

Daily Current Affairs

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India, Namibia Agree to Deepen Cooperation

- India and Namibia held the fifth round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) on January 19-20, 2026, where both sides agreed to deepen collaboration in defence and critical minerals along with other key sectors.
- The fifth round of Foreign Office Consultations reviewed the entire spectrum of India-Namibia relations.
- Discussions covered trade, investment, health and pharmaceuticals, education, capacity building, agriculture, infrastructure development, consular issues, and cultural exchanges.
- Both sides expressed satisfaction with the progress made since previous high-level engagements.
- The talks were held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere, allowing officials to identify new areas for mutually beneficial cooperation.
- It was also agreed that the next round of consultations will be hosted in Windhoek, Namibia, at a mutually convenient time.
- A major highlight of the consultations was the decision to strengthen cooperation in defense and critical minerals.
- This assumes importance at a time when global supply chains for rare earths and critical minerals are under stress, particularly due to China's tightening export controls.
- Namibia is rich in mineral resources essential for clean energy, electronics, and defense technologies.



BCCI Signs ₹270 Crore Gemini Sponsorship

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India has signed a ₹270 crore sponsorship agreement with Gemini for the Indian Premier League, starting from the 2026 season.
- The newly signed sponsorship agreement is a significant addition to IPL's commercial portfolio.
- The deal is valued at ₹270 crore.
- It is a three-year agreement, covering multiple IPL seasons.
- The partnership reinforces the global brand value of IPL.
- The Gemini deal highlights a growing trend of artificial intelligence platforms associating with Indian cricket.
- ChatGPT, a rival AI platform, is already sponsoring the Women's Premier League.
- AI brands view cricket as a powerful medium to reach millions of users.
- Such partnerships blend technology, fan engagement, and sports marketing.



National Paralympic Powerlifting Championship

- The National Paralympic Powerlifting Championship was inaugurated in January 2026 by Pushkar Singh Dhimi. The event highlighted inclusive sports and empowerment of persons with disabilities at the national level.
- The National Paralympic Powerlifting Championship is a prestigious national-level sporting event for para-athletes.
- It focuses on paralympic powerlifting, a sport that tests physical strength, discipline, and mental resilience.
- The championship provides athletes with disabilities an opportunity to compete at a high level and gain national exposure.
- The championship was inaugurated virtually from COER University, Roorkee, by the Uttarakhand Chief Minister.
- Addressing athletes and organisers, the Chief Minister emphasised the importance of sports in shaping character and self-confidence.
- The virtual inauguration reflects the use of technology to support large-scale events while ensuring wider participation.



Cabinet Approves ₹5,000 Crore Capital Support to SIDBI

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Narendra Modi approved a ₹5,000 crore equity infusion into SIDBI. The decision is aimed at boosting MSME lending and maintaining SIDBI's capital adequacy amid rising credit demand.
- The Cabinet approved equity support for the Small Industries Development Bank of India to strengthen its financial position.
- SIDBI is India's principal financial institution for the MSME sector and plays a key role in refinancing banks, NBFCs, and MFIs.
- The infusion will enhance SIDBI's ability to provide direct and indirect credit to MSMEs at competitive rates.
- The equity infusion will be made by the Department of Financial Services (DFS) in a phased manner over three years.
- Of the total amount, ₹3,000 crore will be infused in FY26 at a book value of ₹568.65 per share.
- The remaining ₹2,000 crore will be provided in FY27 and FY28, in two equal tranches of ₹1,000 crore each.

Overview of SIDBI

- Principal financial institution for promotion, financing, and development of the MSME sector in India.
- Focuses on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Establishment & Legal Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established on 2 April 1990. Set up under an Act of the Indian Parliament. Initially incorporated as a wholly owned subsidiary of IDBI. Currently owned by, Government of India 22 other Central Government–controlled institutions, PSBs, and insurance companies.
Administrative Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functions under the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.
Headquarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
Objectives & Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote, finance, and develop the MSME sector. Coordinate the activities of institutions engaged in MSME financing.



SAMPANN Pension Portal Integrated with UMANG

- The SAMPANN pension portal has been integrated with the UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) platform, allowing nearly 4 lakh pensioners of the Department of Telecommunications to access their PPO details and Life Certificate validity online.

- SAMPANN (System for Accounting and Management of Pension) is a flagship digital platform developed by the Office of the Controller General of Communication Accounts.
- Dedicated to the nation in December 2018, the system manages the entire pension lifecycle, from processing pension cases to disbursement and grievance redressal.
- With integration into UMANG, pensioners can now retrieve their Pension Payment Order (PPO) number and check Life Certificate (LC) validity status through a single digital platform.
- According to Ashish Joshi, Principal Controller of Communication Accounts, this integration enhances ease of access, transparency, and service efficiency.
- Combined with DigiLocker support, it ensures pensioners always have access to vital pension information on mobile or web platforms.
- Currently, two major SAMPANN services are available on UMANG.
- Pensioners can know their PPO number by entering their bank or post office account details along with date of birth.
- They can also check the Life Certificate validity date, which confirms whether their pension will continue without interruption.
- These services are especially useful for elderly pensioners, helping them avoid delays or stoppages due to missing documentation



Israel Joins Trump's Board of Peace

- Benjamin Netanyahu has confirmed that Israel will join the Board of Peace proposed and chaired by Donald Trump. The board is meant to supervise the Gaza ceasefire and future governance arrangements.

- The Board of Peace is a US-led international initiative to manage post-conflict arrangements in Gaza.
- Initially planned as a small group of global leaders.
- Expanded into a larger international coalition.
- Designed to oversee implementation of the Gaza ceasefire agreement.
- Israel's decision marks a departure from its earlier criticism of the board's structure.
- Netanyahu's office earlier objected to the Gaza executive committee's composition.
- Concerns were raised over the inclusion of Turkey, a regional rival of Israel.
- The move may create friction with far-right coalition allies, including Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. The fifth round of India–Namibia Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) was held in which month and year?

- A. December 2025
- B. January 2026
- C. February 2026
- D. March 2026

Answer: B

2. A major highlight of the India–Namibia consultations was cooperation in which sectors?

- A. Tourism and culture
- B. Space and nuclear energy
- C. Defence and critical minerals
- D. Banking and insurance

Answer: C

3. Strengthening cooperation in critical minerals between India and Namibia is important mainly due to:

- A. Rising oil prices
- B. Climate change agreements
- C. Stress in global supply chains for rare earths
- D. Decline in agricultural output

Answer: C

4. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) signed a ₹270 crore sponsorship deal with which company for IPL?

- A. Google DeepMind
- B. OpenAI
- C. Gemini
- D. Microsoft Azure

Answer: C

5. The Gemini–BCCI sponsorship agreement for IPL is valid for how many years?

- A. One year
- B. Two years
- C. Three years
- D. Five years

Answer: C

6. The National Paralympic Powerlifting Championship 2026 was inaugurated by:

- A. Narendra Modi
- B. Amit Shah
- C. Pushkar Singh Dhami
- D. Anurag Thakur

Answer: C

7. The Union Cabinet approved a ₹5,000 crore equity infusion into which institution?

- A. NABARD
- B. SIDBI
- C. RBI
- D. EXIM Bank

Answer: B

8. SIDBI functions under the administrative control of which ministry?

- A. Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- B. Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- C. Ministry of Finance
- D. Ministry of MSME

Answer: C

9. Integration of the SAMPANN pension portal with UMANG benefits which group directly?

- A. Railway employees
- B. Defence pensioners
- C. Telecom pensioners
- D. State government employees

Answer: C

10. Israel agreed to join which US-led initiative to oversee the Gaza ceasefire?

- A. Quartet for West Asia
- B. Abraham Accord Council
- C. Board of Peace
- D. Middle East Stability Forum

Answer: C



SSBCrack
EXAMS