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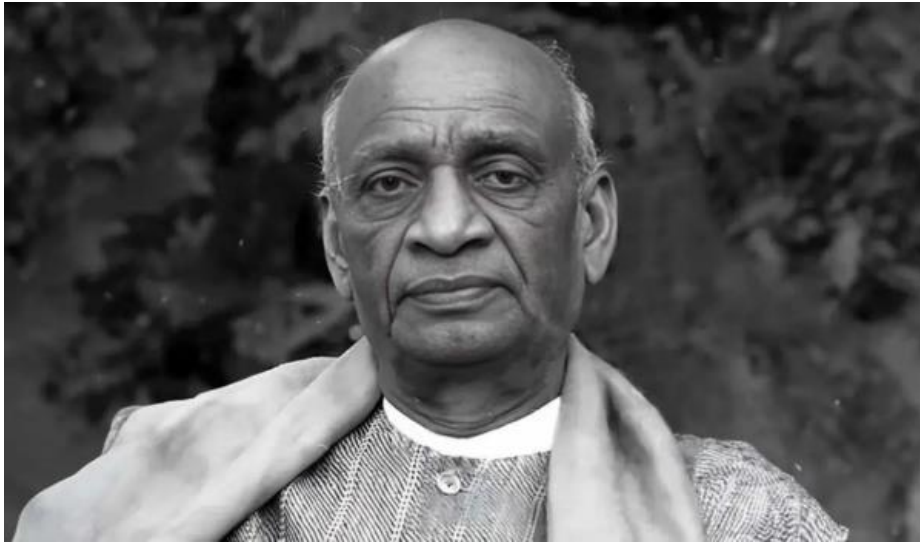
First Woman President of the Press Club of India

- A pathbreaking development for India's media scene, senior journalist Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty was elected as the first woman President of the Press Club of India.
- The declaration of results on December 14, 2025, marked a historic milestone in the annals of one of the most powerful journalist bodies of the country, and a step towards changing the trend of low gender representation in media leadership.
- Newly Elected Office Bearers
- President: Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty
- Vice-President: Jatin Gandhi
- Secretary General: Afzal Imam
- Joint Secretary: P. R. Sunil
- Treasurer: Aditi Rajput (elected unopposed)
- **What is the Press Club of India?**
- Established in 1958, headquartered in New Delhi
- A professional body representing journalists and media professionals
- Works to,
- Safeguard freedom of the press
- Promote ethical journalism
- Provide a forum for dialogue between the media and policymakers



75th Death Anniversary of Sardar Patel

- PM Narendra Modi today paid his respectful homage to the Iron Man of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, on his 75th death anniversary. He said that Sardar Patel dedicated his entire life to unifying the nation and weaving India into a single thread of unity.
- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel passed away on **15 December 1950**, but his legacy continues to inspire generations. In his honor, the Statue of Unity, the world's tallest statue, was unveiled in Gujarat in 2018, symbolizing his role in unifying India.
- Vallabhbhai Patel was born on **31 October 1875** in Nadiad, Gujarat, into a humble farming family. From an early age, he displayed qualities of discipline, determination, and self-reliance.
- After independence in **1947**, Vallabhbhai Patel became India's first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister. His most remarkable contribution was the integration of over **560 princely states** into the **Indian Union**.



West Asia-North Africa : PM Modi Visit

- As PM Narendra Modi visits Jordan, Ethiopia and Oman from December 15, as part of his latest leadership interactions abroad, he cannot but be conscious that he is retracing the path of deep and substantial civilisational interactions that our ancestors have traversed over millennia.
- For centuries, Indian traders, scholars, philosophers, religious teachers and ordinary seamen have crossed the waters of the Indian Ocean to the Gulf and engaged with their counterparts from Oman to Mesopotamia.
- Again, braving the dangerous Red Sea, they have traded with the coastal states while on their way to Rome. These historic ties have remained vibrant and mutually beneficial as Indian enterprise has ensured that the changing needs of its foreign partners are met.
- But the PM's latest conclaves with regional leaders are taking place amid severe insecurity and uncertainty. The broad West Asian landscape and the Red Sea littoral have been severely destabilised by the horrendous Gaza war and the ongoing big power competitions in the Indian Ocean.
- While India is engaging with the major players — the US, China and Russia — to safeguard its interests in this volatile period, its priority concerns lie in the western Indian Ocean, and it is here that PM Modi will need to address diverse challenges.
- India's relations with the three countries that will host him are generally good, with several initiatives also under discussion to take these ties into new frontier

areas. With Jordan, bilateral trade stands at \$2.87 billion and is anchored in purchases of phosphates and phosphoric acid, with foodstuffs, chemicals and industrial manufacture making up the rest.

- Both sides are expected to look at Indian investments in renewable energy, information technology, Artificial Intelligence, and the development of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone.
- Oman-India trade is about **\$12.4 billion**, and is largely based on Indian imports of oil, natural gas, and fertiliser, and exports of petroleum products. The visit is likely to see the signing of the **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** that will boost trade in goods and services. Indo-Ethiopian trade is a modest half a billion dollars, dominated by Indian exports.
- Jordan has remarkable geopolitical importance: It borders five West Asian countries — Israel, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. It also has a presence in the Red Sea — the port of Aqaba (astride the Israeli port of Eilat) is located on the Gulf of Aqaba, which is an offshoot of the Red Sea.
- Located between Asia and Africa, it has been a major trade and maritime centre for several millennia.
- Ethiopia is landlocked, being separated from the Red Sea by a tiny sliver of Eritrean territory. Its principal maritime outlet is Djibouti, though, in January 2024, Ethiopia signed an agreement with Somaliland (Somalia's separatist province) to link Addis Ababa by road and rail with a port on the Red Sea, most probably Berbera.
- Ethiopia is at the heart of the fragile and conflict-prone Horn of Africa that includes Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti. The Horn dominates the Gulf of Aden, the Bab al-Mandab Strait that opens into the Red Sea, and the Red Sea itself. Indian trade valued at over \$200 billion passes through the Red Sea annually.



ISRO Lines Up 7 Launches

- ISRO has lined up seven launch missions by March next year, including one to demonstrate home-built electric propulsion systems for satellite and quantum key distribution technologies, and the first uncrewed mission of the Gaganyaan project.
- India's heaviest rocket, LVM3, will place in orbit the Bluebird-6 communication satellite for U.S.-based AST Space mobile through a commercial agreement with ISRO's New Space India Limited (NSIL), Union minister Jitendra Singh recently told Parliament.
- The human-rated LVM3 will soar into the sky early next year, carrying the first uncrewed mission of India's human **spaceflight Gaganyaan** with a robot 'Vyommitra' onboard the crew module.
- One more uncrewed mission is planned later next year before ISRO sends Indian astronauts into **low earth orbit in 2027**.
- Next year will also see the launch of India's first industry-built Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) that will put in orbit Oceansat satellite. The PSLV will have two more passengers — Indo-Mauritius Joint Satellite and LEAP-2 satellite of Dhruva Space.
- To increase commercial launches of satellites, NSIL had given a contract to a HAL-L&T consortium to manufacture five PSLV rockets, under a technology transfer agreement signed in September 2025.
- An ISRO-built PSLV will put in orbit an earth observation satellite (EOS-N1) for a strategic user and 18 smaller satellites of Indian and international customers.

- The GSLV-Mk II rocket is expected to launch the EOS-5 satellite or GISAT-1A, which will be a replacement for GISAT-1 which failed to reach the intended orbit in 2021.
- The PSLV63 mission of ISRO will put in orbit the TDS-01 satellite to demonstrate technologies such as the high thrust electric propulsion system, the quantum key distribution, and indigenous travelling wave tube amplifier.
- The High Thrust Electric Propulsion System (HTEP) will enable ISRO to launch all electric satellites in future. This technology will make satellites lighter and reduce the dependence of chemical fuels.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

Q1. Vallabhbhai Patel was born on which date?

- A) 15 August 1872
- B) 31 October 1875
- C) 2 October 1869
- D) 26 January 1890

Answer: B) 31 October 1875

Q2. Vallabhbhai Patel was born in which place?

- A) Ahmedabad, Gujarat
- B) Surat, Gujarat
- C) Nadiad, Gujarat

D) Vadodara, Gujarat

Answer: C) Nadiad, Gujarat

Q3. Who became the first woman President of the Press Club of India?

A) Barkha Dutt

B) Nidhi Razdan

C) Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty

D) Rana Ayyub

Answer: C) Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty

Q4. The Press Club of India was established in which year?

A) 1947

B) 1950

C) 1958

D) 1965

Answer: C) 1958

Q5. Where is the headquarters of the Press Club of India located?

A) Mumbai

B) Kolkata

C) Chennai

D) New Delhi

Answer: D) New Delhi

Q6. PM Narendra Modi visited which of the following countries from December 15?

A) Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar

B) Jordan, Ethiopia and Oman

C) Egypt, Sudan and Kenya

D) Iran, Iraq and Syria

Answer: B) Jordan, Ethiopia and Oman

Q7. Ethiopia is located in which region of Africa?

A) North Africa

B) Southern Africa

C) Horn of Africa

D) Central Africa

Answer: C) Horn of Africa

Q8. Which of the following water bodies is dominated by the Horn of Africa region?

A) Arabian Sea

B) Mediterranean Sea

C) Gulf of Aden

D) Black Sea

Answer: C) Gulf of Aden

Q9. Approximately how much Indian trade passes through the Red Sea annually?

A) \$50 billion

B) \$100 billion

C) \$150 billion

D) Over \$200 billion

Answer: D) Over \$200 billion

Q10. India's heaviest rocket LVM3 will launch which satellite?

A) GSAT-20

B) Bluebird-6

C) Cartosat-3

D) Oceansat-4

Answer: B) Bluebird-6