

Daily Defence Current Affairs

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UNESCO Adds Endangered Traditional Arts & Crafts

- UNESCO has inscribed the following endangered traditional arts and crafts on its List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding in a major step to help protect global cultural diversity.
- The decision underlines the life of cultural practices seriously threatened by modernization, migration, lack of participation by communities, or insufficient economic support.
- The List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding is maintained by UNESCO to identify cultural practices that are at risk of disappearing.
- These include traditions related to music, dance, crafts, rituals, and oral knowledge.
- Once a cultural element is inscribed, it becomes eligible for international support, technical assistance, and funding, helping communities preserve and transmit their heritage.



Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025

- The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the Union Government has introduced the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA) Bill, 2025, which was listed in the Winter Session of Parliament.
- The Bill represents one of the most significant reforms in higher education governance in recent years, aiming to simplify regulation, enhance academic quality, and improve global competitiveness.
- Currently, India's higher education sector is regulated by multiple bodies such as:
 - University Grants Commission (UGC)
 - All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)
 - National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)
- The Bill clearly outlines its intent to enable and empower universities to achieve excellence in:
 - Teaching and learning
 - Research and innovation
 - Academic governance
- Key objectives include:
 - Better coordination among regulatory functions
 - Clear and uniform academic standards
 - A unified governance mechanism for higher education



Commemorative Stamp Honouring Emperor Mutharaiyar

- A commemorative postage stamp was issued by the Vice-President of India, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan, in the memory of Emperor Perumbidugu Mutharaiyar II (Suvaran Maran) at the Vice-President Enclave, New Delhi.
- The event was an extension of the Centre's prevailing initiative to recognize unsung rulers and cultural icons of Tamil Nadu, with continuous assurance by the government to preserve historical and cultural legacy.
- **Emperor Perumbidugu Mutharaiyar II**
- Also known as Suvaran Maran
- Belonged to the Mutharaiyar dynasty, which ruled central Tamil Nadu between the 7th and 9th centuries CE
- Ruled from Tiruchirappalli for nearly four decades
- Considered one of the most distinguished rulers of early medieval South India



India Ranks Third in Global AI Index

- India is a major milestone in the area of artificial intelligence with its current rankings as the third best globally, after the USA and China, revealed by the report of the Global AI Vibrancy Tool of Stanford University.
- It is noteworthy that India stood at the seventh position as of 2023, but enters 2024 with the current position of the third best in the global rankings.
- The Global AI Vibrancy Index, prepared by Stanford University, measures how competitive countries are in the AI domain. It evaluates nations across multiple pillars such as research and development (R&D), talent, economic activity, infrastructure, governance, and public opinion.



Ex-Justice Secretary Raj Kumar Appointed CIC

- For the country's transparency and accountability regime, former Secretary in the Ministry of Law and Justice Raj Kumar Goyal took oath as the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) of Central Information Commission (CIC) in a ceremony held on December 15th, 2025.
- While administering the oath, President Droupadi Murmu initiated a new beginning in one of the country's most critical institutions under the Right to Information Act, 2005, with a new head in charge.
- The CIC is appointed by the President of India on the recommendation of a committee comprising,
 - Prime Minister is the Chairperson
 - Union Home Minister
 - Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha
 - The same committee also recommends Information Commissioners.
- **Central Information Commission**
- **Statutory Power Gets From:** Right to Information Act, 2005.
- **Role:** It plays a pivotal role in ensuring transparency and accountability in the functioning of public authorities by adjudicating appeals and complaints related to information requests.
- **Composition:** The Commission is headed by the Chief Information Commissioner and can have a maximum of 10 Information Commissioners. At present, Anandi Ramalingam and Vinod Kumar Tiwari are serving as Information Commissioners.



India Crowned Champion of WSF Squash

- India created history in sports by winning the WSF Squash World Cup 2025 for the first time in the history of the tournament. In addition, the Indian team put on a great show to defeat top-seeded Hong Kong 3-0 in the final held at Express Avenue Mall, Chennai, in front of an enthusiastic home crowd.
- This is a major victory for Indian squash, incidentally, highlighting the country's steady rise into prominence on the global squash stage.
- The WSF Squash World Cup is a prestigious international team tournament organised under the aegis of the World Squash Federation (WSF).
- It features top squash-playing nations competing in team ties consisting of men's and women's singles matches.
- Before this edition, India had won only one medal at the WSF Squash World Cup — a **bronze medal in 2023**.
- The 2025 title therefore represents a significant leap, as India upgraded its previous best performance to gold.
- Hosting the **event in Chennai**, a city known as a strong centre for squash in India, also played a key role in boosting the team's confidence and performance.
- Invented in England in the early 19th century, squash has rapidly gained popularity among both enthusiasts and professionals.



MRF Tyres Bags 2025 FIA European Rally Championship Title

- India's presence in global motorsport technology received a major boost as MRF Tyres clinched the 2025 FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) Teams Title. The prestigious award was presented at the FIA Awards Gala, marking another milestone for the Chennai based tyre manufacturer on the international stage.
- This victory reinforces MRF's reputation as one of the few Indian companies to consistently compete and succeed in elite global motorsport championships, an area traditionally dominated by European and Japanese firms.
- The 2025 title marks the third time MRF Tyres has secured the ERC Teams Championship.
- The company first won the title in 2022, followed by a consecutive win in 2023, and has now reclaimed the top position in 2025.
- Winning the ERC Teams Title requires consistent performance across multiple rally events held in diverse and challenging terrains across Europe.



Awards for Technological Innovations

- India's push towards meeting its increasing energy demands while ensuring long-term sustainability received a boost with the presentation of the first DV Kapur Foundation Energy Innovation Awards.
- The awards recognised outstanding technological innovations that contribute to clean energy transition, efficiency, and indigenous research. It was held on 12 December 2025 at SCOPE Complex, New Delhi, and brought to the fore the crucial role innovation can play in shaping India's future energy landscape.
- Category 1 – Young Innovators (under 38 years)

- Winner: Dr Achu Chandran, Principal Scientist, CSIR-NIIST
- Innovation: Nano Electricity Generator
- Prize: Citation, trophy, and Rs 1 lakh
- Category 2 – Individuals/Organizations for Technological Innovation
- Winner: NTPC's R&D wing, NETRA
- Innovation: Green Use of Coal Technologies
- Prize: Citation, trophy, and Rs 10 lakh
- Recipient: Shri Shaswattam, ED (NETRA), along with his team



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Which Indian company won the 2025 FIA European Rally Championship (ERC) Teams Title?

- A. CEAT Tyres
- B. Apollo Tyres
- C. MRF Tyres
- D. JK Tyres

Answer: C. MRF Tyres

2. The 2025 FIA European Rally Championship Teams Title boosted India's presence in which field?

- A. Space technology
- B. Artificial intelligence
- C. Defence manufacturing
- D. Global motorsport technology

Answer: D. Global motorsport technology

3. India won which major international sports title for the first time in 2025?

- A. Thomas Cup
- B. Davis Cup
- C. Hockey World Cup
- D. WSF Squash World Cup

Answer: D. WSF Squash World Cup

4. Which team did India defeat in the final of the WSF Squash World Cup 2025?

- A. England
- B. Malaysia
- C. Pakistan
- D. Hong Kong

Answer: D. Hong Kong

5. What was the scoreline of the WSF Squash World Cup 2025 final?

- A. 2–1
- B. 3–1
- C. 3–0
- D. 4–2

Answer: C. 3–0

6. Where was the final of the WSF Squash World Cup 2025 held?

- A. Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Delhi
- B. Indira Gandhi Arena, Delhi
- C. Gachibowli Stadium, Hyderabad
- D. Express Avenue Mall, Chennai

Answer: D. Express Avenue Mall, Chennai

7. Who took oath as the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC)?

- A. Ashok Kumar
- B. Sanjay Murthy
- C. Raj Kumar Goyal
- D. Rakesh Gupta

Answer: C. Raj Kumar Goyal

8. Who appoints the Chief Information Commissioner of India?

- A. Prime Minister of India
- B. Chief Justice of India
- C. Parliament of India
- D. President of India

Answer: D. President of India

9. According to Stanford University's Global AI Vibrancy Tool, India ranks globally in Artificial Intelligence at which position?

- A. First
- B. Second
- C. Third
- D. Fourth

Answer: C. Third

10. A commemorative postage stamp was issued in memory of which historical figure?

- A. Rajaraja Chola I
- B. Pulakeshin II
- C. Emperor Perumbidugu Mutharaiyar II (Suvaran Maran)
- D. Harsha Vardhana

Answer: C. Emperor Perumbidugu Mutharaiyar II (Suvaran Maran)