEO Deepinder Goyal** emphasized that the change reflects Eternal's mission to build an enduring institution.



### **Cabinet Approvals on 7 February 2025**

The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by Prime Minister (PM) **Narendra Modi**, has approved the following:

- A new Income Tax (IT) Bill 2025 to simplify tax laws, and reduce legal complexities. Effective from the Financial Year (FY) 2025-26, the bill will replace the Income Tax Act of 1961 and will apply to taxpayers from the Assessment Year (AY) 2026-27.
- Extension of the tenure of the National Commission for SafaiKaramcharis (NCSK) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) for **3 years** beyond 31 March 2025, up to **31 March 2028**. This extension involves a financial implication of approximately **Rs. 50.91 crore**.
- Continuation and restructuring of the Central Sector Scheme – Skill India Programme (SIP) until **2026**, with an outlay of **Rs 8,800 crore** from 2022-23 to 2025-26.
- Granted ex-post facto approval to the **revision of divisional jurisdiction** under the proposed South Coast Railway (SCoR) Zone at **Visakhapatnam**, Andhra Pradesh (AP).

### **Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, launches book “I Am?”**

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar unveiled the book “**I Am?**”, compiled by **Gopichand P. Hinduja**, Chairman of the Hinduja Group. The launch event took place at the Vice-President’s Enclave in New Delhi, Delhi.

- The book was published by the Hinduja Foundation.
- The book delves into themes of unity, spirituality, and interfaith dialogue, emphasizing the importance of harmony in diversity.
- It includes contributions from scholars like **Zeenat Shaukat Ali**, a former professor at **St. Xavier’s College, Mumbai**, who contributed to the **concluding chapter** that focuses on **common grounds among religions**.

### **General Upendra Dwivedi Launched Memoir titled “I Am a Soldier’s Wife: The Life and Love of Toni Lidder”**

General **Upendra Dwivedi**, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) launched the memoir titled “**I Am a Soldier’s Wife: The Life and Love of Toni Lidder**” authored by Geetika Lidder, wife of late Brigadier Lakhwinder Singh Lidder at the Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi (Delhi). The book was published by **Roli Books**.

- The book honors Brigadier Lakhwinder Singh’s life as a soldier, husband, father, and leader and acknowledges the 4 C’s of leadership: Character, Competence, Conduct, and Commitment.
- i. Brigadier Lakhbinder Singh ‘Tony’ Lidder, Seva Medal (SM), Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM) was a distinguished officer of the Indian Army (IA), renowned for his leadership and dedication.
  - ii. He served as the Defence Assistant to the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and played a pivotal role in strategic military reforms.
  - iii. He lost his life in the 2021 Indian Air Force (IAF) Mi-17 crash in Tamil Nadu’s (TN) Nilgiri Hills, alongside **General Bipin Rawat**, India’s first CDS and 12 other personnel.



**Union Minister Rajnath Singh Inaugurates 15th Edition of Aero India in Bengaluru**

Union Minister **Rajnath Singh**, the Ministry of Defence (MoD), inaugurated the **15th edition of Aero India**, Asia's largest aerospace and defence exhibition, at Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru, Karnataka.



- The five-day event took place from February 10 to 14, 2025, with the theme “**The Runway to a Billion Opportunities.**”

**Key Highlights:**

- The first three days, from February 10 to 12, are designated as business days, while February 13 and 14 are reserved as public days for visitors.
- Union Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the **India Pavilion**, Innovations for Defence Excellence (**iDEX Pavilion**), and **Karnataka Pavilion** at Aero India 2025.
- Department of Defence Production, MoD, Secretary **Sanjeev Kumar** unveiled the new name of Hindustan Jet Trainer HJT-36, now called ‘**Yashas**’.
- Ahmedabad (Gujarat) – based Adani Defence & Aerospace, in partnership with the New Delhi (Delhi)- based Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) operating under MoD, introduced a **Vehicle-Mounted Counter-Drone System** at Aero India 2025.
- General Electric (**GE Aerospace**), headquartered in Ohio, United States of America (USA), has signed a **five-year** Performance-Based Logistics (PBL) contract with the Indian Air Force (**IAF**) to support the sustainment of **T700-GE-701D engines** powering its AH-64E-I Apache helicopters.

**Panchayati Raj Devolution Index 2024: Karnataka Tops, Followed by Kerala & TN**

Union Minister of State (MoS), **S.P. Singh Baghel**, Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAH&D) released the comprehensive Devolution Index Report titled “Status of Devolution to Panchayats in States – An Indicative Evidence-Based Ranking 2024” at the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi (Delhi).

- As per the report, **Karnataka** ranked **1st** in the devolution of power to panchayats, excelling in terms of funds, functions, and functionaries, followed by Kerala, Tamil Nadu (TN), Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh (UP).
- The report was prepared by the **IIPA** and assessed 31 states and Union Territories (UTs), sampling 172 Panchayats across 68 districts, with a total of 1,594 respondents interviewed.

**What is the Devolution Index?**

- The Devolution Index is the result of thorough research and empirical analysis, offering insights into decentralization progress across States and UTs.
- The Index evaluates **6 critical dimensions**: Framework, Functions, Finances, Functionaries, Capacity Building, and Accountability of Panchayats.

**About Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA):**

**President** – Jagdeep Dhankhar (Vice President of India)



**Headquarters** – New Delhi, Delhi

**Established** – 1954

### President's Rule Imposed in Manipur, After CM Biren Singh's Resignation

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) imposed **President's Rule** in **Manipur** following the resignation of Chief Minister (CM) **N Biren Singh**. This marks the **11<sup>th</sup>** instance of President's Rule being imposed in the state since its formation in 1951.



- The last instance occurred between June 2, 2001, and March 6, 2002, lasting 277 days.

### Resignation:

**i.** **N Biren Singh** resigned on **February 9, 2025**, nearly 21 months after ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities began in May 2023, which resulted in over 250 deaths and the displacement of thousands.

**ii.** He submitted his resignation to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla at the Raj Bhavan in Imphal, Manipur.

**iii.** He served as the 12th CM of Manipur from March 15 2017 to February 8 2025.

### Political Instability and Constitutional Deadlines:

**i.** Due to the growing political instability, the **Manipur Assembly**, with a tenure lasting until 2027 was placed under suspended animation.

**ii.** According to **Article 174(1)** of the Indian Constitution, state Assemblies must convene within 6 months of their last session.

**iii.** The Manipur Assembly was required to reconvene by February 12, 2025, as the last session was held on August 12, 2024.

### What is the President's Rule?

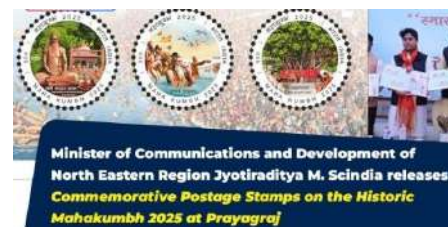
**i.** Under **Article 356** of the Indian Constitution, President's Rule suspends the state government, and the Governor assumes executive powers on behalf of the President of India.

**ii.** Under President's Rule, the elected state government is dissolved, and its powers are suspended.

**iii.** The **Governor** takes over as the executive **head of the state**, managing the administration on behalf of the President of India.

**iv.** President's Rule remains in effect for up to 6 months, with the possibility of extension for a maximum of **3 years**, but only with approval from Parliament every six months and under special conditions after the 1st year.

### Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia Releases Commemorative Postage Stamps on Maha Kumbh 2025



The Department of Posts (DoP) has released a **special commemorative souvenir sheet** featuring **3 postage stamps** dedicated to the **Maha Kumbh Mela 2025**, which is taking place in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh (UP) from 13th January to 26th February 2025.

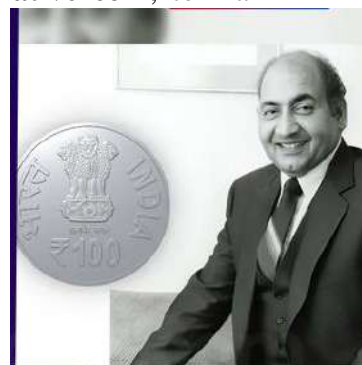
Union Minister Jyotiraditya Madhavrao Scindia, Ministry of Communications (MoC), unveiled these stamps at Arail Ghat Post Office (PO), Prayagraj.

- The commemorative postage stamps, designed by **Sankha Samanta**, depict 3 prominent aspects of **Triveni Tirtha– Maharshi Bharadwaj Ashram** (an ancient center of learning), **Snan** (holy dip at Triveni Sangam), and **Akshayvat** (the immortal Banyan tree).
- Other philatelic releases highlighting Maha Kumbh include special covers and cancellations on sacred Snan days, '**Divya, Bhavya and Digital Mahakumbh**', and a picture postcard celebrating '**Prakhyat Prayagraj**'.

**Note:** The Kumbh Mela is rooted in Hindu mythology, linked to the churning of the ocean (Samudra Manthan). Maha Kumbh occurs once every 144 years at Prayagraj, UP.

### GoI to Issue Rs 100 Commemorative Coin to Mark Birth Centenary of Mohammed Rafi

The Government of India (GoI) will issue a **Rs 100 commemorative coin**, to mark the **birth centenary** of legendary playback singer **Padma Shri Mohammed Rafi**, which concluded on 24 December 2024. The circular and non-circulating coin is reportedly **minted** by the India Government Mint (IGM) in **Mumbai**, Maharashtra.



- The **metal composition** of the Rs 100 commemorative coin will consist of a Quaternary Alloy, comprising 50% Silver (Ag), 40% Copper (Cu), 5% Nickel (Ni), and 5% Zinc (Zn).
- The coin will weigh 35 grams (g) and have a diameter of 44 millimeters (mm), featuring 200 serrations along the edge.
- On the **obverse side**, the face of the coin will bear the **Lion Capital of Ashoka Pillar** in the center with the legend '**Satyamev Jayate**' inscription, Rupee symbol (₹) below, and denominational value "100" in the international numerals below it.
- The left and right peripheries of the coin will be flanked with the words "Bharath" in Devanagari script and 'INDIA' in English respectively.
- On the **reverse side**, the face of the coin will bear Mohammed Rafi's image in the center with inscriptions **Birth Centenary of Mohammed Rafi** in Devanagari script and English on the upper and lower peripheries respectively, along with the years 1924-2024.

### Points to Note:

- i. Mohammed Rafi (24 December 1924 – 31 July 1980) often referred to as *Rafi Sahab* was born in Punjab. He was honoured with the **Padma Shri** in **1967** for 'Art'.
- ii. Commemorative coins were earlier issued in honour of legendary singers including **Begum Akhtar**, a renowned Ghazal artist in **2014**, and **Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi**, the iconic Carnatic singer in **2017**.

**Volvo Trucks Launches India's First Road Train for Efficient Logistics**

India's first Road Train was flagged off in Nagpur, Maharashtra by Union Minister, **Nitin Jairam Gadkari**, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH). It was developed by Bengaluru (Karnataka) based **Volvo Trucks** (Volvo Group India Private Limited) and operated by Gurgaon, (Haryana) based **Delhivery Limited**.

- This innovation marks a major shift in India's long-haul transportation system, offering higher efficiency and increased capacity in logistics.

i. The Volvo FM "Forward Control Medium Height Cab" 420 4×2 Road Train features a **24-foot** intermediate trailer and a 44-foot semi-trailer, offering a total cargo volume of **144 cubic** meters (m), which is 50% higher than standard semi-trailers.

ii. The Road Train is certified by the MoRTH and Pune, Maharashtra based Automotive Research Association of India (**ARAI**) for operations between Nagpur and Bhiwandi, Maharashtra.

iii. The Road Train is equipped with advanced safety features, including the Electronic Braking System (EBS), Electronic Stability Program (ESP), and a **360-degree** camera system, ensuring a safe and stable journey.

**India's 4th-Generation Deep-Ocean Submersible 'Matsya-6000' Completes Wet Testing**

India's 4th-generation deep-ocean submersible '**Matsya-6000**' successfully completed its wet testing at L&T Shipbuilding facility in Kattupalli Port, Chennai (Tamil Nadu, TN).

- It was developed and tested by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (**NIOT**), Chennai under the **Samudrayaan Project**, and was designed for deep-sea exploration and scientific research.

i. Before undergoing wet testing, Matsya-6000 completed dry tests at a 500 m operational range to assess the integration and performance of the submersible, ensuring its readiness for more advanced trials.

ii. From January 27 to February 12, 2025, Matsya-6000 underwent wet testing at Kattupalli Port, involving 8 dives: **5 unmanned** and **3 manned**.

iii. The tests focused on key performance parameters, such as power control, buoyancy, stability, maneuverability, safety, and the functionality of its scientific instruments.

**About National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT):**

**Director-** Balaji Ramakrishnan

**Headquarters-** Chennai (Tamil Nadu)

**Established-** 1993

**Bharat Tex 2025: India's Largest Textile Event Held in New Delhi & Greater Noida**

Bharat Tex 2025, the 2nd edition of India's largest global textile event was organised by a

consortium of 12 Textile Export Promotion Councils (EPCs), supported by the Ministry of Textiles (MoT) to highlight India's exceptional capabilities in the textile industry. The 2025 event was built around the twin themes of “**Resilient Global Value Chains**” and “**Textile Sustainability**”.

- Bharat Tex 2025 events were held at 2 state-of-the-art venues: the main event (14 to 17 February 2025) which covered the entire value chain of textiles from raw materials to finished products at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi(**Delhi**), and Related exhibitions(12 to 15 February 2025) held at India Expo Centre and Mart (IECM) in Greater New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (NOIDA), **Uttar Pradesh** (UP).

i.Prime Minister(PM) **Narendra Modi** addressed Bharat Tex 2025 at Bharat Mandapam and emphasised its role in displaying India's rich cultural diversity through traditional garments.

ii.Union Minister Giriraj Singh, MoT inaugurated a key event named **Indie Haat** at the National Crafts Museum & Hastkala Academy (**NCMHA**), New Delhi. The event featured traditional weaves and crafts, highlighting the fusion of tradition and innovation in the textile sector.

#### **A Book Titled “The New Icon: Savarkar and the Facts” by Arun Shourie**

A book titled “**The New Icon Savarkar and the Facts**” was authored by **Arun Shourie**, a Scholar, Author, and former Minister for Disinvestment, Communications, and Information Technology (IT). Published by Penguin Random House India (**PRHI**), the book “The New Icon Savarkar and the Facts”, analyses various myths built around **Vinayak Damodar Savarkar**, an Indian freedom fighter, activist, writer, and President of Hindu Mahasabha.

- Arun Shourie was an economist with the World Bank (WB) (1967-1976) and Editor of the Indian Express (IE) from 1987 to 1990.
- He became a nominated Member of Parliament (MP) and held the position of Minister of Disinvestment, Communications, and IT in Atal Bihari Vajpayee's cabinet.
- He was honoured with the **Ramon Magsaysay Award** for Journalism, Literature, and Creative Communication Arts in **1982**. In **1990**, he was honoured with the **Padma Bhushan** for Literature and Education.
- His other notable works include Preparing For Death (2020), and The Commissioner For Lost Causes (2022).

#### **Overview of Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani's visit to India from February 17 to 18, 2025**

The Amir of Qatar, His Highness (HH) **Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani** visited India from **February 17 to 18, 2025**, at the invitation of Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi. This visit marked his 2nd bilateral trip to India, following his first official visit in March 2015. He was accompanied by high-level delegations, including Ministers, Senior Officials and a Business Delegation.

- During his visit, he engaged in significant discussions with Indian President **Droupadi Murmu** and PM **Narendra Modi** in New Delhi (Delhi).
- i. On the sidelines of the visit, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), New Delhi (Delhi) in partnership with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I) organized the '**India-Qatar Joint Business Forum**' on February 18 2025 in New Delhi (Delhi).
- ii. As part of his visit, both countries signed several pivotal agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), ranging from strategic partnerships and economic cooperation to cultural and energy exchanges.

#### **About Qatar:**

Prime Minister (PM)– Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani

#### **UP Assembly Becomes 1st in India to Introduce Translation Facility**

The Uttar Pradesh (UP) Assembly made history by becoming the **first** legislative body in India to implement a **translation facility**. This innovative service will enable discussions in **Awadhi, Braj, Bhojpuri, Bundelkhand, and English** to improve accessibility and inclusivity in legislative proceedings.

- The arrangement was reviewed by Chief Minister (CM) of UP, **Yogi Adityanath**, who observed translation rehearsals in multiple languages.
- i. The service was introduced on February 18, 2025 in the assembly session, subject to approval from the House of Suit.
- ii. If the members want to listen to the address of others in any of the four regional dialects (Awadhi, Braj, Bundeli and Bhojpuri), they will have the facility to select the respective channel on their seat to listen to the live translation in their ear plugs.

#### **IRDAI Forms Committee Under Ex-SBI Chairman Dinesh Khara to Review Insurance Law Amendments**

Hyderabad (Telangana) based Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has set up a **7-member committee** to review and implement changes to the Insurance Act of 1938.

- This panel will be led by **Dinesh Kumar Khara**, the former Chairman of the Mumbai (Maharashtra) based State Bank of India (SBI).
- These changes are part of the government's effort to improve the insurance sector and its reach, aiming for "**Insurance for All by 2047.**"
- i. The committee, led by Dinesh Kumar Khara, is tasked with reviewing these proposed amendments and suggesting a framework for their implementation.
- The committee is expected to submit its report within **3 months**.
- ii. Based on its recommendations, the IRDAI will forward proposals to the Ministry of Finance (MoF), while the Department of Financial Services (DFS), MoF will draft a new bill for stakeholder feedback.



**About Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI):**

**Chairperson**– Debasish Panda

**Headquarters**- Hyderabad, Telangana

**Established**-

1999

**Desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyaan's 1st Phase Achieves 5 Guinness World Records**

The **Desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyaan**, under the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy), achieved **five Guinness World Records**, underscoring India's commitment to holistic healthcare and the global recognition of Ayurveda.

- The New Delhi (Delhi) based National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (**NCISM**), with support from the Ministry of AYUSH, celebrated the completion of the first phase of the Abhiyaan in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The campaign reached over 1.29 crore individuals, exceeding the target of 1 crore, during the closing ceremony.

**Note:** The Desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan initiative aims to bring Ayurveda to every individual's doorstep by educating people about their unique Prakriti, or Ayurvedic body type. It was launched on Ayurveda day on October 29, 2024.

**Key points:**

i. The five Guinness World Records achieved are

1. 6,004,912 pledges, the most pledges received for a health campaign in one week,
2. 13,892,976 pledges, the most pledges received for a health campaign in one month,
3. 13,892,976 pledges, the most pledges received for a health campaign overall,
4. 62,525 photos, the largest online photo album of people displaying a digital certificate,
5. 12,798 videos, the largest online video album of people saying the same sentence.

ii. This achievement involved 1,81,667 volunteers, including 1,33,758 Ayurveda students, 16,155 teachers, and 31,754 physicians, setting a world record in itself.

iii. Richard Williams Stenning, the Guinness World Records adjudicator, officially announced the successful completion of all five records and presented the certificates to the Union Minister of State (MoS)/ (Independent Charge, IC) Jadhav Prataprao Ganpatrao, the Ministry of AYUSH in Mumbai.

**CUNPK Hosts First-Ever 'Conference For Women Peacekeepers From Global South' In New Delhi**

The Indian Army (IA), through the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (**CUNPK**), India hosted the **first-ever** 'Conference on Women Peacekeepers from the Global South' at the Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi (Delhi) from **February 24 to 25, 2025**. The conference was organized by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence (MoD).



- The theme of the Conference is “**Women in Peacekeeping: A Global South Perspective**”.
- The conference featured sessions on topics such as addressing sexual exploitation and abuse, leveraging technology in peacekeeping, and promoting regional cooperation among Global South nations.

**Key Dignitaries:**

i. President of India, **Droupadi Murmu** and External Affairs Minister (EAM) **Subrahmanyam Jaishankar** participated and delivered the keynote address in the Conference.

ii. The UN was represented by Jean-Pierre Lacroix, UN Under-Secretary-General (SG) and Christian Saunders, UN Special Coordinator.

**India's Pioneering Role in UN Peacekeeping Operations:**

i. India has been a key contributor to UN peacekeeping missions for over **70 years**, providing nearly 300,000 troops across 50 missions since the **1950s**.

**Dr. Kiran Bedi** was the first female UN Police Advisor, serving from 2003 to 2005.

**About Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK):**

i. CUNPK is an Indian institution dedicated to enhancing India's contributions to UN peacekeeping operations.

ii. CUNPK was established in **2000** by the **IA**, with encouragement from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and was later nurtured at the United Service Institution (USI) of India, with support from the MEA and the Armed Forces.

**IIT Madras Unveils India's First Hyperloop Test Track**

India achieved a major milestone in transportation with the unveiling of the **first hyperloop test track** at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras in Chennai (Tamil Nadu, TN). The 422-meter (m)-long facility was developed with the support of the Ministry of Railways (MoR).

- It is part of a broader initiative to develop a full-scale Hyperloop system, with the Mumbai-Pune corridor being a prime candidate for the first commercial project.

**Note:** Hyperloop Technology was first proposed by **Elon Musk** in **2013**, aiming to revolutionize long-distance travel by significantly reducing travel times.

**About First Hyperloop Test Track:**

i. The hyperloop technology uses a magnetically levitated pod inside a vacuum tube to eliminate friction and air resistance and could reduce travel time between New Delhi (Delhi) and Jaipur (Rajasthan) (around 300 kilometer, km) to just 30 minutes.

ii. This high-speed transport system promises advantages such as weather immunity, collision-free travel, speeds twice that of airplanes, and low energy consumption.

**Key Technologies of the Hyperloop System:**

i. The Hyperloop is a high-speed transportation system that involves moving capsules or pods through vacuum-sealed tubes at speeds of up to 1,100 km/hour (h).

**FutureBrand Index 2024: Samsung Tops; India's Reliance Industries Ranks 2nd**

According to 'The FutureBrand Index 2024', a global brand perception study, South Korea's **Samsung** has secured the **top spot** in the global rankings, reflecting its strong brand perception

and adaptability to market demands.

- **India's Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)** ranks **2nd** and made an impressive leap, 11 spots rising from **13th** in 2023. This marks the first time an Indian company has made it to the top three on the list.
- Reliance, the only Indian brand on the list ranks ahead of well-known global brands like Apple, Nike, Walt Disney, Netflix, Microsoft, Intel and Toyota.
- **Other Rankings:** Danaher from the USA (Ranks 6th), Disney (7th) from the USA, MOUTAI from China (8th), TSMC from Taiwan (9th) and IHC from the United Arab Emirates(UAE)(10th).

### **GoI Extends B.V.R. Subrahmanyam's Tenure as CEO of NITI Aayog Until February 2026**

The Government of India (GoI) extended the tenure of **B.V.R. Subrahmanyam** as Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**) of National Institution for Transforming India (**NITI Aayog**) for one more year, until **February 24, 2026**.

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), approved Subrahmanyam's tenure as CEO of NITI Aayog until February 24, 2026.
- In February 2023, Subrahmanyam took charge as the **4th CEO** of NITI Aayog for a two-year term, succeeding Parameswaran Iyer, who served as the 3rd CEO of NITI Aayog.

### **About B.V.R. Subrahmanyam:**

- i. He is a 1987-batch retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Chhattisgarh cadre.
- ii. He worked in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) (India) under Prime Minister (PM) Manmohan Singh between 2004 and 2008 and under PM Narendra Modi between March 2012 and March 2015.

## International

### Elon Musk's X Corp to Launch 1st Digital Wallet with Visa Partnership

Elon Musk owned social media platform, X Corp (formerly known as Twitter, Inc. ), a wholly owned subsidiary of X Holdings Corp, unveiled its 1st Digital Wallet , peer-to-peer (P2P) payment service '**X Money**' in partnership with Visitors International Stay Admission(**VISA**), to launch a real-time payment system aiming to create an "everything application (app)."

- **VISA**, one of the largest United States of America (USA) credit card networks, will be the 1st partner for X's Money Account service, set to launch later in **2025**.

i. The company will utilize Visa Direct, Visa's real-time money transfer solution, to fund X Money's wallet, link to a debit card for payments to other users, and facilitate smooth transfers back to your bank account.

ii. X Money will enable users to transfer funds instantly to their bank accounts through Visa Direct.

### Forbes Top 10 Most Powerful Countries in The World 2025: USA Topped; India secures 12th spot

According to the list of Top 10 powerful countries in the world 2025 released by an american business magazine **Forbes**, the United States of America (**USA**) secured the top spot as the most powerful country in the world with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of **USD 30.34 trillion**.

- The USA was followed by **China** in the **2nd** spot with a GDP of USD 19.53 trillion and **Russia** in the 3rd position with a GDP of USD 2.2 trillion respectively.
- **India** secured the **12th** position with a GDP of USD 4.27 trillion in the list as of February 2025.

**Note:** In terms of **global** GDP, **India** is positioned at the **5th** spot behind the USA, China, Germany, and Japan.



### India Tops Global List in Passenger Loads on Domestic Flights: IATA Report

Montreal (Canada)-based International Air Transport Association (**IATA**) released its 'full-year and December 2024 international passenger market performance data', showing record-high demand for air travel. As per IATA's domestic full-year traffic report, India's domestic flights have recorded a Passenger Load Factor (**PLF**) of **86.4%** in 2024 (down by 0.6% point compared to 2023), the highest among all domestic markets.



- Also, India has surpassed the United States of America (**USA**) (**84.1%**) and **China** (**83.2%**), are ranked at **2nd and 3rd** position respectively.

- As per Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)'s data, the aviation sector in India witnessed **163 million** passengers boarding domestic flights in 2024.
- i. The report revealed that domestic-full year demand reached record highs in terms of passenger numbers and load factors.
- Domestic full-year traffic for 2024 increased 5.7% compared to previous year while capacity increased by 2.5%.
- ii. The report showed that the total full-year in 2024 measured in RPKs has increased by 10.4% compared to 2023.
- iii. As per the report, international full-year traffic increased 13.6% in 2024 compared to 2023, and the capacity increased by 12.8%.

### Iran Unveils Its 1st Drone Carrier Warship 'Shahid Bagheri'

Iran commissioned its 1st drone carrier warship, the 'Shahid Bagheri' also known as Shahid Bahman Bagheri or Shahid Bakri, into the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy during a ceremony held in the Persian Gulf.

- It aims to strengthen Iran's maritime presence and operational capabilities, enhancing Iran's defensive and deterrent power.

#### About Shahid Bagheri:

- i. Converted from a commercial container ship, it is designed for the deployment of drones, helicopters, and missile systems, allowing operations far from Iran's mainland.
- ii. It is equipped with Unmanned Aerial vehicle (UAV), maritime and helicopter refueling stations, air defense systems, intelligence and surveillance tools, an air traffic control tower, and various combat drones and guided underwater units.



#### Key Features:

- i. **Drone and Helicopter Operations:** It is equipped with a **180-meter (m)** runway, multiple hangars for drones and helicopters, and a dedicated control tower for seamless operations.
- ii. **Long Range Missile Systems:** It is armed with long-range surface-to-surface missiles and missile-launching boats capable of striking targets up to **30 kilometers (km)** away.
- iii. **Speed:** It has a maximum speed of **22 knots** and an economic cruising speed of **18 knots**.
- iv. **Medical and Logistical Facilities:** it includes specialized hospitals offering surgical and medical services, along with sports and fitness facilities to support the crew's well-being.
- v. **Sustained Operations:** It has a range of up to **22,000 nautical miles (NM)** and can operate for up to **one year** without the need for refueling.

**Panama Becomes 1st Latin American Nation to Exit China's BRI**

The President of Panama, **José Raúl Mulino Quintero** announced that Panama would not renew its participation in China's Belt and Road Initiative (**BRI**), making it the **1st Latin American** nation to withdraw from the global infrastructure program.

- This decision follows the visit of the United States of America's (USA) Secretary of State **Marco Antonio Rubio**, during which Panama faced pressure over its ties with China.
- Panama joined the BRI in **2017**, but the initiative faced growing criticism, regarding the high costs of projects and the financial strain of repaying loans by other countries.



**Note:** India strongly opposed the CPEC due to its route passing through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (**PoK**), a region of India.

**About Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):**

**i.** The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched by China's President **Xi Jinping** in 2013, is a global infrastructure development and investment project aimed at enhancing Beijing's (China) global influence.

- The initiative seeks to establish extensive networks of land and sea routes that connect Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf region, Africa, and Europe.

**ii. Global Reach:** The BRI involves over **140 countries** and regions. China, as a result, became a major trading partner for many countries, leading the world in total trade volume and a destination for global investment.

**iii. Flagship Project:** The most prominent BRI project is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (**CPEC**), a USD 60 billion venture linking **Gwadar Port** of Balochistan region in Pakistan to Xinjiang province in China.

- The **3,000 kilometer** (km) long CPEC encompasses a variety of infrastructure projects, including roads, railways, and energy developments since 2013.

**iv.** In 2023, **Italy** also withdrew from the BRI amid the USA concerns about China's expanding economic influence.

**Corruption Perceptions Index 2024: India ranks 96; Denmark Tops**

Berlin(Germany)-based International Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), **Transparency International** (TI) released its '2024 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI 2024)' which evaluated the perceived levels of public sector corruption across 180 countries.

- According to the 2024 CPI Report, India ranks **96th** out of 180 countries with a score of **38**, marking a decline from its 2023 position, where India ranked **93rd** with a score of **39**. India's score and rank was shared by Gambia and Maldives.

- **Denmark** tops the 2024 CPI, for the 7th consecutive time with a score of 90, followed by Finland(88) and Singapore(84).

i. The 2024 CPI highlights that about 85% of the world (about **6.8 billion people**) live in countries with high corruption.

ii. South Sudan ranked 180th (score 8), Somalia at 179th (score 9), Venezuela at 178th (score 10) and Syria at 177th (score 12) are the most corrupt nations, ranking at the bottom.

#### **About Transparency International(TI):**

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)– Maíra Martini

Headquarters– Berlin, Germany

#### **Brazil to Join Major Oil-Exporting Nations in OPEC+ Group**

**Brazil's** government approved its membership in Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC+) plus, a coalition of 22 major oil-producing nations, marking a significant move for the country. Brazil was officially invited to join in 2023.

- The 'National Council for Energy Policy' (Conselho Nacional de Política Energética, **CNPE**) authorized the move, marking a key step in Brazil's emergence as a significant contributor in the global oil market.
- This decision comes ahead of Brazil's role as the host of the 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference (**COP30**) in November 2025.

**Note:** As of January 2025, OPEC+ has 22 member countries.

#### **About Brazil:**

**President**– Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

#### **12th World Government Summit Held in Dubai from 11-13 February 2025**

The **12th** edition of the World Governments Summit (**WGS**) was held from **11-13 February 2025** in **Dubai**, the United Arab Emirates (**UAE**) under the theme '**Shaping Future Governments**', The 2025 Summit aims to inspire and empower the next generation of governments.

i. **Union Minister Bhupender Yadav**, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (**MoEFCC**), represented India at the WGS 2025 and participated in 2 major sessions:

- High-Level Roundtable (HLR) on the Future of Mobility
- XDGs 2045 (the next global development agenda) Ministerial Roundtable

ii. **3 Indian** computer science students **Sagar Teotia** (Team Lead), **Abhinav Mishra**, and **Anushka Singh** from the Maharaja Agrasen Institute of Technology (**MAIT**), New Delhi (Delhi) secured the **Bronze Award** at the **Global Best M-Gov Award 2025** during the **WGS 2025** in Dubai.



#### **Brazil to Host 'BRICS Summit 2025' in Rio de Janeiro in July**

In February 2025, **Brazil** announced that the next '**BRICS Summit 2025**' will take place in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) on July 6-7, 2025. Throughout 2025, Brazil will lead the group of developing nations and plans to prioritize global governance reform and bolster cooperation among countries of the Global South.



**About BRICS:**

BRICS, an intergovernmental organisation originally formed in 2009 by Brazil, Russia, India, and China, expanded with South Africa in 2010. In 2024, it expanded by adding Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with Saudi Arabia also invited to join. Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Malaysia have applied for membership. At the 2024 summit in Kazan (Russia), Indonesia became the 11th member, while Nigeria was named a “partner country”

**EAM S Jaishankar Participated at 8th IOC in Oman**

External Affairs Minister (EAM) **Subrahmanyam Jaishankar** participated at the inaugural session of 8th Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) in Muscat, Oman. The conference, themed “Voyage to New Horizons of Maritime Partnership,” aimed to enhance regional cooperation and address shared challenges in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

- During the conference, EAM **S. Jaishankar** delivered the keynote address highlighting India’s dedication to enhancing regional cooperation.

**Highlights of the Visit:**

**i. Bilateral Engagements:** During his visit, EAM of India, S. Jaishankar held a bilateral meeting with Sayyid Badr Albusaidi, the Foreign Minister of Oman.

- They reviewed the full spectrum of **India-Oman relations** and discussed avenues for further enhancing collaboration in areas of mutual interest.

**ii. Commemorative Initiatives:** EAM of India, S. Jaishankar and Foreign Minister of Oman, Sayyid Badr Albusaidi unveiled a specially **designed logo** celebrating **70 years** of diplomatic relations between India and Oman.

- This logo symbolizes the long-standing partnership built on history, culture, and strong people-to-people ties.

**THE World Reputation Rankings 2025: Harvard University Retained Top Spot; 4 Indian Varsities in the List**

According to Times Higher Education (THE)’ latest ‘World Reputation Rankings 2025’, **Harvard University** based in the United States of America (USA) retained top position as the world’s most reputed institution for the **14th** consecutive year, with an overall score of **99.9**.

- USA-based Massachusetts Institute of Technology (**MIT**) and United Kingdom (UK)-based **University of Oxford** jointly shared 2nd position on the list and both secured the overall score of **99.7**. This marks the highest position for any institution from the UK since 2015.
- This year, only 4 Indian universities/institutions featured on the list. Also, all these institutions witnessed a drop in their rankings compared to the 2023 edition.

**India Specific:**

**i.** Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based Indian Institute of Science (IISc) saw drop in its ranking from 101-123 (in 2023) to 201-300, with overall score within the range of 26.9-34.2.

**ii.** Similarly, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IIT-D) based in Delhi, slipped to 201-300 (in 2025) from 151-175 (in 2023).

- While Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN), ranked in the range of 201-300, down from 176-200 (in 2023).
- Also, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (**IIT-B**) which was featured in the previous edition of rankings in 151-175 range, has not been included in 2025 rankings.
- iii. Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA), which is a private deemed-to-be university based in Bhubaneswar (Odisha) debuted in the latest edition of rankings and has been ranked in the 201-300, with overall score of 26.9-34.2.

### **Sunita Williams Sets New Record for Longest Spacewalk by a Female Astronaut During 92<sup>nd</sup> USA Spacewalk**

An Indian-origin astronaut from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) **Sunita "Suni" Williams** set a new record for the longest total spacewalking time by a female astronaut, reaching **62 hours and 6 minutes**. This milestone was achieved during the **92<sup>nd</sup> United States of America (USA) spacewalk**.

- i. The spacewalk was **part of Expedition 72**, which began on September 23, 2024.
- ii. This marked **her ninth spacewalk**, breaking the previous record of 60 hours and 21 minutes held by former astronaut Peggy Whitson.
- iii. During this spacewalk, Sunita Williams, along with her mission partner Butch Wilmore, performed maintenance on the International Space Station (ISS) and collected material samples from the Destiny laboratory and Quest airlock for scientific analysis.

- Both astronauts have been on the International Space Station (ISS) since June 2024.

### **Konstantinos Tasoulas Elected as Greece's New President**

Former House speaker of Greece Konstantinos Tasoulas, the candidate from the ruling conservative New Democracy (ND) party, was elected as the **President of Greece** (Officially Hellenic Republic) for a five-year term, effective from March 13, 2025, by the Greek Parliament.



- He won the presidency by securing 160 votes in the fourth round of voting in Greece's 300-member parliament.
- He will succeed **Katerina Sakellaropoulou**, Greece's first female president, as her five-year term comes to an end on March 13, 2025.

### **About Konstantinos Tasoulas:**

- i. Konstantinos Tasoulas is a lawyer and a former speaker of the Hellenic Parliament.
- ii. In 2000, he was elected Member of Parliament (MP) for Ioannina, Greece.
- iii. In 2006, he was appointed as the parliamentary representative of the ND party, and in 2010, he became its General Secretary.
- iv. In 2007, he served as the Defense Deputy Minister of Greece.
- v. From 2014 to 2015, he served as the Minister of Culture and Sports in Greece.
- vi. From 2019 to 2025, he served as the President of the Hellenic Parliament.

## Defence

### Indian Armed Forces conducts TROPEX 25 to test its combat readiness

The senior military officers observed the Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX-2025), joint operations aboard several Indian Navy Ship (INS) to witness the operations and readiness of Indian armed forces : Indian Navy (IN), the Indian Army (IA), and the Indian Air Force (IAF), in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The exercise was held for 2 days from January 30-31, 2025.



- The senior military officers participated in the exercise are Lieutenant General **Johnson P Mathew**, Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (CISC); Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani, Vice Chief of the Army Staff (VCOAS); Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, Vice Chief of the Naval Staff (VCNS); Air Marshal Sujeet Pushpakar (S.P) Dharkar, Vice Chief of the Air Staff (VCAS) and Lt Gen Ajay Kumar, Director General (DG) of Infantry.

#### About

#### TROPEX:

- TROPEX is the Indian Navy's (IN) largest exercise, held every two years, to improve coordination among the armed forces and to test readiness in case of threats in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- The previous exercise, TROPEX 23 involved extensive operational activities, including coastal defence operations (Sea Vigil) and amphibious maneuvers (AMPHEX).

#### About

#### TROPEX

#### 25:

- Senior officers onboard the India's first indigenous aircraft carrier **INS Vikrant** saw fighter jets and helicopters in action, with demonstrations that included bomb drops, rocket firing, and aerobatics.
- On **INS Jalashwa**, the officers watched the Army soldiers and Navy Commandos carry out a series of amphibious landing drills. These included breaking through bunkers, jumping from planes in combat, and landing troops and vehicles on the shore using specialized boats.
- Air Marshal SP Dharkar** participated in a MiG-29K trainer, showcasing the joint capabilities of the IN, the IA, and the IAF.

### DRDO Successfully Conducted 3 Flight-trials of Indigenous VSHORADS from off the Coast of Odisha

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted three consecutive flight-trials of the Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) from Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the coast of Odisha. These tests were conducted against high-speed targets flying at very low altitude.



i. During these tests, the surface-to-air missiles intercepted and completely destroyed the targets having reduced thermal signature simulating low flying drones at different flying conditions.

ii. These flight-tests were carried out in final deployment configuration where in two field operators carried out weapon readiness, target acquisition and missile firing.

#### **About Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO):**

It is the Research and Development (R&D) wing of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), Government of India (GoI).

**Chairman-** Dr. Samir Vankatpati Kamat

**Headquarters-** New Delhi, Delhi

**Established-** 1958

#### **IA and IAF Conduct Joint Airborne Operations Exercise 'Ex Winged Raider'**

The Indian Army (IA) and Indian Air Force (IAF) jointly conducted a major training exercise named **Ex Winged Raider**, focusing on special airborne operations in the Eastern region (India).

- The exercise demonstrated high operational readiness and showcased the integration between the IA and the Indian Air Force (IAF).

#### **Highlights:**

i. The exercise focused on practicing various airborne insertion techniques using both **fixed-wing** and **rotary-wing** aircraft, aimed at enhancing the skills of the participating personnel.

ii. The exercise also witnessed a **first** in the Eastern Theatre, with airborne operations being conducted from the Chinook Helicopter (CH-47 Chinook).

iii. This training provided a crucial opportunity for troops to refine their operational expertise, which is essential for rapid deployment and ensuring mission readiness.

iv. It highlighted the vital role of airborne forces in modern military strategies, enabling swift and decisive action in diverse operational settings.

#### **Synergy Between IA and IAF:**

i. The joint operation demonstrated the seamless coordination between the IA and the IAF, showcasing the effectiveness of integrated training programs.

ii. This joint operation reaffirmed both forces' commitment to maintaining a high level of preparedness to address evolving security challenges.

#### **Notable Event:**

i. On February 9, 2025, IA Chief General, **Upendra Dwivedi** and IAF Air Chief, **Marshal AP Singh** had a historic flight together in the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, single-engine multirole fighter aircraft.

#### **About Indian Air Force (IAF):**

Chief of the Air Staff (CAS)– Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh

**Headquarters**– New Delhi (Delhi)

**Established**– 1932



**13th Edition of India-Maldives Joint Military Exercise 'Ekuverin' Begins**

The 13th edition of the joint military exercise '**Ekuverin**' hosted by Maldives between the Indian Army (IA) and the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF), commenced in the Archipelago Nation (Maldives).

- On February 2, 2025, the inaugural ceremony was held at the Official Composite Training Center of the MNDF at Maalifushi (Maldives) and was attended by Major General, **Ibrahim Hilmy**, Chief of the MNDF and **G Balasubramanian**, High Commissioner of India (HCI).

- The 14-day exercise will run from **February 2 to 15, 2025**.

About	Ekuverin	Exercise:
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**i.** It is a bilateral annual exercise conducted between India and Maldives since 2009 to strengthen military relations between the two countries.

- Ekuverin means "Friends" in the Dhivehi language.

- The 12th edition was held in Chaubatia, Uttarakhand (India) from June 11 to 24, 2023.

**ii.** The exercise conducted alternatively between India and Maldives involves platoon-level contingents from both countries.

**iii.** The aim of the exercise is to enhance the interoperability in counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations, carry out joint humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

**Other Exercise:**

India and Maldives also conducted other military exercise, such as Exercise '**Katha**', which involves the IN and the Naval wing of the MNDF.

- The 6th edition of this exercise took place in the Maldives from June 4 to July 3, 2023.

**Points to Note:**

**i.** India and Maldives have shared close political and defence ties, with defence and security cooperation being a key area of focus since 1998.

**ii.** In 2016, the 2 countries signed a 'Comprehensive Action Plan for Defence' to further consolidate their military relationship.

**India & Egypt Begins 3rd Joint Military Exercise 'Cyclone 2025' in Rajasthan**

The **3rd** edition of the **India-Egypt** joint military exercise '**Cyclone 2025**' commenced at the Maharajan Field Range, Rajasthan, aiming to enhance defence cooperation and improve special forces interoperability in desert conditions. The exercise will run for **14 days** from February 10-23, 2025.

- Exercise 'Cyclone 2025' also aims to improve cooperation between the two armies and strengthen their relationship by holding discussions and practicing military drills together.

**Background:**

- i. Exercise Cyclone is a joint military exercise conducted between India and Egypt since 2023.
- ii. This exercise is aligned with Chapter VII of the United Nations (UN) Charter.
- iii. The 2nd edition of the exercise was conducted at Anshas, Egypt from 22nd January to 1st February 2024.

**About Cyclone 2025:**

- i. **Focus:** The joint Military exercise will focus on combat in urban areas and rescuing hostages.
  - ii. **Participants:** The Indian Army is represented by the Parachute Regiment (Special Forces), while the Egyptian contingent consists of the Egyptian Commando Squadron and the Egyptian Airborne Platoon.
  - iii. **Motto:** "Together we train, together we excel," is the motto of Cyclone 2025.
  - iv. **Operation:** It will include counter-terrorism operations, raids, reconnaissance, and other specialized missions, along with special forces skills such as sniping, combat free fall, surveillance, reconnaissance, and target designation.
  - v. **Features:** The exercise will feature military demonstrations and discussions, with training on Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)s, countering them, and providing first aid in combat.
- Note:** 'Exercise Desert Warrior' is another joint exercise carried out by the air forces of India and Egypt.

**About Egypt:**

**President** – Abdel Fattah Saeed Hussein Khalil El-Sisi

**Capital** – Cairo

**Currency** – Egyptian pound (EGP)

**IN Chiefs' Conclave 2025 for future of warfare & maritime strategy**

The Indian Navy (IN) **Chiefs' Conclave 2025** took place at **Nausena Bhawan**, the IN headquarters in New Delhi (Delhi) from **February 8 to 9, 2025**.

- The conclave gathers **eight** Former Chief of Naval Staffs (CNS) alongside the current CNS, Dinesh Kumar Tripathi.
- It took place as the IN works towards full self-reliance by 2047, focusing on strengthening its capabilities in the Indian Ocean region (IOR).

**About IN Chief's Conclave 2025:**

- i. It aimed to leverage the knowledge and collective experience of former CNS while also providing updates on the latest developments and policy initiatives of IN.
  - The former CNS were briefed on an operational update, covering policy initiatives, advancements in technology, materials, and operational logistics, as well as perspective plans.
- ii. An exclusive session, *Manthan*, was held to discuss key issues, promoting an open exchange of ideas on future warfare, maritime strategy, shifting geopolitical dynamics, and evolving HR frameworks.
- iii. It reaffirms the IN's commitment to continuity, drawing on past leadership's wisdom while shaping the future of India's maritime power.
- iv. A book titled **"Legacy of Leadership: Naval Chiefs through Time"** was released during the Conclave, showcasing the inspiring journeys of former CNSs.



- It features personal stories, rare photos, and firsthand accounts, this “collector’s edition” provides a unique insight into their leadership.

### Indo-Russia JV IRRPL Delivers 40,000 AK-203 Assault Rifles to IA

Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL), a Joint Venture (JV) between India and Russia, delivered **40,000** Avtomat Kalashnikova (AK)-203 assault rifles to the Indian Army (IA).

- These rifles were produced at the Korwa Ordnance Factory in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh (UP).
- The rifles are being produced with complete technology transfer from Russia, with the goal of achieving 100% localization in India.
- It aligns with India’s “Make in India” and “Atmanirbhar Bharat” initiatives, focusing on achieving self-reliance in defense manufacturing.



### IN's Participation in 'International Fleet Review 2025' and 'Exercise Komodo'

The Indian Navy (IN) actively participated in the ‘International Fleet Review (IFR) 2025’ and the ‘5th Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo’ in Bali, Indonesia, with the events scheduled from February 15 to 22, 2025.



- The Indian delegation is represented by the Indian Naval Ship (INS) **Shardul**, a Landing Ship Tank (Large), and the P-8I Long-Range Maritime Surveillance Aircraft.

### International Fleet Review 2025:

- The IFR 2025 is a multinational naval event reviewed by the President of Indonesia, **Prabowo Subianto Djojohadikusumo**.
- Naval forces from various countries participate, underscoring the event’s significance in promoting international maritime cooperation.
- On February 15, 2025, the IN participated in the ‘IFR 2025’ and was involved in several high-level engagements:

- **International Maritime Security Symposium:** A platform for discussing global maritime security challenges and solutions.

- **Tactical Floor Games:** Simulated exercises to enhance tactical decision-making skills.
- iv. Additionally, the IN crew participated in multinational activities such as a city parade, baby turtle release, coral and mangrove plantation, and beach cleaning, highlighting the commitment to environmental conservation and maritime cooperation.

### Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo 2025:

- The ‘Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo 2025’ officially commenced at Benoa Port in

Denpasar, Bali on February 16, 2025.

ii. Following the IFR, both INS Shardul and the P-8I participated in Exercise Komodo aimed at enhancing maritime interoperability and regional security cooperation.

iii. The opening ceremony featured a traditional **Balinese dance**, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Indonesia, the host country.

iv. This year's 2025 theme, '**Maritime Partnership for Peace and Stability**', emphasizes natural disaster management and humanitarian aid, highlighting the collaborative efforts of participating nations in enhancing maritime security and regional cooperation.

v. This exercise involves naval forces from over **30 countries**, including the United States of America (USA), Russia, China, Australia, and Singapore, focusing on disaster relief and humanitarian operations.

**Note:** Exercise Komodo, first launched in 2014, is a non-combat military drill organized by the Indonesian Navy to strengthen maritime cooperation among friendly nations.

#### **About Indonesia:**

**President-** Prabowo Subianto Djojohadikusumo  
**Capital-** Jakarta

**Currency-** Indonesian Rupiah (IDR)

#### **About Indian Navy (IN):**

**Chief of Naval Staff (CNS)**– Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi

**Headquarters-** New Delhi, Delhi

**Established-** 1950

#### **IDEX and NAVDEX 2025 in Abu Dhabi: 17–21 February 2025**

The **17th edition** of the International Defence Exhibition (**IDEX**) and the **8th edition** of the Naval Defence and Maritime Security Exhibition (**NAVDEX**) were held from **17 to 21 February 2025** held at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre. (**ADNEC**) Centre in **Abu Dhabi**, United Arab Emirates (**UAE**) under the patronage of His Highness **Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan**, President of the UAE.

- It was organized by **ADNEC Group** in **collaboration** with the Ministry of Defence, UAE and Tawazun Council UAE.

**Note:** The **18th edition**, IDEX 2027, was scheduled for 25–29 January 2027 at the ADNEC Centre in Abu Dhabi.

#### **Key Highlights:**

i. Indian Coast Guard Ship (**ICGS**) **Shoor**, an advanced Offshore Patrol Vessel, represented India's maritime strength at NAVDEX 2025.

ii. Goa Shipyard Ltd (**GSL**) based in Goa presented its locally designed Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs) and Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) at NAVDEX 2025 in Abu Dhabi.

iii. Hyderabad based Tata Advanced Systems Limited (**TASL**) introduced its indigenously developed Light Armoured Multi-role Vehicle (**LAMV**), compliant with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (**NATO**) standards, at IDEX 2025.

#### **About United Arab Emirates (UAE):**

**President**– Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan

**Prime Minister(PM)**– Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum

**Capital**– Abu Dhabi

**Currency**– UAE Dirham (AED)

### 6th Edition of India-Japan Joint Military Exercise 'Dharma Guardian' Begins in Japan

The **6th** edition of the India-Japan joint military exercise, '**Dharma Guardian**,' began at the East Fuji Manoeuvre Training Area in **Japan**.

- The exercise is scheduled from 24th February to 9th March 2025.
- The exercise aims to boost interoperability between India and Japan while focusing on joint urban warfare and counter-terrorism operations under the United Nations (UN) mandate.

#### Background:

**i.** Exercise DHARMA GUARDIAN is an annual event conducted, since 2008, alternatively in India and Japan.

**ii.** The **5th edition** of the exercise was held at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in **Rajasthan**, India, from February to March 2024.

#### About Dharma Guardian Exercise 2025:

**i. Participants:** The exercise is held between the Indian Army (IA) and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF).

- The Indian contingent, consisting of 120 personnel, is represented by a battalion of the MADRAS Regiment along with troops from other arms and services.
- The Japanese contingent, also consisting of 120 personnel, is made up of troops from the 34th Infantry Regiment.

**ii. Aim:** It strengthens the India-Japan relationship, boosting military ties and promoting cultural understanding for regional cooperation.

**iii. Focus:** The exercise will focus on physical fitness, joint planning, and tactical drills, including disaster response strategies to enhance skills, combat readiness, and teamwork for effective operations.

**iv.** It also highlights India's and Japan's shared commitment to regional security, peace, and stability, while promoting a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific.

#### Other Exercises:

India and Japan also conducts other military exercises such as

#### **i. Japan-India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX):**

- A bilateral military exercise between the Indian Navy (IN) and the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF).
- The 8th edition of JIMEX was held in Japan in June 2024.

#### **ii. Veer Guardian:**

A joint air exercise between the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF). The 1st edition of Veer Guardian was held in Japan in January 2023.

#### About Japan:

Prime Minister (**PM**) – Shigeru Ishiba

## Appointments or Resign/Retired

### Serbian Prime Minister Milos Vucevic Resigns

Serbia's Prime Minister (PM) **Milos Vucevic** resigned from the position of PM along with **Novi Sad Mayor Milan Djuric** following weeks of anti-corruption protests sparked by the deadly collapse of a concrete canopy at the Novi Sad railway station, Serbia in November 2024, which killed 15 people.

- He assumed the role of Serbia's Prime Minister in May 2024.
- i. Miloš Vučević is Serbian Lawyer, Politician, and Leader of the Serbian Progressive Party who currently serves as the President of the Serbian Progressive Party.
- ii. His political career spans over a decade, he served as the Mayor of Novi Sad from 2012 to 2022.
- iii. He served as Deputy PM of Serbia and Minister of Defence from 2022 to 2024.

### ACC Appoints Rajesh Nirwan as DG of BCAS

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of a 1992-batch senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Rajasthan cadre **Rajesh Nirwan** as the Director General (DG) of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) under the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA).

- According to an order from the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (MoPP&P), his appointment will take effect once he takes charge and will remain in place until further notice.
- He takes over from **Amrit Mohan Prasad**, a 1989-batch IPS officer of the Odisha cadre, who has been serving as the DG of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and holding the additional charge of DG, BCAS, since November 1, 2024.



### About Rajesh Nirwan:

- i. Rajesh Nirwan started his career as Superintendent of Police (SP) in Crime Branch-Criminal Investigation Department (CB-CID), Jaipur (Rajasthan), and later served as the police chief in cities of Rajasthan -Jhalawar, Sawai Madhopur, Tonk, and Kota.
- ii. In 2007, he was promoted to Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIGP) at the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for 2 years.
- iii. He became Inspector General (IG) of Police in 2010 and led the Ajmer Range (Rajasthan) until 2012.
- iv. From 2016 to 2023, Nirwan held key leadership roles as IG and Additional DG of Police in the Border Security Force (BSF) in New Delhi.

### About the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS):

The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) is the main organization responsible for aviation security in India.

Director General(DG) – Rajesh Nirwan

**Headquarters** – New Delhi (Delhi)

**Established** – 1978

### **Gyanesh Kumar Appointed as 26th Chief Election Commissioner of India**

Election Commissioner, **Gyanesh Kumar** was appointed as the **26th** Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) by the Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi led selection committee. He succeeds incumbent **Rajiv Kumar** and becomes the first CEC to be appointed under the newly established law governing the selection of Election Commission (EC) members.



- He will assume charge on **February 19, 2025** and will hold the position until **January 26, 2029**.
- Prior to his appointment, he served as the Election Commissioner (EC) from March 2024 to February 2025.
- Additionally, a 1989-batch Haryana-cadre Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer **Dr Vivek Joshi** was appointed as an Election Commissioner. He is currently posted as Chief Secretary(CS) in Haryana.

### **About Gyanesh Kumar:**

- Gyanesh Kumar** is a distinguished 1988-batch Kerala-cadre, IAS officer who held several prominent positions throughout his career.
- He also served as the Joint Secretary (Defence Production) in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) from 2007 to 2012.
- In August 2019, he was appointed as the Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) where he contributed to various critical initiatives, including the abrogation of Article 370 which led to the reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).
- From May 2021 to May 2022, he served as the Parliamentary Affairs Secretary of India and managed parliamentary affairs, facilitating communication between the government and Parliament.
- He served as the Cooperation Secretary of India from May 2022 to January 2024.

### **New Selection Process for CEC and ECs:**

- The Chief Election Commissioner And Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service And Term of Office) Act, 2023**, sets the new selection process for the CEC and ECs, with the President appointing them based on recommendations from a committee comprising the PM, a Union Cabinet Minister, and the Leader of Opposition or the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha.
- A search committee, headed by the Cabinet Secretary, proposes names for the selection committee.
- Previously, there was no defined selection process, and the President appointed Election Commissioners based on the advice of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers.
- The new Act aligns the salary and conditions of service of the CEC and ECs with those of a Cabinet Secretary.
- The eligibility criteria for CEC and ECs include being persons of integrity, having knowledge and experience in election management, and being or having been a Secretary or equivalent.
- The term remains 6 years, with no reappointment, and the removal process stays the same.



as in the Constitution.

vii. The change in the selection process came after the Supreme Court's (SC) recommendation for an independent selection process.

### **Flemish Nationalist Bart Albert Liliane De Wever sworn-in as New PM of Belgium**

Bart Albert Liliane De Wever, the first Flemish Nationalist was sworn-in as the new Prime Minister (PM) of Belgium. His victory came after 7-months of negotiations, leading to the formation of a new coalition that currently holds an **81-seat** majority in the **150-seat** Belgian Parliament.



- Prior to the appointment, he served as the Mayor of Antwerp, Belgium.
- He succeeds **Alexander De Croo**, who has remained in office as a caretaker since June 2024.

### **About Bart Albert Liliane De Wever:**

i. **Bart Albert Liliane De Wever's** political career began in the Volksunie (VU, People's Union) party, following a split in the party, he founded the New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) in 2004.

- He served two times as the Member of the Flemish Parliament from (2004 to 2007) and from (2019 to 2024).
- He was also Member of the Senate of Belgium from 2010 to 2013.

ii. He served as the Member of the Chamber of Representatives of Belgium in 2 separate terms: from 2007 to 2010 and from 2014 to 2019.

iii. From 2013 to January 2025, he served as the Mayor of Antwerp, Belgium, a position in which he became one of the most influential politicians in Flanders.

### **About Belgium:**

Prime Minister (PM)– Bart Albert Liliane De Wever

Capital-

Brussels

Currency- Belgian Euro (EUR)

### **Rekha Gupta Sworn-in as 4th Women CM of Delhi, Parvesh Verma Sworn-in as Deputy CM**

Rekha

Gupta, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, took oath as the 9th Chief Minister (CM) of Union Territory (UT) of Delhi at Ramlila Maidan, New Delhi, Delhi. She succeeded Atishi Marlena Singh.

- She has also become **Delhi's fourth woman CM**, following Sushma Swaraj, Sheila Dikshit, and Atishi Marlena Singh
- Along with her, six cabinet ministers were sworn in, including **Parvesh Singh Verma**, who took oath as the **Deputy CM**.
- Lieutenant Governor (L-G) of Delhi **Vinai Kumar Saxena** administered oath of office and secrecy to the CM and the ministers at the function.

**Note:** This marks the end of the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s 10-year rule.



**GoI Extends V.Anantha Nageswaran's Tenure as CEA Until March 2027**

The Government of India (GoI) extended the tenure of **Venkatramanan(V). Anantha Nageswaran** as Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) for two more years, until **March 31, 2027**.

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, approved Nageswaran's tenure on a contract basis up to March 31, 2027, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- i. Nageswaran was a key contributor to India's annual Economic Survey 2024-25, which projected India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth at **6.3% to 6.8%** for the Financial Year (FY) 2025-26.
- ii. On January 28, 2022, Nageswaran took charge as the **18th CEA** for a three-year term, succeeding Krishnamurthy Venkata (KV) Subramanian, who served as the 17th CEA from 2018 to 2021.

**ACC Approved Extension of Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi's Tenure as DCGI by 1 Year**

The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi has approved an extension of tenure for **Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi** as Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) head of India's apex health regulatory body i.e. Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) on a contract basis for **1 year**.

- This extension will come into effect **from March 1, 2025**, or until the appointment of a regular incumbent to the post, whichever is earlier.
  - This approval came after the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) proposed his name to the ACC as DCGI until a suitable candidate is found.
  - i. Raghuvanshi, who has been serving as DCGI since February 2023, was set to superannuate on February 28, 2025.
  - ii. He also holds the additional charge of secretary-cum-scientific director of the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC), MoH&FW.
  - ii. Earlier, he worked with reputed multi-national companies such as Gurugram (Haryana)-based Ranbaxy Laboratories Limited and Hyderabad (Telangana)-based Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Limited (DRL).
- Note:** New Delhi (Delhi)-based CDSCO, under MoH&FW, is a regulatory body primarily responsible for manufacturing, sales, export, and import of all medicines, vaccines, cosmetics, and medical devices in India.

## Honours/ Awards

### BCCI Awards 2025: Jasprit Bumrah & Smriti Mandhana Named Best International Cricketers of 2023-24

Jasprit Bumrah won the Best International Cricketer of the Year (also called the Polly Umrigar Award) 2023-24 in the **Men's category**, and **Smriti Mandhana** won the Best International Cricketer of the Year 2023-24 in the **Women's category** at the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Awards 2025 (Naman Awards).



- Former Indian cricketer **Sachin Tendulkar**, fondly called the “God of Cricket” or “Master Blaster,” was presented with the **Colonel CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award** of the Year 2024.

26 winners across categories were awarded during a ceremony held on 1st February 2025 in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

#### Other Awards:

i.**Sachin Tendulkar** is the **31st** recipient of the **Colonel CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award** from the BCCI.

- The Colonel CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award was instituted in 1994 in honour of India's first cricket captain Colonel Cottari Kanakaiya (CK) Nayudu.

iii.The BCCI also presented a **special award** to Indian cricketer **Ravichandran Ashwin**, who retired from all forms of international cricket in December 2024.

### South Africa's Tshego Gaelae Wins 40th Mrs World Title

Tshego Gaelae from South Africa (SA), a 33-year-old model, made history by becoming the first Black South African woman to win the **40th edition of the Mrs.World title in 2025**.

- The grand finale took place in **Las Vegas**, United States of America (**USA**), where Gaelae was crowned by **Viktoria Horshkova**, the winner of Mrs.World 2024.
- Sri Lanka's (SL) **Ishadi Amanda** was named **first runner-up**, while Thailand's Ploy Panperm took the second runner-up.

**Note:** Mrs.World Competition, established in 1984, is known as the first beauty pageant exclusively for married women.

#### About Tshego Gaelae:

Born in Soweto,SA, Gaelae is not only a model but **also a lawyer** and a labor relations manager.

i.She is deeply committed to supporting **women and children** affected by domestic violence through her organization, *We Are Our Children's Keepers*.

ii.Gaelae is only the **second South African** to win the title, following Candice Abrahams, who claimed victory in 2016



iii. She also holds the title of **Mrs South Africa 2024**.

#### **About South Africa (SA):**

**President**– Cyril Ramaphosa

**Capital**– Pretoria (administrative capital), Cape Town (legislative capital), and Bloemfontein (judicial capital)

**Currency**– South African Rand(ZAR)

#### **67th Annual Grammy Awards: India's Chandrika Tandon Bags Grammy Award for "Triveni"**

Chandrika Krishnamurthy Tandon, an Indian-American entrepreneur and vocalist won her first Grammy Award under the category Best New Age, Ambient, or Chant Album for "Triveni" at the 67th annual Grammy Awards (also known as Grammy 2025), the biggest musical awards night, at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, California, the United States of America (USA).



- She shared the award with her collaborators, Wouter Kellerman( 3rd time), a South African flutist, and Eru Matsumoto(first time), a Japanese cellist.

**i. Beyoncé Knowles-Carter** from the USA (often referred to as *Queen Bey*), an American singer-songwriter won the Album Of The Year (AOTY) Grammy Award for the first time for Cowboy Carter.

Now she became the 35-time Grammy-winning star and she also became the first Black artist to win the Grammy for Best Country Album category.

**ii. Amy Allen(USA)** became the first woman to win the Songwriter of the Year, Non-Classical at the Grammy Awards 2025.

#### **Forbes' Top 10 Richest Women in the World in 2025: USA's Alice Louise Walton Tops, India's Savitri Devi Jindal Ranks 7<sup>th</sup>**

Forbes India released its 5th Edition of the "Top 10 Richest Women in the World in 2025" list, highlighting the significant wealth amassed by women across different sectors.

- **Alice Louise Walton**, the daughter of United States of America (USA) based Walmart Inc. founder Sam Walton, has secured the **top position** globally with a net worth of **USD 112.5 billion**.
- India's **Savitri Devi Jindal** and Family claimed the **7th position**, with a net worth of USD 32.3 billion, from the JSW (Jindal South West) Group.

**Note:** The top 10 wealthiest women worldwide, as highlighted by Forbes, have established themselves as powerful leaders across various industries, with their combined net worth exceeding USD 500 billion (approximately).

#### **About Forbes India:**

**Editor**- Suveen Sinha

**Headquarters**– Mumbai, Maharashtra

**Established**– 2009

### 2024 Burgundy Private Hurun India 500 List: RIL Tops as Most Valuable company for 4th Consecutive Year

According to the 2024 Burgundy Private Hurun India 500 list, released by Axis Bank Limited's Burgundy Private and Hurun India, Reliance Industries Limited (**RIL**) based in Mumbai, Maharashtra has retained its position as India's most valuable company for the fourth consecutive year with a valuation of **Rs17,52,650 crore**.

- Following RIL, Mumbai based Tata Consultancy Services Limited (**TCS**) ranks second with a valuation of Rs 16,10,800 crore, while Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) Bank Limited, Mumbai, is in third place at Rs 14,22,570 crore.
- The total worth of the 500 companies featured in the 2024 edition of the list stands at Rs 324 lakh crore (approximately USD 3.8 trillion).

#### About 2024 Burgundy Private Hurun India 500:

- i. The 2024 Burgundy Private Hurun India is the **fourth edition** of the list featuring the 500 most valuable private companies in India. The average age of the companies on the list is **43 years**.
- ii. The **threshold** for qualifying in the 2024 Burgundy Private Hurun India 500 is **Rs 9,580 crore** as of 13 December 2024, reflecting a 43% increase from the Rs 6,700 crore threshold in 2023.

#### About Hurun India:

**Founder and Chief Researcher** – Anas Rahman Junaid

**Headquarters** – Mumbai, Maharashtra

**Established** – 2012

### Purnima Devi Barman: Assam's Conservation Champion featured in TIME's Women of the Year 2025

New York, United States of America (USA) based TIME Magazine's announced 2025 *Women of the Year* list, recognizing 13 inspiring women worldwide for their efforts in shaping a more equal and sustainable future. Purnima Devi Barman, a wildlife biologist and conservationist from Assam, India, is the only Indian honoree on the list. She is recognized for her efforts in reviving the endangered **greater adjutant stork (Hargila, meaning is bone swallower)** while empowering rural women through conservation initiatives.

#### About Purnima Devi Barman and her efforts

- i. Purnima Devi Barman is widely recognized for her dedication to wildlife conservation, particularly in saving the greater adjutant stork (Hargila) from extinction.
- ii. This species was once on the brink of disappearing, with only 450 birds remaining in the region. However, due to her relentless efforts, the stork population has now increased to over 1,800.
- iii. As a result, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (**IUCN**) upgraded its status from "**endangered**" to "**near threatened**" in 2023.
- iv. She founded the Hargila Army, an all-female conservation group comprising 10,000 women. This group plays a vital role in protecting the stork's nesting sites and rehabilitating injured birds, ensuring the long-term survival of the species.

**Goa's Mopa Airport becomes 1st in India to win 'Sarvashrestha Suraksha Puraskar'**

Goa's **Manohar International Airport (GOX)**, also known as **Mopa Airport**, became the **first airport in India** to receive the "Sarvashrestha Suraksha Puraskar (Golden Trophy)" at the National Safety Council of India (NSCI) Safety Awards 2024 in the '**Service Sector**' category held in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

- The airport was developed by GMR Goa International Airport Limited (**GGIAL**), a subsidiary of Grandhi Mallikarjuna Rao (GMR) Airports Limited, under the Build-Operate-Transfer (**BOT**) model.
- The airport was evaluated on Safety performance, Safety statistics, Safety commitments, Safety awareness, Training and promotional activities and Innovations on the ground.

i. The Sarvashrestha Suraksha Puraskar is awarded by the **NSCI**, established by the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoL&E), Government of India (GoI), to recognize organizations for exemplary Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) performance.

ii. The award acknowledges efforts in reducing workplace injuries, implementing best OSH practices, and promoting continuous improvements.

**Note:** The airport is named after **Manohar Gopalkrishna Prabhu Parrikar**, the former Union Minister, Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Chief Minister (CM) of Goa.

**Bharti Enterprises Chairman, Sunil Bharti Mittal presented with 'Honorary Knighthood Medal'**

Sunil

Bharti Mittal, Founder and Chairman of New Delhi (Delhi) based Bharti Enterprises, was honored with the 'Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE)' for his contributions to strengthening business relations between the United Kingdom (UK) and India.

- The KBE medal was presented by BHC to India, **Lindy Cameron** at the investiture ceremony held at the British High Commissioner's (BHC) residence in New Delhi.
- The ceremony follows the announcement made in 2024, declaring Sunil Bharti Mittal as the **first Indian citizen** to receive the KBE under **King Charles III**.

**About Sunil Bharti Mittal:**

i. **Sunil Bharti Mittal**, is an Indian industrialist, philanthropist and the founder & chairman of Bharti Enterprises, a conglomerate with diversified interests in telecom, insurance, real estate, education, malls, hospitality, agriculture, and food.

ii. Bharti Enterprises, has formed joint ventures with global partners such as Singapore based Singapore Telecommunications Limited (SingTel), Japan based SoftBank Group Corp., the UK and French governments.

iii. He chairs **Airtel Africa Plc**, overseeing operations across 17 African countries, providing mobile services to over 100 million customers.

iv. In 2007, he was awarded the **Padma Bhushan**, India's 3rd-highest civilian honor, recognizing his contributions to trade and industry.

**Note:** As of 2024, Forbes India ranked him as the **7th richest person in India**, with a net worth of USD 30.7 billion.



## Tata Sons

**Chairman N Chandrasekaran Conferred with UK's Honorary Knighthood** Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Chairman of Tata Sons Private Limited was conferred with the United Kingdom's (UK's) "Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE)" under King Charles III reign for his services to U.K./India Business relations.

- The KBE/DBE is one of the highest honors awarded by the British Sovereign to civilians, recognizing the exceptional contributions of foreign nationals across various fields.

### About the Order of the British Empire:

i. The GBE (Knight or Dame Grand Cross) is the highest rank within the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

- In 2014, the late **Ratan Tata**, former Chairman of the Tata Group, became the only Indian to be awarded the GBE (Knight or Dame Grand Cross) since 1950.

ii. The "Knight Commander (KBE for men) or Dame Commander (DBE for women)" of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire is the second-highest rank within the Order of the British Empire.

- In 2024, **Sunil Bharti Mittal**, Founder and Chairman of Bharti Enterprises Limited, was conferred with the Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE).
- Other Indian recipients of the honorary KBE include the late Ratan Tata (2009), the late sitar virtuoso Pandit Ravi Shankar (2001), and the late Tata Steel veteran Jamshed Irani (1997), was honored by the late Queen Elizabeth II.

## About Natarajan Chandrasekaran:

i. In 2016, he joined the Board of Tata Sons Private Limited, and in 2017, he became its Chairman.

ii. He also chairs the boards of key Tata Group companies, including Tata Steel Limited, Tata Motors Limited, Tata Power Limited, and Air India Limited.

### Awards:

i. In 2023, Chandrasekaran was also awarded France's highest civilian honor, the '**Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur**' (Knight of the Legion of Honour).

ii. In 2022, he was honored with the **Padma Bhushan**, India's third-highest civilian award, in the field of Trade and Industry.



## Sports

### Australia Wins ICC Women's Championship Trophy for the 3rd time

Australia won International Cricket Council (ICC) Women's Championship trophy 2022-2025. Australia secured the championship for the third consecutive time.

- This was the **3rd** edition of the ICC Women's Championship.
- Each Team has to play **3 One Day International (ODI)** matches against all other teams. At the end of the cycle, Team which secured top position will be awarded.



#### Note:

Captain Alyssa Healy (Australia) received the trophy in Melbourne, Australia on behalf of the ICC by Cricket Australia Chair and ICC Director Mike Baird.

#### Key Highlights:

i. Australia finished the 3rd edition series with the highest total of **39** points (17 wins, three no-results, three losses) in 24 matches.

- **India** secured 2nd position with **37** points in the table.
- ii. Top 6 team from the points table will be directly qualified for the 2025 Women's Cricket World Cup hosted by India.

- Australia (39), India (37), England (32), South Africa (25), Sri Lanka (22) and New Zealand (21) are the direct entrants.

#### About Australia Women's Team:

- i. Australia has won the **greatest** number of World Cups in the **50-over** format of the game—1978, 1982, 1988, 1997, 2005, 2013 and 2022.
- ii. They have also won the ICC **Women's T20 World Cup** in 2010, 2012, 2014, 2018, 2020 and 2023.

#### About ICC Women's Championship:

The first and second editions of 2014-16 and 2017-20 consisted of eight teams – Australia, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka and the West Indies.

- Later, Bangladesh and Ireland were added in the 3rd edition played from 2022-2025 totaling it to 10 teams.

### India won ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup 2025 by defeating South Africa for 2nd consecutive time

India won the 2nd edition of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Under-19 (U19) Women's T20 (Twenty 20) World Cup 2025 for the 2nd consecutive time by



defeating **South Africa** with 9 wickets in the final at Bayuemas Oval, Kuala Lumpur (KL), Malaysia.

- India's women cricket team was led by captain Niki Prasad and South Africa's women cricket team was led by captain Kayla Reyneke.

**Note:** Following this win, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced prize money of Rs 5 crore for the India's U-19 women's team.

#### **Highlights:**

- i. South Africa, batting first, had scored 82 runs in 20 overs.
- ii. India completed the task by securing 84 runs in **just 11.2 overs**, winning with 52 balls to spare.
- ii. **Gongadi Trisha** earned 'Player of the Match 2025' and 'Player of the Series 2025' awards for her outstanding performance and contributions in the match.

- She had an exceptional tournament, scoring 309 runs at an average of 77.25 and a strike rate of 147.14.
- She scored an unbeaten 44 runs from 33 balls and took 3 wickets for 15 runs, leading India to victory.

**iii. Sanika Chalke** provided solid support with an unbeaten 26 runs off 22 balls.

#### **About ICC Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup:**

- i. It is an international cricket competition, organised by the ICC since 2023.
- ii. The tournament was played in the T20 format, featured 16 teams, participated in 41 matches.
- iii. In the first edition of ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2023, India defeated England by 7 wickets in the final in South Africa.
- iv. The third edition of the Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup, scheduled to be hosted by **Bangladesh and Nepal** in 2027.

#### **R Praggnanandhaa won 'Tata Steel Chess Masters 2025', Defeats World Champion D Gukesh in Tiebreaker**

Indian Chess Grandmaster **R Praggnanandhaa** won the 'Tata Steel Chess Masters 2025' trophy by defeating World Chess Champion of 2024, **D Gukesh** in the tiebreaker held in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands.

- With this victory, Praggnanandhaa became the **1st Indian Chess player** since Viswanathan Anand in 2006 to win the Tata Steel Masters title.
- He previously reached a career-high World **Ranking of 8** in July 2024 and was a runner-up at the Chess World Cup 2023, where he lost to Magnus Carlsen in the final.

#### **About Tata Steel Chess Tournament 2025:**

- i. The Tata Steel Chess Tournament 2025 was the 87th edition of the "Wimbledon of Chess," a

classical tournament that has been previously won by World Chess Champions Euwe, Botvinnik, Tal, Petrosian, Spassky, Karpov, Kasparov, Kramnik, Anand, and Carlsen.

- The event was held from **17 January 2025 to 2 February 2025** in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands.
- ii.The tournament, the 1st elite chess event of the year, featured 5 out of 14 participants ranked in the top 10 globally.
- iii.The event includes chess legends, showcasing a classical **14-player round-robin** format in both the **Masters** and **Challengers** categories.

#### Highlights:

- i.Praggnanandhaa R, ranked 14th in the world, performed admirably, securing six wins, five draws, and two losses during the tournament, including a defeat to Germany's Vincent Keymer in the final round.
- ii.Gukesh D, newly crowned World Chess Champion 2024, lost for the 1st time as World Champion, falling to Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi in 31 moves.

- Tiebreaker:** The tournament was decided by a blitz tiebreaker, with each player playing two fast-paced games, ending with a 1-1 score.

#### Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers Wins 6th 'Men's HIL 2024-25' Title

Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers won the first ever title of the 'Men's Hockey India League 2024-25(HIL 2024-25)' by defeating Hyderabad Toofans 4-3 in the final tournament held at the Birsamunda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela, Odisha.

- The 6th edition of Men's HIL 2024-25 tournament, featured 8 teams, was held from December 28, 2024, to February 1, 2025.
- The Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers for the 2024-25 season were led by Captain **Rupinder Pal Singh**, while the Hyderabad Toofans were led by Captain **Sumit Walmiki**.

#### Prize Money:

With this victory, Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers were awarded **Rs 3 crore** as the prize money, while the runners-up, Hyderabad Toofans, received **Rs 2 crore**.

#### Highlights:

- i.**Jugraj Singh** scored a hat-trick (25', 32', 35') and Sam Lane added a goal in the 54th minute(m) to secure the title for Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers.
- ii.**Gonzalo Peillat** found the back of the net twice (9', 39') and Amandeep Lakra scored once (26') for Hyderabad Toofans, but their efforts fell short in the 4-3 defeat.

#### Awards:



- Top Scorer of the Tournament 2024-25: Jugraj Singh (Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers)
- Player of the Tournament 2024-25: Sukhjeet Singh (Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers)
- Best Goalkeeper of the Tournament 2024-25: Bikramjit Singh (Hyderabad Toofans)
- Upcoming Player of the Tournament 2024-25: Arshdeep Singh (Hyderabad Toofans)
- Fairplay Award (Team) 2024-25: Uttar Pradesh (UP) Rudras

#### About Men's Hockey India League (HIL):

i. The Hockey India League is a premier club-based hockey tournament organized by Hockey India, with participation from both Indian and International players.

ii. The **1st edition** of the Men's Hockey India League (HIL) was held in 2013 and was held every year till 2017 and resumed with the 6th edition of the Men's HIL in Rourkela.

**Note:** In January 2025, **Odisha Warriors** won the **1st edition** of 'Women's HIL 2024-25' by defeating Soorma Hockey Club **2-1** at the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Munda AstroTurf Hockey Stadium in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

#### Sportico's 100 Top Highest-Paid Athletes 2024: Ronaldo Leads the List with USD 260 Million; No Female in the Top 100

In February 2025, Sports industry news site Sportico's released 4th Annual list of 100 Top Highest-Paid Athletes, **Cristiano Ronaldo**, a Portuguese professional footballer is the **world's highest-paid athlete** in 2024 for the **2<sup>nd</sup>** consecutive year, earning **USD 260 million**, including USD 215 million from Salary/Winnings (from Saudi Pro League club Al Nassr) and USD 45 million from endorsements.



- Stephen Curry** (USD 153.8 million), an American professional basketball player secured **2<sup>nd</sup>** place, and **Tyson Fury** (USD 147 million), a British former professional boxer secured **3<sup>rd</sup>** place on the list.

**Female athletes** were **absent** from the top 100 for the **2<sup>nd</sup>** straight year; The top 100 also doesn't include a single sportsperson from India.

**Coco Gauff**, an American professional Tennis player was the **highest-paid female athlete in 2024** for the **2<sup>nd</sup>** consecutive year with USD 30.4 million.

#### BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year Awards 2024: Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker won Top Honour

The **5<sup>th</sup>** edition of the "British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Indian Sportswoman of the Year (ISWOTY) Award 2024" was held in New Delhi, Delhi. The event celebrates and honors the outstanding achievements of Indian sportswomen, recognizing their excellence across various fields of competition.

- Indian shooter **Manu Bhaker** was honored with the 'BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award 2024', becoming the first Indian woman to win 2 bronze medals in a single edition of the Games at Paris 2024 Olympics.

- Para Shooter **Avani Lekhara** was named the 'BBC Para Sportswoman of the Year 2024', becoming the first Indian woman to win 3 Paralympic medals, including gold at Paris 2024 Olympics following a gold and bronze in Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

#### Nominees:

- The nominations of the award 2024 were announced on January 16, 2025, showcasing 5 remarkable Indian sportswomen.
- The shortlisted nominees, who proceeded to the public vote, included **Aditi Ashok**, professional golfer; **Manu Bhaker**, professional shooter; **Avani Lekhara**, professional shooter; **Smriti Mandhana**, India women's cricket vice-captain and **Vinesh Phogat**, professional freestyle wrestler

#### About British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC):

Director-General (DG)- Timothy Douglas Davie

**Headquarters**– London, the United Kingdom (UK)

Established- 1922

**Mumbai Open 2025: Jil Teichmann Won Singles Title, Pridankina & Anshba Claim Doubles Title**



Jil Belén Teichmann, Switzerland's professional tennis player, claimed the singles title of the 4th edition of "Mumbai Open 2025 WTA (Women Tennis Association) 125 Event", held from February 3 to February 9, 2025 in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

- **Singles Title:** Jil Belén Teichmann won the singles title by defeating **Mananchaya Sawangkaew** of Thailand with a straight-set victory of 6-3, 6-4.
- **Doubles Title:** **Elena Ivanovna Pridankina** and **Amina Vladikovna Anshba** of Russia won the Doubles title by defeating Prarthana Thombare of India and her Dutch partner Arianne Hartono with a score of 6-7(4), 6-2, 10-7.

#### About the Mumbai Open 2025:

- The Mumbai Open 2025 is an outdoor tournament played on a hard court, at the Cricket Club of India (CCI) in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- The 4th edition was sponsored by Mumbai (Maharashtra) based Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Limited and was named as "L&T Mumbai Open 2025".
- Prize Money and Points:** Jil Belén Teichmann earned 125 ranking points and a **USD 15,000** winner's cheque, while Mananchaya Sawangkaew received 81 points and a USD 8,400 prize.
- WTA Tournament Levels:** WTA 1000, WTA 500, WTA 250, WTA 125 (Mumbai Open is a WTA 125 event)
- The Mumbai Open was first held in 2017 and was won by the current World No.1 women's tennis player **Aryna Siarhiejeŭna Sabalenka** of Belarus.

- The 2nd edition of the Mumbai Open was held in 2018 and the 3rd was held in 2024.

**vi. India's Participants:** Jil Belén Teichmann defeated India's **Maaya Rajeshwaran Revathi** in the semi finals.

**Note:** The 'Mumbai Open 2025' singles title marked Jil Belén Teichmann's **2nd** WTA 125 title. In 2024, she won her first WTA 125 tournament in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

#### About Women's Tennis Association (WTA):



Chief Executive Officer (CEO)– Portia Archer  
Chairman– Steve Simon  
Headquarters– Florida, United States of America (USA)  
Established– 1973

### **Sportstar Aces Awards 2025: PR Sreejesh, Manu Bhaker Bagged To Honours “Sportstar of the Year Male & Female”**

The 7th edition of the “Sportstar Aces Awards 2025” was held at the Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The event celebrated exceptional achievements in Indian sports, honoring the winners across **24 distinct categories**. The awards recognized the remarkable contributions and accomplishments of athletes, coaches, and organizations that have significantly impacted Indian sports.

- Indian hockey legend, **Parattu Raveendran (PR) Sreejesh** won the Sportstar of the Year 2025 (Male), while **Manu Bhaker** won the Sportstar of the Year 2025 (Female) and also the Sportswoman of the Year (Olympic Sport) respectively.
- The event featured 5 Popular Choice Awards and 16 Jury Awards, with over 2 lakh votes cast for the Popular Choice categories.
- This year 2025, 2 special awards: ‘Special Recognition Gamechanger 2025’ and ‘Inspirational Icon Award 2025’ were presented.

**i. Pusarla Venkata Sindhu** was honored with the “**Inspirational Icon Award 2025**” recognizing her exceptional achievements and unwavering dedication to the sport of Badminton.

**ii. Jay Shah**, Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), was honored with the ‘**Special Recognition Game Changer Award 2025**’ in recognition of his transformative contributions to Indian cricket and the sport globally.

**iii. Mukesh Ambani’s** Mumbai (Maharashtra) based Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) received the award, recognizing their significant contributions to sports development.

**iv.** The “Chairperson’s Award for Sports for Social Good 2025” Chairperson’s Award for Sports for Social Good 2025 was presented to Downtown Heroes FC, a football club based in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K).

### **Uttarakhand host the 38th National Games : Services Topped Medal Tally with 121 Medals**

Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) topped at the **38th** edition of National Games which was held in Uttarakhand from January 26, 2025 to February 14, 2025, with **121 medals** including 68 gold, 26 silver and 27 bronze. With this, SSCB continued its dominance in the National Games as it topped the medal tally for **5th time** in the last six National Games, except in 2023.

- SSCB secured the Raja Bhalindra Singh Trophy which is awarded to the team that wins the highest number of gold medals at the National Games.
- **Maharashtra**, secured **2nd** position in overall medal tally with 201 medals, 54 gold, 71 silver and 76 bronze.



- It is followed by Haryana ranked at **3rd** position with 153 medals (48 gold, 47 silver and 58 bronze).
  - The event, themed '**Green Games**', focused on sustainability, featuring eco-friendly welcome kits, e-waste medals, and tree plantations for medalists.
- i. The latest edition of National Games witnessed the participation of **more than 16,000 athletes** from 28 states, 8 Union Territories (UTs) and SSCB competed in 35 different sports, with 33 medal sports and a total of 448 gold, 448 silver, and 594 bronze medals.
- ii. 14-year old Swimmer from Karnataka, **Dhinidhi Desinghu**, and India's top backstroke swimmer **Srihari Nataraj** (Bengaluru, Karnataka) claimed the **Best Female Athlete** and **Best Male Athlete** title, respectively at 38th National Games.
- iii. **Meghalaya** will host the 39th edition of National Games which is scheduled to be held tentatively in the month of February or March, 2027.

### **Pankaj Advani wins 2025 Asian Snooker Championship Title**

India's **Pankaj Advani** won the **2025 Asian Snooker Championship's** men's title, defeating Amir Sarkosh of Iran in the final. He won the championship for the fourteenth time in the Asian Snooker and Billiards tournaments.

- The Asian Confederation of Billiards Sports (**ACBS**) organized the Men's, Women's, and Men's under-21 Asian Snooker Championship, which was held in Doha, Qatar, from February 15 to 21, 2025, and was hosted by the Qatar Billiards Sports Federation (**QBSF**).
- i. Pankaj Advani has won five Asian snooker championships in team, 6-red, and 15-red categories. He has also won two gold medals at the Asian Games (Guangzhou 2010, Doha 2006) and nine Asian Billiards titles.
- ii. He has won **18** billiards world titles, including the International Billiards and Snooker Federation (IBSF) World Billiards Championship 17 times and the World Team Billiards Championship once.
- iii. The Indian government has given him several awards for his accomplishments, including the **Arjuna Award** in 2004, **Khel Ratna** in 2006, **Padma Shri** in 2009, and **Padma Bhushan** in 2018.
- iv. **Narantuya Bayarsaikhan** of Mongolia defeated Ng On Yee of Hong Kong, China in the **women's section** of the 2025 Asian Snooker Championship.
- v. **Shaheen Sabzi** of Iran defeated Zihao Dong of China in the **under-21 men's title** of the 2025 Asian Snooker Championship.

### **2025 Archery Asia Cup World Ranking Tournament, Stage I: India Tops Medal Tally With 5 Gold Medals**

India concluded the '2025 Archery Asia Cup-World Ranking Tournament, Stage I' organized by World Archery Asia (WAA), held from February 16 to 23, 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand. Indian Archers topped the medal tally with an outstanding performance of securing **8 medals** in the competition including **5 Gold, 2 Silver** and **1 Bronze**.

- South Korea finished second in the medal tally with 5 medals, including 2 gold.
- India set a new **Under-21 World Record** by scoring **2129** in Men's Compound Team .

**Highlights:**

**i. Vishnu Choudhary** claimed 2 gold in both the Men's Individual and Men's Team in the Recurve category.

**ii. Kushal Dalal**, claimed 2 gold in both the 'Men's Compound Team' and 'Men's Compound Individual'.

**iii. Basanti Mahato** earned a gold in the 'Women's Recurve', by defeating **Fong You Jhu** of Chinese Taipei after a remarkable comeback from 0-4 down to win **6-4**.

**iv. Vishnu Choudhary** secured a silver medal in the 'Mixed Team Recurve' with women's individual champion **Basanti Mahato**, where they lost to China **6-0** in the final. Chinese Taipei secured the bronze.

**Mohun Bagan Super Giant Wins 2024-25 ISL Shield Title**

Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG) football club (also known as Mariners) clinched the 2024-25 Indian Super League (ISL) **League Winners' Shield**, finishing the regular season as the top team. The Kolkata-based club secured the Shield with a dramatic 1-0 victory over **Odisha FC** at Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (Salt Lake Stadium), in Kolkata, West Bengal (WB).

- This triumph marked MBSG's **second consecutive ISL Shield** and made them the **first team** in ISL history to successfully defend the League Winners' Shield.

**Key Points:**

**i.** MBSG Football Club is leading the league table with 52 points, followed by FC Goa with 42 points, and 3 matches remaining. Even if FC Goa wins all of its remaining games, it will not be able to surpass MBSG on the points table.

- As a result, Mohun Bagan has been declared the winner of the 2024-25 ISL Winners Shield.

**ii.** With this win, MBSG football club qualified for the next Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Champions League Two season.

**iii.** Goalkeeper Vishal Kaith reached a historic milestone, becoming the first-ever goalkeeper to register 50 clean sheets in ISL history.

**About Indian Super League (ISL):**

- Founded: 21 October 2013
- Organized by: Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL) in partnership with the All India Football Federation (AIFF).
- Number of clubs : 13 (Mohun Bagan Super Giant, FC Goa, Bengaluru Football Club, Jamshedpur FC, North East United FC, Mumbai City FC, Odisha FC, East Bengal FC, Kerala Blasters Football Club, Punjab FC, Chennaiyin FC, Hyderabad FC, Mohammedan Sporting Club)
- The top team wins the Shield, while the top 6 qualify for playoffs to compete for the ISL Trophy.

**About Mohun Bagan Super Giant:**

Mohun Bagan Super Giant, commonly referred to as Mohun Bagan, is an Indian professional football club based in Kolkata, West Bengal. Founded in 1889, it is one of the oldest football clubs in Asia.

## Obituary

**World Oldest Living Olympic Gold Medalist in Athletics, Greg Bell, Passes Away** Gregory Curtis Bell (**Greg Bell**), the **American long jump** legend and the world's oldest living Olympic gold medalist in athletics, passed away at the age of 94 in Indiana, the United States of America (USA). He was born on November 7, 1930, in Indiana.

### About Greg Bell:

- i. Greg Bell was the world's leading men's long jumper during the 1950s.
- ii. In **1956 Melbourne Olympics**, Greg Bell won the gold medal in the long jump with a leap of 7.83 meters (m) under challenging conditions to win by 15 centimeters (cm) ahead of his compatriot John Bennett
- iii. He set a personal best of 8.10 m in Austin, the USA, in 1957, which was just 3 cm short of the world record set by Jesse Owens in 1935.
- iv. In 1959, he won the silver medal at the Pan American Games in Chicago, the USA. He retired after finishing fourth at the 1960 U.S. Olympic Trials.
- v. He served as the director of dentistry at Logansport State Hospital, the USA for 50 years before retiring in 2020 at the age of 89.
- vi. In 1982, he was inducted into the Indiana University (**IU**) **Hall of Fame** and was inducted into the USA Track and Field (**USATF**) **Hall of Fame** in 1988.



### Navin Chawla, Former CEC Passed Away

Former Chief Election Commissioner of India (CEC) **Navin Chawla** passed away at the **age of 79** in New Delhi (Delhi). He was born on 30 July 1945 in New Delhi.

- i. **Navin Chawla** was a retired 1969-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Arunachal Pradesh (AR)-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre.
- ii. He served as the Election Commissioner (EC) from May 16, 2005, to April 20, 2009, and then as CEC from April 2009 to July 2010.
- iii. During his tenure, he oversaw the 2009 Lok Sabha elections and implemented reforms, such as allowing 3rd-gender voters to choose a new voting category.
- iv. In 2005 he received '**Mazzini Award**' (Government of Italy) for his efforts to forge a new relationship with Italy and strengthen the existing bonds between India and Italy.
- v. In 2014 he received 'Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai Award' for his exemplary work in the conduct of elections during electoral processes in India.

**Note:** In 1992, he authored the '**Authorized Biography of Mother Teresa**', which was later translated into 14 languages both in India and internationally.

### Aga Khan IV, Padma Vibhushan Awardee & Spiritual Leader of Ismaili Muslims Passes Away

Prince Karim Al-Husseini Aga Khan (also known as the **Aga Khan IV**), the **49th** hereditary imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims and a philanthropist, passed away at the age of 88 in Lisbon (Portugal). He was born on 13 December 1936 in Geneva (Switzerland).

- **Prince Rahim Al-Hussaini** become the 50th imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims

### About Aga Khan IV:

- i. In 1957, at the age of 20, Prince Karim Al-Husseini Aga Khan became the imam of the Ismaili

Muslims, a branch of Shia Islam, following the death of his grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan.

- Queen Elizabeth bestowed upon him the title of “His Highness.” in 1957.

**ii.**In **1959**, he founded the Nation Media Group(NMG) which has grown into the largest independent media organization in East and Central Africa.

**iii.**He was the founder and chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), one of the world’s largest private development organizations.

**iv.**In **2015**, the Government of India(GoI) awarded him the **Padma Vibhushan** , India’s second-highest civilian honor, for his contributions to social development in India.

## Important Days with theme

### Indian Coast Guard Day 2025 – 1st February

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Day is celebrated annually on **1st February** across India to commemorate the establishment of the ICG, India's maritime armed force under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

- 1st February 2025 marks the observance of **49th Raising Day** of the ICG.

#### Background :

i. In 1977, the Union Cabinet approved the establishment of the ICG, with 2 frigates and 5 patrol boats transferred from the Indian Navy (IN).



- The ICG was formed on **February 1, 1977** by the Coast Guard Act of 1978 of Parliament of India, to combat sea-based smuggling that affected India's economy.
- The 1st Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS), Kuthar (Pennant No. 31), was transferred from the IN to the ICG in 1978.

ii. The Indian Parliament declared ICG Day on August 18, 1978.

- ICG was formally inaugurated by the then Prime Minister (PM) Morarji Desai on 19th August 1978.

### World Wetlands Day 2025 – February 2

The United Nations (UN's) **World Wetlands Day** is observed annually on **February 2** across the globe to raise awareness about the critical role wetlands play in supporting both people and the planet.

- The day commemorates the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (**Ramsar Convention**), an intergovernmental treaty signed on **2 February 1971**, in Ramsar, Iran along the shores of the Caspian Sea.
- The theme for World Wetlands Day 2025, "**Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future**".

#### Background:

i. The World Wetlands Day observance began in **1997**, organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands, and has been celebrated by the Convention's Contracting Parties since its establishment.

ii. On **30 August 2021**, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution **A/RES/75/317**, declaring February 2 as World Wetlands Day every year to halt the





loss of wetlands and promote their conservation and restoration.

iii. The first UN-recognized World Wetlands Day was observed on **February 2, 2022.**

#### **About Ramsar Convention on Wetlands:**

The Ramsar Convention Secretariat is based at the headquarters of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Gland, Switzerland.

Secretary-General (SG)– Dr. Musonda Mumba

#### **World Cancer Day 2025 – February 4**

World Cancer Day (WCD) is observed annually on **February 4** across the globe to raise awareness of fundamental cancer issues and promote efforts in prevention, detection, and treatment.

- The campaign theme of WCD 2025-2027 is “**United by Unique,**” emphasizes the importance of personalized, patient-centered care in the battle against cancer.

#### **Background:**

i. On February 4 1999, the ‘Charter of Paris’ consisting of 10 articles, was adopted at the World Summit Against Cancer for the New Millennium in Paris, France.

ii. Under Article X, WCD was officially proclaimed to be observed annually on February 4.

- The first-ever WCD was observed on **February 4 2000.**
- February 4 2025 marks 25 years of signing the Charter of Paris Against Cancer.



#### **World Pulses Day 2025 – February 10**

The United Nations (UN's) World Pulses Day (WPD) is observed annually on **February 10** across the globe to highlight the importance of pulse crops, such as chickpeas, dry beans, and lentils, in the world's food systems.

- The theme of WPD 2025 is “**Pulses: Bringing diversity to agrifood systems**” underscores the vital role of pulses in promoting diversity, both above and below the ground.
- The slogan of WPD 2025 is “Love pulses for a healthy diet and planet”.

#### **Background:**

i. On December 20, 2013, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed **2016** as the International Year of Pulses to raise awareness about their nutritional and environmental benefits in sustainable food production.

ii. The UNGA adopted the resolution **A/RES/73/251** on December 20, 2018, officially establishing February 10 as WPD every year, with Burkina Faso, a landlocked West African country, proposing the observance.



- The **first -ever WPD** was observed on **February 10, 2019**
- iii. This day was created following the successful implementation of the International Year of Pulses (IYP) in 2016 by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

### National Women's day 2025 – February 13

National Women's Day is annually observed on **13th February** across India to honor the birth anniversary of **Sarojini Chattopadhyay Naidu** also known as Sarojini Naidu and popularly named as the "Nightingale of India" or "Bharat Kokila".

- 13 February 2025 marks the **146th birth anniversary** of Sarojini Naidu.

#### About Sarojini Naidu:

- Sarojini Naidu, born on February 13, 1879, in Hyderabad, Hyderabad State, British Raj (present-day Telangana), was a distinguished poet, freedom fighter, and political leader.
- In 1917, alongside Annie Besant and other notable figures, she co-founded the Women's Indian Association (WIA) to advance women's rights and welfare.
- A prominent figure in India's freedom struggle, she played a crucial role in the Indian Nationalist Movement (INM) and was the **first woman** to become the President of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1925.
- She served as the President of the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) in 1930, advocating for women's education, political participation, and social reforms.



### World Day of Social Justice 2025 – February 20

The United Nations (UN's) **World Day of Social Justice** is observed annually on **February 20** across the globe to highlight the importance of social justice worldwide.

- This day raises awareness about critical issues such as poverty alleviation, employment, gender equality, and access to essential services like education, healthcare, and social services.
- The theme for World Day of Social Justice 2025: "**Strengthening a Just Transition for a Sustainable Future**" focusing on the importance of inclusive policies and social protection in addressing systematic inequality.

#### Background:

- On November 26, 2007, during its 62nd session, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution **A/RES/62/10**, declaring February 20th of each year as World Day of Social Justice, starting from the 63rd session of the UNGA.
- The first-ever World Day of Social Justice was observed on **February 20, 2009**.

### International Mother Language Day 2025 – February 21

The United Nations (UN's) International Mother Language Day (IMLD) is observed annually on **February 21** across the globe to raise awareness about the importance of preserving and

promoting mother languages. The day also aims to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and to encourage multilingualism and highlight the role of languages in fostering a peaceful, tolerant, and inclusive global society.

- 21 February 2025 marks the observance of the **25th** anniversary of IMLD.
- The theme of IMLD 2025: “**Languages Matter: Silver Jubilee Celebration of International Mother Language Day**,” serves as an important reminder to safeguard linguistic diversity and encourage the use of mother tongues.

**Background:**

i. The initiative to celebrate IMLD originated in Bangladesh, where it honors the language martyrs who made the ultimate sacrifice during the 1952 language movement in Dhaka, Bangladesh striving to protect the dignity of their mother tongue, ‘Bangla’.

ii. On November 17 **1999**, the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared February 21 as “International Mother Language Day (IMLD)” to honor the Bengali people’s struggle and sacrifice for their language and culture.

- The **first ever** IMLD was observed on **21st December 2000**, following the proclamation by UNESCO.
- v. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) further recognized this observance in its resolution (A/RES/56/262) in 2002.

**Central Excise Day 2025 – February 24**

The **Central Excise Day** is observed annually on **24th February** across India to honor the contributions of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), the authority responsible for managing indirect taxes in India. The day marks the anniversary of the enactment of the **Central Excise and Salt Act, 1944**, on 24th February, 1944.

- It aims to promote the implementation of rules and regulations to ensure the highest standard of excise services.

**Background:**

i. The Central Excise Day dates back to 1944 when the Government of India (GoI) approved the Central Excise and Salt Act.

ii. This Act consolidated **11 previous laws** related to excise duty and was introduced to bring about changes in the law concerning salt and central duties.

iii. On February 24, 1944, the Central Excise and Salt Act was enacted, and in its honor, Central Excise Day has been celebrated annually on this date.

- The **first ever** Central Excise Day was observed on February 24, 1944.

**About Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC):**

**Chairman-** Sanjay Kumar Agarwal

**Headquarters-** New Delhi, Delhi