

# Daily Defence Current Affairs

## 24 February 2025

### Central Excise Day 2026

- India will observe Central Excise Day 2026 on 24 February 2026 to mark the historic Central Excise Act, 1944. This day recognises the contribution of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) in tax administration and revenue collection.
- Even after the introduction of GST, Central Excise remains important for specific goods like petroleum and tobacco.
- Central Excise Day 2026 commemorates the enactment of the Central Excise and Salt Act **on 24 February 1944**, which later became the Central Excise Act in the 1944. This law consolidated multiple earlier excise related laws into one framework.
- CBIC is responsible for,
  - Collection of Customs Duty
  - Administration of Central Excise Duty
  - Implementation of Central GST (CGST) and IGST
  - Prevention of smuggling and illegal trade
  - Policy formulation related to indirect taxes



## Geneva to Host AI Summit 2027

- Switzerland will host the AI Summit 2027 in Geneva, Swiss President Guy Parmelin announced during the AI Impact Summit in the New Delhi. The United Arab Emirates will host the AI Summit 2028.
- The declaration came on the sidelines of the AI Impact Summit at Bharat Mandapam, marking a significant step in global AI cooperation.
- The announcement positions Geneva as a central hub for global AI dialogue in 2027. Known for hosting major international organizations, Geneva provides a neutral and diplomatic platform for multilateral engagement.
- Key highlights,
  - Switzerland to host AI Summit 2027
  - UAE confirmed as host for AI Summit 2028
  - Partnership approach between Geneva and UAE
  - Focus on ethical, inclusive AI governance
  - Economic ties between India and Switzerland have gained strong momentum following the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) signed between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).
  - The TEPA came into effect in October 2025, enhancing,
    - Investment flows
    - Technology cooperation

- Sustainable job creation
- Market access
- After Geneva in 2027, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will host the AI Summit in 2028. The collaborative transition between Switzerland and the UAE indicates a shared commitment to continuity in global AI governance discussions.



## India Drops Most Favoured Nation Status in France

- India has removed the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) clause from its treaty with France. The updated India-France tax treaty was signed during French President Emmanuel Macron's recent visit.
- The move changes dividend tax rules, capital gains taxation and adds global anti-tax avoidance standards. The MFN clause removal ends automatic tax benefits that France could claim from India's other treaties.
- This decision aims to reduce disputes and bring clarity in cross-border taxation between India and France.
- The India-France tax treaty, officially known as the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC), was signed in 1992. Its goal is to prevent double taxation on the same income.
- The MFN clause removal was done to,
  - Reduce long-running tax disputes
  - Avoid automatic application of future treaty benefits

- Bring legal clarity in tax matters
- Protect India's taxation rights



## Bharat Launches 'Prahaar'

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has launched 'Prahaar', India's new national counter-terrorism policy which is outlining a zero-tolerance framework against terrorism. Announced on the February 23, 2026, the strategy aims to tackle evolving terror threats through prevention, intelligence-led coordination, technological upgrades, and adherence to the rule of law.
- **Aims of 'Prahaar'**
  - Prevent terror attacks before they occur
  - Enable swift and proportionate responses
  - Strengthen coordination between central and state agencies
  - Protect human rights within the rule of law
  - Reduce conditions that enable radicalization
  - Strengthen community resilience
- **Tackling Evolving and High-Tech Terror Threats**
  - Cross-border terrorism and extremist networks
  - Use of drones in Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir
  - Online propaganda and encrypted communication
  - Dark web and crypto-wallet funding channels
  - Threats involving Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive and Digital (CBRNED) materials

- Cyber-attacks by state and non-state actors



गृह मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF  
**HOME AFFAIRS**

## Lutyens Statue to Be Replaced

- PM Narendra Modi announced that the statue of British architect Edwin Lutyens at Rashtrapati Bhavan will be replaced with a statue of C. Rajagopalachari. The announcement was made during the 'Mann Ki Baat' address.
- **Key Reasons Behind the Move,**
- Push to remove colonial-era symbols
- Honour Indian freedom fighters and statesmen
- Promote 'freedom from slavery mentality under' Panch-Pran vision
- Edwin Lutyens was a prominent British architect chosen in 1912 to design the new capital of British India.
- **Major Landmarks Designed by Lutyens,**
- Rashtrapati Bhavan
- North Block and South Block
- India Gate
- Hyderabad House
- Connaught Place



## Govt Launches Mobile Labs to Check National Highway Standards

- To improve National Highway quality, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has launched Mobile Quality Control Vans (MQCVs) to monitor ongoing highway construction projects. Pilot runs have started in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka and Odisha.
- These mobile labs are equipped with advanced non-destructive testing tools to ensure world-class road standards. The government is also developing a National Highway Quality Monitoring Portal with real-time GPS tracking to enhance transparency and accountability.
- The MoRTH initiative aims to shift focus from just expanding road networks to ensuring quality, safety and durability.
- India is building highways at a record pace and maintaining National Highway quality has become a top priority.
- Through Mobile Quality Control Vans, the ministry will conduct quick on-site checks.
- The pilot phase of this MoRTH initiative is currently underway in four states,
  - Rajasthan
  - Gujarat
  - Karnataka
  - Odisha



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

**1. Central Excise Day is observed on which date?**

- A) 26 January
- B) 24 February
- C) 1 April
- D) 15 August

**Answer: B) 24 February**

**Explanation: Central Excise Day is observed on 24 February to commemorate the enactment of the Central Excise Act, 1944.**

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**2. Which organization is responsible for administering Central Excise Duty in India?**

- A) RBI
- B) SEBI
- C) Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs
- D) NITI Aayog

**Answer: C) Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs**

**Explanation: The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) administers customs, central excise, and GST laws in India.**

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**3. After GST implementation, Central Excise is primarily applicable to which goods?**

- A) Electronics and automobiles
- B) Agricultural products
- C) Petroleum products and tobacco
- D) Services sector

**Answer: C) Petroleum products and tobacco**

**Explanation: Even after GST, central excise duty continues on selected items such as petroleum products and tobacco.**

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**4. The AI Summit 2027 will be hosted by which country?**

- A) France
- B) Switzerland
- C) India
- D) UAE

**Answer: B) Switzerland**

**Explanation: Switzerland will host the AI Summit 2027 in Geneva, a global diplomatic hub.**

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**5. Which country will host the AI Summit in 2028?**

- A) Germany
- B) Japan
- C) United Arab Emirates
- D) Canada

**Answer: C) United Arab Emirates**

**Explanation: After Switzerland in 2027, the United Arab Emirates will host the AI Summit in 2028.**

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**6. The Most Favoured Nation (MFN) clause was removed from India's tax treaty with which country?**

- A) USA
- B) United Kingdom

- C) France
- D) Australia

**Answer: C) France**

**Explanation: India removed the MFN clause from its Double Taxation Avoidance Convention with France to reduce disputes and protect taxation rights.**

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**7. 'Prahaar' is associated with which ministry?**

- A) Ministry of Defence
- B) Ministry of External Affairs
- C) Ministry of Home Affairs
- D) Ministry of Finance

**Answer: C) Ministry of Home Affairs**

**Explanation: 'Prahaar' is a national counter-terrorism policy launched by the Ministry of Home Affairs.**

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**8. The statue of Edwin Lutyens at Rashtrapati Bhavan will be replaced by which Indian statesman?**

- A) Sardar Patel
- B) B. R. Ambedkar
- C) C. Rajagopalachari
- D) Subhas Chandra Bose

**Answer: C) C. Rajagopalachari**

**Explanation: The statue of Edwin Lutyens at Rashtrapati Bhavan will be replaced with that of C. Rajagopalachari.**

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**9. Which ministry launched Mobile Quality Control Vans (MQCVs) for National Highways?**

- A) Ministry of Defence
- B) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- C) Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
- D) Ministry of Railways

**Answer: B) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**

**Explanation: The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways launched MQCVs to improve highway construction quality.**

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**10. The Mobile Quality Control Vans pilot project has been launched in how many states initially?**

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

**Answer: C) Four**

**Explanation: The pilot phase has begun in four states — Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Odisha — to monitor highway quality standards.**

