

MAY-2026
PULSE



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IMPORTANT DAYS

Date	Important Day	Theme 2026	Significance
1 May	International Labour Day (May Day)	"Ensuring a Healthy Psychosocial Working Environment"	Celebrates workers' rights, labour movements, fair wages, and safe working conditions.
2 May (First Tuesday of May)	World Asthma Day	"Access to anti-inflammatory inhalers for everyone with asthma – still an urgent need" Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA)	Raises awareness about asthma prevention, diagnosis, and treatment
3 May	World Press Freedom Day	"Shaping a Future at Peace: Promoting Press Freedom for Human Rights, Development and Security"	Promotes freedom of expression, independent journalism, and protection of media professionals.
4 May	Coal Miners Day	No official theme	Recognises the contribution and sacrifices of coal miners in the energy sector.
4 May	International Firefighters' Day	"Risking and Sacrificing for Others — A Hallmark of Firefighters."	Honours firefighters for protecting lives, property, and the environment.
7 May	World Athletics Day	"Sport: Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers"	Encourages youth participation in athletics and promotes physical



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			fitness.
8 May	World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day	"United in Humanity"	Recognises humanitarian services provided by Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers worldwide.
8 May	World Thalassaemia Day	"Hidden No More: Finding the Undiagnosed. Supporting the Unseen."	Creates awareness about thalassaemia and the need for early diagnosis and treatment.
11 May	National Technology Day (India)	"Responsible Innovation for Inclusive Growth."	Commemorates India's technological achievements, including the Pokhran-II nuclear tests.
12 May	International Nurses Day	"Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives"	Highlights the vital role of nurses and advocates investment in the nursing workforce.
15 May	International Day of Families	"Families, Inequalities and Child Wellbeing"	Focuses on strengthening family-oriented policies and improving child welfare amid rising inequalities.
17 May	World Telecommunication and Information Society Day	"Digital lifelines: Strengthening resilience in a connected world"	Promotes the role of ICTs and digital connectivity in development.



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21 May	National Anti-Terrorism Day (India)	peace, unity, and a zero-tolerance stance towards terrorism	Spreads awareness against terrorism and violence.
22 May	International Day for Biological Diversity	"Acting locally for global impact."	Promotes biodiversity conservation and implementation of global biodiversity goals.
31 May	World No Tobacco Day	"Unmasking the Appeal – Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction"	Exposes tobacco industry tactics and promotes tobacco-free lifestyles, especially among youth.

APPOINTMENTS AND PERSONALITIES:

1. 75th Anniversary of Reopening of Somnath Temple

India recently commemorated the **75th anniversary of the reopening and consecration of the Somnath Temple**, one of the holiest Shiva temples and the first among the twelve Jyotirlingas. The celebrations, known as **Somnath Amrut Mahotsav**, were held at Prabhas Patan in Gujarat.

Historical Background

- The Somnath Temple is located at **Prabhas Patan** on the western coast of Gujarat along the Arabian Sea.
- It is regarded as the **first Jyotirlinga** of Lord Shiva in Hindu tradition.
- The temple witnessed repeated invasions and destruction over centuries, beginning with the attack by **Mahmud of Ghazni in 1026 CE**.
- It was rebuilt multiple times, symbolizing cultural resilience and continuity.

Reconstruction After Independence

- After India's independence, the reconstruction of the temple was initiated under the leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.



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- The restored temple was ceremonially inaugurated on **11 May 1951** by India's first President, Rajendra Prasad.
- The reopening was viewed as a symbol of India's civilisational resurgence and cultural self-confidence after colonial rule.

SOMNATH: THE ETERNAL FLAME OF BHARAT - A Thousand Years of Resilience

Somnath is not just a temple; it is an eternal symbol of faith, resilience, and the unbreakable spirit of Bharat.

1026 The First Invasion
Mahmud of Ghazni invaded and plundered Somnath, destroying and desecrating the temple.

1951 The Constructional Resurgence
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel led the reconstruction of Somnath, reigniting the flame of faith and national pride.

2002-Somnath Swabhiman Park
A museum and memorial park dedicated to pride and the glory of the legends and martyrs.

The Modern Legacy: Impact & Sustainability

Architectural Grandeur
Features 150-foot archway and intricate Kailash Mahameru architecture.

Pioneering Sustainability
Ensures water security, solar power usage & waste water treatment.

Women's Economic Empowerment
Uplifting local women through livelihood opportunities, self-help groups and traditional handicrafts.

Heritage & Humanitarian Reach

92+ Million+ Free Medical Camps Visitors Annually	11.5+ Lakh+ Free Medical Camps Patients Benefited	1,200+ Trees Planted
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SOMNATH - AN ETERNAL SYMBOL OF FAITH, PRIDE & PROGRESS
From invasion to resurgence, from heritage to sustainability - Somnath continues to inspire generations.

Somnath Amrut Mahotsav 2026

The 75th anniversary celebrations included:

- Religious rituals and Maharudra Yagna,
- Cultural programmes,
- Vedic chanting,
- Commemorative events,
- Release of a ₹75 commemorative coin.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the celebrations and described Somnath as a symbol of India's "eternal consciousness and civilisational resilience."

Significance of Somnath Temple

Cultural Significance



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- Represents India's enduring spiritual and cultural heritage.
- Symbolizes resilience against repeated destruction.

Religious Importance

- One of the most sacred pilgrimage centres for Hindus.
- Central to Shaivite traditions as the first Jyotirlinga.

Historical Importance

- Reflects the continuity of Indian civilisation despite invasions and political upheavals.
- Became an important symbol in post-independence nation-building discourse.

Additional Facts

- 2026 also marks:
 - **1,000 years since the first recorded attack** on the temple in 1026 CE,
 - 75 years since its reopening in independent India.
- The temple is managed by the Shree Somnath Trust.

2. Personality in News — Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore was recently in the news due to celebrations marking his **165th birth anniversary (7 May 2026)** across India, especially in West Bengal. Political leaders, literary organisations, universities, and cultural institutions paid tribute to his enduring contribution to literature, education, music, philosophy, and nationalism.

Born on **7 May 1861** in Calcutta (now Kolkata), Tagore was a leading figure of the **Bengal Renaissance** and is widely regarded as one of the greatest literary personalities of modern India. He was a poet, novelist, playwright, philosopher, composer, painter, and educationist.

Tagore became the **first Asian and first non-European Nobel laureate in Literature** in 1913 for his work *Gitanjali*. His writings transformed Bengali literature by introducing modern prose, colloquial language, and new literary styles.



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He composed over **2,000 songs**, collectively known as *Rabindra Sangeet*. Notably, he wrote:

- **“Jana Gana Mana”** — National Anthem of India,
- **“Amar Shonar Bangla”** — National Anthem of Bangladesh.

Tagore founded **Visva-Bharati University** at Santiniketan, envisioning an education system rooted in creativity, humanism, and harmony with nature.

Philosophically, he advocated:

- Universal humanism,
 - Cultural harmony,
 - Internationalism,
 - Spiritual freedom,
- while strongly criticizing aggressive nationalism and colonialism.

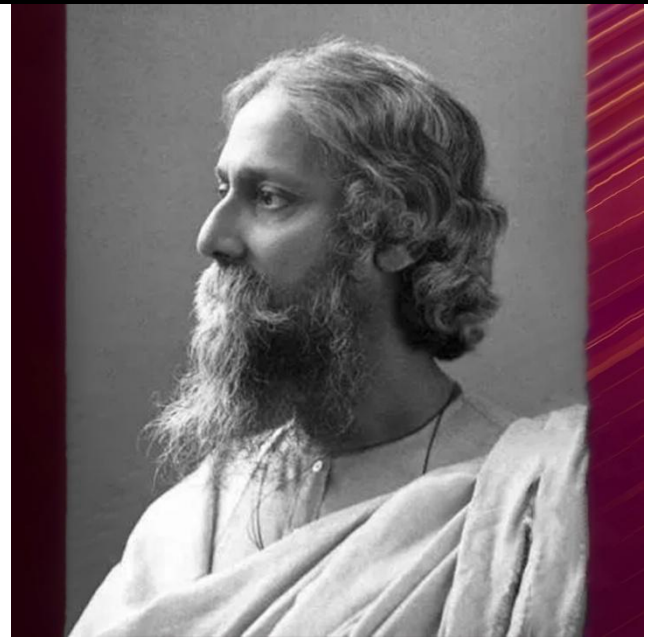
Known by titles such as **“Gurudev,” “Kabiguru,”** and **“Biswakabi,”** Tagore remains a towering symbol of India’s cultural and intellectual heritage.

3. Lt Gen N.S. Raja Subramani Appointed as India’s 3rd Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

The Government of India recently appointed **Lieutenant General N.S. Raja Subramani (Retd.)** as the **third Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** of India. He will succeed General Anil Chauhan, whose tenure concludes on **30 May 2026**. Along with the post of CDS, he will also serve as **Secretary, Department of Military Affairs (DMA)** under the Ministry of Defence.

Lt Gen Raja Subramani is a highly decorated officer awarded:

- **PVSM** (Param Vishisht Seva Medal),
- **AVSM** (Ati Vishisht Seva Medal),





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- **SM** (Sena Medal),
- **VSM** (Vishisht Seva Medal).

Commissioned into the **8th Battalion of the Garhwal Rifles** in 1985, he has over four decades of military experience across operational, intelligence, and strategic appointments.

During his career, he served as:

- Vice Chief of Army Staff,
- General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (Central Command),
- Military Adviser at the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS),
- Commander in Jammu & Kashmir and Northeast operational theatres.

He is also known for expertise in:

- Pakistan and China-related security issues,
- Theatre command integration,
- Joint military operations,
- Strategic planning and military reforms.

About the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

The post of CDS was created in **2019** following recommendations of the:

- Kargil Review Committee,
- Group of Ministers on defence reforms.

Functions of the CDS

- Principal Military Adviser to the Government,
- Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee,
- Promotes jointness among Army, Navy, and Air Force,
- Oversees integration and modernization of the armed forces,
- Heads the Department of Military Affairs (DMA).

Significance of the Appointment

Lt Gen Raja Subramani's appointment is important because India is currently pushing for:



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- Integrated theatre commands,
- Greater tri-service coordination,
- Indigenous defence modernization,
- Faster military reforms and preparedness.

His extensive operational experience and strategic background are expected to play a major role in shaping India's future defence architecture and joint warfare capabilities.

4. Personality in News — Baba Banda Singh Bahadur

Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was recently in the news due to the observance of **Sirhind Fateh Divas**, commemorating his historic victory over the Mughal governor Wazir Khan at Sirhind in 1710.

Born as **Lachman Dev** in 1670 in the Rajouri region of present-day Jammu & Kashmir, he later became a disciple of Guru Gobind Singh and came to be known as Banda Singh Bahadur.





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He emerged as one of the greatest Sikh military commanders and led the Khalsa army against Mughal oppression in Punjab. Under the guidance of Guru Gobind Singh, he launched military campaigns against Mughal authorities and achieved major victories at:

- Samana,
- Sadhaura,
- Sirhind.

After defeating Wazir Khan in 1710, Banda Singh Bahadur established the **first Sikh state** and made Lohgarh his capital. He is remembered for major agrarian reforms, including:

- Abolition of the zamindari system,
- Distribution of land to peasants,
- Promotion of social equality.

He also issued coins in the name of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh, symbolizing Sikh sovereignty.

Banda Singh Bahadur was captured by Mughal forces in 1715 and executed in Delhi in 1716 after severe torture. His martyrdom became a lasting symbol of courage, resistance, sacrifice, and defence of faith in Sikh history.

6. Personality in News — Sukhdev Thapar

Shaheed Sukhdev Thapar was recently remembered on his **birth anniversary (15 May)** across India. Leaders and organizations paid tribute to his contribution to the Indian freedom struggle and his role as one of the most prominent revolutionary nationalists of the colonial period.

Sukhdev Thapar was born on **15 May 1907** in Ludhiana, Punjab. He became actively involved in revolutionary politics at a young age and emerged as a key member and strategist of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA).

He played an important role in organizing revolutionary activities in Punjab and northern India. Along with Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru, he was associated with the assassination of British police officer J.P. Saunders in Lahore in 1928. The action was carried out in retaliation for the death of Lala Lajpat Rai following a brutal lathi charge during protests against the Simon Commission.

Sukhdev was also associated with the **Naujawan Bharat Sabha**, an organization aimed at mobilizing youth for the independence movement and promoting anti-colonial nationalism.



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He was arrested in the **Lahore Conspiracy Case** and sentenced to death by the British government. On **23 March 1931**, Sukhdev was hanged in Lahore Jail along with Bhagat Singh and Rajguru. The day is observed as **Shaheed Diwas (Martyrs' Day)** in India.

Sukhdev Thapar is remembered for:

- Courage and patriotism,
- Revolutionary nationalism,
- Sacrifice for independence,
- Commitment to youth mobilization and social awakening.

7. Personality in News — Shaheed Veer Gundadhur

Shaheed Veer Gundadhur was recently in the news after Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the **Shaheed Veer Gundadhur Seva Dera Jan Suvridha Kendra** in Bastar, Chhattisgarh. The initiative aims to provide welfare services and development facilities in tribal regions.

Veer Gundadhur was a prominent tribal freedom fighter from the **Dhurva tribal community** of Bastar in present-day Chhattisgarh. He was born in **Netanar village** and emerged as one of the strongest tribal leaders resisting British colonial rule in central India.

He is best known for leading the **Bhumkal Rebellion of 1910**, a major tribal uprising against:

- British exploitation,
- Oppressive forest policies,
- Forced labour,
- Excessive taxation,
- Interference in tribal traditions and administration.

The word "**Bhumkal**" means "earthquake" in the local tribal dialect, symbolizing a massive upheaval against colonial authority. Gundadhur mobilized thousands of tribal people across Bastar using guerrilla warfare tactics and local networks.

One of the most distinctive aspects of the rebellion was the use of "**Dara Miri**" — a traditional secret communication system using:

- Dry red chillies,



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- Mango twigs,
to spread messages of revolt among villages.

Although the British brutally suppressed the uprising, Veer Gundadhur was never captured. He became a lasting symbol of:

- Tribal resistance,
- Courage,
- Leadership,
- Anti-colonial struggle in Bastar.

Today, Veer Gundadhur is remembered as one of India's important tribal freedom fighters. His legacy remains deeply rooted in the folk traditions, songs, and collective memory of Bastar's tribal communities.

8. Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan Appointed as New Navy Chief

- The Government of India appointed Krishna Swaminathan as the new Chief of the Naval Staff (Navy Chief).
- He succeeded Dinesh Kumar Tripathi after his retirement.
- Before this appointment, he served as Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command, one of the Indian Navy's most important operational commands.
- He was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1987 and is a specialist in Communication and Electronic Warfare.
- During his distinguished career, he commanded major naval assets including aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya and destroyer INS Mysore.
- He has received prestigious military honours such as the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM) and Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM).



9. IAS Officer Saurabh Vijay Takes Charge as CEO of UIDAI

- Saurabh Vijay, a 1998-batch IAS officer of the Maharashtra cadre, assumed charge as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Unique Identification Authority of India.
- He was previously serving as Principal Secretary (Expenditure) in Maharashtra's Finance Department.



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- UIDAI is the authority responsible for managing the Aadhaar programme, the world's largest biometric digital identity system.
- As CEO, he will oversee Aadhaar operations, digital identity infrastructure, authentication services, and future technological initiatives.
- His appointment was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).

DEFENCE NEWS:

1. India's 1st Indigenous Glide Weapon — TARA

India recently achieved a major milestone in defence technology with the successful maiden flight trial of **Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA)**, the country's first indigenous glide weapon system. The test was jointly conducted by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Air Force (IAF) off the Odisha coast.

What is TARA?

- TARA is a **modular range-extension glide kit** designed to convert conventional "dumb" bombs or unguided warheads into precision-guided weapons.
- Developed by:
 - DRDO's **Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad,**
 - Along with other DRDO laboratories and Indian industry partners.

Key Features

Precision Strike Capability

- Enhances:
 - Accuracy,
 - Range,
 - Lethality of existing air-dropped munitions.
- Enables stand-off attacks from safer distances.

Low-Cost Smart Weapon Conversion

- Converts existing conventional bombs into smart precision weapons at relatively low cost.
- Reduces the need for entirely new missile systems.

Indigenous Defence Technology



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- Marks India's entry into a select group of nations possessing indigenous glide weapon technology.

Air-Launched System

- During trials, TARA was reportedly launched from a Jaguar aircraft of the Indian Air Force.



Significance

Strengthening Precision Warfare

TARA improves India's capability in:

- Precision-guided aerial strikes,
- Long-range stand-off attacks,
- Modern network-centric warfare.

Boost to Atmanirbhar Bharat

- Supports India's push for self-reliance in advanced defence manufacturing.
- Reduces dependence on imported smart bomb kits and guided weapon systems.

Cost-Effective Force Multiplier

- Existing stockpiles of unguided bombs can now be upgraded into precision-guided munitions.
- Significantly increases combat effectiveness without massive procurement costs.



Challenges

- Integration with multiple aircraft platforms,
- Electronic warfare resistance,
- Navigation accuracy in contested environments,
- Large-scale production and deployment capability.

Conclusion

The successful trial of TARA represents a major advancement in India's indigenous precision-strike capability. By transforming conventional bombs into smart glide weapons, India is moving toward affordable, scalable, and self-reliant modern warfare systems aligned with the broader vision of defence indigenisation.

2. Divyastra Missile

- Indigenous missile system linked with **MIRV (Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle)** capability.
- Allows a single missile to carry multiple warheads targeting different locations.
- Enhances India's nuclear deterrence and strategic strike capability.
- Represents progress in indigenous missile technology.

3. Kaal Bhairava: India's AI-Powered Combat Aircraft

- **Kaal Bhairava** is India's first AI-powered autonomous combat aircraft developed by Flying Wedge Defence & Aerospace (FWDA).
- It will be manufactured in **Portugal** through a partnership with European firm SKETCHPIXEL.
- The project is part of **Operation 777**, aimed at expanding India's defence manufacturing footprint globally.
- The aircraft is designed for autonomous combat missions, surveillance, and high-risk military operations with minimal human intervention.

4. Squadron Leader Saanya Becomes First Woman CAT-A Flying Instructor

- **Squadron Leader Saanya** became the first woman officer in the Indian Air Force to earn the prestigious **CAT-A Qualified Flying Instructor (QFI)** rating.
- CAT-A QFI is considered the highest instructional qualification for IAF flying instructors.



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- She was felicitated by Air Chief Marshal A. P. Singh for this historic achievement.
- The milestone reflects the increasing role of women in military aviation.

5. Bharat Forge to Set Up India's First Private Marine Gas Turbine Facility

- Defence manufacturer **Bharat Forge** will establish India's first private-sector marine gas turbine manufacturing facility.
- The facility will be located in **Andhra Pradesh**.
- It aims to support indigenous production of marine propulsion systems for naval vessels.
- The project strengthens the **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** initiative in defence manufacturing.

6. Military Exercise Pragati 2026

- **Exercise Pragati 2026** commenced in **Meghalaya**.
- Armed forces from **12 countries** are participating.
- The exercise focuses on humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, peacekeeping, and multinational military cooperation.
- It promotes interoperability among participating nations.

7. Exercise Shakti

- **Exercise Shakti** is a bilateral military exercise between **India and France**.
- Conducted alternately in both countries.
- Focuses on counter-terrorism operations, joint combat drills, and interoperability.
- Enhances defence cooperation and strategic partnership between the two nations.

8. Rajnath Singh Launches Suryastra Rocket System

- Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** launched **Suryastra**, India's first indigenous **300-km range rocket artillery system**.
- The system significantly enhances long-range precision strike capabilities.
- It can engage strategic targets deep inside enemy territory.
- Represents a major boost to indigenous artillery modernization.

9. Indian Army Launches Kautilya and Q-Force Platforms

- The Indian Army launched **Kautilya** and **Q-Force**, two AI-enabled warfare platforms.



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- They are designed to support decision-making, intelligence analysis, and battlefield management.
- The platforms integrate artificial intelligence into military operations.
- They strengthen India's move toward network-centric and technology-driven warfare.

10. Vice Admiral Ajay Kochhar Appointed Vice Chief of Naval Staff

- **Vice Admiral Ajay Kochhar** assumed charge as the **48th Vice Chief of Naval Staff (VCNS)** on May 29.
- Before this appointment, he held several key operational and strategic positions in the Indian Navy.
- The Vice Chief assists the Navy Chief in administration, planning, and operational preparedness.
- His appointment strengthens the Navy's leadership structure.

11. CINBAX-II 2026

Overview

CINBAX-II 2026 is the **second edition of the India–Cambodia joint military exercise**, conducted between the **Indian Army and the Royal Cambodian Army**. It is being held in **Kampong Speu Province, Cambodia**, from **4 to 17 May 2026**.

The first edition of this bilateral exercise took place in **Pune, India (2024)**, making it a relatively new but strategically important defence engagement.

Participants and Structure

- Around **120 personnel from India**, mainly from the **Maratha Light Infantry Regiment**
- About **160 personnel from Cambodia**
- Conducted at the **company level**, focusing on joint tactical operations

Objectives

- Enhance **interoperability and coordination** between the two armies
- Develop **operational synergy** during joint missions
- Share **best practices and combat experience**
- Strengthen **bilateral defence cooperation**



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Key Focus Areas

- **Counter-terrorism (CT) operations** in sub-conventional environments
- Training in **semi-urban and jungle warfare scenarios**
- Modern combat skills such as:
 - **Drone operations**
 - **Sniper tactics**
 - **Mortar handling**

The exercise is conducted under the framework of **Chapter VII of the UN Charter**, aligning with real-world **UN peacekeeping operations**.

Significance

- Reflects India's **Act East Policy** and growing engagement with Southeast Asia
- Enhances preparedness for **modern asymmetric warfare**
- Builds **mutual trust and regional security cooperation**
- Supports **UN peacekeeping readiness** and global stability

Conclusion

CINBAX-II isn't just a routine military drill—it's a **strategic signal**. India is expanding its defence footprint in Southeast Asia, but unless these exercises translate into **long-term operational integration and strategic leverage**, they remain symbolic cooperation rather than real capability building.

SPORTS:

1. Apaar Saxena Earns International Master (IM) Title

- Young Indian chess player **Apaar Saxena** earned the prestigious **International Master (IM)** title awarded by FIDE.
- He achieved all **three required IM norms** through strong performances in European tournaments.
- Apaar completed his final norm at the **IM Putnik 114 Tournament in Serbia**.
- The IM title is the second-highest chess title after Grandmaster (GM).



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2. Sahdev Yadav Elected President of South Asian Weightlifting Federation

- **Sahdev Yadav**, President of the Indian Weightlifting Federation, was unanimously elected President of the **South Asian Weightlifting Federation (SAWF)**.
- The election was held in **Ahmedabad**.
- He aims to strengthen regional cooperation and improve weightlifting standards across South Asia.

3. India Wins 27 Medals at Asian Boxing U-15 Championships

- India delivered an outstanding performance at the **Asian Boxing U-15 Championships 2026** in **Tashkent, Uzbekistan**.
- The Indian contingent won **27 medals** in total.
- Medal tally: **9 Gold, 6 Silver, and 12 Bronze**.
- India emerged as one of the strongest teams in the tournament.

4. Gurindervir Singh Becomes Fastest Indian Sprinter

- **Gurindervir Singh** created history by clocking **10.09 seconds** in the men's 100m race.
- He became the **fastest Indian ever** in the 100m event.
- The record was achieved at the **National Senior Athletics Federation Cup 2026** in Ranchi.
- He became the first Indian sprinter to run below the **10.10-second barrier**.

5. RCB Win IPL 2026 Final by 5 Wickets

- Royal Challengers Bengaluru defeated Gujarat Titans by **5 wickets** in the **IPL 2026 Final**.
- The final was played at the Narendra Modi Stadium.
- **Virat Kohli** scored 75 runs and was named **Player of the Match**.
- RCB successfully defended their title, winning back-to-back IPL championships

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

1. India's 1st Orbital Data Centre Satellite — Pathfinder

India is preparing to launch its first **orbital data centre satellite**, named **Pathfinder**, through a partnership between Bengaluru-based space startup **Pixxel** and AI company **Sarvam AI**. The mission represents a major step toward integrating artificial intelligence, high-performance computing, and satellite infrastructure directly in space.



About Pathfinder

- Pathfinder is a **200-kilogram-class satellite** expected to be launched by the **fourth quarter of 2026**.
- It aims to function as an **orbital data centre**, processing data directly in space rather than sending all raw data back to Earth.
- The satellite will carry:
 - Data-centre-grade **GPUs (Graphics Processing Units)**,
 - AI foundation models,
 - Hyperspectral imaging systems.

Key Features

In-Orbit AI Processing

Unlike conventional satellites that depend on ground stations for computation, Pathfinder will:

- Analyse satellite imagery directly in orbit,
- Perform AI training and inference in space,
- Reduce latency and bandwidth dependence.

Hyperspectral Imaging

- The satellite will use advanced hyperspectral imaging to capture detailed Earth observation data.
- This can support:
 - Agriculture monitoring,
 - Disaster management,
 - Infrastructure assessment,
 - Climate analysis.

Sovereign AI Infrastructure

- India-built AI models will operate on India-built space infrastructure.
- The project aims to reduce dependence on foreign cloud and computing systems.



Significance

Boost to India's Space-Tech Ecosystem

Pathfinder reflects the growing role of Indian private startups in advanced space technologies and AI-enabled satellite systems.

Faster Decision-Making

Real-time processing in orbit can significantly improve response time for:

- Military surveillance,
- Weather forecasting,
- Environmental monitoring,
- Strategic intelligence.

Reduced Energy Burden on Earth

Orbital data centres are being explored globally as alternatives to energy-intensive terrestrial data centres, which consume massive electricity and cooling resources.

Challenges

- High launch and operational costs,
- Radiation protection for computing hardware,
- Heat dissipation in space,
- Cybersecurity and orbital debris risks,
- Long-term sustainability of space-based computing systems.

Conclusion

Pathfinder marks an important technological milestone for India by combining:

- Artificial intelligence,
- High-performance computing,
- Earth observation,
- And space infrastructure.

If successful, it could position India among the few countries exploring the future of **space-based computing and orbital AI infrastructure**.



2. Tardigrades

- Microscopic organisms also called “water bears.”
- Known for extreme survival capabilities under radiation, vacuum, and extreme temperatures.
- Enter cryptobiosis, a dormant survival state during harsh conditions.
- Widely studied in astrobiology and space research.

3. Eutrophication

- Process in which excess nutrients, especially nitrogen and phosphorus, enrich water bodies.
- Leads to algal blooms, oxygen depletion, and aquatic biodiversity loss.
- Commonly caused by agricultural runoff, sewage discharge, and industrial waste.
- Creates “dead zones” in lakes and coastal ecosystems.

4. Indian Scientists Develop CLEAR Technology for Precision Medicine

Indian scientists have developed an innovative protein imaging platform called **CLEAR (Cleavable Light-Erased Antibody Reporter)**, a breakthrough that could significantly advance precision medicine and disease diagnosis. The technology enables researchers to visualize a large number of proteins within the same biological sample using a single fluorescent marker, overcoming limitations of conventional imaging methods.

Proteins play a crucial role in cellular functions and are key indicators of diseases such as cancer and neurological disorders. Traditional techniques struggle to map multiple proteins simultaneously while preserving their spatial organization. CLEAR solves this challenge by repeatedly imaging and erasing fluorescent signals, allowing detailed protein mapping without damaging the sample.

This breakthrough can help scientists better understand disease mechanisms, identify biomarkers, and develop targeted therapies. The technology is expected to improve early disease detection, personalized treatment strategies, and biomedical research, marking a major step forward in India's contribution to advanced healthcare innovation.

5. Cell Broadcast System (CBS)

What is Cell Broadcast System?

The **Cell Broadcast System (CBS)** is a technology used to send **real-time emergency alerts simultaneously to all mobile phones within a specific geographic area**. Unlike traditional SMS,



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it follows a **one-to-many communication model**, delivering messages instantly to millions of users connected to nearby mobile towers.

How it Works

- Messages are transmitted through **cell towers (radio cells)** to all devices in that area
- No need for individual phone numbers or subscriptions
- Alerts are **geo-targeted**, meaning only people in affected regions receive them
- Messages appear with **distinct sound and vibration**, even if the phone is on silent

6.Modern Orbital Conflict

Why in News?

Recent developments highlight a shift in space warfare from **physical destruction to non-kinetic, "silent" conflict**, where cyber and electronic tools disrupt satellite systems without direct attacks.

What is Modern Orbital Conflict?

Modern orbital conflict refers to **strategic competition and conflict in outer space**, especially targeting satellites and space-based infrastructure. Unlike earlier **kinetic warfare (missile-based destruction)**, the focus has shifted to **functional disruption** using tools like:

- **Jamming of signals**
- **GPS spoofing**
- **Cyberattacks on ground stations**

This allows states to cripple an opponent's infrastructure **without visible destruction or direct warfare**.

Key Features

- **Weaponisation of Civil Systems:** Satellite services like communication and navigation can be manipulated, affecting aviation, shipping, and defence systems.
- **Attribution Gap:** Identifying the attacker is difficult due to anonymity in cyber operations, weakening deterrence.
- **Blurring Civil-Military Lines:** Commercial satellites (e.g., internet constellations) are used for military purposes, complicating legal classification.
- **Functional Strike Doctrine:** Even non-physical disruption of satellites may be treated as "use of force" under international law.



Major Consequences

- **Kessler Syndrome:** Destruction of satellites can create cascading debris, making orbits unusable.
- **Economic Disruption:** Loss of GPS and satellite timing can cripple **banking, logistics, and global trade**.
- **Strategic Instability:** Attacks on early-warning satellites may trigger **nuclear miscalculations**.
- **Digital Isolation:** Satellite internet loss can widen the **digital divide**, especially in remote regions.

Legal and Governance Challenges

Existing frameworks like the **Outer Space Treaty (1967)** lack enforcement mechanisms and do not fully address **cyber or non-kinetic attacks**. The absence of clear norms creates a **grey zone in international law**.

Way Forward

- Develop **global norms against anti-satellite (ASAT) tests**
- Strengthen **space situational awareness (SSA)** systems
- Promote **secure-by-design satellite architecture**
- Improve **attribution capabilities** to deter attacks

Conclusion

Modern orbital conflict is no longer about blowing satellites apart—it's about **silently disabling them**. That makes it more dangerous, not less, because it blurs war and peace while threatening the backbone of the global economy.

NATIONAL:

1. Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2026

The Ministry of Home Affairs has notified the **Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2026**, operationalising the provisions of the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019. These rules provide the procedural framework for granting Indian citizenship to specified categories of migrants.

Key Provisions



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The rules apply to **Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians** from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan who entered India on or before **31 December 2014** due to religious persecution. They reduce the required period of residence in India from **11 years to 5 years** for naturalisation under this category.

Applicants can now submit their citizenship requests through an **online portal**, simplifying the process. District-level committees and empowered authorities have been designated to **verify documents and process applications efficiently**, reducing bureaucratic delays.

2. Procedural and Administrative Features

The rules emphasize **digital processing, time-bound verification, and decentralised decision-making**. Applicants must provide proof of origin, date of entry, and religious identity, along with declarations regarding persecution. Authorities are expected to ensure transparency and accountability in granting citizenship.

Significance

The notification marks the **implementation phase** of the Citizenship Amendment framework, addressing the long-pending issue of refugees from neighbouring countries. It aims to provide **legal recognition, dignity, and access to rights** for eligible migrants who have been residing in India without formal citizenship.

Concerns and Criticism

The rules continue to attract criticism for being **religion-specific**, with concerns that they may violate the principle of equality under Indian Constitution. Critics also highlight the **exclusion of Muslim communities** and link the issue with debates around secularism and inclusive citizenship.

Overall, the rules represent a significant policy move with **legal, humanitarian, and political implications**, while continuing to remain a subject of constitutional and public debate.

3. SC Collegium Recommends 9 Judges to Calcutta High Court

The Supreme Court Collegium recently recommended the appointment of **nine judicial officers and advocates as judges of the Calcutta High Court**, aiming to address the severe shortage of judges and rising pendency of cases in one of India's oldest High Courts. The recommendation is part of the judiciary's broader effort to strengthen judicial capacity across High Courts.

The Calcutta High Court, established in **1862**, is the oldest High Court in India and has jurisdiction over:

- West Bengal,
- Andaman & Nicobar Islands.



Despite its historical importance, the court has been facing a substantial vacancy crisis.

Why the Recommendation is Significant

Rising Pendency of Cases

- High Courts across India continue to face mounting case backlogs.
- Judicial vacancies significantly slow down disposal of civil, criminal, constitutional, and commercial matters.

Improving Judicial Efficiency

Appointment of additional judges is expected to:

- Speed up hearings,
- Reduce delays,
- Improve access to justice,
- Strengthen judicial administration.

Balancing Representation

The Collegium system generally attempts to maintain:

- Regional representation,
- Social diversity,
- Balance between Bar and judicial service candidates, while recommending appointments.

About the Collegium System

The Collegium system is the mechanism through which judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts are appointed and transferred.

Composition

For High Court judge appointments, the Collegium consists of:

- Chief Justice of India (CJI),
- Two senior-most Supreme Court judges.

Procedure

- Recommendations originate from the High Court Collegium.



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- The Supreme Court Collegium reviews candidates.
- Final appointments are made by the President of India after consultation with the Union Government.

Concerns Regarding Judicial Appointments

The appointment process often faces criticism for:

- Lack of transparency,
- Delays between recommendation and appointment,
- Executive-judiciary disagreements,
- Persistent judicial vacancies.

India's judiciary continues to struggle with one of the world's largest case backlogs, making timely judicial appointments increasingly critical.

Way Forward

Experts suggest:

- Faster appointment timelines,
- Greater transparency in Collegium decisions,
- Better coordination between judiciary and executive,
- Increasing sanctioned judicial strength,
- Expanding judicial infrastructure.

The recommendation of nine judges to the Calcutta High Court is therefore viewed as an important step toward improving judicial functioning, reducing pendency, and strengthening access to timely justice in eastern India.

4. Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA)

About CWMA

The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) is a statutory body constituted by the Government of India in 2018 under the Inter-State River Water Disputes framework. It was established following the Supreme Court's 2018 judgment to implement the Cauvery water-sharing arrangement among Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, and Puducherry.



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It operates under the administrative control of the Ministry of Jal Shakti and is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) award (2007) as modified by the Supreme Court.

Composition

The Authority consists of a Chairperson, a Secretary, and eight members. These include full-time and part-time members from the Centre and representatives of basin states, ensuring cooperative federal participation.

Functions and Powers

- Supervises storage, regulation, and release of Cauvery water
- Ensures implementation of tribunal award and SC directives
- Coordinates with the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC)
- Monitors reservoir levels, rainfall, and water inflows
- Issues directions to states during distress years (low rainfall)
- Resolves inter-state disputes related to water release

Significance

CWMA plays a crucial role in maintaining equitable water distribution and preventing conflicts between riparian states. It strengthens cooperative federalism by providing a structured mechanism for dispute resolution and resource management.

Challenges

Despite its mandate, CWMA faces issues such as non-compliance by states, political pressures, and variability in monsoon patterns, which complicate water-sharing decisions.

Conclusion

CWMA represents an institutional solution to a long-standing inter-state dispute. However, its effectiveness ultimately depends on state cooperation, data transparency, and adaptive water governance in the face of climate uncertainties.

5. Hung Assembly and Floor Test

Hung Assembly: Meaning and Context

A **Hung Assembly** arises when no single political party or pre-poll alliance secures a **clear majority** in the legislative assembly after elections. In such situations, the government cannot be formed independently, leading to **coalition-building, post-poll alliances, or minority**



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governments supported by external parties. Hung assemblies are common in multi-party democracies like India, especially at the state level, and often result in political uncertainty and intense bargaining.

Role of the Governor

In case of a hung assembly, the Governor of an Indian State plays a crucial role. The Governor may invite:

1. The **single largest party** to form the government, or
2. A **post-poll coalition** that appears to command majority support

However, this discretion is not absolute and has been subject to judicial scrutiny to prevent arbitrariness or political bias.

Floor Test: Concept and Procedure

A **Floor Test** is the constitutional method to determine whether the Council of Ministers enjoys the **confidence of the legislature**. It takes place on the floor of the assembly, where the government must prove its majority through a **vote of confidence or no-confidence motion**.

The Supreme Court of India has repeatedly emphasized that **majority must be tested on the floor of the House, not decided by the Governor's subjective assessment**.

Judicial Principles and Key Cases

In cases like S.R. Bommai vs Union of India (1994), the Court held that the proper place to test majority is the assembly. Similarly, in Shivraj Singh Chouhan vs Speaker, Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly (2020), the Court ordered an immediate floor test to resolve political uncertainty.

Significance of Floor Test

- Ensures **transparency and constitutional legitimacy**
- Prevents misuse of **Governor's discretion**
- Upholds **democratic principles and legislative supremacy**

Issues and Challenges

- Possibility of **horse-trading and defections**
- Delays in conducting floor tests may distort outcomes
- Role of Speaker and anti-defection law can become contentious



Conclusion

A hung assembly tests the resilience of parliamentary democracy. The **floor test remains the most objective and constitutionally sound mechanism** to establish majority, ensuring that governance reflects the will of elected representatives rather than political manipulation.

6. Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026 – Introduction

The Union Cabinet has approved the **Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026**, which proposes to increase the sanctioned strength of Supreme Court judges from **33 to 37 (excluding the Chief Justice of India)**.

This amendment modifies the **Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956** under the authority of **Article 124**, which empowers Parliament to determine the strength of the Court.

The core objective is straightforward: **reduce case backlog (over 90,000 pending cases) and improve judicial efficiency**. More judges = more benches = faster disposal. No mystery here.

SUPREME COURT STRENGTH INCREASED

CABINET APPROVES AMENDMENT BILL 2026

Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approves the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026.

JUDICIAL STRENGTH INCREASED

FROM **33** → **37** JUDGES

(Excluding Chief Justice of India)

PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT

- To enable the Supreme Court to better serve a bulgeoning and efficiency
- Ensure speedy justice for citizens

FINANCIAL ASPECT

Increase in the salary of Judges, supporting staff and other facilities will be met from the Consolidated Fund of India.

“The wisdom in the number of Judges will allow the Supreme Court to function more effectively and will eventually ensuring speedy justice.”

– Government of India

BOOST TO JUDICIAL EFFICIENCY & SPEEDY JUSTICE

CURRENT SITUATION

- Current working strength: **32 Judges**
- At least four Judges expected to retire in **2026**
- 30 Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India Justice Buryg Itagi, will hold its next of-seat 5 recommendation on the year new Bill is cleared
- CJI Justice Surya Kant has a tenure till **February 2027**

HISTORICAL CHANGE IN STRENGTH

- 1950 – 8 Judges
- 1960 – 13 Judges
- 1977 – 17 Judges
- 2019 – 31 Judges
- 2026 – 37 Judges (After Amendment)



How Supreme Court Judges are Appointed (Reality vs Theory)

Constitutional Provision

- Under **Article 124(2)**, judges are appointed by the **President of India**.
- The President acts **“in consultation”** with judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts.

On paper, this looks executive-led. In reality, it's not.

Collegium System – Actual Power Centre

What is the Collegium?

- A **judge-made system** (not in Constitution) evolved through Supreme Court judgments
- Composed of the **Chief Justice of India + 4 senior-most SC judges**

How Appointment Actually Happens

1. **CJI initiates recommendation**
2. Collegium discusses and finalizes names
3. Recommendation sent to the Government
4. Government can:
 - Accept
 - Return once for reconsideration
5. If Collegium reiterates → **Government is bound to appoint**

This is the key point: **final say effectively lies with the judiciary, not the executive.**

Role of Collegium in Appointments

- Decides **who becomes a Supreme Court judge**
- Handles **elevation from High Courts**
- Recommends **transfers and promotions**
- Ensures **judicial independence by limiting executive interference**

The CJI plays a central role, but decisions are **collective, not unilateral.**

Critical Analysis

- The amendment increases **quantity of judges**, not quality of appointments



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- Collegium ensures independence, but suffers from **opacity and lack of accountability**
- Executive has limited role → leads to **tension between judiciary and government**

Conclusion

The 2026 amendment is a **capacity fix**, not a structural reform. The real power struggle in Indian judiciary is not about number of judges—it's about **who controls appointments**, and right now, that control firmly sits with the **collegium system**.

7. Komagata Maru Incident (1914)

Background and Event

The Komagata Maru Incident (1914) was a landmark episode exposing racial discrimination within the British Empire. A Japanese steamship, Komagata Maru, was chartered by Gurdit Singh and carried 376 Indian passengers, mostly Sikhs, from Hong Kong to Vancouver, Canada.

The passengers aimed to challenge Canada's "Continuous Journey Regulation (1908)", which required migrants to arrive directly from their country of origin—effectively a hidden ban on Indian immigration.



Denial and Aftermath

On reaching Vancouver in 1914, Canadian authorities denied most passengers entry despite them being British subjects. Only a few were allowed to disembark, while the rest were forced to remain on the ship for nearly two months before being sent back to India.

When the ship reached Budge Budge (near Calcutta), British authorities attempted to arrest the passengers, leading to a violent clash in which around 20 people were killed.

Significance

- Exposed racial discrimination in colonial immigration policies
- Strengthened anti-colonial sentiments among Indians
- Acted as a catalyst for the Ghadar Movement, encouraging revolutionary nationalism



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- Demonstrated that Indians, though British subjects, lacked equal rights within the Empire

Conclusion

The Komagata Maru incident was not just an immigration dispute—it was a turning point in India's freedom struggle, highlighting the hypocrisy of colonial rule and accelerating demands for independence.

8. Pre-1857 Revolts in India

Overview

Before the Revolt of 1857, India witnessed numerous localized uprisings against British rule. These revolts reflected **widespread dissatisfaction among rulers, peasants, tribals, and religious groups** due to exploitative colonial policies. However, they remained **fragmented and uncoordinated**, lacking a unified national character.

Types of Pre-1857 Revolts

1. Civil (Feudal) Uprisings

Led by **deposed rulers, zamindars, and feudal chiefs** who lost power due to British expansion.

- Examples: **Sanyasi Rebellion (1763–1800), Poligar Rebellion, Paika Rebellion (1817), Vizianagaram Revolt (1794)**
- Cause: Loss of authority, heavy taxation, and annexation policies

2. Peasant Movements

Triggered by **high land revenue, exploitation by zamindars and moneylenders**.

- Examples: **Rangpur Revolt, Indigo Revolt (early phase), Faraizi Movement**
- Focused on economic grievances rather than political independence

3. Tribal Revolts

Tribal communities resisted **land alienation, forest restrictions, and outsider exploitation**.

- Examples: **Kol Uprising (1832), Santhal Rebellion (1855–56), Bhil and Khasi revolts**
- Caused by disruption of traditional systems and intrusion of moneylenders

4. Religious and Socio-Political Movements

These revolts combined **religious reform with anti-colonial resistance**.

- Examples: **Wahabi Movement, Faraizi Movement**
- Mobilized people against British authority and social injustices



Causes of Revolts

- **Economic exploitation:** Heavy taxation and destruction of traditional industries
- **Political annexation:** Policies like subsidiary alliances and loss of sovereignty
- **Social-religious interference:** Fear of cultural erosion
- **Administrative oppression:** Corruption and arbitrary governance

Limitations

- **Localized nature** with no national coordination
- **Lack of common ideology or leadership**
- **Limited resources and poor communication**
- Easily suppressed by British military power

Significance

Despite failure, these revolts **exposed deep-rooted resentment against British rule** and laid the groundwork for the 1857 uprising. They acted as **precursors to organized resistance**, showing that colonial authority was not fully accepted.

Conclusion

Pre-1857 revolts were not isolated incidents—they were **warning signals**. The real mistake is underestimating them. Without these early resistances, the scale and intensity of 1857 would never have happened.

9. Netherlands Returns 11th-Century Chola Copper Plates to India

The Netherlands recently returned the historic **11th-century Chola Copper Plates** to India during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to the Netherlands. The restitution ceremony took place in the presence of Dutch Prime Minister Rob Jetten and representatives of Leiden University, where the artefacts had been preserved for over three centuries. The return is regarded as a major milestone in India's efforts to reclaim its cultural heritage from colonial-era collections.

The artefacts, popularly known as the **Leiden Plates** or **Anaimangalam Copper Plates**, belong to the Chola period and are considered among the most important surviving records of the Chola Empire. The collection consists of:

- 21 large copper plates,
- 3 smaller plates,



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- Weighing nearly 30 kilograms,
all bound together by a bronze ring carrying the royal seal of Emperor Rajendra Chola I.

The inscriptions date back to the reigns of:

- Rajaraja Chola I (985–1014 CE),
- Rajendra Chola I,
- Kulottunga Chola I.

The plates contain inscriptions in both Tamil and Sanskrit. They record:

- Chola genealogy,
- Administrative grants,
- Maritime relations,
- Religious patronage,
- Land grants to the Chudamani Vihara, a Buddhist monastery at Nagapattinam built by the Srivijaya ruler of Southeast Asia.

These inscriptions provide valuable evidence of:

- Chola maritime power,
- India–Southeast Asia cultural linkages,
- Religious pluralism,
- Advanced administrative systems during the medieval period.

The plates were taken to the Netherlands around the late 17th century during Dutch colonial presence in Nagapattinam and eventually became part of Leiden University's Asian collections in 1862. India formally began pursuing their repatriation in 2012. The process gained momentum after:

- UNESCO-backed deliberations in 2023,
- The Netherlands' colonial restitution policy,
- Bilateral diplomatic engagement between India and the Netherlands.

Prime Minister Modi described the return as a "joyous moment for every Indian" and highlighted the greatness of Chola civilization, especially its maritime achievements and cultural legacy.



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The return of the Chola Copper Plates is significant because it strengthens:

- Cultural diplomacy,
- Global recognition of India's heritage claims,
- International cooperation in restitution of colonial-era artefacts.

10. Draft Rules for VB-G RAM G Act

The Union Government has released draft rules for implementing the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025 (VB-G RAM G), which will replace the 20-year-old Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) from 1 July 2026. The draft rules are currently open for public consultation.

VB-G RAM G aims to align rural employment generation with the broader “Viksit Bharat @2047” vision. The new law increases the statutory employment guarantee from 100 days under MGNREGA to 125 days per rural household annually. It also emphasizes livelihood creation, infrastructure development, and convergence with other rural development schemes.

A major feature of the draft rules is the shift from MGNREGA's demand-driven funding model to a “normative allocation” system. Funds to states will now be allocated using the 16th Finance Commission's devolution criteria and performance indicators. This effectively introduces expenditure ceilings and performance-based funding.

MGNREGA	Viksit Bharat-G RAM G
100 days of wage employment per rural household	125 days of wage employment per rural household
Multiple and scattered categories of works with limited strategic focus	4 clearly defined priority areas focusing on water security, rural infrastructure, livelihoods and climate resilience
Center bears unskilled wage costs, states bear unemployment allowance	State cost-sharing for wages, 60:40 for most states, 90:10 for certain special-category regions
No explicit statutory "pause window"	States can notify up to 60 days in a FY when work will not be executed
Demand based funding with unpredictable allocations	Normative funding ensuring predictable budgeting while protecting the employment guarantee
Gram Panchayat planning is central	Integrates institutionalised convergence and infrastructure planning

Source: Ministry of Rural Development

The draft rules also establish institutional mechanisms such as:

- National Level Steering Committee (NLSC)
- Central and State Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Councils
- Digital monitoring and grievance redressal systems
- Aadhaar-based Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) wage payments

Technology-driven monitoring through Management Information Systems (MIS), biometrics, and geospatial infrastructure has been proposed to improve transparency and accountability.

However, the proposed framework has generated criticism. Experts argue that VB-G RAM G weakens the rights-based character of MGNREGA by making employment more supply-driven and administratively controlled. Concerns have also been raised regarding exclusion risks due to



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mandatory digital authentication, reduced worker participation in decision-making, and greater fiscal pressure on poorer states.

Supporters argue that the reforms will improve efficiency, ensure predictable funding, strengthen state accountability, and modernize rural employment delivery mechanisms. The scheme is expected to operate with an estimated budget allocation of nearly ₹95,692 crore.

Overall, the draft rules represent one of the biggest restructurings of India's rural employment architecture since the introduction of MGNREGA in 2005.

11. Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, 2026 Introduced in Assam Assembly

The Assam Government introduced the **Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, 2026** in the Assam Legislative Assembly with the objective of creating a common legal framework governing personal matters such as **marriage, divorce, succession, inheritance, and live-in relationships** across communities. If enacted, Assam could become one of the few Indian states after Uttarakhand and Gujarat to implement a state-level UCC.

The Bill proposes several major reforms. It seeks to **ban polygamy**, make **registration of marriages and divorces compulsory**, and mandate the **registration of live-in relationships**. It also prescribes the minimum marriage age as **21 years for men and 18 years for women**. Violations related to concealment of previous marriages or unlawful polygamy may attract imprisonment and penalties.

A significant feature of the Bill is that it **exempts Scheduled Tribes and tribal customary practices** from its ambit. The Assam Government clarified that local rituals, traditions, and customary practices of indigenous communities would remain protected. This exemption attempts to balance legal uniformity with Assam's ethnic and cultural diversity.

The concept of a Uniform Civil Code originates from **Article 44** of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP), which directs the State to strive for a common civil code for all citizens. Supporters argue that the UCC promotes **gender justice, equality before law, national integration, and simplification of personal laws**. They especially highlight issues such as unequal inheritance rights and practices like polygamy as grounds for reform.

However, critics argue that the Bill may affect **religious freedom and cultural autonomy**, particularly among minorities. Opposition parties have demanded wider public consultation and raised concerns regarding excessive state intervention in personal matters.

Overall, the Assam UCC Bill represents a major constitutional and political development in India's debate over balancing **uniformity, secularism, gender justice, and cultural diversity**.

12. 16th Finance Commission and Issues of Fiscal Transfers and Equity



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The **16th Finance Commission (FC)**, chaired by **Dr. Arvind Panagariya**, submitted its recommendations for the period **2026–31**, focusing on strengthening fiscal federalism and balancing equity in Centre–State financial relations. Constituted under **Article 280** of the Constitution, the Finance Commission recommends the distribution of tax revenues between the Union and States and among the States themselves.

A major recommendation of the 16th FC is the retention of **41% vertical devolution** of the divisible tax pool to states, continuing the arrangement of the 15th FC. However, many states had demanded an increase to 50%, arguing that rising expenditure responsibilities require greater fiscal autonomy. States also raised concerns that the growing share of **cesses and surcharges**, which are excluded from the divisible pool, reduces their effective share in central taxes.

The Commission also revised the criteria for **horizontal devolution** among states. It reduced the weight of **income distance** from 45% to 42.5% while introducing a new **10% weight for contribution to GDP**. Population (2011 Census) received 17.5% weight, while demographic performance and area saw reduced weights. This change attempts to balance the competing demands of equity and efficiency.

The reforms triggered debates over **fiscal equity**. Poorer states support income–distance criteria because it redistributes resources toward less developed regions. In contrast, economically stronger southern and western states argue that they are being penalized despite better fiscal discipline, lower population growth, and higher economic contribution. The inclusion of GDP contribution partially addresses these concerns.

Another important feature is the shift toward **performance- and compliance-based fiscal federalism**. The Commission emphasized fiscal discipline, subsidy rationalization, limits on off-budget borrowing, and caps on fiscal deficits at 3% of GSDP. Critics argue that excessive conditionalities may weaken state autonomy and disproportionately affect poorer states with limited administrative capacity.

The Commission also recommended nearly **₹7.9 lakh crore grants for local bodies**, focusing on urbanization, infrastructure, and governance reforms.

Overall, the 16th Finance Commission reflects the continuing challenge of balancing **equity, efficiency, regional development, and cooperative federalism** within India's complex fiscal structure.

13. National Sports Governance Board Rules and National Sports Tribunal Rules, 2026

The Union Government notified the **National Sports Governance (National Sports Board) Rules, 2026** and the **National Sports Governance (National Sports Tribunal) Rules, 2026** under the **National Sports Governance Act, 2025**. These rules aim to strengthen transparency, accountability, athlete welfare, and dispute resolution mechanisms within India's sports ecosystem.



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The **National Sports Board (NSB)** has been established as the apex regulatory authority for granting, renewing, suspending, or cancelling recognition of National Sports Bodies (NSBs). It will ensure compliance with governance, financial, ethical, and transparency standards. The Board will consist of a **Chairperson and two Members**, appointed by the Central Government from a panel recommended by a Search-cum-Selection Committee.

The NSB will also maintain:

- A roster of the **National Sports Election Panel**
- A register of affiliated units of National Sports Bodies
- Public governance records under the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023

The Board may further issue model guidelines on sports governance and conduct consultations with stakeholders.

Another major reform is the establishment of the **National Sports Tribunal (NST)** as a dedicated adjudicatory body for sports-related disputes. The Tribunal aims to provide **speedy, independent, cost-effective, and accessible resolution** of disputes related to elections, athlete selection, governance conflicts, disciplinary actions, and administrative matters.

The Tribunal will consist of a Chairperson and Members with expertise in law, sports administration, and public affairs. Members will generally hold office for **three years or until attaining 65 years of age**, whichever is earlier.

These reforms are significant because Indian sports administration has long faced allegations of **politicization, corruption, lack of athlete representation, delayed dispute resolution, and poor governance standards**. The new framework seeks to professionalize sports administration and reduce dependence on ordinary civil courts.

Overall, the rules mark one of the most comprehensive institutional reforms in Indian sports governance, especially important as India strengthens its preparations for major global sporting ambitions, including the **2036 Olympics bid**.

14. Article 142: Judicial Activism vs Judicial Overreach

Article 142 of the Indian Constitution empowers the Supreme Court to pass any decree or order necessary for doing “**complete justice**” in any matter pending before it. It is one of the most extraordinary constitutional powers available to the judiciary and reflects the Supreme Court’s role as the final guardian of justice. However, the growing use of Article 142 has triggered a major debate over the thin line between **judicial activism** and **judicial overreach**.



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Judicial activism refers to the proactive role played by the judiciary in protecting constitutional values, fundamental rights, and social justice, especially when the legislature or executive fails to act. Article 142 has often been used constructively to fill legal and policy vacuums. For example, in the **Vishaka case (1997)**, the Supreme Court framed guidelines against workplace sexual harassment in the absence of legislation. Similarly, Article 142 was used in cases involving prison reforms, environmental protection, undertrial prisoners, and compensation for victims of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy.

Concept	Meaning	Nature	Intent	Legitimacy	Examples	Impact
Judicial Activism	Proactive interpretation and enforcement of rights and constitutional values	Corrective and constructive	To uphold justice, protect rights	Within constitutional framework	Vishaka Guidelines, PILs for environmental rights	Enhances accountability and rights protection
Judicial Overreach	Judiciary crossing its limits and entering executive/legislative domain	Excessive and intrusive	To fill a governance vacuum, often with good intent	Borderline unconstitutional	Ordering liquor bans near highways, policy interference	Disrupts balance of powers
Judicial Despotism	Systemic, unchecked judicial dominance over other organs	Authoritarian and undemocratic	Assertion of supremacy, ignoring constitutional limits	Often outside constitutional boundaries	Frequent use of Article 142, overriding democratic will	Threatens democracy and constitutional order

The significance of Article 142 lies in its flexibility. It allows the Court to deliver justice beyond rigid statutory limitations and address exceptional situations where existing laws are inadequate. It also strengthens public trust in the judiciary as a protector of rights and constitutional morality.

However, critics argue that excessive reliance on Article 142 can lead to **judicial overreach**, where the judiciary enters domains reserved for the executive or legislature. Judicial overreach occurs when courts effectively create policy, impose administrative directions, or interfere excessively in governance matters. Critics contend that the phrase "complete justice" is vague and gives judges extremely wide discretionary powers.

Several judgments have generated controversy in this regard. The Supreme Court's interventions in matters such as liquor bans near highways, BCCI reforms, deadlines for Governors and the President regarding assent to bills, and administrative directions in environmental governance have been viewed by some as encroachments into policymaking. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar even described Article 142 as a "nuclear missile against democratic forces," arguing that the judiciary should not function as a "super Parliament."



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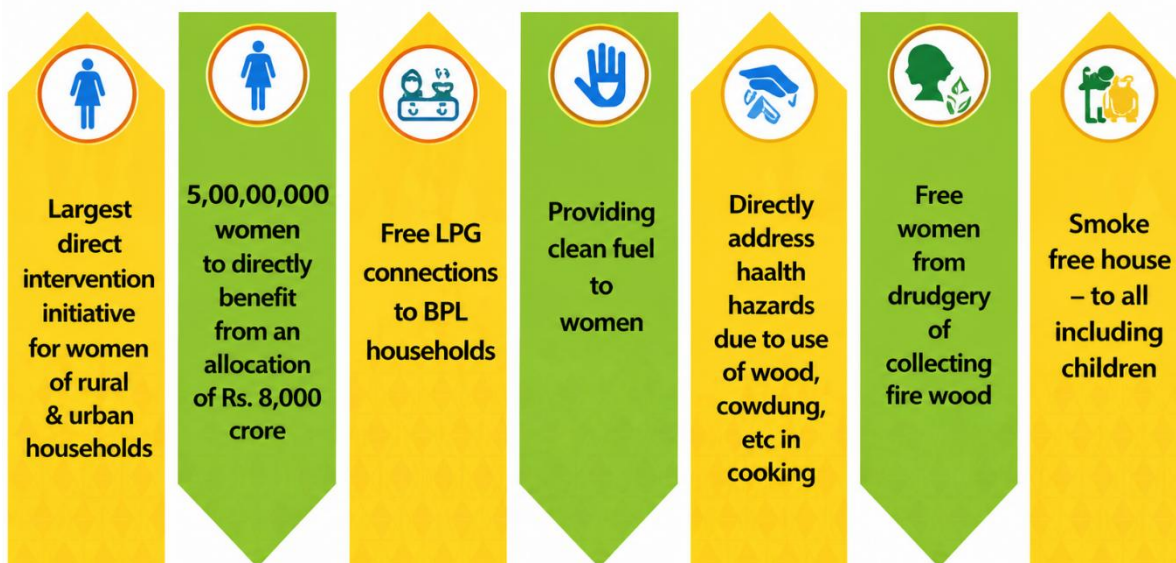
The debate essentially revolves around the **Doctrine of Separation of Powers**, which requires mutual respect among the legislature, executive, and judiciary. While judicial activism may be necessary to protect constitutional values during institutional failure, unchecked judicial expansion can weaken democratic accountability and institutional balance.

Therefore, the challenge lies in ensuring that Article 142 remains a constitutional safety valve rather than becoming a mechanism for routine judicial policymaking. Greater judicial restraint, clearer standards for invoking "complete justice," and stronger legislative responsiveness are necessary to maintain constitutional equilibrium.

SCHEMES:

1. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), launched in 2016 by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, aims to provide clean cooking fuel (LPG) to poor households, replacing polluting fuels like firewood and coal. Over the past decade, it has emerged as a major social welfare and energy transition scheme.



In 10 years, PMUY has significantly expanded access to LPG, with over 10 crore connections issued, contributing to near-universal clean cooking coverage. It has improved women's health by reducing indoor air pollution, saved time spent on fuel collection, and enhanced dignity and empowerment, as connections are issued in women's names.



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The scheme also strengthened infrastructure, including expansion of LPG distribution networks and use of direct benefit transfer (DBT) mechanisms. Recent policy support includes a ₹300 subsidy per cylinder for eligible beneficiaries.

However, challenges persist. Low refill rates, affordability issues, and continued use of traditional fuels (fuel stacking) limit its full impact.

Overall, PMUY represents a shift toward clean energy access and women-led development, but sustained usage remains the key policy challenge.

2. RBI's UDGAM Portal

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched the **UDGAM Portal** — *Unclaimed Deposits – Gateway to Access Information* — to help citizens identify and recover unclaimed bank deposits across multiple banks through a single online platform.

About the UDGAM Portal

- Launched by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in August 2023.
- Developed to tackle the growing problem of unclaimed bank deposits in India.
- Allows registered users to search unclaimed accounts across participating banks at one place.

What are Unclaimed Deposits?

- Deposits that remain inactive or unoperated for **10 years or more** are treated as unclaimed deposits.
- Such funds are transferred by banks to the **Depositor Education and Awareness (DEA) Fund** maintained by RBI.

Key Features of the Portal

Centralised Search Facility

- Users can search:
 - Savings accounts
 - Current accounts
 - Fixed deposits
 - Recurring deposits
 - Other inactive accounts across multiple banks.



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Simplified Access

- Requires registration through:
 - Name
 - Mobile number
 - OTP authentication.
- Searches can be conducted using:
 - PAN
 - Date of birth
 - Voter ID
 - Passport details
 - Driving licence number.

Coverage

- Around **30 banks** are currently integrated with the portal.
- These banks account for nearly **90% of total unclaimed deposits** in value terms.

Claim Settlement

- The portal only helps users identify unclaimed deposits.
- Actual settlement or withdrawal must be done directly through the concerned bank.

Significance

- Helps citizens recover forgotten financial assets.
- Assists legal heirs in tracing deposits of deceased family members.
- Improves financial transparency and consumer awareness.
- Reduces fraud risks associated with dormant accounts.

Challenges

- Not all banks are fully integrated yet.
- Many citizens remain unaware of the portal.



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- Claim procedures at bank level can still be time-consuming and documentation-heavy.

Way Forward

RBI, along with IRDAI and SEBI, is working towards creating a unified platform for tracing:

- Unclaimed bank deposits,
- Insurance proceeds,
- Mutual fund investments,
- Other dormant financial assets.

3. Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)

- Provides **life insurance coverage of ₹2 lakh** for death due to any reason
- Available for individuals aged **18–50 years** with bank accounts
- Annual premium is very low and **auto-debited from bank accounts**

4. Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)

- Provides **accidental insurance coverage**:
- ₹2 lakh for accidental death/full disability
- ₹1 lakh for partial disability
- Available for individuals aged **18–70 years**
- Premium remains **highly affordable**

5. Atal Pension Yojana (APY)

- Pension scheme targeted mainly at **workers in the unorganized sector**
- Guarantees **monthly pension between ₹1,000 and ₹5,000** after the age of 60
- Government-backed **defined pension model**

6. Bhashini Initiative

- AI-based language translation platform launched under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- Full form: **BHASHINI – BHASha INterface for India**.
- Promotes digital inclusion by enabling translation and voice services in Indian languages.
- Supports governance, education, e-commerce, and digital public services in multilingual formats.



7. Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

- The **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** is an intergovernmental organization established in 1997.
- Headquarters located in **Ebene, Mauritius**.
- India is a founding member.
- Focus areas include:
 - Maritime security,
 - Blue economy,
 - Trade facilitation,
 - Disaster risk management,
 - Fisheries cooperation.
- Strategically important due to the Indian Ocean's role in global trade and energy transportation.

8. One Case One Data & SU-SAHAY

- **One Case One Data** is a judicial digital integration initiative aimed at creating a unified database for court cases across India.
- Designed to improve:
 - Data accuracy,
 - Case tracking,
 - Interoperability between courts,
 - Judicial transparency.
- **SU-SAHAY** is an AI-assisted legal support initiative intended to improve:
 - Legal research,
 - Judicial administration,
 - Access to legal services.
- Reflects the judiciary's push toward digitization under the e-Courts Mission Mode Project.



9. Government e-Marketplace (GeM)

- Government e-Marketplace (GeM) recently observed its Incorporation Day.
- Established in 2017 as a Section 8 non-profit company under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Digital procurement platform for government purchases.
- Promotes:
 - Transparency,
 - Efficiency,
 - Paperless procurement,
 - MSME participation.

10. Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)

The Supreme Court recently highlighted concerns regarding delays in child adoption procedures and emphasized the need for faster processing through the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA). CARA is a statutory body functioning under the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It acts as the nodal agency for regulating and monitoring both in-country and inter-country adoptions in India.

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CARA operates under the provisions of the:

- Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015,
- Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption, 1993.

Its major functions include:

- Registration of prospective adoptive parents,
- Regulation of adoption agencies,
- Child matching and monitoring,
- Prevention of illegal adoption practices.



11. PM POSHAN Scheme

The government recently reviewed implementation of the **PM POSHAN Scheme** to improve nutritional support for school children. PM POSHAN, formerly known as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, is a centrally sponsored programme providing cooked meals to students in government and aided schools.

The scheme aims to:

- Improve nutritional levels among children,
- Increase school enrolment and attendance,
- Reduce dropout rates,
- Promote social equity.

It covers students from:

- Balvatika,
- Primary classes,
- Upper primary classes.

Nutrition gardens and millet-based meals are increasingly being integrated into the programme.

12. PM e-Drive Scheme

- Government approved the PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM e-DRIVE) Scheme.
- Focuses on accelerating electric mobility through subsidies for EVs and charging infrastructure.
- Replaces the earlier FAME scheme framework with a more targeted approach.
- Aims to reduce fossil fuel dependence and urban pollution.

13. Waqf UMEED Portal

- Ministry of Minority Affairs launched the Waqf Unified Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development (UMEED) Portal.
- Intended to digitize waqf property records and improve transparency in management.
- Helps reduce disputes and improve monitoring of waqf assets.



14. Green Hydrogen Certification Scheme of India (GHCI)

- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy operationalized the Green Hydrogen Certification Scheme.
- Defines standards for certifying hydrogen produced using renewable energy sources.
- Aims to ensure transparency, export competitiveness, and carbon accounting in the hydrogen sector.
- Important for achieving India's National Green Hydrogen Mission targets.

INTERNATIONAL:

1. Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)

- RAW is India's external intelligence agency.
- Established in 1968 after the Indo-China and Indo-Pak wars exposed intelligence gaps.
- Functions under the Cabinet Secretariat.
- Responsible for:
 - Foreign intelligence gathering,
 - Counter-terrorism,
 - Strategic security operations.

2. International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- Specialized agency of the United Nations for information and communication technologies. International Telecommunication Union
- Established in 1865; headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Allocates:
 - Global radio spectrum,
 - Satellite orbits,
 - Telecom standards.
- Plays a major role in digital connectivity and global telecom governance.

3. India–Algeria Defence Cooperation



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India and Algeria recently held the **inaugural Joint Commission on Defence Cooperation** in New Delhi, marking a major step in strengthening bilateral strategic and military relations between the two countries. The meeting followed the signing of the **India–Algeria Defence Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2024**.



Key Highlights

First Joint Defence Commission Meeting

- The meeting was co-chaired by:
 - Amitabh Prasad, Joint Secretary (International Cooperation), India
 - Major General Kaid Nour Eddine, Chief of Staff of Algeria's Naval Forces.

Areas of Cooperation Discussed

Both sides explored cooperation in:

- Military training,
- Joint military exercises,
- Defence industry collaboration,
- Medical cooperation,
- Capacity building and technology exchange.

Institutional Framework Established



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- India and Algeria signed the **Rules of Procedure** for implementing defence cooperation.
- This creates a formal institutional mechanism for future defence engagements and regular commission meetings.

Significance of the Cooperation

Expanding India's Strategic Outreach in Africa

- Algeria is one of Africa's major military powers and an important partner in North Africa.
- Strengthening ties with Algeria supports India's broader engagement with the African continent.

Defence Industrial Cooperation

- India showcased opportunities under:
 - "Make in India"
 - "Make for the World"initiatives in defence manufacturing.
- Algeria may emerge as a future partner for defence procurement and co-production.

Maritime and Security Cooperation

- Both countries share concerns regarding:
 - Terrorism,
 - Maritime security,
 - Regional instability,
 - Extremism.
- Defence cooperation can improve strategic coordination in these areas.

India–Algeria Relations

Diplomatic Relations

- India and Algeria established diplomatic relations in 1962 after Algeria gained independence from France.
- India supported Algeria's anti-colonial liberation struggle.
- Both nations were active members of the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**.



Trade Relations

- Bilateral trade rebounded strongly after the COVID-19 period.
- Major Indian exports:
 - Rice,
 - Pharmaceuticals,
 - Engineering goods,
 - Granite.
- Major imports from Algeria:
 - Petroleum products,
 - Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG),
 - Fertilizers and minerals.

Other Areas of Cooperation

India and Algeria have also signed agreements in:

- Space cooperation,
- Broadcasting,
- Scientific and technical collaboration.

Importance for India

The growing defence partnership reflects India's attempt to:

- Expand strategic influence in Africa,
- Diversify defence partnerships,
- Promote indigenous defence exports,
- Strengthen South–South cooperation.

It also aligns with India's larger vision of becoming a reliable global security and defence partner.

4. New Development Bank (NDB)

- Multilateral development bank established by BRICS nations in 2014.



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- Headquarters located in Shanghai, China.
- Focuses on infrastructure and sustainable development projects in emerging economies.
- Sometimes referred to as the "BRICS Bank."

5. India Hosts Kimberley Process Intersessional Meeting 2026

India recently hosted the **Kimberley Process (KP) Intersessional Meeting 2026** in Mumbai under its chairship, bringing together representatives from participating countries, industry bodies, and civil society organizations to discuss ethical and sustainable diamond trade. The meeting focused on strengthening monitoring, compliance, and consumer confidence in the global natural diamond supply chain.

The discussions centered on the **Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS)**, an international mechanism established under **UN General Assembly Resolution 55/56 (2000)** to prevent "conflict diamonds" from entering legitimate markets. Conflict diamonds refer to rough diamonds used by rebel groups to finance armed conflicts against legitimate governments.

India assumed the chairmanship of the Kimberley Process on **1 January 2026**, reflecting its growing role in global diamond governance. India's 2026 chairship theme revolves around the **"3Cs" framework — Credibility, Compliance, and Consumer Confidence**.

Currently, the Kimberley Process has **60 participants representing 86 countries**, with the European Union treated as a single participant. KP members account for nearly **99.8% of global rough diamond production and trade**.

The meeting is significant because India processes nearly **90% of the world's diamonds** and accounts for around **75% of global diamond turnover by value**, mainly through hubs such as Surat and Mumbai.

Key discussions during the meeting included:

- Monitoring and compliance mechanisms,
- Artisanal and alluvial diamond mining,
- Digital traceability,
- Ethical sourcing,
- Possible expansion of the definition of "conflict diamonds" to address evolving geopolitical realities.

India's leadership in the Kimberley Process is viewed as an opportunity to strengthen transparency, sustainability, and responsible governance in the global diamond industry.



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6. Mount Etna

- Europe's most active volcano located on Sicily Island, Italy.
- A stratovolcano situated near the boundary of the African and Eurasian tectonic plates.
- Frequent eruptions affect nearby settlements, tourism, and air traffic.
- Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

7. Kilauea Volcano

- One of the world's most active volcanoes located in Hawaii, USA.
- Classified as a shield volcano with basaltic lava flows.
- Part of the Pacific Ring of Fire.
- Closely monitored due to continuous volcanic activity and lava eruptions.

8. Place in News — Chile

Chile was recently in the news due to growing India–Chile engagement in areas such as:

- Critical minerals,
- Trade and investment,
- Clean energy cooperation,
- Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) negotiations.



Geographical Features

- Located along the western coast of South America.



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- Bordered by:
 - Peru (North),
 - Bolivia (Northeast),
 - Argentina (East),
 - Pacific Ocean (West).
- Capital: Santiago.
- One of the world's longest north–south countries, stretching over 4,200 km.

Important Physical Features

- **Andes Mountains** run along the eastern boundary.
- Home to the **Atacama Desert**, among the driest places on Earth.
- Southern Chile contains:
 - Fjords,
 - Glaciers,
 - Volcanoes,
 - Islands and archipelagos.

9. PLACES IN NEWS: Mayon Volcano

The **Mayon Volcano** in the Philippines recently erupted, prompting evacuations and raising volcanic alert levels due to lava flows, ash emissions, and pyroclastic activity in the Albay province.





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Mayon is an active **stratovolcano (composite volcano)** located in Albay province on Luzon Island in the Philippines. It is globally famous for its nearly perfect cone-shaped symmetry and is considered the most active volcano in the country.

The volcano forms part of the **Pacific Ring of Fire**, a highly seismically active zone created by tectonic plate interactions. Mayon was formed due to the subduction of the Philippine Sea Plate beneath the Philippine Mobile Belt.

Its eruptions are generally **Strombolian in nature**, producing:

- Lava flows,
- Ash clouds,
- Pyroclastic density currents (PDCs),
- Lahars or volcanic mudflows.

In 2026, volcanic unrest intensified with repeated lava collapses and pyroclastic flows, affecting thousands of residents and forcing evacuations from nearby villages. Authorities raised the alert status to Level 3 on a five-step warning scale.

Historically, Mayon has experienced several destructive eruptions. The 1814 eruption devastated nearby towns and caused heavy casualties, while later eruptions in 1993 and 2018 also led to deaths and displacement.

The volcano and its surrounding landscape are protected under the **Mayon Volcano Natural Park**, an ecologically significant area and a major tourist attraction in the Philippines.

10. Kilauea Volcano

Kilauea Volcano in Hawaii recently witnessed renewed volcanic activity. Kilauea is one of the world's most active volcanoes and forms part of the Pacific Ring of Fire

It is classified as a **shield volcano**, characterized by:

- Broad gentle slopes,
- Basaltic lava flows,
- Frequent eruptions.

The volcano is located within Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and is continuously monitored by the United States Geological Survey (USGS).

11. Lake Tanganyika

- One of the world's deepest freshwater lakes located in East Africa.



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- Shared by Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and Zambia.
- Known for high biodiversity and endemic aquatic species.
- Faces threats from climate change and pollution.
