

# Monthly Current Affairs

## January 2026

### Rakesh Aggarwal Gets Additional Charge as NIA Chief

- Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has assigned the additional charge of Director General of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to senior IPS officer Rakesh Aggarwal. The move aims to ensure institutional stability and continuity at the helm of India's premier counter-terrorism agency.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued an Office Memorandum assigning additional charge of DG, NIA to Rakesh Aggarwal.
- He will hold this charge until a regular incumbent is appointed or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- The decision follows the premature repatriation of Sadanand Vasant Date, a 1990 batch IPS officer of the Maharashtra cadre.
- The repatriation was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).
- Rakesh Aggarwal is a 1994 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the Himachal Pradesh cadre.
- He is currently serving as Special Director General of the NIA.
- **Role and Importance of NIA**
- It investigates offences related to,
  - Terrorism and terror financing
  - Radicalization networks
  - Cross border linkages
  - Threats to national security



## India's Broadband Subscribers Cross 100 Crore Mark

- India achieved a major digital milestone in November 2025 as its broadband subscriber base crossed 1 billion (100 crore) users. This landmark reflects the country's rapid progress in digital connectivity and the success of sustained policy focus on expanding internet access nationwide.
- India had 100.37 crore broadband subscribers by the end of November 2025. This marks the first time the country has crossed the 1 billion subscriber threshold. The achievement places India among the world's largest digital and connected societies.
- The growth in broadband connectivity has been extraordinary over the past ten years.
- November 2015: Broadband subscribers stood at 131.49 million (13.15 crore).
- November 2025: Subscribers increased to 100.37 crore.



## Bulgaria Adopts the Euro

- Bulgaria has taken a historic economic step by adopting the euro as its official currency. This move places the country firmly within Europe's economic mainstream after years of preparation. While many urban and younger Bulgarians see the change as progress, others fear rising prices and loss of national identity.
- Bulgaria has officially replaced its national currency, the lev, with the euro, becoming the 21st member of the eurozone. The move follows years of economic reforms and EU integration, despite political instability and public division over the new currency.
- The eurozone is a group of EU countries that use the euro as their official currency.
- Members follow common monetary policies led by the European Central Bank. Joining the eurozone requires strict criteria on inflation, debt, fiscal discipline, and currency stability.
- The Bulgarian lev has been the national currency since 1881.
- Since 1997, the lev has been pegged to major European currencies, first the Deutschmark and later the euro.
- Bulgaria joined NATO and the European Union, then the Schengen Area, before adopting the euro.

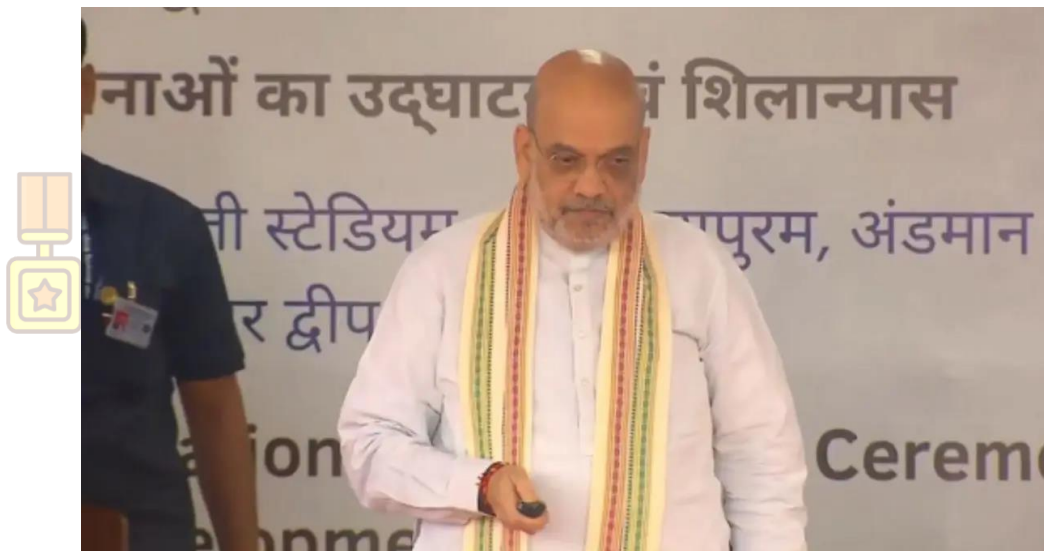
- The country has a population of about 6.5 million, making it one of the EU's poorest members.
- **How the Transition Is Being Done**
- Shops have displayed prices in both lev and euro since August.
- During January, people can pay using either currency, but change is given in euros.
- From 1 February, payments in lev will no longer be allowed.
- Coins and small euro notes have already been distributed to businesses.



## Integrated Security Hub Launched

- India has taken another step to strengthen security and governance in its island territories. With a focus on technology-driven surveillance and coordination, a major security infrastructure project has been launched in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The initiative reflects the government's broader vision of combining national security, development, and tourism in strategically important regions.
- The Integrated Command and Control Centre, built at a cost of **₹229 crore**, is a high-tech facility designed to strengthen security management and emergency response in the islands.
- It integrates **surveillance, communication, and coordination** among multiple agencies under one platform.
- The **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** hold immense strategic and geopolitical importance due to their location near major international sea lanes in the Indian Ocean.

- Strengthening security infrastructure in the islands enhances maritime security, disaster management, and surveillance.
- **Andaman Islands**
- Proximity: Closer to mainland India, stretch Nearly 800 km north-south
- Major Islands: North, Middle, and South Andaman
- Capital: Port Blair (South Andaman)
- Strategic Importance: Near Ten Degree Channel and Malacca Strait
- **Nicobar Islands**
- Location: South of Andamans, separated by Ten Degree Channel
- Capital: Car Nicobar
- Strategic Importance: Indira Point – India’s southernmost tip, near major sea routes



## MoSPI Launches New Logo and Mascot ‘Sankhyiki’

- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) unveiled its new logo and official mascot ‘**Sankhyiki (सांख्यिकी)**’ in New Delhi, Delhi.
- The launch aligns with the central theme “**Data for Development**”, highlighting the growing role of reliable, timely, and transparent data in evidence-based policymaking and governance.
- Sankhyiki will be actively used in **National Sample Surveys (NSS)**, awareness programmes, educational material, digital platforms, and public events. Through these channels, the mascot will encourage public participation, promote statistical literacy, and strengthen trust in official data.



## India's Largest Inland Rainbow Trout Farm

- India's fisheries sector marked a major technological milestone with the launch of a large-scale trout farming project in Telangana. Traditionally limited to cold Himalayan regions, trout cultivation has now been successfully adapted to a warm inland climate.
- Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh inaugurated the country's largest integrated inland Rainbow Trout farm in Telangana. The facility, located in Ranga Reddy district, showcases advanced aquaculture engineering that enables cold-water fish farming in warm regions.
- The integrated inland farm has been established by startup Smart Green Aquaculture with an estimated investment of **₹50 crore**.
- It is designed to rear Rainbow Trout, a cold water species, in the warm climate of the Deccan Plateau.
- Rainbow Trout is a high-value, protein rich fish with strong demand in domestic and international markets.
- Trout farming contributes to nutritional security, employment generation, and export earnings.
- Integrating technology with aquaculture supports sustainable water use, improves productivity, and helps India move toward modern, climate-resilient fisheries.





## 1000 Years of Somnath's Resilience

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday commemorated 1,000 years since the first attack on the Somnath Temple in 1026 AD, describing the iconic shrine as a timeless symbol of India's civilisational resilience and unbreakable spirit.
- Sharing an Op-Ed on the occasion, the Prime Minister said Somnath's legacy goes beyond a temple, reflecting the courage and faith of generations who safeguarded India's culture and civilisation despite repeated assaults.
- In the Op-Ed, the Prime Minister highlighted Somnath's spiritual and civilisational significance as the first of the 12 Jyotirlings mentioned in the Dwadasha Jyotirling Stotram.
- Located at Prabhas Patan on Gujarat's western coast, the temple has long been a centre of faith, culture and maritime prosperity.
- The Prime Minister recalled that Sardar Patel resolved to rebuild the temple after visiting Somnath in 1947, a vision realised in 1951 when the restored temple was inaugurated in the presence of then President Dr. Rajendra Prasad.



## Kushan Coins from King Vasudeva's Era Found

- Archaeologists in Pakistan have discovered 2,000-year-old Kushan Empire coins and lapis lazuli fragments at Bhir Mound near Taxila in Rawalpindi. The coins belong to the era of King Vasudeva, one of the last great Kushan rulers.
- The discovery highlights the region's ancient trade links, religious diversity, and historical importance during the early centuries of the Common Era.
- The excavation team unearthed **bronze coins** along with fragments of lapis lazuli, a prized semi-precious stone.
- Experts estimate that while the stones date back to the **6<sup>th</sup> century BC**, the coins belong to the **2<sup>nd</sup> century AD**, firmly placing them in the **Kushan period**.
- Scientific dating and numismatic analysis confirmed that the coins feature Emperor Vasudeva, regarded by historians as the last great Kushan ruler.





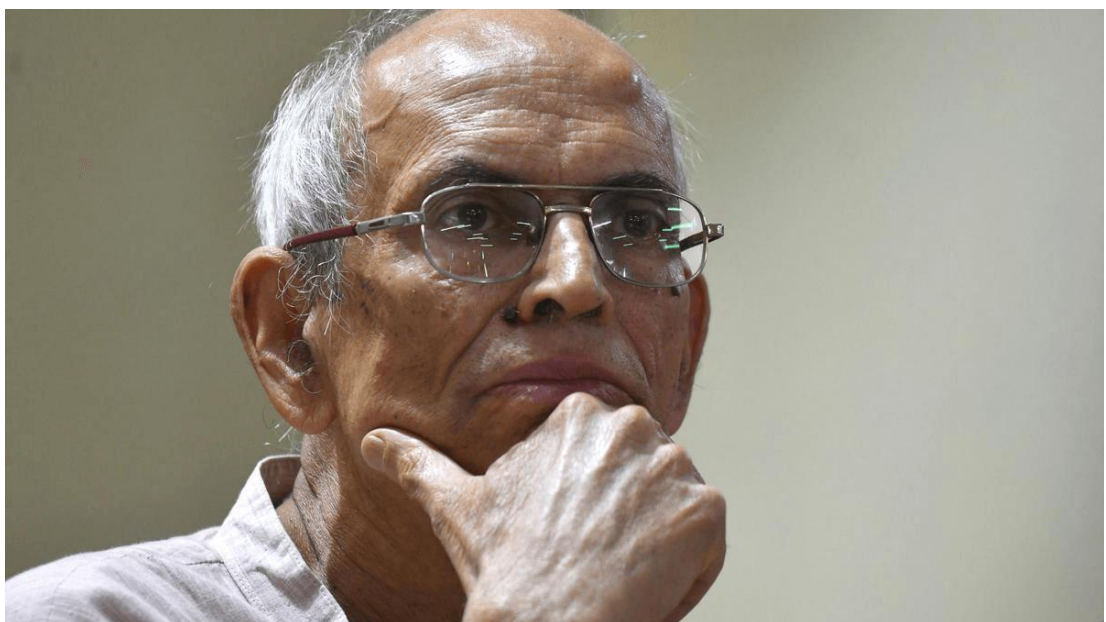
## Haryana to Launch India's First Hydrogen-Train

- Bharat is preparing to take a major step towards green transportation with the launch of its first hydrogen-powered train in Haryana. The pilot project, led by Indian Railways will operate between **Jind and Sonipat** and is now in the final stages of commissioning.
- The initiative highlights India's growing focus on clean energy and sustainable mobility solutions.
- The hydrogen-powered train is a pilot project of Northern Railway and will run on the Jind to Sonipat route in Haryana.
- Manufacturing of the hydrogen train-set has been completed and the project is designed to demonstrate the feasibility of hydrogen as a clean fuel for rail transport in India.
- A hydrogen plant has been established at Jind with a storage capacity of 3,000 kilograms.
- The plant is powered by a stable 11 kV electricity supply to ensure uninterrupted hydrogen production during commissioning and regular operations.
- Hydrogen is produced using the electrolysis process, a key method of green hydrogen generation.



## Ecologist Madhav Gadgil Passes Away at 82

- Madhav Gadgil, one of India's most renowned and influential ecologists, passed away at his residence in Pune on the night of January 7, 2026, after a brief illness. He was 82 years old.
- Madhav Gadgil is most renowned for his pioneering work on the ecological significance of the **Western Ghats**, one of the world's most biodiverse regions. His systematic scientific research and conservation advocacy transformed public and governmental understanding of the **Western Ghats'** irreplaceable ecological value.
- In his landmark 2011 report, Gadgil's work classified the **Western Ghats into zones of high, medium, and low ecological sensitivity**, providing a scientific framework for environmental impact assessment and land-use planning.



## India's First Bio-Happy District

- The newly formed Keyi Panyor district is set to make history by becoming India's first Bio-Happy District. This pioneering initiative aims to integrate biodiversity conservation with human well-being, offering a new development model that balances ecology, livelihoods, and public health.
- The project revives the visionary concept of Bio happiness, introduced by the legendary agricultural scientist M. S. Swaminathan.
- The Bio-Happy District initiative is being implemented by the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation in collaboration with the district administration.
- According to Soumya Swaminathan, Chairperson of the Foundation, the project focuses on:
  - Livelihood assessment
  - Agro-biodiversity mapping
  - Ecological system evaluation
- Bio happiness refers to a state of human well-being achieved when biodiversity is conserved and sustainably used to enhance:
  - Nutrition
  - Public health
  - Income and livelihoods



## India's First Fully Paperless District Court

- Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant virtually inaugurated India's first fully paperless district court in Kalpetta, Wayanad, Kerala.
- This historic milestone marks the complete digital transformation of district judiciary operations, making all judicial proceedings entirely electronic from case filing to final judgment.
- This development is significant because:
  - Judicial Modernization: Represents India's commitment to digital courts
  - Efficiency Boost: Reduces delays, court visits, and clerical errors
  - Technology Integration: First use of AI in district court operations
  - Citizen-Centric: Improves access to justice through digital platforms
  - Environmental Impact: Eliminates massive paper consumption
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Aspect	Impact
Clerical Delays	Significantly reduced
Court Visits	Minimized through digital access
Costs	Lower litigation expenses
Storage	No physical file storage needed
Order Communication	Instant digital delivery

Case Processing

Faster resolution

## Billiards Champion Manoj Kothari Passes Away

- In January 2026, the Indian sports fraternity mourned the passing of Manoj Kothari, one of the most distinguished figures in cue sports and a pioneering force in Indian billiards.
- The former World Billiards Champion and current Chief National Coach of the Indian billiards team breathed his last at the age of 67 years in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu.
- **World Billiards Titles Won:** 2 times
- **First World Title:** 1990 (IBSF World Billiards Championship)
- **Second World Title:** 1997 (World Doubles Billiards Championship with Ian Williamson, England)
- **National Coach:** From 2011 onwards (more than 15 years of service)
- **Major Dhyan Chand Award:** Received in 2005
- **State Champion Titles:** Won 16 times during his career
- **IBSF Lifetime Achievement Award:** Received in 2025



## Oscars 2026

- The 98th Academy Awards, also known as Oscars 2026, have recognized five Indian films as eligible for the prestigious Best Picture category. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences released the list of 201 feature films that qualify for Best Picture, with a total of 317 films eligible across all categories.



- The four Indian films eligible for Best Picture consideration at Oscars 2026 include:
- **Kantara: A Legend – Chapter 1** (Kannada), directed by Rishabh Shetty
- **Tanvi The Great** (Hindi), directed by Anupam Kher
- **Mahavatar Narsimha** (Multilingual animated feature)
- **Tourist Family** (Tamil), by debut filmmaker Abishan Jeevinth
- Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science (AMPAS)
- President: Lynette Howell Taylor
- Headquarters: Beverly Hills, California, USA
- Established: 1927
- AMPAS is responsible for recognizing excellence in cinema globally, including presenting the Oscars to outstanding films, actors, and filmmakers.



## UIDAI Launches Aadhaar Mascot 'Udai'

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has taken a significant step towards improving public communication by launching the Aadhaar mascot named '**Udai (उदय)**'.
- The new mascot has been introduced as a resident-facing communication companion to help simplify and humanise Aadhaar-related information for citizens across the country.



- Designed to be friendly, relatable, and easy to understand, Uдай aims to bridge the gap between technology and people by explaining Aadhaar services in a simpler and more engaging manner.
- The Aadhaar mascot will play a key role in explaining a wide range of Aadhaar-related services, including:
  - Aadhaar updates and corrections
  - Authentication and verification processes, Offline Aadhaar verification
  - Selective sharing of Aadhaar information
  - Responsible and secure usage of Aadhaar
  - Adoption of new technologies linked to Aadhaar



## Major Swathi Shantha Kumar Wins UN Secretary-General's Award

- Indian Army officer Major Swathi Shantha Kumar has brought international recognition to India by winning the UN Secretary-General's Award 2025 for gender-inclusive peacekeeping.
- Serving with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, her work highlights how inclusive leadership can improve community trust, women's participation, and long-term peace in conflict-affected regions.
- Major Swathi Shantha Kumar has been awarded the UN Secretary-General's Award 2025 in the Gender Category for her project "Equal Partners, Lasting Peace", selected from nominations across all UN peacekeeping missions worldwide.
- The project directly supported over 5,000 women, creating a safer environment for their participation in community activities. It strengthened grassroots level

trust, improved local confidence in UN missions, and demonstrated how gender-inclusive leadership can contribute to lasting peace and stability.



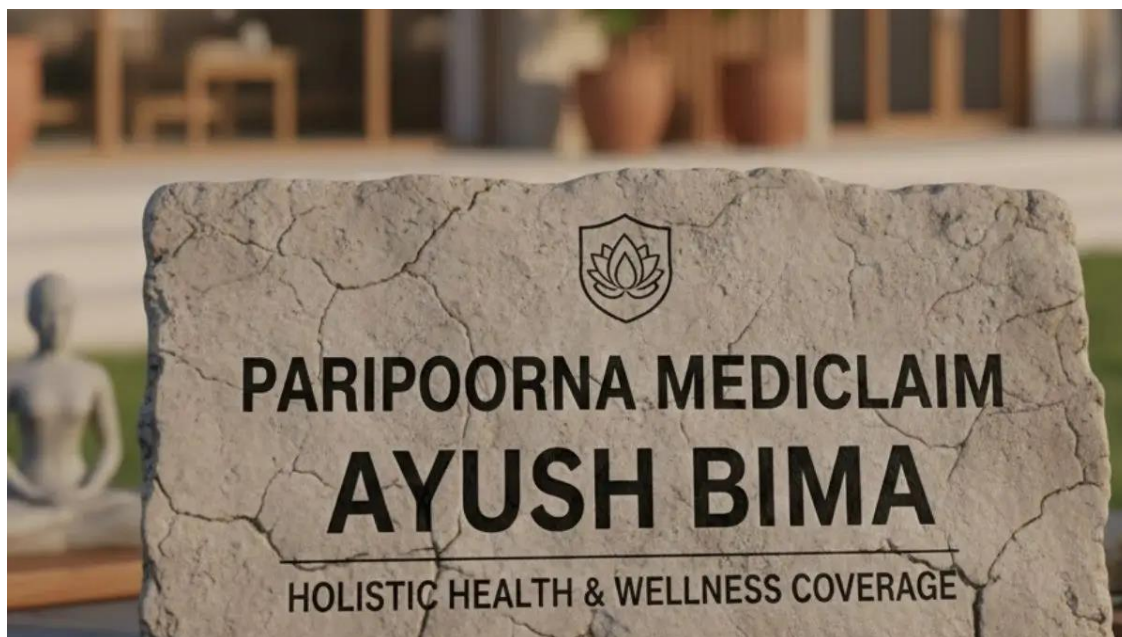
## India Unveils Logo and Website for BRICS

- India has officially begun preparations for its **BRICS Presidency in 2026** by unveiling the logo and dedicated website for the grouping. The launch signals India's vision for a people-centric and inclusive chairship at a time of growing global uncertainty.
- India launched the official logo and website for BRICS Presidency 2026. The announcement was made by S. Jaishankar, marking the formal start of India's preparations to assume the BRICS chairship.
- India's BRICS Presidency theme is "**Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability.**"
- The newly launched BRICS India website will act as a central digital platform during India's chairship. It will provide information on meetings, initiatives and outcomes, ensuring transparency and wider engagement.
- BRICS is a grouping of major emerging economies formed in 2006. It serves as a platform for cooperation on economic, political and development issues, representing the interests of the Global South in global governance.



## Finance Ministry Launches 'Paripoorna Mediclaim Ayush Bima'

- Ministry of Finance launched Paripoorna Mediclaim Ayush Bima, a new retail health insurance policy offering coverage of up to ₹20 lakh exclusively for beneficiaries of the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS).
- Paripoorna Mediclaim Ayush Bima is an optional retail health insurance policy designed to complement CGHS benefits. It provides indemnity-based in-patient hospitalisation coverage within India.
- Beneficiaries can choose a sum insured of ₹10 lakh or ₹20 lakh, making it suitable for both routine and high-cost medical needs.
- The policy introduces flexible co-payment models, allowing beneficiaries to choose between 70:30 or 50:50 cost-sharing between the insurer and the subscriber.
- In return, subscribers receive discounted premiums of 28% and 42%, respectively, compared to regular health insurance policies.
- The scheme is offered by state-run New India Assurance. Additional features include room rent caps of 1% of the sum insured for normal rooms and 2% for ICU per day.
- A cumulative bonus of 10% is provided for every claim-free year, up to a maximum of 100% of the sum insured.



## Centre Appoints Rakesh Aggarwal as DG NIA

- The Union government has announced key leadership appointments in India's internal security framework. Senior IPS officer Rakesh Aggarwal has been appointed as the new Director General of the National Investigation Agency.
- The National Investigation Agency will now be headed by Rakesh Aggarwal, a 1994-batch IPS officer of the Himachal Pradesh cadre.
- Before this formal appointment, Aggarwal was serving as Special Director General in the agency and was also holding additional charge as DG, NIA.
- His elevation ensures continuity in leadership at India's premier counter-terrorism body, which handles sensitive cases related to terrorism, extremism, and national security.
- The appointment was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC). According to an order issued by the Ministry of Personnel, Aggarwal will serve as DG, NIA till August 31, 2028, which marks the date of his superannuation.
- The National Investigation Agency was established in 2008 after the Mumbai terror attacks.
- It functions as a central agency to investigate terror-related offences across states without requiring special permission.
- The DG of NIA plays a crucial role in guiding investigations, inter-agency coordination, and strengthening India's counter-terror architecture.





## Centre Appoints ITBP, BSF Chief

- Centre appointed Shatrueet Singh Kapoor as DG of ITBP, while Praveen Kumar was named the new DG of BSF, according to orders issued by the Ministry of Personnel.
- Shatrueet Singh Kapoor, a 1990-batch IPS officer, has been appointed as the Director General of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police.
- He is currently serving in his cadre state Haryana. Kapoor will succeed Praveen Kumar and will remain in office until October 31, 2026, the date of his superannuation.
- His appointment is expected to strengthen leadership in ITBP, which guards India's sensitive Himalayan borders.
- The Indo-Tibetan Border Police was raised in 1962 after the India-China conflict and specialises in high-altitude operations.
- The Border Security Force, established in 1965, is India's largest border guarding force. Both forces operate under the Ministry of Home Affairs and form a key pillar of India's internal security architecture.



## GeM's Womaniya Initiative Completes 7 Years

- The Government e-Marketplace has completed seven years of the Womaniya Initiative, under which women led MSEs have secured public procurement orders worth over ₹80,000 crore, far exceeding the mandated procurement target.
- The Womaniya Initiative, launched on January 14, 2019, was conceived to address the limited access of women entrepreneurs and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to government markets.
- By offering a direct, transparent, and fully digital interface between sellers and government buyers, Womaniya removed intermediaries and reduced traditional entry barriers.
- According to GeM leadership, Womaniya has emerged as a structured and scalable ecosystem for women entrepreneurs.
- Digital procurement through GeM enables transparent price discovery, product comparison, and wider market access.
- Awareness of Government Financial Rules (GFR) and understanding procurement patterns were identified as crucial for women entrepreneurs to fully leverage public procurement opportunities.
- The initiative aligns technology with policy intent to create long-term entrepreneurial resilience.
- The Government e-Marketplace is India's national public procurement portal aimed at enhancing efficiency, transparency, and inclusivity. Initiatives like



Womaniya highlight how targeted interventions within digital public infrastructure can address structural inequalities and promote equitable growth.



## **Aaryan Varshney Becomes India's 92<sup>nd</sup> Chess Grandmaster**

- Indian chess player Aaryan Varshney became India's 92nd Grandmaster after securing his final GM norm at the Andranik Margaryan Memorial Tournament in Armenia.
- Aaryan Varshney sealed his Grandmaster title by winning the Andranik Margaryan Memorial with a round to spare.
- The 21-year-old secured his third and final GM norm after holding a crucial draw against FM Tyhran Ambartsumian in the eighth round.
- Achieving the norm before the final round underlined his consistency and composure at the international level.
- The Grandmaster (GM) title is awarded by the International Chess Federation (FIDE).
- It requires players to achieve three GM norms and cross a minimum Elo rating benchmark, making it one of the toughest titles in competitive sports.



## India and Germany Sign Joint Declaration

- India and Germany signed a Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) on Telecommunications Cooperation during the official visit of German Federal Chancellor Friedrich Merz to India in January 2026.
- The Joint Declaration was signed by Amit Agrawal, Secretary (Telecom), on behalf of the Government of India, and Philipp Ackermann, on behalf of the Government of Germany.
- The agreement was concluded between India's Department of Telecommunications and Germany's Federal Ministry for Digital Transformation and Government Modernisation (BMDS).
- The Joint Declaration reflects the shared intent of both countries to deepen bilateral cooperation in telecommunications and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).
- It builds upon strong momentum in India–Germany relations and sustained high-level political engagements.
- The JDI aims to promote innovation-driven growth while supporting inclusive and sustainable digital transformation in both countries.



## **Praveen Vashista Appointed Vigilance Commissioner**

- The President of India has appointed Shri Praveen Vashista as Vigilance Commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission under the provisions of the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003.
- Shri Praveen Vashista was appointed through a Presidential warrant dated December 12, 2025, exercising powers under Section 4(1) of the CVC Act, 2003.
- He made and subscribed to his oath of office on January 16, 2026, before the Central Vigilance Commission.
- The oath was administered by the Central Vigilance Commissioner, who was authorised by the President under Section 5(3) of the Act.
- The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) is India's apex anti-corruption body, established in 1964 and given statutory status in 2003, to promote transparency and accountability in public administration and combat corruption in central government organizations, operating as an independent watchdog by monitoring vigilance activities and advising agencies, though it primarily has advisory powers and focuses on disciplinary matters rather than direct criminal prosecution.

- It's headed by a Central Vigilance Commissioner and two Vigilance Commissioners, appointed for a four-year term, and works to prevent corruption through its Secretariat, CTEO, and CDI wings.



## **Laura Wolvaardt Named ICC Women's Player**

- South Africa captain Laura Wolvaardt has been named the International Cricket Council Women's Player of the Month for December 2025 for her record-breaking performances against Ireland.
- This is Wolvaardt's second ICC Player of the Month award in just three months, having previously won it in October 2025.
- The recognition reflects her remarkable consistency and leadership at the highest level of international cricket.
- By outperforming strong contenders such as Shafali Verma and teammate Sune Luus, Wolvaardt reinforced her place among the elite batters in women's cricket.



## Mitchell Starc Wins ICC Men's Player of the Month

- Australian fast bowler Mitchell Starc has been awarded the ICC Men's Player of the Month for December 2025 following his exceptional all-round contributions in the Ashes series.
- Mitchell Starc was a dominant force throughout the Ashes, delivering match-winning spells with the ball.
- He began the series in emphatic fashion with a 10-wicket haul in the opening Test at Perth, immediately putting England under pressure.
- He followed this up with eight wickets in the second Test at Brisbane, underlining his consistency and ability to exploit home conditions.



## Davos 2026

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2026 is in news as it starts on January 19 in Davos. This year's summit is among the largest-ever gatherings, with leaders from over 130 countries participating.
- The World Economic Forum (WEF) is an international organization headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- For over 50 years, it has brought together leaders from governments, businesses, international organizations and civil society.
- Its most prominent event is the annual Davos meeting, where global challenges are discussed through public private cooperation.
- **World Economic Forum**

Aspect	Details
<b>Established In</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1971 (as European Management Forum)</li> <li>• Renamed World Economic Forum in 1987</li> </ul>
<b>Founder</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Klaus Schwab, German economist</li> <li>• Propounded the concept of Stakeholder Capitalism</li> </ul>
<b>Headquarters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cologny, Switzerland</li> </ul>
<b>Aim / Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the state of the world</li> <li>• Promote public–private cooperation</li> <li>• Address global economic, social, and environmental challenges</li> <li>• Encourage collaboration among governments, businesses, and civil society</li> </ul>





## India Introduces First Tailings Policy

- The Centre has notified India's first Tailings Policy to guide the recovery of critical and strategic minerals from mining waste. The move follows a Union Budget announcement on recovering minerals from tailings and secondary sources.
- Tailings are the leftover waste materials produced after valuable minerals are extracted from crushed ore.
- They usually form a slurry of fine rock particles, water and processing chemicals, stored in tailing ponds or dumps.
- Earlier seen only as waste, tailings are now recognized as valuable secondary resources.
- Many tailings contain critical and companion minerals that were not economically viable to extract earlier.
- With rising global demand for clean energy minerals, these tailings can now help unlock new domestic mineral resources without opening fresh mines.



## India and UAE Set \$200 Billion Trade Target

- India and the UAE agreed to double bilateral trade to \$200 billion by 2032. Several agreements were signed during talks between Narendra Modi and Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in New Delhi.
- The decision to double bilateral trade to \$200 billion by 2032 highlights the growing economic interdependence between India and the UAE.
- The UAE is one of India's largest trading partners and a key gateway to West Asia and Africa.
- This ambitious target builds on the momentum created by recent trade facilitation measures and investment flows.
- Both countries aim to diversify trade beyond traditional sectors by strengthening cooperation in manufacturing, energy, logistics, technology and services, ensuring long-term and resilient economic growth.
- India and the UAE signed a letter of intent to conclude a framework agreement on a strategic defense partnership.
- This reflects rising trust and shared security interests. Another letter of intent focuses on joint initiatives in space infrastructure development and its commercialization.



## Abu Dhabi Ranked World's Safest City

- Abu Dhabi has been named the world's safest city for the 10th year in a row in an international safety ranking released by Numbeo, reaffirming its global reputation for security and quality of life.
- The ranking has been released by Numbeo, a well-known global database that compares cities based on crime rates, public safety perception, law enforcement efficiency, and overall quality of life.
- Abu Dhabi has topped this index continuously since 2017. The ranking is based on user-contributed data and surveys, combined with crime statistics.
- Abu Dhabi is known for its low crime rate, strict enforcement of laws, and proactive policing.
- Advanced surveillance systems, smart city technologies, and rapid emergency response mechanisms contribute significantly to public safety.



## UAE Becomes India's Second-Largest LNG Supplier

- India and the UAE signed a long-term LNG supply agreement during the official visit of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to New Delhi. With this deal, the UAE has become **India's second largest supplier of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)** after **Qatar**.
- The most significant outcome of the visit was the long-term agreement for the supply of 0.5 million metric tonnes of LNG per year to India.
- LNG is a cleaner fossil fuel used widely for power generation, industry, and cooking gas. India's energy demand is increasing rapidly due to economic growth and urbanisation.
- This agreement ensures a stable and reliable energy supply at a time of global energy uncertainty.
- The UAE has traditionally been a major oil supplier, and this LNG deal expands cooperation into cleaner energy sources.



## Vidarbha Create History

- Vidarbha won their first Vijay Hazare Trophy title. They defeated Saurashtra by 38 runs in the final played in Bengaluru.
- The final of the Vijay Hazare Trophy was played at the BCCI Centre of Excellence, Bengaluru.
- Vidarbha entered the match with a consistent run through the tournament and delivered under pressure on the biggest stage.
- Their 38-run victory over Saurashtra, a two-time champion, marked a defining moment for the Vidarbha cricket association.
- The Vijay Hazare Trophy is India's premier domestic one day tournament, played in the 50 over List A format.
- It is named after legendary Indian cricketer Vijay Hazare.

- While Vidarbha have previously won the Ranji Trophy, this was their first victory in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, highlighting their growing strength in limited-overs cricket.

## Last 5 Years Champions

Season	Winner	Runner-up	Details
2025/26	Vidarbha	Saurashtra	First title for Vidarbha
2024/25	Karnataka	Vidarbha	5th title for Karnataka (most successful)
2023/24	Haryana	Rajasthan	First title for Haryana
2022/23	Saurashtra	Maharashtra	Second title for Saurashtra
2021/22	Himachal Pradesh	Tamil Nadu	First title for Himachal Pradesh

## Most Successful Teams

Team	Titles	Years Won
Karnataka	5	2013/14, 2014/15, 2017/18, 2019/20, 2024/25
Tamil Nadu	5	2002/03, 2004/05, 2008/09, 2009/10, 2016/17



<b>Mumbai</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2006/07, 2018/19, 2020/21, plus earlier wins</b>
<b>Saurashtra</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2007/08, 2022/23</b>
<b>Others</b>	<b>1 each</b>	<b>Jharkhand, Bengal, Delhi, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Vidarbha</b>



## 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.



## Parakram Diwas 2026

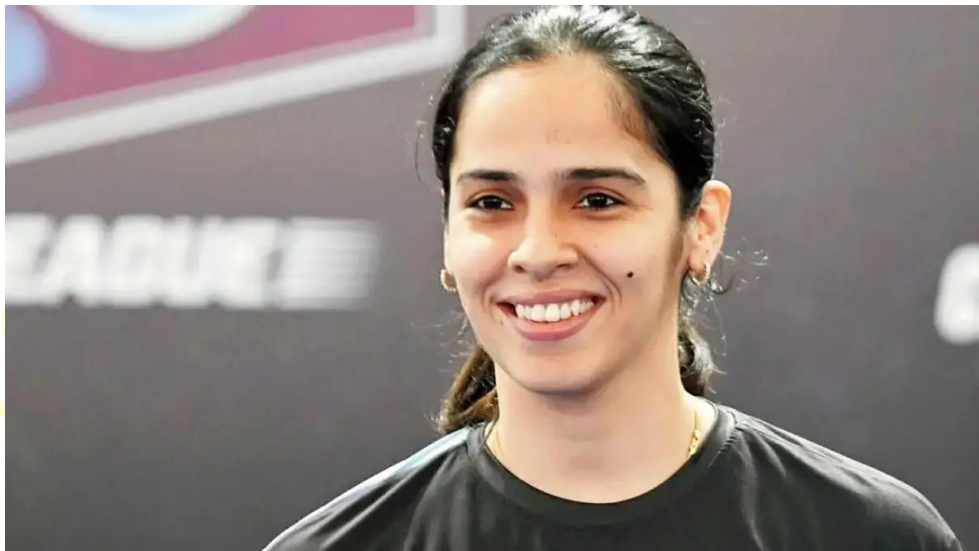
- Parakram Diwas 2026 will be observed on Friday, 23 January. The day will be marked nationwide with patriotic programmes and educational activities. The date remains the same every year, as it is linked to Netaji's birth anniversary.
- Parakram Diwas means the "**Day of Courage.**" It is celebrated every year on 23 January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
- Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was born on 23 January 1897 in Cuttack, Odisha. He was a brilliant student and even cleared the Indian Civil Service (ICS) exam in England. However, he left this prestigious job to fully join India's freedom struggle.
- He later became the leader of the Indian National Army (INA) and gave the powerful slogan "**Delhi Chalo.**" His life continues to inspire generations.
- Parakram Diwas was officially announced by the Government of India on 19 January 2021. This declaration was made during the celebrations of Netaji's 125th birth anniversary.



## Saina Nehwal Retires from Badminton

- Saina Nehwal has confirmed her retirement from competitive badminton after being inactive for almost two years due to severe knee injuries, including cartilage degeneration and arthritis.
- Saina Nehwal revealed that severe cartilage degeneration and arthritis in her knees made high-intensity training impossible.
- According to her, elite-level badminton requires eight to nine hours of daily training, but her body could no longer cope beyond one or two hours.
- Frequent swelling and pain forced her to accept that continuing at the highest level was no longer feasible.
- Saina Nehwal scripted history at the London 2012 Olympics by winning a bronze medal in women's singles, becoming the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal in badminton.
- This achievement changed the perception of badminton in India and inspired a new generation of players.
- In 2015, Saina reached the pinnacle of world badminton by becoming World No.1, making her only the second Indian, after Prakash Padukone, to achieve this feat.
- Her career includes winning the Indonesia Open Super Series in 2009, making her the first Indian to claim a BWF Super Series title.

- Saina's career was marked by resilience. Despite recurring injuries and a disappointing outing at the Rio 2016 Olympics, she made strong comebacks.
- In 2015, she won silver at the BWF World Championships, and later clinched bronze in 2017.
- She also won gold at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, proving her ability to return to the top despite physical setbacks.
- Saina Nehwal's contribution to Indian sport has been recognised with top national honours, including the **Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, Khel Ratna, and Arjuna Award**.



## Mother of Deal Signed 16<sup>th</sup> Summit

- India and the European Union signed documents announcing the conclusion of FTA negotiations and agreed on a Security and Defence Partnership, ending a negotiation process that began in 2007.
- The India–EU FTA is a comprehensive trade agreement aimed at reducing tariffs, easing market access, and boosting trade in goods, services, and investments.
- According to the agreement together represents 25% of global GDP and nearly one-third of global trade, making it one of the largest trade deals in the world.
- With bilateral trade already exceeding \$136 billion, the FTA is expected to further expand exports in textiles, gems and jewellery, leather, footwear, services, and manufacturing while improving investor confidence in India.

- Negotiations for the India–EU FTA were first launched in 2007, but talks stalled in 2013 due to differences over tariffs, services, and regulatory standards. The negotiations were relaunched in June 2022.
- The 2026 conclusion finally ends a nearly 20-year-long process, earning the label “mother of all deals” from EU leaders.
- The agreement also comes at a time of shifting global trade patterns and growing uncertainties in transatlantic relations, giving India and the EU strategic autonomy.
- The summit also saw the signing of an agreement to establish a Green Hydrogen Task Force, reflecting shared climate commitments.
- Both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in clean energy, climate action, critical technologies, and supply chains.



## US Withdraws from the World Health Organization

- The US officially withdrew from the World Health Organization after completing the mandatory one-year notice period, following an executive order issued by Donald Trump at the start of his presidency in 2025.
- President Donald Trump announced the decision to leave the WHO on the first day of his presidency in 2025, citing alleged failures by the organisation in handling the COVID-19 pandemic.
- According to US officials, the WHO’s management decisions caused severe economic and public health consequences for the United States.
- Under US legislation, withdrawal from WHO requires one-year notice and settlement of all outstanding dues, estimated at around \$260 million.
- However, the US State Department disputed the interpretation that payment was a precondition for exit.

- The WHO stated that the US has not paid its dues for 2024 and 2025, and the issue will be discussed at the WHO Executive Board meeting in February.
- The withdrawal has triggered a financial crisis, forcing the WHO to cut its management team by half, reduce budgets, and plan to lay off nearly 25% of its workforce by mid-year.
- Traditionally, the US contributed around 18% of WHO's total funding, making it the organisation's largest donor.



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

SSBCrack  
EXAMS

**Who has been given the additional charge of Director General of the National Investigation Agency (NIA)?**

- A. Sadanand Vasant Date
- B. Rakesh Aggarwal
- C. Nagesh Kapoor
- D. S. Shrinivas

**Answer: B. Rakesh Aggarwal**

**Which country has recently adopted the euro as its official currency?**

- A. Romania
- B. Croatia
- C. Bulgaria
- D. Hungary

**Answer: C. Bulgaria**



**What was the national currency of Bulgaria before adopting the euro?**

- A. Dinar
- B. Lev
- C. Kuna
- D. Zloty

**Answer: B. Lev**

**Who has returned as the coach of the Indian women's hockey team?**

- A. Graham Reid
- B. Michael Nobbs
- C. Sjoerd Marijne
- D. Ric Charlesworth

**Answer: C. Sjoerd Marijne**

**The largest inland Rainbow Trout farm in India is located in which district of Telangana?**

- A. Medchal
- B. Ranga Reddy
- C. Warangal
- D. Nizamabad

**Answer: B. Ranga Reddy**

**Somnath Temple is regarded as spiritually significant because it is:**

- A. The largest Shiva temple in India
- B. The oldest temple in Gujarat
- C. One of the four Char Dhams
- D. The first of the 12 Jyotirlings

**Answer: D. The first of the 12 Jyotirlings**

**The recently discovered Kushan coins at Bhir Mound belong to the reign of which ruler?**

- A. Kanishka
- B. Huvishka
- C. Vasudeva
- D. Kujula Kadphises

**Answer: C. Vasudeva**

**The Kushan coins and lapis lazuli fragments were found near which ancient site?**

- A. Mohenjo-daro
- B. Harappa
- C. Taxila
- D. Gandhara

**Answer: C. Taxila**

**Hydrogen for India's first hydrogen train is produced using which process?**

- A. Combustion
- B. Thermal cracking
- C. Electrolysis
- D. Gasification

**Answer: C. Electrolysis**

**Madhav Gadgil is best known for his work related to which region?**

- A. Eastern Himalayas
- B. Indo-Gangetic Plains
- C. Thar Desert
- D. Western Ghats

**Answer: D**

**Which district is set to become India's first Bio-Happy District?**

- A. Wayanad
- B. Keyi Panyor
- C. Tirunelveli
- D. Kalpetta

**Answer: B. Keyi Panyor**

**The concept of "Bio Happiness" was originally introduced by which renowned scientist?**

- A. Verghese Kurien
- B. C. V. Raman
- C. M. S. Swaminathan
- D. Raghunath Mashelkar

**Answer: C. M. S. Swaminathan**

**What is the name of the Aadhaar mascot launched by UIDAI?**

- A. Aadharsh
- B. Setu
- C. Udai
- D. Pramaan

**Answer: C. Udai**

**Major Swathi Shantha Kumar received the UN Secretary-General's Award 2025 for her service in which country?**

- A. Congo
- B. Lebanon
- C. Mali
- D. South Sudan

**Correct Answer: D**

**India's theme for its BRICS Presidency 2026 is:**

- A. Growth through Global Cooperation
- B. Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability
- C. Partnership for Inclusive Development
- D. Strengthening Global South Leadership

**Answer: B**

**Paripoorna Medclaim Ayush Bima' is exclusively designed for beneficiaries of which scheme?**

- A. Ayushman Bharat
- B. Employees' State Insurance Scheme
- C. Central Government Health Scheme
- D. National Health Mission

**Answer: C**

**Who was appointed as the new Prime Minister of Yemen after the resignation of Salem bin Breik?**

- A. Rashad al-Alimi
- B. Aidarus al-Zoubaidi
- C. Shaya Mohsen Zindani
- D. Mohammed Ali al-Houthi

**Answer: C**

**The Womaniya Initiative is associated with which government platform?**

- A. Udyam Portal
- B. Government e-Marketplace (GeM)
- C. National Skill Portal
- D. MSME Sampark

**Answer: B**

**Aaryan Varshney became India's 92nd Chess Grandmaster after securing his final GM norm at which tournament?**

- A. Tata Steel Chess Tournament
- B. Reykjavik Open
- C. Andranik Margaryan Memorial Tournament
- D. Abu Dhabi Masters

**Answer: C**

**The Grandmaster (GM) title in chess is awarded by which organization?**

- A. Asian Chess Federation
- B. International Olympic Committee
- C. World Chess Council
- D. International Chess Federation (FIDE)

**Answer: D**

**The World Economic Forum was originally established in 1971 as:**

- A. Global Economic Council
- B. World Trade Forum
- C. European Management Forum
- D. International Business Forum

**Answer: C**

**Who is the founder of the World Economic Forum?**

- A. Joseph Stiglitz
- B. Adam Smith
- C. Paul Krugman
- D. Klaus Schwab

**Answer: D**

**India's first Tailings Policy is mainly aimed at:**

- A. Expanding coal mining
- B. Managing nuclear waste
- C. Recovering critical minerals from mining waste
- D. Reducing mining employment

**Answer: C. Recovering critical minerals from mining waste**

**Lahars associated with Tropical Storm Nokaen pose a risk mainly around which volcano?**

- A. Mount Pinatubo
- B. Mount Taal
- C. Mayon Volcano
- D. Mount Apo

**Answer: C. Mayon Volcano**

**Which global platform ranked Abu Dhabi as the world's safest city for the 10th consecutive year?**

- A. World Economic Forum
- B. Mercer
- C. Numbeo
- D. UN Habitat

**Answer: C. Numbeo**

**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**

**Saina Nehwal became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal in badminton at which event?**

- A. Beijing 2008
- B. London 2012
- C. Rio 2016
- D. Tokyo 2020

**Answer: B. London 2012**



**The India–EU Free Trade Agreement negotiations were originally launched in:**

- A. 2005
- B. 2007
- C. 2013
- D. 2022

**Answer: B**

**Explanation:** India–EU FTA talks began in 2007 and concluded in 2026.