

# Daily Current Affairs

## 29 January 2025

### Indian Newspaper Day

- A day set aside to honour the beginning of newspapers in India is known as **Indian Newspaper Day**. This day is intended to raise awareness of Indian newspapers. Indian Newspaper Day, which is observed on **January 29<sup>th</sup>** each year.
- The first newspaper in India was named Hicky's Bengal Gazette, which was also called **The Calcutta General Advertiser**. It was published in **1780 in Calcutta**, which is now known as **Kolkata**. The founder of this newspaper was **James Augustus Hicky**.
- Following the closure of Hicky's Bengal Gazette, several other newspapers emerged during the British era. These included:
  - The Bengal Journal
  - Calcutta Chronicle
  - Madras Courier
  - Bombay Herald
- One of the most significant regulations on the freedom of the press during the British era was the **Vernacular Press Act of 1878**. Introduced by Lord Lytton, the then Viceroy of India, this Act granted the government the power to censor reports and editorials in the vernacular press.
- The Act was widely criticized for its oppressive nature and its attempt to stifle dissent.
- After India gained independence in 1947, the government recognized the need to reform press laws in line with the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. A Press Enquiry Committee was established to examine existing press laws and recommend changes to ensure the freedom of the press.

- The Press Council of India (PCI) is a statutory quasi-judicial autonomous authority established to preserve the freedom of the press and maintain the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India. It was first set up in 1966 under the **Indian Press Council Act, 1965**, based on the recommendations of the first Press Commission.
- During the Emergency period in 1975, the Press Council was abolished, and the 1965 Act was repealed. However, in 1979, a new Act, the Press Council Act, 1978, was enacted, and the Press Council was re-established. The PCI continues to play a vital role in upholding the integrity and independence of the press in India.



## Highlights of Economic Survey 2025-26

- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the Economic Survey 2025-26 in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha (January 29, 2026). The Survey projected the GDP growth in the range of 6.8 to 7.2% in 2026-27, a tad lower than 7.4% estimated in the current fiscal.
- First advance estimate projects real GDP growth and GVA growth for FY26 to 7.4% and 7.3% respectively.
- Potential growth for India estimated at around 7%, while real GDP growth for FY27 projected at 6.8-7.2%
- Centre revenue receipts rose to 9.2% of GDP in FY25 (PA)
- GNPAs reach multi-decadal low of 2.2% in September 2025

- 55.02 crore bank accounts opened as of March 2025 under PMJDY, with 36.63 crore in rural and semi-urban areas.
- Number of unique investors cross the 12-crore mark in September 2025, with nearly 25% being women
- India's share of global merchandise exports nearly doubles from 1% to 1.8% between 2005 and 2024
- Services exports touch an all-time high of \$387.6 billion in FY25, growing by 13.6%
- India remains the world's largest recipient of remittances, with inflows reaching \$135.4 billion in FY25
- India's Foreign Exchange reserves increase to \$701.4 billion as of January 16, 2026, providing cover for 11 months imports and 94% of external debt
- Domestic inflation averaged 1.7% for April-December 2025
- India's foodgrain production is estimated to have reached 3577.3 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) in agriculture year (AY) 2024-25, an increase of 254.3 LMT over the previous year.
- As Of January 2026, The E-Shram Portal Has Successfully Registered Over 31 Crore Unorganised Workers, 54% Being Women
- Vacancies Mobilised In The National Career Service Portal Exceeded 2.8 Crore In Fy25 And Have Already Crossed 2.3 Crore By September Fy26.
- Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) As Measured By Niti Aayog Shows A Decline From 55.3% In 2005-06 To 11.28% In 2022-23



## Supreme Court Stays 2026 UGC Equity Regulations

- The Supreme Court on Thursday ordered that the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026, be kept in abeyance.
- The Court expressed certain reservations about the Regulations, which are being challenged as discriminatory towards "general classes".
- A bench comprising CJI Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi was hearing three writ petitions which challenge the constitutionality of the 2026 Regulations. These have been filed by - Mritunjay Tiwari, Advocate Vineet Jindal and Rahul Dewan.
- The Court issued notice to the Union and the University Grants Commission on the petitions, returnable on March 19. Till then, the 2026 Regulations are kept in abeyance. The Court further ordered that the **2012 UGC Regulations** will operate in the meantime.
- During the hearing, the bench orally flagged the following issues with respect to the Regulations :
  - The provisions are vague and are capable of being misused.
  - Why "caste-based discrimination" is separately defined when the definition of "discrimination" takes care of all forms of discriminatory treatment?
  - Why ragging has been left out of the Regulations?



## India's Solid Waste Management Rules 2026

- India has taken an important step towards sustainable urban living by updating its solid waste governance framework. The new rules aim to reduce landfill pressure, improve recycling, and ensure accountability across the waste management chain by combining environmental responsibility with enforceable compliance measures.
- The SWM Rules 2026, notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, are designed to modernize India's approach to solid waste handling.
- The revised rules integrate circular economy principles and extended producer responsibility (EPR), ensuring that waste is treated as a resource rather than a burden.
- The focus is on reducing waste generation, improving recycling, and minimizing disposal in landfills through better planning and enforcement.
- A major highlight of the new rules is the introduction of mandatory four-stream segregation of waste at source.
- Citizens, bulk waste generators, and institutions must now segregate waste into biodegradable, recyclable, domestic hazardous, and sanitary/inert waste.

- This step is expected to significantly improve recycling efficiency, reduce contamination of waste streams, and lower the burden on processing and disposal facilities.



1. Indian Newspaper Day is observed every year on:

- A. 26 January
- B. 28 January
- C. 29 January
- D. 30 January

Answer: C. 29 January

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2. The first newspaper published in India was:

- A. The Bengal Journal
- B. Madras Courier
- C. Bombay Herald
- D. Hicky's Bengal Gazette

Answer: D. Hicky's Bengal Gazette

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### 3. Who founded Hicky's Bengal Gazette in 1780?

- A. Lord Curzon
- B. James Augustus Hicky
- C. Warren Hastings
- D. Lord Lytton

 **Answer: B. James Augustus Hicky**

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### 4. The Vernacular Press Act, 1878 was introduced during the tenure of:

- A. Lord Ripon
- B. Lord Curzon
- C. Lord Lytton
- D. Lord Dalhousie

 **Answer: C. Lord Lytton**

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### 5. The Press Council of India was first established in:

- A. 1950
- B. 1962
- C. 1966
- D. 1978

 **Answer: C. 1966**

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### 6. According to the Economic Survey 2025-26, India's GDP growth for FY 2026-27 is projected at:

- A. 5.5–6.0%
- B. 6.0–6.5%
- C. 6.8–7.2%
- D. 7.5–8.0%

 **Answer: C. 6.8–7.2%**

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**7. India's Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPAs) declined to a multi-decadal low of:**

- A. 3.5%
- B. 2.8%
- C. 2.2%
- D. 1.9%

 **Answer: C. 2.2%**

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**8. The Supreme Court stayed which UGC Regulations in 2026?**

- A. Teacher Recruitment Regulations
- B. University Accreditation Regulations
- C. Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions Regulations
- D. Foreign University Entry Regulations

 **Answer: C. Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions Regulations**

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**9. Until further orders, which UGC Regulations will remain in force?**

- A. UGC Regulations, 2008
- B. UGC Regulations, 2010
- C. UGC Regulations, 2012
- D. UGC Regulations, 2018

 **Answer: C. UGC Regulations, 2012**

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**10. Under the Solid Waste Management Rules 2026, waste segregation at source must be done into how many streams?**

- A. Two
- B. Three
- C. Four
- D. Five

 **Answer: C. Four**