

Weekly One Liners 16th to 22nd of March 2026

Oscars 2026 Winners List

98th Academy Awards 2026: Key Highlights

Category	Details
Event	98th Academy Awards
Date	March 15, 2026
Venue	Dolby Theatre, Hollywood, Los Angeles
Host	Conan O'Brien
Best Picture	One Battle After Another
Most Wins	One Battle After Another (6)
Most Nominations	Sinners (16)
Broadcast	ABC
Streaming	Hulu

The ceremony recognized the best films released in **2025 across 24 categories.**

Oscars 2026 Winners List (Major Categories)

Best Picture

Winner: One Battle After Another

Other nominees included:

- Bugonia
- F1
- Frankenstein
- Hamnet
- Marty Supreme
- The Secret Agent
- Sentimental Value
- Sinners
- Train Dreams

Best Actor

Winner: Michael B. Jordan – *Sinners*

Other nominees:

- Timothée Chalamet – Marty Supreme
- Leonardo DiCaprio – One Battle After Another
- Ethan Hawke – Blue Moon
- Wagner Moura – The Secret Agent

Best Actress

Winner: Jessie Buckley – *Hamnet*

Other nominees:

- Rose Byrne – If I Had Legs I'd Kick You
- Renate Reinsve – Sentimental Value
- Emma Stone – Bugonia
- Kate Hudson – Song Sung Blue

Best Director

Winner: Paul Thomas Anderson – *One Battle After Another*

Other nominees:

- Ryan Coogler – *Sinners*
- Chloé Zhao – *Hamnet*
- Josh Safdie – *Marty Supreme*
- Joachim Trier – *Sentimental Value*

Oscars 2026 Supporting Categories Winners

Category	Winner	Film
Best Supporting Actor	Sean Penn	One Battle After Another
Best Supporting Actress	Amy Madigan	Weapons
Best Original Screenplay	Ryan Coogler	Sinners
Best Adapted Screenplay	One Battle After Another	Paul Thomas Anderson

The film **"One Battle After Another"** dominated the ceremony with **six Oscars**, including Best Picture and Best Director.

Other Major Oscars 2026 Winners

Category	Winner
Best Animated Feature	KPop Demon Hunters
Best International Feature	Sentimental Value
Best Documentary Feature	Mr. Nobody Against Putin
Best Visual Effects	Avatar: Fire and Ash
Best Sound	F1
Best Original Score	Sinners

These awards showcased the diversity of global cinema and technical excellence in filmmaking.

Oscars 2026: Major Highlights

Several memorable moments defined the ceremony:

- **"One Battle After Another" won six awards**, becoming the biggest winner of the night.
- **Michael B. Jordan won Best Actor** for his role in *Sinners*.
- **Jessie Buckley won Best Actress** for *Hamnet*.
- **Sean Penn won his third Oscar** for Best Supporting Actor.
- Norwegian film **"Sentimental Value" won Best International Feature**.

Oscars 2026 Records and Interesting Facts

- The film **Sinners received 16 nominations**, the highest for the ceremony.
- A **tie occurred in the Best Live Action Short Film category**.
- **Autumn Durald Arkapaw became the first woman to win Best Cinematography**.
- The Academy introduced a **new award category for Best Casting**.

Sahitya Akademi Award 2025

Sahitya Akademi Award 2025 Categories and Genres
The Sahitya Akademi Award 2025 recognizes literary excellence across multiple genres which are representing India's diverse literary traditions.

This award distribution show the wide range of literary forms being celebrated this year.

The Categories awarded in the Sahitya Akademi Award 2025 are the,

Poetry – 8 books

Novels – 4 books

Short story collections – 6 books

Essays – 2 books

Literary criticism – 1 book

Autobiography – 1 book

Memoirs – 2 books

Sahitya Akademi Award 2025 Winners List

The Sahitya Akademi Award 2025 winners list includes authors from the across India representing different literary traditions. This award highlights important works in poetry, fiction, essays and memoirs.

Category	Books
Poetry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shrestha Kabita (Bengali) – Prasun Bandyopadhyay Bhattkhadaki (Gujarati) – Yogesh Vaidya Padapurana (Odia) – Girijakumar Baliyar Singh Animesha (Telugu) – Nandini Sidha Reddy Safar Jaari Hai (Urdu) – Pritpal Singh Betab Prasthanacatustaye Brahmaghosah (Sanskrit) – Sadhu Bhadreshdas
Novel Winners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karhi Khelar Sadhu (Assamese) – Devabrat Das Dwngnwi Lama Mwnse Gathwn (Bodo) – Sahaisuli Brahma Crimson Spring (English) – Navtej Sarna Maayaamanushyar (Malayalam) – N. Prabhakaran
Short Story Winners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dada Seerisu Tande (Kannada) – Amaresh Nugadoni Safety Kit (Punjabi) – Jinder Bharkhama (Rajasthani) – Jitender Kumar Soni Waghoo (Sindhi) – Bhagwan Atlani
Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Konkani Kavyem: Rupani Ani Rupakam (Konkani) – Henry Mendonca Nepali Paramparik Sanskriti Ra Sabhyata Ko Dukuti (Nepali) – Prakash Bhattarai

Category	Books
Literary Criticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thamiz Sirukathaiyin Thadangal (Tamil) – Sa. Tamilselvan
Autobiography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kalyanilya Resha (Marathi)
Memoir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jeete Jee Allahabad (Hindi) – Mamta Kalia Dhatri Paat San Gaam (Maithili) – Mahendra

Sahitya Akademi Award 2025 Winners List Language Wise

Language	Title and Genre	Name of the Author
Assamese	Karhi Khelar Sadhu (Novel)	Devabrat Das
Bengali	Shrestha Kabita (Poetry)	Prasun Bandyopadhyay
Bodo	Dwngnwi Lama Mwnse Gathwn (Novel)	Sahaisuli Brahma
Dogri	Thakur Satsayie (Poetry, Couplets)	Khajur Singh Thakur
English	Crimson Spring (Novel)	Navtej Sarna
Gujarati	Bhattkhadaki (Poetry)	Yogesh Vaidya
Hindi	Jeete Jee Allahabad (Memoir)	Mamta Kalia
Kannada	Dada Seerisu Tande (Short Stories)	Amaresh Nugadoni
Kashmiri	Najdavanek'y Pot Aalav (Poetry)	Ali Shaida
Konkani	Konkani Kavyem: Rupani Ani Rupakam (Essays)	Henry Mendonca (H.M. Pernal)
Maithili	Dhatri Paat San Gaam (Memoir)	Mahendra
Malayalam	Maayaamanushyar (Novel)	N. Prabhakaran
Manipuri	Kanglamdriba Eephut (Short Stories)	Haobam Nalini
Marathi	Kalyanilya Resha (Autobiography)	Raju Baviskar
Nepali	Nepali Paramparik Sanskriti Ra Sabhyata Ko Dukuti (Essays)	Prakash Bhattarai
Odia	Padapurana (Poetry)	Girijakumar Baliyar Singh
Punjabi	Safety Kit (Stories)	Jinder
Rajasthani	Bharkhama (Stories)	Jitender Kumar Soni
Sanskrit	Prasthanacatustaye Brahmaghosah (Poetry)	Mahamahopadhyaya Sadhu Bhadreshdas
Santali	Mid Birna Chenne Saon Inag Sagai (Short Stories)	Sumitra Soren

Language	Title and Genre	Name of the Author
Sindhi	Waghoo (Stories)	Bhagwan Atlani
Tamil	Thamiz Sirukathaiyin Thadangal (Literary Criticism)	Sa. Tamilselvan
Telugu	Animesha (Poetry)	Nandini Sidha Reddy
Urdu	Safar Jaari Hai (Poetry)	Pritpal Singh Betab

Sahitya Akademi Award 2025 Ceremony Details

The official Sahitya Akademi Award 2025 ceremony will take place on 31 March 2026 in the New Delhi.

During that event all award winners will be honored in a formal literary gathering. And this event also attended by writers, scholars and cultural leaders.

Each recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award 2025 will receive,

- ₹1,00,000 cash prize
- A ceremonial shawl
- An engraved copper plaque (casket)

World Happiness Report 2026

In the World Happiness Report 2026, released on March 20, 2026, **India is ranked 116th out of 147 nations**. While this marks a slight improvement from the 2025 ranking, India still ranks behind several neighbors, including China (60th) and Pakistan (104th). Finland secured the top spot for the ninth consecutive year.

Top-10 Happiest Countries in the World in 2026

Did you know that happiness can be measured across countries? Every year, experts study how people feel about their lives. The 2026 report highlights nations where people enjoy better well-being, support, and overall life satisfaction.



Here is the list of top-10 happiest countries in the world in 2026:

Rank	Countries	Life Evaluation Score
1.	Finland	7.764
2.	Denmark	7.540
3.	Iceland	7.539
4.	Costa Rica	7.439
5.	Sweden	7.225
6.	Norway	7.242
7.	Netherlands	7.223
8.	Israel	7.187
9.	Luxembourg	7.063
10.	Switzerland	7.018

National Affairs

- **NDSA New Office Inauguration & Digital Initiatives Launch** Union Minister **C. R. Patil** inaugurated the new **National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)** office at **West Block II, R.K. Puram, New Delhi** in March 2026. The inauguration featured the launch of three major digital initiatives: **NDSA website with GIS-based "Specified Dams" section**, **NETRA (AI-enabled platform)** developed in collaboration with **Indian Navy**, and **Rashtriya Bandh Suraksha Darpan (RBSD)** visualization platform by **C-DAC** for **Dam Break Analysis**. These initiatives strengthen dam safety governance and risk management across India.
- **Cabinet Approves BHAVYA Scheme - ₹33,660 Crore for 100 Industrial Parks** The Union Cabinet chaired by **PM Narendra Modi** approved the **Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA)** scheme worth **₹33,660 crore** for developing **100 plug-and-play industrial parks** across the country from March 18, 2026. The scheme provides financial assistance up to **₹1 crore per acre** for core infrastructure, value-added facilities, and social infrastructure including **worker housing**, with **25% allocation for external infrastructure**. This initiative aims to strengthen manufacturing capabilities and generate substantial employment across India.
- **Cabinet Approves Small Hydro Power Development Scheme - ₹2,584.60 Crore** The Union Cabinet approved the **Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme** for **FY2026-27 to FY2030-31** with total outlay of **₹2,584.60 crore** to develop approximately **1,500 MW** of capacity in hilly and North Eastern regions. The scheme provides central financial assistance of **₹3.6 crore per MW** (max **₹30 crore**) for NE states and **₹2.4 crore per MW** (max **₹20 crore**) for other states, supporting sustainable energy generation and rural employment.

- Cabinet Approves MSP Support & NH-927 Project in UP**
The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved ₹1,718.56 crore in Minimum Support Price (MSP) funding for cotton farmers for the 2023-24 season through the Cotton Corporation of India, ensuring income security when market prices fall below MSP. Additionally, ₹6,969.04 crore was sanctioned for the National Highway-927 project from Barabanki to Bahraich (101.515 km) in Uttar Pradesh under Hybrid Annuity Mode, including ₹3,485.49 crore civil cost and ₹1,574.85 crore land acquisition cost.
- Government Launches RELIEF Scheme for Exporters - ₹497 Crore**
The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced the Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation (RELIEF) scheme with financial outlay of ₹497 crore under the Export Promotion Mission to support Indian exporters impacted by the ongoing conflict in West Asia. The scheme addresses rising logistics costs, higher insurance premiums, and war-related risks for export consignments, with ECGC Ltd. designated as the nodal and implementing agency responsible for verification, claim processing, and monitoring.
- CEA Releases Midterm Review - India's Power Capacity to Reach 1,121 GW by 2035-36**
The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) released the midterm review of the 20th Electric Power Survey at the Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 in New Delhi, projecting India's installed power generation capacity to rise from approximately 520 GW (as of January 31, 2026) to 1,121 GW by 2035-36. Peak electricity demand is expected to reach 459 GW with CAGR of 5.58%, while total electricity requirement will increase to 3,365 billion units with 6.41% CAGR, with Solar PV leading at 509 GW (45% share), followed by Coal (315 GW - 28%) and Wind (155 GW - 14%), achieving ~70% non-fossil capacity by 2035-36.
- Ministry of Agriculture Releases Horticulture Production Estimates**
Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW) released the Final Estimates (FE) of 2024-25 and First Advance Estimate (FAE) of 2025-26 for horticulture crops showing total production increased from 3,547.44 lakh tonnes (LT) to 3,707.38 LT, registering 4.51% growth. The total horticulture crop area grew from 290.86 lakh hectares (ha) in 2023-24 FE to 301.36 lakh ha in 2024-25 FE, an increase of 10.50 lakh ha (3.61%), with FAE 2025-26 projecting 3,708.46 LT production and fruit production rising 4.13% to 1,176.49 LT.
- MNRE Expands ALMM Framework - Solar Ingots & Wafers Effective June 2028**
The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) extended the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) framework by introducing ALMM List-III for solar ingots and wafers, effective from June 1, 2028, to strengthen India's solar manufacturing ecosystem.
- The framework mandates that bids submitted more than 7 days after notification must use ALMM List-III wafers with Upstream Manufacturing Integration (UMI) through equivalent ingot capacity, and requires at least three independent manufacturers with combined capacity of 15 GW for issuance.
- Ministry of Culture Launches Gyan Bharatam National Manuscript Survey**
On March 16, 2026, the Ministry of Culture launched the 'Gyan Bharatam National Manuscript Survey (GBNMS)', a three-month nationwide voluntary, non-intrusive exercise under the Gyan Bharatam Mission (GBM) to map India's manuscript heritage. The survey follows a four-stage framework: identification, physical verification, cataloguing with metadata, and conservation with digitisation, leveraging the Gyan Bharatam mobile application and International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) for standardized digital access to scholars globally.
- Parliament Extends JPC Tenure on One Nation One Election Lok Sabha**
extended the tenure of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) reviewing the Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill on One Nation One Election until the Monsoon Session 2026, allowing further examination of proposals to simultaneously conduct elections for the Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, and local bodies to improve administrative efficiency.
- RELIEF Scheme Strengthens Export Sector Amid West Asia Crisis**
India's RELIEF Scheme with ₹497 crore outlay addresses rising logistics costs, higher insurance premiums, and war-related risks for exporters, with real-time monitoring dashboard for tracking claims and fund utilization under ECGC Ltd. implementation, supporting exporters amid the West Asia conflict.
- NSO Releases PLFS Data - Unemployment Rate Declines to 4.9% in February 2026**
The National Statistical Office (NSO) released the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for February 2026, showing India's overall unemployment rate slightly dropped to 4.9% from 5.0% in January 2026 based on 3,74,879 individuals (2,13,679 rural, 1,61,200 urban). Urban unemployment for persons aged 15+ dropped to 6.6% from 7.0%, while rural unemployment remained stable at 4.2%, LFPR stayed at 55.9% overall, with WPR stable at 53.2% reflecting steady employment trends.
- RBI Launches Awareness Program on Digital Payments - 6th DPAW Edition**
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under Governor Sanjay Malhotra launched a pilot programme titled "Awareness Program on Digital Payments" during the 6th Digital Payments Awareness Week (DPAW) from March 9-13, 2026, in partnership with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited to conduct in-person awareness programmes for about 10 lakh participants in rural and semi-urban areas through Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs). RBI also launched a multi-media awareness campaign "Thoda Dhyan Se" encouraging users to be careful while making online payments.

- India Submits First National Report on Nagoya Protocol to CBD** The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) submitted India's First National Report (NR1) on the Nagoya Protocol implementation to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on February 27, 2026, covering the period from November 1, 2017 to December 31, 2025. The report highlights 3,556 Internationally Recognised Certificates of Compliance (IRCCs) published (over 60% of global total), 12,830 ABS approvals issued (5,913 by NBA, 6,917 by State Boards), and ₹216.31 crore mobilized with ₹139.69 crore distributed to benefit claimers including local communities and farmers.
- Government Approves Perpetual Validity for FSSAI Licenses Effective April 1, 2026** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare approved perpetual validity for FSSAI registrations and licenses, eliminating periodic renewals effective from April 1, 2026, reducing compliance burden for Food Business Operators. The government also revised turnover thresholds: Basic Registration increased from ₹12 lakh to ₹1.5 crore, State Licence up to ₹50 crore, Central Licence above ₹50 crore, and street food vendors already registered under the Street Vendors Act 2014 are now deemed FSSAI registered, benefiting over 10 lakh vendors by removing dual registration requirements.
- Supreme Court Removes Age Limit on Maternity Leave for Adoptive Mothers** The Supreme Court of India struck down age restrictions on maternity leave for adoptive mothers in the case of Hamsaanandini Nanduri V. Union of India, declaring Section 60(4) of the Social Security Code 2020 unconstitutional. The ruling guarantees all adoptive mothers 12 weeks of maternity leave regardless of adopted child age, emphasizing that motherhood is based on caregiving and bonding, not childbirth, thereby strengthening recognition of adoption and improving child welfare and family integration.
- GoI Launches Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0 - Extended Until December 2028** The Ministry of Jal Shakti extended the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) until December 2028 with increased financial outlay, launching "Sujal Gaon ID" unique digital identifier system for every rural drinking water scheme in India with 1.64 lakh IDs created across 31 States and UTs linked to 67,000 Sujalam Bharat IDs. The mission promotes Jan Bhagidari (public participation) through Jal Arpan and Jal Utsav programs, raising total financial outlay from ₹3.60 lakh crore to ₹8.69 lakh crore with three fund release modes: Upfront Payment Mode, Reimbursement Mode, and Viability Gap Funding Mode.
- PM Modi Launches Inland Waterway Projects Worth ₹526 Crore in Assam** Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated an elevated road corridor connecting Pandu Port to National Highway-27 and laid the foundation for four major inland waterway projects worth ₹526 crore under the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) including Elevated Road Corridor (₹180 crore), Cruise Terminals at Biswanath Ghat and Neamati, and Regional Centre of Excellence at Bogibeel in Dibrugarh (₹188 crore) for maritime skill development supporting 5,000+ students annually.
- Government Initiatives to Prevent Child Marriage in India** The Government of India strengthened prevention through the Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat campaign launched on November 27, 2024, followed by a 100-day special campaign starting December 4, 2025, implementing the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006, appointing 66,000+ Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs), and launching the Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat Portal for monitoring cases. As of March 2026, the campaign reached 11.81 crore citizens and registered 40 lakh pledges against child marriage with District Magistrates supervising enforcement and District Nodal Officers monitoring implementation.
- UPSC Clarifies DGP Appointment Rules - Supreme Court Guidelines** The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) clarified that state governments cannot delay sending eligible DGP-rank officers for empanelment without Supreme Court approval, following the Prakash Singh vs Union of India guidelines. The UPSC must receive the proposal at least 3 months before the incumbent DGP's retirement, and the state government must appoint one officer from the UPSC-recommended panel of three, with the Attorney General confirming that delays are legally unjustified and states must obtain Supreme Court approval if they fail to meet the prescribed timeline.
- Union Public Service Commission Clarifies Rules for Appointment of State Director General of Police** The UPSC clarified that state governments cannot delay sending names of eligible DGP-rank officers without prior Supreme Court approval, with the Attorney General confirming there is no legal concept of "acting DGP". States must send proposals at least 3 months before incumbent retirement, with the UPSC preparing a panel of 3 officers from which the state must appoint one as Head of State Police Force, ensuring transparency and preventing political interference in police leadership appointment.
- NMDC Becomes First Mining Company to Produce 50 Million Tonnes in FY26** NMDC Limited, a Navratna CPSE under the Ministry of Steel, achieved a historic milestone by producing 50 million tonnes of iron ore in FY 2025-26, becoming the first mining company in India to achieve this target. The company's production increased from approximately 30 million tonnes in 2015 to 50 million tonnes in 2025-26, with nearly one-fifth of current capacity added in the last four years, marking the fastest expansion phase in company history and strengthening India's domestic iron ore supply as the country targets 300 million tonnes steelmaking capacity by 2030.

- **Government Sanctions ₹100 Crore Integrated Aqua Park in Jammu and Kashmir** Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh announced the sanction of ₹100 crore Integrated Aqua Park project in Anantnag district, Jammu and Kashmir during the National Conference on Cold Water Fisheries at Sher-e-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), Srinagar. The ministry also released Model Guidelines for the Development of Cold-Water Fisheries (MG-CWF) covering Scientific Seed Stocking, Cage and Pen-Based Aquaculture, governance mechanisms, and biodiversity conservation, with awards presented to Best Fisheries Cooperative Societies, Progressive Fish Farmers, KCC beneficiaries, and Fisheries Start-ups for their contributions to fisheries development.
- **India Tourism Development Corporation Launches Tribal Homestay Capacity Building Programme 2026** The India Tourism Development Corporation in collaboration with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched the Tribal Homestay Capacity Building Programme 2026 with training modules on guest handling, hygiene standards, local cuisine presentation, and hospitality management implemented by the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition, Ashok. The inaugural batch included 40 participants from Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Gujarat, aiming to strengthen community-based tourism and generate employment and income opportunities for tribal communities.
- **Asia-Africa Agri Alliance Launched to Boost Trade Investment** Senior ambassadors, diplomats, and agribusiness leaders from over ten nations formally launched the Asia Africa Agri Alliance (AAAA) in New Delhi as a Section 8 Not-for-Profit Organisation under the Companies Act 2013 to strengthen trade, agricultural cooperation, investment, and technology exchange between Asia and Africa. The alliance operates through five major pillars: Trade and Market Access, Technology and Innovation Transfer, Investment and Finance, Policy, Standards and Agriculture Diplomacy, and Capacity Building and Knowledge Exchange.
- **India Post Launches '24 Speed Post' with Next-Day Delivery from March 17, 2026** The Department of Posts launched the '24 Speed Post' premium express service effective from March 17, 2026 across six metro cities (New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad) offering next-day (D+1) guaranteed delivery with OTP-based secure delivery, end-to-end SMS tracking, Buy Now Pay Later facility, free bulk pickup, and money-back guarantee. The service also includes '48 Speed Post' (D+2) for two-day delivery and '24 Speed Post Parcel' (D+1) for parcels up to 5 kg, using dedicated processing windows and priority air transmission.
- **India Becomes Third Largest Metro Network - 1,143 km Across 29 Cities** India achieved its position as the world's third largest metro network with 1,143 km operational metro across 29 cities, serving approximately 11.5 million passengers daily, demonstrating significant progress in urban transportation infrastructure.
- **Over 1 Lakh Startups Have Woman Director - Entrepreneurship Growth** India's recognized startups crossed 2.12 lakh, with over 1 lakh startups having at least one woman director, reflecting growing women participation in entrepreneurship and startup ecosystems across the country.
- **India Leads Global Coconut Production - 30.37% Share** India contributes over 30.37% to global coconut output, supporting nearly 30 million people directly and indirectly, positioning India as a leading coconut producer and supplier worldwide.
- **APEDA Facilitates First Export of GI-Tagged Joha Rice from Assam** The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) facilitated the first export consignment of 25 metric tonnes of Geographical Indication (GI) tagged Joha rice from Assam to the United Kingdom and Italy in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Government of Assam. Prior exports included 1 metric tonne to Vietnam and 2 metric tonnes to Middle Eastern countries (Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia), with the indigenous aromatic rice variety receiving GI tag in 2017 and cultivated across 21,662 hectares in major districts including Nagaon, Baksa, Goalpara, Sivasagar, Majuli, Chirang, and Golaghat.
- **RISA Brand Launched to Promote Tribal Crafts Globally** The Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched the 'RISA: Timeless Tribal' brand to enhance global reach and income of tribal artisans, promoting India's rich tribal craft heritage and cultural products in international markets.
- **Rikshawk Shares 'Women's Mode' Feature to Boost Women-Centric Investing** SBI Securities launched 'Women's Mode' on its mobile app developed under the Infinity8 initiative based on feedback from 6,000+ women investors, offering goal-based investment journeys, simplified tools, and special brokerage plans tailored for women to make investing more accessible and build financial confidence.



States in the News

- **PM Narendra Modi's Two-Day Visit to Assam & West Bengal - ₹66,280 Crore Projects** Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Assam and West Bengal from March 13-14, 2026, inaugurating and laying foundation stones for development projects worth over ₹66,280 crore (₹47,600 crore in Assam, ₹18,680 crore in West Bengal). In Assam, projects included **Kopili Hydro Electric Project (₹2,300+ crore)**, **Numaligarh-Siliguri product pipeline capacity enhancement**, **North East Gas Grid Phase 1**, **railway electrification projects (₹2,250 crore)**, **cruise terminals at Bishwanath Ghat and Neamati**, and **Regional Centre of Excellence at Bogibeel in Dibrugarh** for maritime training. In West Bengal, **National Highway projects (420+ km, ₹16,990 crore)** were inaugurated, and **Bhoomi Poojan** was performed for **Assam Mala 3.0 (₹3,200 crore)** covering **900+ km roads and 37 bridges across 34 districts**.
- **PM Modi Announces ₹24,000 Crore Development Projects During Assam Visit** Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced development projects worth ₹24,000+ crore in Assam, including land ownership certificates distributed to **3.5 lakh families in 825 tea gardens** addressing a two-century-old issue. The **22nd installment of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi** was released, transferring ₹2,000 directly to **9.3 crore farmers** across India, strengthening the northeast region's energy infrastructure, railway connectivity, and tourism development.
- **Chhattisgarh Launches Gaudham Yojana - 1,460 Cattle Shelters** Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai of Chhattisgarh launched the **Gaudham Yojana** at **Lakhasar village, Takhatpur, Bilaspur district** to establish **1,460 cattle shelters** across the state with **10 shelters per Development Block** accommodating ~200 cattle each. During the event, **29 Gaudhams across 11 districts** were virtually inaugurated, providing **Daily Feed Assistance (DFA) of ₹10-35 per day per cattle** and **₹5 lakh annually for Infrastructure Development and Maintenance (IDM)**, with shepherds receiving **₹10,916 monthly honorarium** and **Gausevaks receiving ₹13,126**.
- **Tripura FM Presents ₹34,212 Crore Budget for FY27** Finance Minister Pranajit Singha Roy of Tripura presented the state budget worth **₹34,212.31 crore** for **FY 2026-27**, marking a **5.52% increase** over the previous fiscal year with **fiscal deficit of ₹240.72 crore** and **capital expenditure (CapEx) of ₹8,945.92 crore (13.19% increase)**. Key allocations included **health sector (₹2,441.50 crore, +25.29%)**, **agriculture (₹1,985.61 crore, +5.31%)**, and **education (₹6,439.56 crore, +4.43%)**, with major announcements including **5% DA/DR increase**,

- establishment of **Tripura Government Technical University, Women's University, and University of Health Sciences**, and launch of **NAVCHETNA Initiative**.
- **Himachal Pradesh Signs Three MoUs with NDDB - Dairy Sector Strengthening** The Government of Himachal Pradesh (HP) signed **three MoUs** with the **National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)** in Shimla to strengthen dairy infrastructure through **Kangra Milk Union formation** and establishment of **two milk processing plants (20,000 litres per day each)** at **Nahan and Nalagarh**, plus **two chilling centres at Jalari and Jhalera**. An **automated plant at Dhagwar (₹250 crore)** will process **1.5 lakh litres per day**, expandable to **3 lakh litres**, with **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software implementation** for improved transparency and efficiency.
- **Gujarat Achieves Historic Space Milestone - First Sounding Rocket Launch** Gujarat successfully launched its **first sounding rocket** at **Bavaliyari village near Dholera** on **March 15, 2026**, developed by **Ahmedabad-based Omspace Rocket and Exploration Private Limited (OSRE)**. The **single-stage sub-orbital rocket** reached an altitude of **approximately 3 kilometers**, carrying a **mini-satellite for weather data collection** built using **carbon fibre and advanced composites** under the **Make in India initiative**, with **approval from IN-SPACE** and support from **Gujarat Spacotech Policy 2025-2030**.
- **Odisha's First Smart Village - Kusunpur in Kendrapada District** Kusunpur village in Kendrapada district, Odisha is set to become the state's **first smart village** under an initiative by the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research** with a population of **~700 living in 130 families**. Multiple **CSIR institutions** including **Central Building Research Institute (Roorkee)**, **Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (Bhubaneswar)**, and others will implement practical and scalable solutions following a **mission-mode approach** to create a **self-sufficient, climate-resilient, and sustainable village model**.
- **Uttar Pradesh Clean Air Program - World Bank ₹299.66 Million Loan** The **World Bank** signed an agreement to provide **USD 299.66 million** to **Uttar Pradesh** for the **Clean Air Transition Programme**, including installation of **200 new air quality monitoring stations**, adoption of **electric buses and three-wheelers**, transition of **700 brick kilns to cleaner technologies**, and benefit approximately **9 million households** with **clean cooking solutions**. The programme has a **maturity of 10 years** with a **2-year grace period** and will leverage **USD 150 million in private capital** for transport and MSME sectors to boost economic growth and employment.

- Punjab Government Launches 'Punjab Sikhya Kranti 2.0' - ₹3,500 Crore Investment** The Government of Punjab in collaboration with the World Bank (WB) launched 'Punjab Sikhya Kranti 2.0', an ambitious educational reform programme with ₹3,500 crore investment for 6 years, with WB providing ₹2,500 crore as loan assistance and Punjab Government contributing ₹1,000 crore. The programme focuses on three pillars: implementing structured assessments for foundational learning in literacy and numeracy, increasing access to high-demand academic streams, upgrading vocational training, and launching a digital Career Guidance portal for personalized student guidance.
- Gol Approves Puducherry IT Park - ₹1,250 Crore SEZ Project** The Government of India granted approval for Puducherry Government to establish a dedicated Special Economic Zone (SEZ) for the Information Technology (IT) sector spanning 21.30 acres near Thattanchavady, at a cost of ₹1,250 crore. Nearly 70% will be 'Plug-and-Play' offices for immediate occupancy, with 30% for social infrastructure including employee housing, shopping complex, medical centre, bank, and fire station, expected to generate 30,000 jobs and achieve ₹10,000 crore in service exports over 10 years.
- Chirag Paswan Inaugurates Common Incubation Centre at Tezpur University** Union Minister Chirag Paswan of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries inaugurated a Common Incubation Centre at Tezpur University in Sonitpur district, Assam with full financial support from PMFME Scheme (₹2.35 crore). The facility supports self-help groups, farmer producer organizations, cooperatives, start-ups, and provides technical mentorship in food processing technology, packaging, branding, and food safety compliance through seven specialized processing lines for fruits, grains, spices, bakery products, benefiting entrepreneurs from districts including Darrang, Udalguri, Biswanath, Nagaon, and Golaghat.
- Chandigarh University UP Launches CoE in Smart Healthcare** Chandigarh University in Uttar Pradesh, India's first AI-augmented multidisciplinary university, launched a Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Smart Healthcare headed by Dr. Thipendra P. Singh with support from Minister of State Aseem Arun. The CoE is powered by advanced GPU systems (168 GB memory using NVIDIA Blackwell architecture) enabling high-end research and AI model development, functioning as a testbed for smart city healthcare solutions while supporting five AI startups over two years and facilitating hospital-based technology validation.
- Assam's Karbi Anglong Ginger Export to London - Historic Achievement** Assam achieved a major milestone in agricultural exports as GI-tagged Karbi Anglong Ginger was exported to London for the first time on March 2, 2026, flagged off by Assam Agriculture Minister Atul Bora at Krishi Bhawan in Khanapara, Guwahati.
- Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden Opens - 1.8 Million Tulips** The Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden in Srinagar, Asia's largest tulip garden spanning 74 acres, was inaugurated on March 16, 2026 by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah with over 1.8 million tulips featuring 70-75 varieties including imported species from the Netherlands. The garden showcases seasonal spring flowers including Hyacinth, Daffodil, Muscari, and Ranunculus, marking the official beginning of Kashmir's spring tourism season.
- Odisha Retains Top Position in Fiscal Health Index 2026 with 73.1 Score** Odisha retained its top position in the Fiscal Health Index 2026 with a score of 73.1, demonstrating strong fiscal management through efficient revenue mobilization and controlled fiscal deficits compared to other states.
- Maharashtra Passes Freedom of Religion Bill 2026** Maharashtra passed the Freedom of Religion Bill 2026, introducing up to 7 years imprisonment for forced religious conversions through marriage, fraud, or coercion, with stricter penalties (10 years max) for repeat offenders and special protections for minors, women, SC/ST, ensuring transparent and voluntary religious conversions.
- Maharashtra Freedom of Religion Bill 2026 Details** The Bill, passed by voice vote, targets conversions through coercion, fraud, inducement, or marriage, aiming to ensure transparency and protect constitutional rights with special protections for vulnerable groups. Punishments include up to 7 years imprisonment + ₹1 lakh fine for conversions involving marriage, fraud, coercion, 7 years imprisonment + ₹5 lakh fine for conversions of minors, women, SC/ST, mass conversions, and up to 10 years imprisonment + ₹5 lakh fine for repeat offenders.
- Gujarat Launches Foot and Mouth Disease Vaccination Drive** Gujarat Government launched a statewide Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccination drive from March 1 to April 15, 2026 across the state under the National Animal Disease Control Programme, targeting livestock including cattle, buffaloes, sheep, and goats through veterinary teams visiting villages and dairy farms with ear tagging and upload to INAPH portal for tracking.
- Gujarat Launches 'Lake and Air Watch' Initiative** The Gujarat state government launched the 'Lake and Air Watch' initiative to monitor and improve air quality and lake health across urban areas through the Gujarat Urban Development Mission (GUDM) under the Urban Development and Urban Housing Department.

- **Himachal Pradesh Cannabis (Hemp) Farming Pilot Project**
In response to increasing global demand, **Himachal Pradesh Government** under **Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu** approved a **pilot project for cannabis (hemp) farming**, emphasizing **medicinal and industrial uses** for potential economic benefits and agricultural diversification.

International Affairs

- **IISc Professor Arpita Patra Summits Nevado Ojos del Salado - World's Highest Volcano** Arpita Patra, Professor at **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)**, Bengaluru (Karnataka), successfully summited **Nevado Ojos del Salado (6,893 metres)** on **March 6, 2026**, the **world's highest volcanic peak and highest mountain in Chile** on the **Chile–Argentina border** in the **Atacama Desert**. She became the **second Indian woman** to scale the peak after **Arunima Sinha (2019)**, with previous achievements including **Mount Kilimanjaro (5,895 m - Africa)**, **Mount Elbrus (5,642 m - Europe)**, **Mount Giluwe (4,367 m - Oceania - first Indian woman)**, and **Pico de Orizaba (5,636 m - North America - second Indian woman)**.
- **Jose Antonio Kast Sworn in as 38th President of Chile** Jose Antonio Kast Rist, founder and leader of the **Republican Party of Chile**, was sworn in as the **38th President of Chile** for a **four-year term** on **March 19, 2026** following his **2025 election victory**. **Union Minister of State Kirti Vardhan Singh (MEA)** represented the **Government of India** at the **National Congress in Valparaíso**, where **Kast** formally received the **Piocha de O'Higgins**, the **traditional symbol of Chilean presidency**, from outgoing **President Gabriel Boric Font**.
- **Indian Navy Participates in USA-Led Multinational Exercise Sea Dragon 2026 in Guam** The Indian Navy participated in a **two-week multinational Exercise Sea Dragon 2026**, a **United States Navy 7th Fleet-led Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) exercise** at **Andersen Air Force Base, Guam** in **March 2026**. The exercise included forces from **India**, **Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF)**, **Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)**, **Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF)**, and **United States Navy (USN)**, with **tabletop planning sessions** for strategy alignment, technology integration, and mission tactics coordination.
- **NE Indian Institutions and Japan Sign Lol for Academic Consortium at IIT-Guwahati** **22 institutions from North East (NE) India** led by **Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati (IIT-Guwahati)**, **Assam** and **Japan's Gifu University** signed a **Letter of Intent (LoI)** on **March 16, 2026** to establish the '**North East Region (NER)-Japan International Academic and Research Consortium**' during the **Japan-North East Academic Industry Cooperation Symposium (JNTCS 2026)**. Out of **22 NER institutions**, the consortium includes **8 NITs, 2 IITs, North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST), AIIMS-Guwahati, NERIWALM, Tezpur University, Gauhati University, Cotton University, and Assam Engineering College**, with **IIT-Guwahati** as nodal institution on Indian side and **Gifu University** leading on Japanese side, focusing on **education, research, technology transfer, and social engagement**.
- **India and Vietnam Strengthen Cooperation in Tribal and Ethnic Development** **India and Vietnam** enhanced cooperation in **tribal and ethnic development** following a high-level ministerial meeting in **New Delhi**, co-chaired by **Union Minister Jai Oram (Ministry of Tribal Affairs)** and **Vietnam's Minister Dao Ngoc Dung**. The engagement aims to deepen ties under the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**, with emphasis on **livelihood promotion, skill development, sustainable agriculture, value addition to forest-based products, research collaboration, and cultural preservation**, strengthening **people-to-people connections** through **Exhibition of Sacred Relics of Lord Buddha from Sarnath in Vietnam**.
- **Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India and Indo Canada Chamber Sign MoU** The **Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)** and the **Indo Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** during the **India–Canada Business Roundtable in New Delhi** to enhance **trade, investment, and institutional cooperation** through information exchange on trade policies, economic regulations, and investment opportunities. The agreement promotes **joint ventures, production collaboration, trade missions, business delegations, and joint organization of seminars, conferences, workshops** for business networking and capacity building.
- **MSDE Signs MoU with GATI Foundation - Global Skill Mobility** The **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **Global Access to Talent from India (GATI) Foundation**, a project under the **SFI Impact Foundation**, on a **non-financial, collaborative basis** for **three years** to strengthen mechanisms for **overseas employment** of skilled Indian workers. The **MoU** creates a framework to position **India as the global skills capital by 2047**, with **MSDE** coordinating with **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** and **Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoL&E)**, while **GATI Foundation** sets up a **Project Management Unit (PMU)** at **Kaushal Bhawan, New Delhi** for research, monitoring, international partnerships, and workforce development through **Skill India International Centres (SIICs)**.

- **DEPwD and Coalition of the Willing - Hearing Impaired Support Model** The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with "Coalition of the Willing" to launch India's first integrated life-cycle support model for persons with hearing impairment. The coalition comprises Yunikee (Gopalakrishnan Foundation for the Deaf), Blee Tech Innovations Pvt. Ltd., TEACH, WinVinaya Foundation, Buddy4Study India Foundation, VCrop Technologies Pvt. Ltd., and ISLRTC, implementing a public-private-civil society partnership focusing on awareness generation, assistive technologies, early identification, education, skill development, employment, scholarships, Indian Sign Language (ISL) learning, and sustainable livelihoods.
- **OIL Signs MoU with NSTFDC - Healthcare in Tribal Areas of MP** Oil India Limited (OIL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) at the OIL corporate office, Noida, Uttar Pradesh (UP) on March 18, 2026 to improve healthcare infrastructure in tribal-dominated regions of Madhya Pradesh (MP). OIL sanctioned ₹86.27 lakh to strengthen Community Health Centres (CHCs) and Primary Health Centres (PHCs) in Rajgarh district, an Aspirational District, equipping facilities with ambulances, life-care equipment, diagnostic equipment, ventilators, CPAP machines, BiPAP machines, and Ultrasonography (USG) machines, aligning with the Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat.
- **T-Hub and JETRO Partner - India-Japan Deep-Tech Collaboration Technology Hub (T-Hub)**, India's largest startup incubator based in Hyderabad, Telangana, entered into a strategic partnership with the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) in March 2026 to bolster collaboration between Indian and Japanese deep-tech startups. The partnership creates high-impact innovation networks across deep-tech and manufacturing sectors, providing Japanese startups, corporates, and investors with access to India's innovation ecosystem while offering Indian startups structured pathways to expand into Japan. Focus areas include pharma, medical equipment, space and aerospace, defence, mobility, smart infrastructure, deep-tech, AI, emerging technologies, Industry 4.0, and IoT, with initiatives including curated startup exchange programs, corporate open-innovation engagements, market access support, and regulatory guidance.
- **NCB and TraceXero Technologies Partner for CCU Technologies** The National Council for Cement and Building Materials (NCB) under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I), collaborated with M/s TraceXero Technologies Private Limited, an Indian technology startup, on March 17, 2026 at NCB Ballabgarh, Haryana. The partnership aims to develop Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU) technologies for the cement sector, with TraceXero Technologies capturing Carbon Dioxide (CO2) using a proprietary solvent and converting it into graphitic carbon and graphene, transforming cement industry emissions (nearly 7% of global CO2) into valuable material resources.
- **FIFA Partners with YouTube for FIFA World Cup 2026 Streaming** FIFA partnered with YouTube to introduce a new digital streaming format for the FIFA World Cup 2026, allowing fans to watch the first 10 minutes of matches live on YouTube, after which they are redirected to official broadcasters. The initiative aims to expand digital reach and attract younger, mobile-first audiences, creating a hybrid viewing model combining traditional broadcasting with online accessibility for the largest FIFA World Cup edition with 48 teams and 104 matches hosted by USA, Canada, and Mexico from June 11 to July 19, 2026.
- **India Initiates Trade Negotiations with Philippines and Maldives** India started the process of signing Terms of Reference to begin trade negotiations with the Philippines for a Preferential Trade Agreement and with the Maldives for a Free Trade Agreement. India's exports to Philippines increased by 3.11% to USD 2.16 billion in 2024-25, while imports declined 17.8% to USD 1.17 billion, and exports to Maldives declined 37.11% to USD 56.88 million while imports increased 37.14% to USD 118.82 million.
- **Argentina Officially Withdraws from WHO** Argentina officially withdrew from the World Health Organization (WHO) effective after one year notification, with Foreign Minister Pablo Quirno confirming the formal exit under the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT), following President Javier Milei's announcement in February 2025. The move reflects a broader shift with the USA also exiting WHO in January 2026, following disagreement over pandemic handling and management of doping cases.



- **Brazil Implements Stricter Social Media Regulations for Users Under 16** Brazil began enforcing a new law regulating minors' access to social media effective 2026, requiring children and adolescents under 16 to link accounts to legal guardians with reliable age verification systems (identity documents, biometric verification). The law bans targeted advertising to minors and restricts "loot boxes" in video games, with breaches punishable by fines up to 50 million reais, account suspensions, or complete bans, overseen by Brazil's data protection authority (ANPD).
- **Bhumika Shrestha Elected as Nepal's First Transgender Woman MP** Bhumika Shrestha, a 37-year-old LGBTQ rights activist, became Nepal's first transgender woman Member of Parliament in March 2026, elected as a proportional representation MP under the Rastriya Swatantra Party. Her appointment follows political changes in Nepal, including anti-corruption protests in 2025, enabling greater representation for underrepresented communities, with policy priorities including effective implementation of constitutional provisions for LGBTQ rights, legal protection, social inclusion, and addressing systemic discrimination.
- **Fitch Ratings Raises India's GDP Growth Forecast to 7.5% for FY26** Fitch Ratings released its 'Global Economic Outlook – March 2026', projecting India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth at 7.5% for FY 2025–26 (FY26), slightly increased from 7.4% estimated in December 2025. For FY 2026–27 (FY27), Fitch revised upward to 6.7% (compared to 6.4% in December), with growth expected around 6.5% in FY28. Domestic demand remains the main growth driver, with consumer spending projected at 8.6% rise and investment growth at 6.9%, though growth moderation expected in FY27's first half due to rising inflation affecting real incomes.
- **WTO Global Trade Outlook 2026 - Merchandise Trade Growth to Slow to 1.9%** The World Trade Organization (WTO) released its Global Trade Outlook and Statistics - March 2026 report, projecting global merchandise trade growth to slow sharply to 1.9% in 2026 from 4.6% in 2025, driven by geopolitical tensions in West Asia, AI-related demand normalization, and effects of tariff-driven front-loading. 2027 merchandise trade projected to recover to 2.6%, with combined goods and services trade at 2.7% in 2026 vs 4.7% in 2025, commercial services trade easing to 4.8% (down from 5.3%), and global GDP growth moderating from 2.9% to 2.8% in 2026-27.
- **Hurun Global Rich List 2026 - Elon Musk Tops; Mukesh Ambani Leads Asia** The Hurun Global Rich List 2026 reported over 4,020 billionaires globally with 578 new billionaires added in one year. Elon Musk remains the world's richest person with USD 792 billion, holding the top position for the fifth time in six years, while Mukesh Ambani, Chairman of Reliance Industries, continues as

Asia's richest with USD 109 billion. Shah Rukh Khan re-entered the billionaire list with USD 1.3 billion, and the USA leads with 989 billionaires, followed by Mainland China (539), with India ranking third (229).

- **Forbes Top 10 Youngest Billionaires 2026 - Surya Midha Ranks 6th** The Forbes 2026 Top 10 Youngest Billionaires (under 30) includes Surya Midha from India at the 6th position with wealth of USD 2.2 billion, ranking as one of the youngest self-made billionaires at age 22. The list reflects a mix of inherited wealth and self-made entrepreneurs, with increasing influence of technology and start-ups, and Surya Midha's co-founders Brendan Foody and Adarsh Hiremath also ranking highly, representing the AI-driven wealth creation trend.
- **Forbes World's Billionaires List 2026 - Record 3,428 Billionaires** Forbes released its 40th annual World's Billionaires List 2026 featuring a record 3,428 billionaires with combined net worth of USD 20.1 trillion (up from USD 16.1 trillion in 2025), with 390 new entrants and rising younger billionaires. Elon Musk tops with USD 839 billion, Larry Page ranks second (USD 257 billion), and Sergey Brin third (USD 237 billion). The USA leads with 989 billionaires, China with 539, and India third with 229, with 481 women (14%) on the list, up from 13.4% in 2025, with Walmart heir Alice Walton as world's richest woman (USD 134 billion).
- **World Happiness Report 2026 - Finland Tops for 9th Consecutive Year** The World Happiness Report 2026, released by Wellbeing Research Centre, University of Oxford, ranked Finland as the happiest country for the 9th consecutive year with strong social welfare system, high institutional trust, quality education, healthcare, and work-life balance. The top 10 includes Iceland, Denmark, Costa Rica, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Israel, Luxembourg, and Switzerland, with no English-speaking country in top 10 for the second consecutive year. India ranked 116th with a score of 4.536, facing challenges in social support, income, governance, and freedom of choice.

Agreements/MoUs Signed

- **All India Institute of Medical Sciences and Indian Space Research Organisation MoU** The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen medical research related to human spaceflight and develop healthcare solutions for astronauts in future Indian space missions. The agreement, signed by Srinivas, Director of AIIMS, New Delhi and Dinesh Kumar Singh, Director of ISRO's Human Space Flight Centre, covers microgravity research, astronaut health monitoring, space radiation studies, psychological health assessments, and specialised medical training to enhance India's space medicine capabilities.

- **Reliance Industries Signs \$3 Billion Green Ammonia Supply Deal with Samsung C&T** Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) signed a binding long-term Supply and Purchase Agreement (SPA) with Samsung C&T Corporation, South Korea on March 18, 2026 for green ammonia supply over a 15-year period starting from second half of FY2028-29, valued at over USD 3 billion as one of the world's largest off-take agreements for green fuel. Under the SPA, RIL will supply green ammonia produced through a fully integrated clean energy ecosystem in India, marking the first in a series of global offtake agreements aligned with the National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM) to achieve net-zero emissions by 2035.
- **Tata Steel and USTB MoU for Low-Carbon Steelmaking Technologies** Tata Steel Limited signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with University of Science and Technology Beijing (USTB), Beijing, China in March 2026 to develop low-carbon steelmaking technologies. Tata Steel Research and Innovation Limited and USTB will jointly undertake work across four major themes: scrap-based steelmaking, steel waste valorisation, end-product performance, and Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU) technologies, leveraging USTB's academic expertise with experimental and pilot-scale facilities for testing, validating, and scaling promising technologies.

(poetry), and Sadhu Bhadreshdas (Sanskrit) for 'Prasthanacatustaye Brahmaghosah' (poetry). Each winner receives ₹1 lakh cash prize, engraved copper plaque (originally designed by Satyajit Ray), and a shawl.

- **William Dalrymple Wins Mark Lynton History Prize 2026** Renowned historian William Dalrymple awarded the Mark Lynton History Prize 2026 for his book 'The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World', recognising outstanding historical writing combining rigorous research with engaging narrative. The prize carries USD 10,000 cash and is presented annually to works demonstrating scholarly excellence and literary quality, with the book reframing global history by placing ancient India at the centre of international trade, cultural exchange, and intellectual development, introducing the "Golden Road" concept highlighting India's historical role in spreading religion, mathematics, language, and cultural practices across Asia and beyond.
- **Indian Animated Film 'CHYIMI' Wins Best Director Award at New York Short Animation Festival 2026** The animated short film 'CHYIMI', directed by Partha Sarathi Mahanta (senior police officer, Inspector General of Police, Assam, and Commissioner of Police, Guwahati), won the Best Director Award at the New York Short Animation Festival 2026, highlighting growing global recognition of Indian and Assamese animation storytelling.

Books and Authors

- **R. Vairamuthu Honoured with 2025 Jnanpith Award - Third Tamil Writer** Renowned Tamil poet and lyricist R. Vairamuthu (Vairamuthu Ramasamy) was selected for the 60th Jnanpith Award for 2025, India's highest literary honour, becoming the third Tamil writer after P. V. Akilandam (Akilan) in 1975 and Jayakanthan in 2002. The Jnanpith Award, presented annually by Bharatiya Jnanpith (instituted 1961, first awarded 1965), carries cash prize of ₹11 lakh, a bronze statue of Vagdevi (Goddess Saraswati), and a citation for outstanding contribution to Indian literature in Eighth Schedule languages.
- **Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025 - Honouring Literary Excellence in 24 Indian Languages** The Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters, announced Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025, recognising literary excellence in 24 Indian languages with 8 poetry books, 6 short stories, 4 novels, 2 essays, 2 memoirs, 1 autobiography, and 1 literary criticism. Winners include Navtej Sarna (English) for 'Crimson Spring' (novel), Mamta Kalita (Hindi) for 'Jeete Jee Allahabad' (memoir), Sa Tamilselvan (Tamil) for 'Thamiz Sirukathaiyin Thadangaal' (literary criticism), Prasun Bandyopadhyay (Bengali) for 'Shrestha Kabita'

Banking/Economy/Business News

- **RBI Launches "Awareness Program on Digital Payments" During DPAW 2026** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra launched a pilot programme titled "Awareness Program on Digital Payments" during the 6th Digital Payments Awareness Week (DPAW) from March 9–13, 2026. The RBI also launched multi-media awareness campaign "Thoda Dhyani Se" encouraging users to be alert while making online payments, with tabletop planning sessions between Governor and Managing Directors/CEOs of Payment Systems Operators (PSOs) to strengthen public confidence in digital payments.
- **RBI Imposes ₹2.7 Lakh Penalty on Manappuram Finance for Regulatory Non-Compliance** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed a monetary penalty of ₹2.70 lakh on Manappuram Finance Limited for non-compliance with KMP compensation guidelines during statutory inspection based on financial position as of March 31, 2025. The NBFC revised its Remuneration Policy to include mandatory deferral, malus, and clawback provisions, with the Board recovering deferred compensation in installments to ensure Scale Based Regulation (SBR) framework compliance.

- **DCM Shriram Secured USD 90 Million from IFC via Sustainability-Linked NCDs** DCM Shriram Limited secured USD 90 million from the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of World Bank Group (WBG), through Sustainability-Linked Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs) in March 2026. The funds support strategic initiatives and long-term growth including expansion of downstream chemicals business and capital expenditures in agri-businesses for rural job creation, with the sustainability framework independently validated by CareEdge Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG).
- **MoF Revises Minimum Public Shareholding Norms for Large Companies** The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) under the Ministry of Finance (MoF) revised rules for Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS), reducing the MPS at listing from 5% to 2.5% through amendments to the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules, 1957. The revised graded framework expands categories to six (from three) based on post-issue capital size: up to ₹1,600 crore; ₹1,600–4,000 crore; ₹4,000–50,000 crore; ₹50,000 crore–1 lakh crore; ₹1–5 lakh crore; and >₹5 lakh crore, facilitating large-scale IPOs while maintaining market liquidity.
- **Department of Economic Affairs - Revised Minimum Public Shareholding Framework** The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) restructured Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS) norms, introducing a graded framework allowing smaller public share offerings at Initial Public Offering (IPO) time through amendments to the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules, 1957, reducing MPS at listing from 5% to 2.5% and expanding timeline categories to six (from three) to ease large company IPO processes.
- **India's Merchandise and Services Exports Rise 5.79% to USD 790.86 Bn** India's cumulative exports (merchandise and services combined) for April–February 2025-26 reached USD 790.86 Billion (Bn), registering 5.79% growth, with merchandise exports at USD 402.93 Bn (up from USD 395.66 Bn) and services exports at USD 387.93 Bn (up from USD 351.93 Bn - 10.23% growth). Total imports stood at USD 900.51 Bn (up 7.37%), with merchandise imports at USD 713.53 Bn and merchandise trade deficit widening to USD 310.60 Bn (from USD 261.80 Bn), while services trade surplus reached USD 200.96 Bn.
- **India's February 2026 Trade Performance - Strong Export Growth** In February 2026 alone, total exports reached USD 76.13 Bn (up 11.05%), with Engineering Goods exports growing 90% to USD 10.36 Bn and Electronic Goods up 10.37% to USD 4.18 Bn. Non-petroleum exports rose 5.03% to USD 354.12 Bn, with positive gains in China (37.66%), USA (3.84%), UAE (8.52%), and significant rise in Spain (45.31%), while Meat, Dairy & Poultry grew 22.66% and services surplus reached USD 200.96 Bn.
- **World Bank Approves USD 300 Million Loan to UP for Clean Air Transition** The World Bank signed an agreement to provide ~USD 300 million to Uttar Pradesh to support the state's Clean Air Plan and facilitate clean air transition. The agreement, signed by Juhi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary in DEA, B Chandrakala, CEO of Clean Air Management Authority, and Paul Procee, Acting Country Director for India (WB), has a maturity of 10 years with a 2-year grace period and receives support from the multi-donor Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP), as part of the WB's Regional Air Quality Management Program in IGP-HF, a global air pollution hotspot.
- **Shriram General Insurance Launches 'Shri Health Suraksha 2.0' with Enhanced Coverage** Shriram General Insurance Company (SGIC) launched Shri Health Suraksha 2.0, an upgraded health insurance plan providing flexible and comprehensive medical coverage with unlimited restoration of sum insured within policy year and cumulative bonus up to 250% for claim-free years. The policy eliminates room rent capping, offers zero co-payment, covers ambulance and air ambulance expenses, includes medical consumables and AYUSH treatments, designed to reduce out-of-pocket expenses.
- **National Stock Exchange Selects 20 Merchant Bankers for IPO** National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) appointed 20 merchant bankers through a structured and competitive process approved by the NSE IPO Committee to manage its long-awaited Initial Public Offering, along with eight leading law firms including Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, Khaitan & Co, AZB & Partners, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co, and Trilegal for legal and regulatory aspects.
- **Bank of Baroda Secures \$500 Million Five-Year Syndicated Term Loan** Bank of Baroda raised USD 500 million five-year syndicated term loan through its IFSC Banking Unit in GIFT City, Gujarat in March 2026, with MUFG Bank and HSBC as mandated lead arrangers, underwriters, and book-runners, drawing participation from 13 investors across Asian markets (Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Singapore), marking the bank's return to the global syndicated loan market after a one-year gap.
- **South Indian Bank Launches EPF Payment Facility via SIBerNet** South Indian Bank (SIB) launched Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) payment services through its SIBerNet internet banking platform in collaboration with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), enabling employers and establishments to remit EPF contributions online, making the process faster and more convenient. The service went live on March 12, 2026, inaugurated by Uttam Prakash, Regional PF Commissioner for Kochi Region, P R Seshadri, MD & CEO of SIB, and Biji S S, Senior GM & Head of Branch Banking.

- **State Bank of India Raises ₹6,051 Crore via Basel III-Compliant Tier-2 Bonds** State Bank of India (SBI) raised ₹6,051 crore through Basel III-compliant Tier-2 bonds with a coupon rate of 7.05% and tenor of 10 years with a call option after 5 years. The bonds received excellent investor response with bids of ~2 times the base issue size (₹5,000 crore) from 47 qualified institutional investors including provident funds, pension funds, mutual funds, and banks, rated AAA with stable outlook by CRISIL Ratings and India Ratings.
- **Edelweiss AMC Launches India's 1st Hybrid Passive Index Fund** Edelweiss Asset Management Company (EAMC) launched 'Edelweiss Nifty LargeMidcap250 Plus 8–13 yr G-sec 70:30 Index Fund', India's first hybrid passive index fund integrating equities (70%) and Government Securities (30%) with automatic monthly rebalancing to maintain allocation. The New Fund Offer (NFO) is open from March 18 to April 01, 2026, with minimum investment of ₹100 and subsequent multiples of ₹1, managed by Bhavesh Jain and Bharat Lahoti (equity) and Dhawal Dalal and Hetul Raval (debt).
- **RBI Revises Prudential Guidelines Linking Dividend Payouts to CET1 Ratios** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued revised RBI (Commercial Banks – Prudential Norms on Declaration of Dividend and Remittances of Profits) Directions, 2026, effective April 1, 2027, linking dividend payouts to Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) capital ratios across 10 capital-ratio buckets. Banks with CET1 ratio at/below 8% are barred from dividend, while those above 20% may pay up to 100% of adjusted PAT, with total dividend capped at 75% irrespective of bucket, requiring reporting within 15 days to RBI's Department of Supervision.
- **RBI Imposes ₹3.10 Lakh Penalty on Cashfree Payments for Guideline Violation** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed a monetary penalty of ₹3.10 lakh on Cashfree Payments India Private Limited for non-compliance with RBI guidelines on Payment Aggregators (PAs) and Payment Gateways (PGs) regarding impermissible debits from escrow account. The penalty was issued under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, following a statutory inspection covering April 2024 to June 2025, with action based on regulatory compliance deficiencies and reserving the right for further action.
- **RBI Holds 622nd Central Board Meeting in Patna** The 622nd meeting of RBI's Central Board of Directors was held in Patna under Governor Sanjay Malhotra's chairmanship, assessing emerging global and domestic economic scenarios including geopolitical developments and their impact on financial markets. The Board approved RBI's budget for 2026-27 and the Medium Term Strategy Framework (Utkarsh 3.0) for 2026-29, with Deputy Governors T. Rabi Sankar, Shri Swaminathan J., Dr. Poonam Gupta, and Shri Shirish Chandra Murmu attending, along with other Directors discussing associated challenges from global and domestic economic environments.
- **NPCI Expands UPI Merchant Acceptance in Sri Lanka** NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL), the global arm of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), expanded India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) acceptance across merchant establishments in Sri Lanka, enabling Indian tourists to make real-time account-to-account payments by scanning Lanka Quick Response (QR) codes through UPI-enabled mobile applications. The initiative leverages UPI's dominance processing >20 billion monthly financial transactions with >700 million QR touch points across India, now operational in >8 countries including UAE, Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius, and Qatar.
- **Scapia Launches 'Scapia Pay' App - Rewards via RuPay Credit Cards** Scapia, a travel fintech platform in India, launched 'Scapia Pay', an in-application UPI payment service enabling users to earn rewards on transactions made using RuPay credit cards. Through Scapia Pay, users link Scapia Federal RuPay and Scapia BOBCARD RuPay credit cards to the app for quick UPI payments earning benefits on qualifying transactions, with features including seamless interface, real-time payments, custom UPI ID for privacy, first-time payment notifications, high-value transaction alerts, and consolidated spend tracking. The platform expanded from travel-first credit offerings to a multi-category platform including flights, buses, visas, and financial services.
- **RBI Constituent Frequency Data - Digital Lending Ecosystem Regulation** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) constituted a Working Group on Digital Lending, covering loans through Online Platforms and Mobile Apps, issuing regulatory guidelines on digital lending to strengthen the regulatory framework, enhance customer protection, and ensure a safe digital lending ecosystem. All Regulated Entities (REs) must comply with these guidelines with supervisory checks on sample basis and enforcement action for non-compliance. RBI launched the Digital Lending Apps (DLA) directory on July 1, 2025, allowing users to verify authorized digital lending apps linked to REs, while the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) can block fraudulent loan apps under Section 69A of IT Act, 2000.

- **SEBI Permits Mutual Funds Intraday Borrowing Operations** Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) tightened rules on **intraday borrowings** by mutual funds to manage **temporary cash mismatches** during **redemptions**, mandating that funds frame **formal intraday borrowing policy** approved by **AMC board and trustees**. **Intraday borrowings** are allowed only for **repurchase/redemption of units, interest payments, and Income Distribution cum Capital Withdrawal (ICW) payouts**, with borrowing amounts not exceeding **guaranteed same-day receivables** from **Government of India, RBI, Clearing Corporation of India Limited**, and specified securities like **TREPS, reverse repo, G-Secs, T-Bills, SDLs**, effective **April 1, 2026** as per **SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 2026**.
- **SEBI Proposes Streamlined Nomination Norms for Demat and MF Accounts** Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) proposed changes to **nomination rules for demat accounts and mutual fund (MF) folios**, making **nomination the default option** for new accounts with explicit opt-out, capping **nominees at four**, and limiting **mandatory information to name and relationship nature**. The proposals include **periodic reminders and pop-up prompts** highlighting **benefits of nominees**, aiming to streamline **nomination practices**, reduce **investor onboarding friction**, prevent **accumulation of unclaimed assets**, and align with **financial sector operational norms**.
- **PayU Partners with CoRover.ai for Multilingual Voice-Enabled Payments** PayU partnered with CoRover.ai, the creator of **BharatGPT**, to enable **AI-driven agentic payments in India**, integrating **PayU's secure payment infrastructure** with **CoRover's BharatGPT-powered conversational AI platform for voice-first and multilingual payment experiences** supporting **>100 Indian languages and dialects**. Early use cases include **voice-based UPI payments on Afterlife, the first digital succession planning platform**, with future expansion across **e-commerce, travel, OTT platforms, and BFSI**, exploring **integration with NPCI innovations like UPI Circle and UPI Reserve Pay for AI-initiated transactions**.
- **Jio Payments Bank Introduces Cardless UPI Cash Withdrawal** Jio Payments Bank (JPBL), a subsidiary of **Jio Financial Services**, launched **UPI-based cash withdrawal at Business Correspondent (BC) points**, enabling customers to **withdraw cash by scanning UPI QR code** and authorizing transactions through **UPI apps**, without **debit cards or ATMs**. This initiative particularly benefits **rural and semi-urban users**, improving **access to banking services and financial inclusion** for **first-time digital users** seeking **secure and assisted UPI transaction experiences**.
- **Public Sector Banks Earn Over ₹28,000 Crore from Third-Party Financial Product Sales** Public Sector Banks (PSBs) earned over **₹28,600 crore** in the **last five years** by selling **third-party financial products** such as **insurance (life and non-life), mutual funds, credit cards, and demat accounts**. **State Bank of India (SBI)** was the **highest earner with ₹17,043.49 crore**, followed by **Punjab National Bank (₹2,865.54 crore), Canara Bank (₹2,059.54 crore), Bank of Baroda (₹1,904.52 crore), and Union Bank of India (₹1,832.69 crore)**. The **RBI issued draft directions under Commercial Banks - Responsible Business Conduct Amendment Directions, 2026**, instructing banks to **prevent incentives for mis-selling** and ensure **employees do not receive direct or indirect incentives for third-party product marketing**.
- **Private Banks Earn Over ₹11,000 Crore from Minimum Balance Penalties** Private sector banks collected about **₹11,000 crore** between **FY2022-23 and FY2024-25** as **penalties for non-maintenance of minimum balance in savings accounts**, with **HDFC Bank the highest earner (₹3,800 crore+)**, followed by **Axis Bank (₹2,700 crore) and ICICI Bank (₹1,200 crore)**. **Public Sector Banks (PSBs)** collected **~₹8,000 crore**, with **Punjab National Bank leading (~₹1,500 crore)**, followed by **Bank of Baroda (~₹1,200 crore) and Indian Bank (~₹1,100 crore)**. **State Bank of India (SBI)** waived penalties since **March 2020**, followed by other **PSBs**, while **private banks continue charging penalties**, though **Basic Savings Bank Deposit Accounts (BSDBA)** including **PMJDY accounts** are **exempt from penalties**.
- **Razorpay Unveils World's First AI-Powered Agent Studio for Payment Management** Razorpay, India's **omnichannel payments and banking platform**, launched the **world's first Agent Studio for payments at FTX 2026**, built using **Claude Agent SDK from Anthropic**. The **Agentic Experience Platform**, an **AI-native system**, simplifies **onboarding, payment integration, and payment management** for businesses, with **Agent Studio functioning as a B2B marketplace and builder platform** allowing businesses to **deploy AI agents for abandoned cart recovery, subscription recovery, settlement reconciliation, and payment dispute resolution** without coding through **plain English task descriptions**. The **Agentic Onboarding feature** enables **5-minute onboarding with automated identity verification via government data like PAN**, integrating with platforms including **Shopify, Shiprocket, WhatsApp, Slack, Tally, Sarvam, and Quickbook**.



- **Government Boosts Financial Inclusion Through Flagship Schemes** The Government of India launched the **National Mission for Financial Inclusion (NRFI)** under **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)** in **August 2014** achieving **57.78 crore Jan-Dhan accounts** (as of **February 2026**) with **₹2,94,702 crore deposits**, of which **32.21 crore (55.8%)** belong to women and **45.17 crore (78.2%)** are in rural/semi-urban areas. **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)** achieved **26.88 crore cumulative enrolments** providing **₹2 lakh life insurance**, **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)** reached **57.11 crore cumulative enrolments** with **₹2 lakh accidental cover/permanent disability** and **₹1 lakh permanent partial disability**, **Atal Pension Yojana (APY)** had **8.84 crore cumulative enrolments**, and **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)** sanctioned **57.26 crore loans (₹39.48 lakh crore)** for micro and small business units up to **₹20 lakh**.
- **India's Retail Inflation Jumps to 3.21% in February Driven by Food and Housing** India's retail inflation rose to **3.21%** in **February 2026** from **2.74%** in **January 2026**, driven by higher food, clothing, housing, and utility prices. Rural inflation increased to **3.37%** from **2.73%**, while urban inflation rose to **3.02%** from **2.75%**, both remaining below RBI's **4% medium-term target**. The revised CPI series (with **2024 base year**) shows food weight declining from **45.86%** to **36.75%**, with food accounting for **34.77%** of the basket, expected to reduce headline inflation volatility given food price fluctuations.
- **NSO Reports WPI Inflation Surge - Wholesale Price Index Rises** India's Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation increased to **2.13%** in **February 2026**, marking the **fourth consecutive month** of price increases driven by higher food and manufactured product costs.
- **India's Core Sector Growth - 2.3% in February 2026** India's core sector growth reached **2.3%** in **February 2026**, driven by steel (**7.2%**) and cement (**9.3%**), while crude oil, natural gas, and refinery output declined, reflecting energy sector challenges.
- **Income-tax Act 2025 - Digital Taxation Framework Effective April 1, 2026** The **New Income-tax Act 2025**, effective **April 1, 2026**, introduces digital taxation, Significant Economic Presence (SEP) with **₹2 crore/3 lakh users threshold**, stricter compliance rules, audit trails, and simplified capital gains and dividend taxation, ensuring transparency and ease of compliance.
- **ATMA Leadership Changes - Addressing Raw Material Costs** **Arun Mammen** was re-elected as **ATMA (Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association) Chairman**, with **Rajarshi Moitra** appointed **Vice Chairman** and **Sanjay Chatterjee** elevated to **Director General**, positioning India's automotive tyre sector to address raw material costs and technological transformation.

Appointments/Resignations

- **Uniqlo Appoints Jasprit Bumrah as Brand Ambassador** Global apparel brand **Uniqlo** appointed Indian fast bowler **Jasprit Bumrah** as **brand ambassador for India**, launching a nationwide campaign emphasizing the **LifeWear philosophy** of practical, comfortable, and timeless design across digital and retail platforms.
- **KV Ramana Murty Appointed Whole-Time Member of SEBI** The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, approved the appointment of **Kompella Venkata (K.V.) Ramana Murty** as a **Whole-Time Member (WTM)** of the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** for three years from date of assuming charge. **K.V. Ramana Murty**, a **1991-batch Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS)** officer, previously served as **Additional Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA)** in **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** and as a **part-time SEBI board member** representing the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA)**. With his appointment, the total number of **WTMs on SEBI board** reached **4**, comprising **Kamlesh Chandra Varshney, Sandip Pradhan, and Amarjeet Singh**, alongside the **Chairperson** and **4 part-time members** including **MoCA, Ministry of Finance, and RBI representatives**.
- **Atanu Chakraborty Resigns as HDFC Bank Part-Time Chairman** **Atanu Chakraborty**, **Part-time Chairman and Independent Director of HDFC Bank**, resigned with immediate effect on **March 19, 2026**, citing ethical concerns and differences over values regarding certain bank practices over the past two years. **Keki Mistry** was appointed **interim Part-time Chairman** for three months, a **Non-Executive Director at HDFC Bank** with over four decades in housing finance, banking, and financial services, and currently **Chairman of HDFC Life Insurance Company Limited** and **Operating Advisor at Kedaara Capital**.
- **Vikram Doraiswami Appointed Ambassador to China** India appointed **1992-batch IFS officer Vikram Doraiswami** as **Ambassador to China** in **March 2026**, strengthening diplomatic ties between the two nations.
- **Election Commission Appoints Manjeet Singh as Assam Special Observer** The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** appointed **Manjeet Singh**, a **retired 1988-batch IAS officer (Rajasthan cadre)**, as **Special Observer** for the **2026 General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Assam**, scheduled for **April 9, 2026** with **vote counting on May 4, 2026**. The **Special Observer** will monitor poll preparedness and conduct of elections, providing inputs to the **ECI** for necessary action under **Article 324 of the Constitution of India**.

- **JP Nadda Appointed Chairman of Reconstituted Hindi Advisory Panel** The Union Government reconstituted the Hindi Advisory Committee for the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, appointing Union Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda as Chairman and Minister of State Anupriya Patel as Vice-Chairperson. The committee comprises Chairman, Vice-Chairman, 15 nominated members (including 4 MPs from Parliamentary Affairs, 2 MPs from Parliamentary Committee on Official Language, 4 ministry officials, 3 from Department of Official Language, and representatives from Vishwa Hindi Parishad and Hindi Prachar Sabha, Hyderabad), plus 37 official members including Secretaries of Fertilizers, Chemicals & Petrochemicals, and Pharmaceuticals departments, with 3-year tenure and potential modifications under special circumstances.
- **MS Dhoni Appointed Brand Ambassador of BHIM Payments App** NPCI BHIM Services Limited (NBSL), a subsidiary of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), appointed Indian cricketer Mahendra Singh (M.S.) Dhoni as brand ambassador for the BHIM Payments Application (App). The partnership aims to enhance trust, inclusion, and scale in India's digital payments ecosystem, with MS Dhoni featuring in multi-channel promotional initiatives highlighting BHIM's ease of use, security features, and accessibility. Launched in 2016 on NPCI's UPI platform, BHIM is positioned as "Bharat Ka Apna Payments App" with wide reach across Tier 1–3 cities, support for 15+ regional languages, optimization for low-connectivity areas, and user engagement through rewards and merchant partnerships.

- **City Union Bank Appoints Cricketer Ravindra Jadeja as Brand Ambassador** City Union Bank (CUB), a private sector bank headquartered in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, appointed cricketer Ravindra Jadeja as its primary Brand Ambassador, signing a two-year agreement on March 16, 2026 with Ravindra Jadeja and Baseline Ventures (India) Private Limited. The partnership aims to enhance bank's visibility and outreach, boost customer acquisition, and expand market presence through Jadeja's association with reliability and multifaceted excellence.
- **T. N. Natarajan Appointed Director (Commercial) at SAIL** T. N. Natarajan was appointed Director (Commercial) at SAIL (Steel Authority of India Limited), bringing 32+ years experience and transforming marketing strategy into customer-centric approach, enhancing brand value, competitiveness, and strengthening domestic and global steel market presence.
- **Krishna Kumar Thakur Appointed Director (Personnel) at NMDC** Krishna Kumar Thakur was appointed Director (Personnel) at NMDC Limited, with 20+ years HR experience in large-scale recruitment, HR reforms implementation, improving employee engagement and productivity, strengthening people-centric organizational practices.
- **Dr. Partha Biswas Takes Charge as Member of NCSC** Dr. Partha Biswas, holding a Ph.D. in Defence & Strategic Studies, took charge as Member of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, having completed studies at University of Calcutta, Jadavpur University, and Kanpur University and received a Post-Doctoral Fellowship from ICSSR at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. The NCSC works towards protection of constitutional safeguards and promotion of welfare and socio-economic development of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in India.

Defence News

- **Sagar Defence Lays Foundation of World's First Autonomous Maritime Shipbuilding Centre in AP** Sagar Defence Engineering Private Limited, a defence technology company, laid the foundation stone for the world's first Autonomous Maritime Shipbuilding and Systems Centre at Juvvaladinne Fishing Harbour, Nellore district, Andhra Pradesh (AP) on March 18, 2026. The proposed advanced shipyard will integrate robotics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) into key production processes, improving shipbuilding efficiency, workforce productivity, and sustainability, with integrated facilities including autonomous shipbuilding units, testing infrastructure, R&D centre, MRO facilities, and specialized training hub employing smart manufacturing technologies like robotic fabrication systems for welding, cutting, painting, assembly, automated guided vehicles, and additive manufacturing (3D printing) for rapid production of specialized components.
- **Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh Announced ₹100 Crore Integrated Aqua Park** Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh of the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAH&D) and Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) announced the sanction of ₹100 crore Integrated Aqua Park project in Anantnag district, Jammu and Kashmir, during the National Conference on Cold Water Fisheries at Sher-e-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), Srinagar. The minister also released Model Guidelines for the Development of Cold-Water Fisheries (MG-CWF) to promote scientific and sustainable development of the sector with frameworks covering Scientific Seed Stocking, Cage and Pen-Based Aquaculture, governance mechanisms, biodiversity conservation, value-chain development, and monitoring systems, with awards presented to Best Fisheries Cooperative Societies, Progressive Fish Farmers, KCC beneficiaries, and Fisheries Start-ups.

- Indian Navy Advances IOS SAGAR Initiative - Maritime Cooperation India** reaffirmed commitment to collaborative maritime security through the second edition of Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR, commencing in March 2026 with India's assumption of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) chair in February 2026. The initiative includes participation from 16 IONS nations, aligning with the Government of India's SAGAR vision (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and MAHASAGAR framework (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security Across the Regions). The IOS SAGAR programme enables naval personnel from Friendly Foreign Countries to train and sail together onboard an Indian Naval Ship, promoting practical cooperation, interoperability, and shared understanding of maritime operations through professional training interactions at Indian Naval training establishments in Kochi and deployment onboard Indian Naval Ships with maritime engagement activities and port visits for strengthening professional linkages and sharing best practices.
- INS Sudarshini Reaches Valletta, Malta - Lokayan-26 Expedition** The Indian Naval Sail Training Ship INS Sudarshini arrived at the port of Valletta, Malta as part of its transoceanic expedition "Lokayan-26", highlighting strong maritime ties between India and Malta during the ship's 22,000-nautical-mile global voyage. Before reaching Malta, INS Sudarshini successfully transited the Suez Canal and made a port call at Alexandria in Egypt. The ship's visit to Malta supports the MAHASAGAR vision, promotes maritime cooperation and people-to-people connections, with the Commanding Officer calling on Rachita Bhandari, High Commissioner of India to Malta, and community outreach activities including an "Open Ship" event for schoolchildren and Indian diaspora, before sailing to the French coast to participate in the Escale à Sète Maritime Festival.
- INS Trikand Completes Port Visit to Port Louis, Mauritius** INS Trikand concluded its port call at Port Louis, Mauritius, participating in the 58th Mauritius National Day Parade on March 12, 2026 with a marching contingent, naval band, and integral helicopter fly-past at Champ de Mars. Captain Sachin Kulkarni, Commanding Officer of INS Trikand, called on Mr Rampersad Soorojebally, Commissioner of Police, and H.E Mr Anurag Srivastava, High Commissioner of India to Mauritius, with the ship hosting a cultural evening with Dr Mahend Gungapersad, Minister of Education and Human Resources of Mauritius, as Chief Guest. Over 500 visitors attended the open ship event on March 12, with professional interactions, cultural engagements, sports fixtures, and community outreach activities strengthening India–Mauritius bilateral relations. Training was provided to Mauritius National Coast Guard personnel on harbour and sea watchkeeping, firefighting, and damage control, with the ship undertaking a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) and joint Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance with CGS Valiant on departure, aligning with India's MAHASAGAR vision.
- Keel Laid for Next-Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels at YMPL, Ratnagiri** The keel laying ceremony for Yard 16402 & 16403, the second and third ships of six Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs), was held at M/s YMPL, Ratnagiri, with the ceremony presided over by IG Sudhir Sahni, TM, DDG (M&M) in the presence of senior officials from Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL). The Next Generation OPVs feature 117-meter length, crew strength of 11 officers and 110 men, range of 5,000 nautical miles, maximum speed of 23 knots, and state-of-the-art machinery including AI-based predictive maintenance, Remote Piloted Drones, Integrated Bridge System (IBS), and Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS). The six OPVs are being indigenously designed, developed, and constructed by MDL under the Buy (Indian-IDDMM) category, supporting India's Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative, with the contract concluded on December 20, 2023, marking a key milestone in ICG's efforts to enhance operational capabilities and bolster coastal security.
- Indian Army Successfully Conducted Exercise 'Amogh Jwala' at Babina** The Southern Command of Indian Army (IA) successfully conducted Exercise 'Amogh Jwala' from March 6 to 18, 2026 at the Babina Field Firing Ranges, Uttar Pradesh (UP). The 13-day military exercise aimed to validate the IA's preparedness for mechanised warfare in multi-domain operational environment, with the key highlight being the successful demonstration of deployment of mechanised forces with newly inducted Apache attack helicopters, fighter aircraft, drone and counter-drone systems, and network-enabled battlefield platforms. The drill used advanced surveillance systems, precision firepower, and real-time communication networks to enhance battlefield transparency and decision-making, highlighting the effective integration of Electronic Warfare (EW), Air Defence (AD), and night-fighting capabilities, reflecting the rising combat edge of a networked and future-ready force.



Awards and Recognitions

- 98th Academy Awards (Oscars 2026) - Best Picture and Major Awards** The 98th Edition of the Academy Awards (Oscars 2026) was held on **March 15, 2026** at the **Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles, USA**, honoring the best films released in **2025** across **24** categories. The film "**One Battle After Another**," directed by **Paul Thomas Anderson**, emerged as the **biggest** winner with **six Oscars**: **Best Picture, Best Director, Best Supporting Actor (Sean Penn), Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Film Editing, and Best Casting**. The film "**Sinners**" received the **highest nominations (16)**, with **Michael B. Jordan** winning **Best Actor in a Leading Role**, and **Jessie Buckley** becoming the **first Irish actress** to win **Best Actress** for "**Hamnet**". The **Academy introduced a new category – Achievement in Casting**, with **Cassandra Kulukundis** winning the **inaugural award** for "**One Battle After Another**." **Priyanka Chopra** presented the **Best International Feature Film** award along with **Spanish actor Javier Bardem**.
- Jawed Ashraf Conferred France's Legion d'honneur - Commandeur Rank** On **March 18, 2026**, **Jawed Ashraf**, former **Ambassador of India to France**, was conferred **France's Legion of Honour (Commandeur rank)** for his contribution to **strengthening the India–France Strategic Partnership**, becoming the **first Indian Ambassador** to receive this honour. The award was presented in **New Delhi** by **French Ambassador Thierry Mathou** in the presence of **National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval**. The **Commander rank** has been conferred on limited Indians including **Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoj (JRD) Tata, Ratan Tata, Amartya Sen, Pandit Ravi Shankar, Satyajit Ray, Syed Haider (S.H.) Raza, and Manna Dey**, with **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** awarded the **Grand Cross (highest level)** in **July 2023**.
- N Chandrasekaran Conferred Honorary Knighthood by UK** **Natarajan Chandrasekaran**, **Chairman of Tata Sons** (the holding company of the **Tata Group**), was conferred the **Honorary Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE)** by the **United Kingdom government** in **March 2026** for his contribution to **strengthening India–UK business relations**. The honour was presented by **Lindy Cameron, British High Commissioner to India**, at the **British High Commissioner's residence in New Delhi**, on behalf of **King Charles III**. The **KBE (Civil Division)** is an **honorary knighthood** awarded to **foreign nationals** for **pre-eminent service in business, public life, culture, and international relations**, with previous Indian recipients including **Jamshed Irani (1997), Ravi Shankar (2001), Ratan Tata (2009, later elevated to GBE in 2014), Lakshmi Niwas Mittal (2015), and Sunil Bharti Mittal (2025)**.
- Kaveh Madani Named 2026 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate** **Kaveh Madani**, **Director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)**, was named the **2026 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate** on **March 18, 2026** at a ceremony held at **UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France** during the **2026 World Water Day (March 22)** event. At **age 44**, **Kaveh Madani** became the **youngest recipient** in the **prize's 35-year history**, and the **first UN official** as well as the **first former politician** to receive the award. An **Iranian scientist**, he was honoured for his **contributions to water governance and crisis management**, which **shifted global focus from infrastructure-based solutions to governance-driven approaches**, highlighting that **weak governance is a key cause of water crises**.
- RBI Wins 'Initiative of the Year' Award for '.bank.in'** **Domain Rollout** **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** won the **'Initiative of the Year'** award by the **London-based Central Banking** at the **13th annual Central Banking Awards** in **March 2026** for its innovative **'.bank.in' domain rollout** initiative designed to **combat rising cyber frauds** in the **digital financial ecosystem**. The domain, launched in **February 2025**, is designed around **exclusivity and stringent control**, with only **RBI-licensed banks** allowed to use it, making **India the world's 1st country** to **mandate a secure and exclusive internet domain** for the **banking system**. **RBI appointed the Institute for Development and Research on Banking Technology (IDRBT)** as the **sole registrar** for the **domain rollout**, with banks mandated to **transition their net banking websites by October 31, 2025**.
- BCCI Naman Awards 2026 - Honours for Outstanding Cricket Performances** The **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** presented its annual **Naman Awards 2026** in **New Delhi**, honouring **outstanding performances and contributions** in **Indian cricket** for the **2024–25 season**. **Roger Binny** and **Rahul Dravid** were conferred the **highest honour of BCCI: Colonel (Col.) C. K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award**, while **Mithali Raj** received the **Lifetime Achievement Award (Women)**. **Shubman Gill** won the **Polly Umrigar Award for Best International Cricketer (Men)** after scoring **983 runs in Tests** and **490 runs in ODIs**, and **Smriti Mandhana** was named **Best International Cricketer (IC) (Women)** for the **fifth time**, scoring **434 runs in Women's ODI World Cup (WWC)** and setting a record with **five ODI centuries** in **2025**. **Shafali Verma** won the **Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy (JDT) for Best Woman Cricketer in Senior Domestic One Day (SDOD) cricket**, with **Harshit Rana (Men)** and **N Sree Charani (Women)** receiving **Best International Debut awards**, and **Deepti Sharma** emerging as the **highest wicket-taker** in **Women's One Day Internationals (WODIs)**.

Summits and Conferences News

- **National Conference on Cold Water Fisheries - Anantnag, Jammu and Kashmir** The first-of-its-kind National Conference on Cold Water Fisheries was organized by the Department of Fisheries (DoF), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAH&D) at the Sher-e-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), Srinagar, during which Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh announced the ₹100 crore Integrated Aqua Park project in Anantnag district and released Model Guidelines for the Development of Cold-Water Fisheries (MG-CWF) providing a framework for Scientific Seed Stocking, Cage and Pen-Based Aquaculture, governance mechanisms, Biodiversity Conservation, value-chain development, and monitoring systems. Awards were presented to Best Fisheries Cooperative Societies (BFCS), Progressive Fish Farmers (PFF), Kisan Credit Card (KCC) beneficiaries, and Fisheries Start-ups (FSU) for their contributions.
- **Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 - Central Electricity Authority Releases EPS Report** The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) released the midterm review of the 20th Electric Power Survey (EPS) titled 'National Generation Adequacy Plan (2026-27 to 2035-36)' at the Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 in New Delhi, projecting India's installed power generation capacity to rise from ~520 GW (as of January 31, 2026) to 1,121 GW by 2035-36, with peak electricity demand reaching 459 GW (CAGR of 5.58%) and total electricity requirement increasing to 3,365 billion units (BU) (CAGR: 6.41%) between FY24-25 and FY36.
- **India International Science Festival (IISF) 2026 in Pune** The India International Science Festival (IISF) 2026 will be held in Pune (Maharashtra), with the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology, managing logistics and theme planning.
- **National Technology Day (NTD) 2026 - May 11 Showcase** National Technology Day (NTD) on May 11, 2026 will feature 500+ innovations at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, with participation from 3,000+ stakeholders, showcasing India's technological achievements and innovations.
- **Japan-North East Academic Industry Cooperation Symposium (JNTCS) 2026** The Japan-North East Academic Industry Cooperation Symposium (JNTCS) 2026 was held at IIT-Guwahati, where 22 institutions from North East India led by IIT-Guwahati and Japan's Gifu University signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to establish the 'North East Region (NER)-Japan International Academic and Research Consortium', covering education, research, technology transfer, and social engagement with IIT-Guwahati as the nodal institution on the Indian side and Gifu University leading on the Japanese side.

- **India-Canada Business Roundtable - MoU Signing** The India-Canada Business Roundtable held in New Delhi facilitated the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and the Indo Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC) to enhance trade, investment, and institutional cooperation through joint ventures, production collaboration, trade missions, and business delegations.

Ranks and Reports

- **Fitch Ratings Projects India's GDP Growth at 7.5% for FY26** Fitch Ratings released its 'Global Economic Outlook – March 2026', projecting India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth at 7.5% for FY 2025-26 (FY26), slightly increased from 7.4% estimated in December 2025. Domestic demand remains the main growth driver with consumer spending projected at 8.6% and investment growth at 6.9%. For FY 2026-27 (FY27), Fitch revised growth upward to 6.7% (compared to 6.4% in December), expecting growth around 6.5% in FY28. Global GDP growth is forecast to moderate from 2.9% in 2025 to 2.8% in 2026, with global merchandise trade growth projected at 2.6% in 2026.
- **Tamil Nadu Emerges as India's Top Textile Exporter in 2024-25** Tamil Nadu became India's leading textile exporting state in FY 2024-25, recording textile exports worth USD 7,997.17 million, contributing 21.84% to India's total textile exports. Over the last four years, TN exports grew by 29%, increasing from USD 6,193 million in FY 2020-21 to ~USD 8 billion in FY 2024-25. Gujarat ranked second with USD 5,646.01 million and Maharashtra third with USD 3,831.29 million, with India's total textile exports at USD 36,610 million, demonstrating TN's competitive advantage in value-added textiles and strong supply chain networks.
- **World Happiness Report 2026 - Finland Tops for 9th Consecutive Year** The World Happiness Report 2026, released by the Wellbeing Research Centre, University of Oxford, in partnership with Gallup Inc (GI) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UN-SDSN) on March 20, 2026, ranked Finland as the happiest country for the 9th consecutive year, with strong social welfare system, high institutional trust, quality education and healthcare, and work-life balance. The top 10 includes Iceland, Denmark, Costa Rica, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Israel, Luxembourg, and Switzerland. For the second consecutive year, no English-speaking country is in the top 10, with New Zealand (11th), Ireland (13th), and Australia (15th). India ranked 116th with a score of 4.536, with concerns about social support, income, governance, and freedom of choice.

- **Hurun Global Rich List 2026 - Record 4,020 Billionaires** The Hurun Global Rich List 2026 reported over 4,020 billionaires globally with 578 new billionaires added in one year, with combined net worth of USD 20.1 trillion (up from USD 16.1 trillion in 2025). Elon Musk remains the world's richest person with USD 839 billion, holding the top position for the second consecutive year. The USA leads with 989 billionaires, followed by Mainland China (539), with India ranking third (229). 481 women (14%) featured on the list, up from 13.4% in 2025.
- **Forbes Top 10 Youngest Billionaires 2026** The Forbes 2026 Top 10 Youngest Billionaires (under 30) includes Surya Midha from India at the 6th position with USD 2.2 billion wealth at age 22, representing rising influence of technology and AI-driven wealth creation, with co-founders Brendan Foody (7th) and Adarsh Hiremath (8th) also ranking highly.
- **Odisha Retains Top Position in Fiscal Health Index 2026 - 73.1 Score** Odisha retained its top position in the Fiscal Health Index 2026 with a score of 73.1, demonstrating strong fiscal management through efficient revenue mobilization and controlled fiscal deficits compared to other states.
- **NIRYAT Data for FY25 - Tamil Nadu Top Textile Exporter** The National-Import-Export Record for Yearly Analysis of Trade (NIRYAT) data for FY 2024-25 released by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I), showed Tamil Nadu emerging as India's top state in textile exports, with exports of USD 7,997.17 million (21.84% of India's overall exports). Total India textile export was USD 36,610 million with Gujarat second (USD 5,646.01 million) and Maharashtra third (USD 3,831.28 million).

Sports News

- **India Tops Medal Table at World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026 with 208 Medals** India topped the medal standings at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix (WPAGP) 2026 – New Delhi leg, the second stop of the 13th Grand Prix season, winning 208 medals (75 gold, 69 silver, and 64 bronze) at the three-day event held at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi (Delhi), from March 11–13, 2026. Russia finished second with 35 medals (15 gold, 14 silver, 6 bronze), while Bosnia & Herzegovina secured third place with 3 medals (1 gold, 2 silver). The competition featured more than 90 track and field events across various classification categories including 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m races, long jump, high jump, javelin throw, shot put, discus throw, wheelchair racing, and other adapted

athletics events, serving as a key qualifying event offering classification and performance opportunities for the 2026 World Para Athletics Championships and the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympics.

- **Mayank Chakraborty Becomes India's 94th Grandmaster** Mayank Chakraborty, a 17-year-old International Master (IM) from Guwahati (Assam), created history by becoming India's 94th Grandmaster (GM) and the first-ever Grandmaster from the North East region of India in March 2026. He achieved this milestone at the First Hotels Young Talents Tournament held in Stockholm, Sweden, securing his third and final GM norm at the 8th GM Tournament by finishing first with a score of 7/9 points, winning six games, drawing two, and losing one, finishing half a point ahead of Aksel Bu Kvaloy of Norway to clinch the title. Along with achieving three GM norms, he also crossed the mandatory 2500 rating of the Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE), fulfilling all criteria for the Grandmaster title.
- **Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli Wins First F1 Chinese Grand Prix 2026** On March 15, 2026, Italy's Andrea Kimi Antonelli, driving for Mercedes-AMG Petronas, won his first-ever 2026 Chinese Grand Prix (GP) (also known as Formula 1 (F1) Heineken Chinese Grand Prix 2026) held at the Shanghai International Circuit in Shanghai (China), with George Russell (United Kingdom, UK) of Mercedes finishing second and Lewis Hamilton (UK) of Ferrari securing third place. The 2026 race marked the 19th running of the Chinese GP and the 19th time it was hosted at the Shanghai International Circuit (SIC), serving as the second round of the 2026 Formula One World Championship (F1WC), with Charles Leclerc of Ferrari finishing fourth and Oliver Bearman of Haas securing fifth place (his best result of the 2026 season).
- **India Wins Five Medals at World Boxing Futures Cup 2026** India finished with a total of five medals at the World Boxing Futures Cup 2026, securing one gold, three silver, and one bronze medal at the tournament held in Bangkok, Thailand from March 8 to March 15, 2026. Chandrika Pujari led India's medal tally by winning the gold medal in the women's 51kg category, defeating Mardonova Nazokat of Uzbekistan by unanimous decision. Gunjan won the silver medal in the women's 48kg category after losing the final to an opponent from United Kingdom by 5–0 decision, Joyshree Devi secured the silver medal in the women's 54kg category losing to Guadalupe Ruiz of United States by 4–1, Ambekar Meetui won the silver medal in the men's 50kg category after finishing as runner-up (losing to Mykhailo Sydorenko of Ukraine), and Radhamani Longjam won the bronze medal in the women's 57kg category after reaching the semi-finals where she faced Yevanhelina Petruk of Ukraine.

- **Former Pakistan Captain Sarfaraz Ahmed Announces Retirement from International Cricket** Sarfaraz Ahmed, former Pakistan cricket captain, announced his retirement from international cricket in March 2026, concluding a career that spanned nearly two decades (2007–2023). Sarfaraz Ahmed made his international debut for Pakistan in 2007, with his final appearance in a Test match against Australia at Perth, Australia in 2023. During his international career, Sarfaraz Ahmed played 54 Test matches, 117 One Day Internationals (ODIs), and 61 Twenty20 Internationals (T20Is), totaling 232 matches, and scored 6,164 runs, including 6 centuries and 35 half-centuries across formats. He recorded 315 catches and 56 stumpings across international formats. He captained Pakistan in 100 international matches, leading the team to No.1 T20I ranking, a record 11 consecutive T20I series wins, and the International Cricket Council (ICC) Champions Trophy 2017 title, after earlier winning the ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup 2006 as captain.
- **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Defers Decision on Ban for Government Officials** The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) postponed its decision on a proposed rule to ban government officials from attending major sporting events until September 2026, after the FIFA World Cup 2026 to be held in the United States of America, Canada, and Mexico. The proposed rule seeks to restrict officials from countries that fail to pay financial dues to WADA. The Executive Committee stated that further discussions and consultations are required due to the global and sensitive nature of the issue, with the decision ensuring that FIFA World Cup 2026 remains unaffected, with no restrictions on attendance of political leaders. The issue is linked to a funding dispute with the United States of America, which has withheld around USD 7.3 million since 2023 over concerns regarding the handling of doping cases, including those involving Chinese athletes.
- **India to Host World Indoor Athletics Championships 2028 in Bhubaneswar** The World Athletics Council (WAC) awarded India the hosting rights for the 22nd edition of the World Indoor Athletics Championships (WIAC 2028), to be held at Kalinga Indoor Athletics Stadium (KIAS) in Bhubaneswar (Odisha) during a meeting held in Toruń (Poland). India will host the WIAC for the first time, becoming the fourth Asian nation after Japan, Qatar, and China. The 21st edition of WIAC is being held in Toruń, Poland from March 20–22, 2026, while the 23rd edition of WIAC 2030 has been awarded to Astana, Kazakhstan. The development aligns with India's ambitions to host the Commonwealth Games (CWG) 2030 and Olympic Games (OG) 2036.

Schemes and Committees News

- **Gol Adds 7 Districts in 6th Phase of Mandatory Gold Hallmarking** The Government of India (GoI) implemented the sixth phase (Phase VI) of the mandatory hallmarking of Gold Jewellery and Gold Artefacts (Amendment) Order, 2026, adding seven more districts under the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) hallmarking regime effective from March 2, 2026. The seven districts are Rupnagar (Punjab), Banda (Uttar Pradesh, UP), Beed (Maharashtra), Gomati (Tripura), Katihar (Bihar), Beawar (Rajasthan), and Neemuch (Madhya Pradesh, MP). Mandatory gold hallmarking has been implemented in a phased manner since June 2021, with Phase I covering 256 districts, Phase II (April 4, 2022) expanding to 288, Phase III (September 8, 2023) to 343, Phase IV (November 5, 2024) to 361, Phase V (July 31, 2025) to 373, and Phase VI reaching 380 districts.
- **Cabinet Approves ₹2584.60 Cr Small Hydro Power Scheme** The Union Cabinet approved the Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme for FY2026-27 to FY2030-31 with total outlay of ₹2,584.60 crore to develop approximately 1,500 MW of capacity. The scheme supports small hydro projects ranging from 1 to 25 MW capacity across different states, with central financial assistance of ₹3.6 crore per MW (max ₹30 crore) for NE states and districts with international borders, and ₹2.4 crore per MW (max ₹20 crore) for other states. The scheme is expected to generate around 51 lakh person-days of employment during construction and create long-term jobs in operation and maintenance, contributing to rural development and local economic growth.
- **India Post Releases Special Cover - Birth Centenary of Annapurna Devi** India Post under the Ministry of Communication, in collaboration with the Annapurna Devi Foundation, released a special cover to mark the birth centenary of legendary Hindustani classical musician Annapurna Devi at the Kolkata General Post Office (GPO), Kolkata, West Bengal (WB). Annapurna Devi, renowned for her mastery in Hindustani classical music and known for her reclusive nature focusing on teaching, received several prestigious awards: Padma Bhushan (India's 3rd highest civilian honour, 1977) in the field of arts, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1991), Desikottama (honorary doctorate by Visva-Bharati University, 1999), and Fellowship of the Sangeet Natak Akademi (2004).
- **Gol Approves 23 Institutions for Quantum Labs - National Quantum Mission** The Government of India (GoI) approved the establishment of quantum teaching laboratories in 23 institutions under the National Quantum Mission (NQM) to strengthen education, research, and workforce development in emerging quantum technologies. The decision was reviewed during a high-level coordination meeting chaired by Union Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge, IC) Dr. Jitendra Singh, Ministry of Science and Technology (MoS&T), with discussions including IISF 2026 to be held in Pune (Maharashtra) and National Technology Day (NTD) (May 11, 2026) featuring 500+ innovations at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi with 3,000+ stakeholders.

- **FSSAI Approves Major Reforms - Ease of Doing Business from April 1, 2026** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) approved key regulatory reforms to improve Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) while strengthening the food safety framework in India, effective from April 1, 2026. These reforms include perpetual validity for FSSAI registrations and licenses (eliminating periodic renewal requirements), increasing the turnover limit for basic registration from ₹12 lakh to ₹1.5 crore, with State licensing up to ₹50 crore and Central licensing for amounts above, and deeming street food vendors registered under the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 as FSSAI registered, benefiting 10 lakh+ vendors by removing dual registration requirements.

Science and Technology News

- **ISRO Successfully Conducts Sea Level Hot Test of Cryogenic Engine CE20** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully conducted a 165-second sea level hot test of the Cryogenic Engine (CE20) at 22 tonne thrust using a Nozzle Protection System (NPS) and multi-element igniter at the ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu (TN). The test supports the development of the uprated Cryogenic Stage (C32) for future missions of the Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3), enhancing the vehicle's payload capability for upcoming space missions. Operating the CE20 at 22-tonne thrust will enhance the payload capability of the LVM3, while earlier sea-level hot tests were conducted at 19-tonne thrust. Sea-level testing is challenging due to the high area-ratio nozzle with an exit pressure of around 50 millibar (mbar), which can cause flow separation leading to vibrations, thermal stress, and possible mechanical damage. The NPS was used to control flow separation effects and ensure safe sea-level testing, with the tested CE20 completing a record 20 hot tests, enabling qualification of multiple technologies using a single engine.
- **Gujarat Achieves Historic Space Milestone - First Sounding Rocket Launch** Gujarat achieved a major milestone in the space sector with the successful launch of its first sounding rocket at Bavaliyari village near Dholera on March 15, 2026, developed by Ahmedabad-based Omspace Rocket and Exploration Private Limited (OSRE). The single-stage sub-orbital rocket was launched from a temporary facility and successfully reached an altitude of nearly 3 kilometres (km). The rocket carried a mini-satellite for weather data collection and was built using carbon fibre and advanced composites under the Make in India initiative. The launch was conducted with approval from Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization

Centre (IN-SPACe) and supported by the Gujarat Spacetech Policy 2025–2030, marking a historic milestone in Gujarat's space research sector.

- **Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati Develops MXene-Based Material** Researchers at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati developed a MXene-based material capable of both hydrogen fuel production and seawater desalination, addressing clean energy generation and safe drinking water challenges. The innovation is based on MXenes, a class of two-dimensional materials known for high electrical conductivity, enhanced through ultra-thin ribbon-like structures and ruthenium atom addition. For hydrogen production, the material achieved a very low hydrogen evolution reaction overpotential of 12 millivolts, outperforming platinum-based catalysts, supporting clean and cost-effective hydrogen fuel production. For desalination, a solar-powered system employs a Janus evaporator (floating device) achieving an evaporation rate of 3.2 kilograms per square metre per hour, operated continuously for five days without salt accumulation, meeting international drinking water standards.
- **Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati Develops Advanced Desalination Technology** IIT Guwahati researchers developed an advanced material for hydrogen production via water electrolysis and solar-powered desalination, published in the journal "Advanced Functional Materials". The material demonstrates exceptional hydrogen evolution performance with ultralow overpotential of 12 mV, outperforming platinum-based catalysts, making it suitable for transportation, industrial energy systems, and decentralized water treatment.
- **India Tests Indigenous Floating LiDAR Buoy System** India achieved a technological milestone with the successful testing of an indigenously developed Floating LiDAR Buoy System by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) off the coast of Muttom, Tamil Nadu. The Floating LiDAR Buoy System is an advanced ocean-based instrument designed to measure wind conditions over the sea using LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging), emitting laser pulses that interact with airborne particles to determine wind speed, direction, and atmospheric variations at different altitudes. Unlike traditional tools, the system can measure wind profiles up to 300 metres above sea level, providing comprehensive and accurate real-time data. The system reduces dependency on imported technologies, supporting India's push for self-reliance in scientific innovation, expected to enhance weather forecasting accuracy, improve cyclone tracking, and provide valuable data for climate change studies.

- **Reliance Industries Inks \$3 Billion Green Ammonia Supply Deal** Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) signed a binding long-term Supply and Purchase Agreement (SPA) with Samsung C&T Corporation, South Korea for green ammonia supply over a 15-year period starting from second half of FY2028-29, valued at over USD 3 billion. The agreement marks the first in a series of global offtake agreements supporting RIL's clean energy expansion, aligned with the National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM) to build a competitive clean-energy platform and achieve net-zero emissions by 2035.
- **Shipping Corporation of India Inks Deal with Mazagon Dock for Green Vessel** Shipping Corporation of India Limited (SCI) signed a shipbuilding contract with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) to build a green methanol dual-fuel vessel in March 2026, marking the first alternative-fuel vessel in SCI's fleet and India's first methanol dual-fuel Platform Supply Vessel (PSV). The PSV (3,000 Deadweight Tonnage - DWT) is equipped with methanol dual-fuel technology, enabling operation on conventional marine fuel and green methanol to reduce emissions, aligning with the National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM) and supporting Government of India's net-zero and green shipping goals.
- **ICAR–Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute Initiates Deep-Sea Survey** The ICAR–Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) launched a deep-sea expedition in the Arabian Sea to study seamount fisheries, focusing on cephalopods such as squid, cuttlefish, and octopus, aiming to study their diversity, ecology, distribution, and biology. The expedition is funded by the Ministry of Earth Sciences with a total cost of ₹4.986 crore for a two-year duration, developing AI-based tools for automated species identification, implemented under Vertical-3 of the Deep Ocean Mission, in collaboration with the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Surathkal. The research aims to generate insights for conservation strategies and sustainable management of seamount-associated fishery resources.
- **Reliance Announces Green Ammonia Supply Deal - USD 3 Billion** Reliance Industries signed a long-term supply agreement with Samsung C&T for green ammonia over 15 years starting FY2028-29, valued at USD 3+ billion, aligning with the National Green Hydrogen Mission to achieve net-zero emissions by 2035.
- **Netflix Launches Eyeline Studios in Hyderabad** Netflix launched Eyeline Studios, its global production and innovation studio, in Hyderabad, strengthening India's Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics (AVGC) ecosystem. The Hyderabad studio functions as part of Eyeline Studios' global network, which includes centres in Los Angeles, Vancouver, Seoul, and London, aiming to strengthen India's role in global production pipelines, promote technology adoption, and support talent development.
- **ISRO Expands Student Involvement in Space Missions** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is expanding student participation in space missions, allowing students to design satellites and develop payloads under mentorship programs. The Student Satellite Programme, led by U R Rao Satellite Centre, provides technical mentorship from ISRO scientists to universities for satellite development. The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) has authorised 17 student satellites and payloads, with 11 already successfully launched, and initiatives like RESPOND Programme and Space Technology Minor Course (approved by AICTE) strengthen space education. The government allocates ~₹10 crore annually for space science outreach and student-focused programs, with Space Technology Incubation Centres facilitating collaborative research and enabling development of indigenous space technologies.



Important Days News

- **World Rotaract Day 2026 – March 13** World Rotaract Day is observed annually on March 13 to recognise the contributions of Rotaractors and their role in community service and leadership development worldwide. 2026 marks the 58th anniversary of the establishment of the first Rotaract club in North Carolina, the United States of America (USA) in 1968. World Rotaract Day is observed as part of World Rotaract Week, celebrated annually by members of Rotaract Clubs and Rotary Clubs, with 2026 observance from March 9–15, 2026.

- **World Sleep Day 2026 – March 13 World Sleep Day (WSD)** is an annual global campaign observed on the Friday before the Spring Vernal Equinox to raise awareness about sleep health, highlight its role in overall well-being, and promote prevention and treatment of sleep disorders. The 19th edition of WSD 2026 was observed on March 13, 2026, while WSD 2025 was marked on March 14, 2025, and WSD 2027 will be observed on March 12, 2026. The World Sleep Society (WSS) was established in 2016 through the merger of the World Association of Sleep Medicine and the World Sleep Federation. WSD was initiated by healthcare professionals and researchers specializing in sleep medicine, with the first WSD observed on March 14, 2008, and the WSD Committee of the World Sleep Society (WSS) annually coordinating the observance.
- **International Day of Mathematics 2026 – March 14 International Day of Mathematics (IDM)** is observed annually on March 14 to highlight the importance of mathematics in fields such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), climate change, energy, and sustainable development. March 14, 2026 marks the 7th observance of the IDM, with the 2026 Theme: "Mathematics and Hope". The 40th General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November 2019 proclaimed March 14 as the IDM through Resolution 40C/30, with the first IDM celebrated on March 14, 2020. The International Day of Mathematics (IDM) is coordinated by UNESCO's International Basic Sciences Programme (IBSP) and the International Mathematical Union (IMU) with support from several international and regional organisations. India observes National Mathematics Day annually on December 22 to commemorate the birth anniversary of renowned mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan.
- **International Day of Action for Rivers 2026 – March 14** The International Day of Action for Rivers, previously known as the International Day of Action Against Dams and For Rivers, Water and Life, is annually observed on March 14 to highlight the importance of rivers in sustaining ecosystems, supporting livelihoods, and ensuring water security. March 14, 2026 marks the 29th observance, with the 2026 Theme: "Protect Rivers, Protect People." The International Day of Action Against Dams and For Rivers, Water and Life was established in March 1997 during the International Meeting of People Affected by Dams (IMPAD) held in Curitiba, Brazil, with the first IMPAD designating March 14, aligning it with Brazil's Day of Action Against Large Dams, with the first International Day of Action for Rivers observed on March 14, 1998.
- **World Oral Health Day 2026 – March 20 World Oral Health Day (WOHD)** is observed annually on March 20 to raise awareness about the importance of oral health and reduce the burden of oral diseases. WOHD was declared in 2007 and initially observed on September 12, marking the birth anniversary of FDI founder Dr. Charles Godon. The World Oral Health Day Campaign (2024–2026) has the theme: "A Happy Mouth is...A Happy Mind," highlighting the link between oral health and overall well-being, including mental health. This global observance is led by the FDI World Dental Federation (Fédération Dentaire Internationale – FDI).
- **International Day of Happiness 2026 – March 20** The United Nations (UN's) International Day of Happiness is observed annually on March 20 to emphasize the importance of happiness and well-being as essential components of human life and public policy. The 2026 Theme: "Caring and Sharing" emphasizes collective well-being. In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution A/RES/66/281, officially declaring March 20 as the International Day of Happiness with support from all 193 member states. The first International Day of Happiness was celebrated on March 20, 2013. The World Happiness Report (WHR) 2026 was released on March 20, 2026 by the Wellbeing Research Centre (WRC), University of Oxford in partnership with Gallup Inc (GI) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UN-SDSN), with Finland securing 1st place for the ninth consecutive year, and India ranked 116th.
- **French Language Day 2026 – March 20** The United Nations (UN's) French Language Day is observed annually on March 20 to promote multilingualism, cultural diversity, and the equal recognition of the UN's six official languages. The date commemorates the anniversary of the establishment of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (Agence de coopération culturelle et technique, ACCT) on March 20, 1970 in Niamey, Niger. The ACCT became the Intergovernmental Agency of La Francophonie in 1998 and was later renamed the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) in 2005. This is one of the UN Language Days, with the UN observing six language days annually: Arabic (December 8), Chinese (April 20), English (April 23), Russian (June 6), Spanish (April 23), and French (March 20).
- **Ordnance Factory Day 2026 – March 18** Ordnance Factory Day is observed annually on March 18 across India by the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) to mark the establishment of India's first Ordnance Factory at Cossipore near Kolkata, West Bengal (WB), in 1801. The Indian Ordnance Factories (IOFs) comprise 41 factories, 9 training institutes, 3 regional marketing centres, and 4 safety controllers under the Department of Defence Production (DDP), Ministry of Defence (MoD). The IOFs, the oldest and largest defence manufacturing entity, produce arms, ammunition, and equipment for the Armed Forces, along with handling testing, logistics, research, development, and marketing of systems across land, sea, and air. In June 2021, the 41 factories were reorganised into seven specialised Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs), with the Directorate of Ordnance (Coordination & Services) (DOO(C&S)) set up on October 1, 2021 to oversee coordination and services, replacing the OFB.

- **Global Recycling Day 2026 – March 18** Global Recycling Day is observed annually on **March 18** to promote the **importance of recycling** in conserving natural resources and ensuring **environmental sustainability**. **March 18, 2026** marks the **9th observance of the Global Recycling Day**, with the **2026 Theme: "Don't Think Waste – Think Opportunity."** Global Recycling Day was established by the **Bureau of International Recycling (BIR)**, founded on **March 18, 1948**, promoting **recycling worldwide**. The idea was introduced by **Ranjit Baxi, Founder of the Global Recycling Foundation (GRF)**, during his **2015 Dubai Convention speech as BIR President**. The **first Global Recycling Day** was observed on **March 18, 2018**, marking the **70th anniversary of the BIR**.
- **World Consumer Rights Day 2026 – March 15** **World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD)** is observed annually on **March 15** to promote **awareness of consumer rights, protection, and empowerment**, ensuring **ethical practices and informed choices**. The **2026 Theme: "Safe products, confident consumers"** emphasizes product quality and consumer confidence. **WCRD** was inspired by a **message from John F. Kennedy, former President of the United States of America (USA)**, to the **US Congress on March 15, 1962**. The **first WCRD** was observed on **March 15, 1983**, and the day is **globally recognized and supported** by organizations like the **United Nations (UN)** and other **international bodies**, promoting **consumer rights worldwide**.
- **International Day to Combat Islamophobia 2026 – March 15** The **United Nations (UN's) International Day to Combat Islamophobia** is observed annually on **March 15** to fight **anti-Muslim hate worldwide** and promote **human rights, religious tolerance, and social harmony**. The **2026 Theme: "Respect Every Person's Dignity."** In **2020**, during the **75th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**, **Imran Khan, former Prime Minister (PM) of Pakistan**, proposed an **International Day to Combat Islamophobia**. On **March 15, 2022**, **UNGA adopted Resolution 76/254**, introduced by **Pakistan's envoy Munir Akram** on behalf of the **Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**, proclaiming **March 15** as the day. The **first observance of the International Day to Combat Islamophobia** was held on **March 15, 2023**. The significance of this date commemorates the **Christchurch mosque attacks (2019)** in **New Zealand**, where **51 people were killed and 40 injured** at **Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre (Linwood Masjid)**.
- **National Vaccination Day 2026 – March 16** **National Vaccination Day**, also known as **National Immunisation Day (NID)**, is observed annually on **March 16** to commemorate the **first dose of the Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV)** administered on **March 16, 1995**, and to raise **awareness about the importance of timely vaccinations**. The **World Health Assembly (WHA)** in **1988** adopted a **resolution to eradicate polio globally**, leading to the **launch of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI)** led by **national governments and the World Health Organization (WHO)**. **India was declared polio-free by WHO on March 27, 2014**. **Full immunisation coverage** increased significantly from **62% in 2015 to 98.4% in January 2026**, with the **proportion of zero-dose children** declining from **0.11% in 2023 to 0.06% in 2024**.
- **World Sparrow Day 2026 – March 20** **World Sparrow Day** is observed annually on **March 20** to raise **awareness about the House Sparrow and other common urban birds**, highlighting the **need for conservation of sparrows and protection of urban biodiversity**. The initiative was **launched by the Nature Forever Society of India** in collaboration with **Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France)** and other **international organisations**. **World Sparrow Day** was **first observed in 2010**, marking the **beginning of a global campaign to protect sparrows**. The **Nature Forever Society** was founded by **Indian conservationist Mohammad Dilawar**, who started efforts to **protect sparrows in Nashik**. He was recognised as a **"Hero of the Environment" (2008)** by **Time Magazine** for his **conservation work**.
- **World Poetry Day 2026 – March 21** **World Poetry Day** is observed annually on **March 21** to honour **poets and promote the reading, writing, and teaching of poetry**. The day celebrates **poetry recitals, music, theatre, dance, painting, and other cultural expressions**. The observance was **adopted by UNESCO in 1999** during its **30th General Conference in Paris**. The **first World Poetry Day** was celebrated on **March 21, 2000**. Historically, **poetry dates back to ancient times**, with early works like the **"Epic of Gilgamesh" (around 2000 BCE)**. In the **14th century**, **sonnets** gained prominence, with **Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch)** known for his **early contributions**. The day encourages **preservation of linguistic diversity** and supports **poetry movements at national and international levels**.
- **World Day for Glaciers – March 21** **World Day for Glaciers** is observed on **March 21** to highlight the **importance of glaciers as freshwater sources, climate indicators, and the risks of melting, sea-level rise, and the need for global conservation efforts**.
- **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination – March 21** **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** is observed on **March 21** to commemorate the **Sharpeville Massacre**, promote **equality, human rights, and global action against racism**, supported by the **United Nations and the ICERD (1965) framework**.

- **International Day of Forests 2026 – March 21**
International Day of Forests, also known as **World Forest Day**, is observed on **March 21** to raise **awareness about the importance of forests** and their benefits. The observance is held under the **United Nations (UN)**. The **concept of World Forestry Day** was introduced in **1971** during the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** conference. From **2007 to 2012**, the **Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)** organised **Forest Day events** in collaboration with **global partners**. The year **2011** was declared the **International Year of Forests**. On **November 28, 2012**, the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** officially declared **March 21** as the **International Day of Forests**, first observed in **2013**. The day highlights the **role of forests in biodiversity conservation, climate regulation, ecological balance, and livelihood support**. The **2026 Theme: "Forests and Economies"** is established by the **United Nations General Assembly**, promoting **sustainable development and conservation**.
- **Nowruz – March 21**
Nowruz, celebrated on **March 21**, marks the **Persian New Year and spring equinox**, symbolizing **renewal, hope, and new beginnings**. Recognised by the **United Nations**, it promotes **unity, cultural traditions**, and features **Haft Sin, cleanings, and festive celebrations** celebrated across **multiple cultures** globally.
- **Gudi Padwa – March 19**
Gudi Padwa on **March 19, 2026** marks the **Marathi New Year and new beginnings**, symbolizing **prosperity and cultural identity** in **Maharashtra and Goa**.
- **Ugadi – March 19**
Ugadi, celebrated on **March 19, 2026** as the **Telugu New Year**, marks the **start of Chaitra month and Shaka Samvat** with **traditional rituals**.

Obituaries News

- **Kushal Das, Former AIFF General Secretary, Passed Away at 66**
Kushal Das, former **General Secretary of the All India Football Federation (AIFF)**, passed away in **New Delhi, Delhi**, at the **age of 66** on **March 18, 2026**. He was born in **1959**. A **Chartered Accountant (CA)** by profession, **Kushal Das** brought **extensive experience in sports management and administration** to **Indian football**. He began his career as a **CA** and worked with **global firms** including **PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), and Shell**. In **1996**, he joined **International Management Group (IMG)** as **Chief Financial Officer (CFO)** and later served as **CFO of the International Cricket Council (ICC)** in **Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE)**. He served as **AIFF General Secretary from 2010 to 2022**, making him **one of the longest-serving officials**. During his tenure, he played a **key role in hosting the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) U-17 World Cup 2017, India's first FIFA tournament**, which recorded the **highest**

attendance in youth World Cup history. He also contributed to the **launch of the Indian Women's League (IWL)** in **2017** and facilitated the **development of the Indian Super League (ISL)** through partnership with **Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL)**.

Miscellaneous News

- **Purple Fest 2026 - Celebrating Divyangjan at Rashtrapati Bhavan**
A special celebration called **Purple Fest** was organised at **Rashtrapati Bhavan** in **New Delhi** to recognise the **talent, achievements, and aspirations of Divyangjan (persons with disabilities)** and promote **inclusion, respect, and awareness about their abilities**. Thousands of participants attended the event, with **more than 8,000 Divyangjan** visiting **Amrit Udyan**, which was **opened exclusively** for them during the **day-long celebration**. Participants engaged in **interactive games, learning sessions, awareness stalls, exhibitions** by **organisations working for persons with disabilities, and social interaction and entertainment programmes**. **Droupadi Murmu, President of India**, attended the festival at the **Open Air Theatre** in the **President's Estate** and watched **cultural performances** presented by **Divyangjan artists**, including **music, dance, and creative acts**. The **President encouraged** persons with disabilities to **move forward with confidence and determination**, assuring them of **continued support** from both the **government and society**. The **Purple Fest** was organised by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** to increase **awareness about different types of disabilities**, promote **acceptance and respect**, encourage **equal opportunities**, and build an **inclusive society**.
- **Bokaro Steel Plant Receives BIS Certification for New Steel Grades**
Bokaro Steel Plant, a unit of the **Steel Authority of India Limited**, received certification from the **Bureau of Indian Standards** for **four new steel grades – ISC 440 LA, ISC 470 LA, ISC 510 LA, and ISC 550 LA**. The approval enables the plant to **expand production of High Strength Low Alloy cold-rolled steel**, strengthening its **range of high-value steel products**. Earlier, **BIS certification** covered **steel grades only up to ISC 410**. With the **latest approval**, the **new grades are included under Indian Standard 513 (Part 2)**, ensuring **compliance with national quality standards**. The certification will **improve product credibility and expand applications** across sectors including **infrastructure, engineering, and manufacturing**. The plant has also produced around **1,100 tonnes of 0.5 millimetre thick Indian Standard 18316 Low Silicon Grade Non-Grain Oriented Electrical Steel** for the **first time**. This **Non-Grain Oriented electrical steel** is used in **electric motors, generators, transformers, and hybrid or electric vehicle rotors**, supporting the **development of energy-efficient technologies**.

• **Supreme Court Allows Withdrawal of Life Support - Harish Rana Passive Euthanasia Case** The Supreme Court of India permitted the **withdrawal of artificial life support** in the **Harish Rana passive euthanasia case**, marking an **important development** in the **legal and ethical debate on end-of-life decisions in India**. The **judgment** was delivered by a **bench comprising Justice J. B. Pardiwala and Justice K. V. Viswanathan**. The Court directed the **All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi**, to **admit Harish Rana** and provide the **required medical facilities** to carry out the **process of withdrawing artificial life support** following **legal and medical guidelines**. **Harish Rana**, a **31-year-old man**, has been in a **permanent vegetative state since 2013**, after sustaining **severe head injuries from a fall at his paying guest accommodation** while studying at **Panjab University**. He suffers from **100% disability and quadriplegia**, requiring **continuous medical support for breathing, feeding, and daily care**, with doctors indicating **almost no chance of recovery**. The Court observed that

forcing a patient to remain alive through prolonged artificial medical intervention, when there is **no realistic hope of recovery**, may **violate the principle of human dignity**. The ruling stated that a **person has the right to refuse prolonged artificial life support** when it **contradicts dignity** in life and death. The decision was based on **medical evaluations** by a **primary and secondary medical board**, with **medical boards from AIIMS, New Delhi**, concluding that **Harish Rana had negligible chances of recovery**. The case highlighted the **emotional and financial burden** faced by families, with **Rana's father Ashok Rana** stating that the family had spent **₹24,000 to ₹30,000 per month** on treatment and **life-support care** for more than a decade. **Passive euthanasia** refers to the **withdrawal or withholding of medical treatment** that **artificially prolongs life** when **recovery is impossible**, and in **India** it is permitted under **strict legal safeguards**, including **medical board approval, family consent, and judicial oversight**.

Static Takeaways

Category	Entity	Key Details
Bank	Bank of Baroda (BoB)	Founded: 1908 • HQ: Vadodara, Gujarat • MD & CEO: Debadatta Chand • Tagline: "India's International Bank"
Bank	South Indian Bank	Founded: 1929 • HQ: Thrissur, Kerala • CEO: P.R. Seshadri • Slogan: "Experience Next-Gen Banking"
Bank	HDFC Bank	Founded: 1994 • HQ: Mumbai • MD & CEO: Sashidhar Jagdishan • Tagline: "We understand your world"
Bank	State Bank of India (SBI)	Founded: 1955 • HQ: Mumbai • Chairman: Challa Sreenivasulu Setty • Slogan: "The Banker to Every Indian"
Financial Institution	World Bank	Founded: 1944 • HQ: Washington, D.C. • President: Ajay Banga • Members: 189 • Institutions: IBRD, IDA, IFC, MIGA, ICSID
Stock Exchange	NSE	Established: 1992 • Location: Mumbai • MD & CEO: Ashish Kumar Chauhan • Trading Time: 9:00 am – 11:30/11:55 pm
Regulatory Body	SEBI	Established: 1988 • Statutory: 1992 • HQ: Mumbai • Chairman: Tuhin Kanta Pandey

Category	Entity	Key Details
Organization	ASSOCHAM	<p>Founded: 1920</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HQ: New Delhi President: Sanjay Nayar Founder: Dr. Niranjana Hiranandani Secretary General: Manish Singhal
Organization	APEDA	<p>Founded: 13 Feb 1986</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HQ: New Delhi Chairman: Abhishek Dev GM: Dr. Saswati Bose
Organization	WHO	<p>Founded: 7 April 1948</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HQ: Geneva Director-General: Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Organization	WADA	<p>Founded: 10 Nov 1999</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HQ: Montreal President: Witold Bańka Founder: Dick Pound
Space Agency	NASA	<p>Established: 1958</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HQ: Washington, D.C., USA
Space Agency	ISRO	<p>Established: 15 Aug 1969</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HQ: New Delhi Chairman: V. Narayanan
Ministry	Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare	<p>Cabinet Minister: Shivraj Singh Chouhan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoS: Bhagirath Choudhary, Ram Nath Thakur
Ministry	Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment	<p>Cabinet Minister: Virendra Kumar Khatik</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoS: Ramdas Athawale, B. L. Verma
State	Assam	<p>CM: Himanta Biswa Sarma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governor: Lakshman Prasad Acharya Capital: Dispur National Parks: Kaziranga, Manas, Dibru-Saikhowa Wildlife Sanctuaries: Pobitora, Orang, Bura-Chapori, Nameri
State	Gujarat	<p>CM: Bhupendra Patel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governor: Acharya Devvrat Capital: Gandhinagar National Parks: Gir, Blackbuck, Vansda, Marine Wildlife Sanctuaries: Nal Sarovar, Velavadar, Kutch Desert, Barda, Purna
State	Maharashtra	<p>CM: Devendra Fadnavis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governor: Jishnu Dev Varma Capital: Mumbai National Parks: Tadoba, Sanjay Gandhi, Chandoli, Gugamal, Navegaon Wildlife Sanctuaries: Bhimashankar, Koyna, Karnala, Melghat, Radhanagari
State	Odisha	<p>CM: Mohan Charan Majhi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governor: Hari Babu Kambhampati Capital: Bhubaneswar National Parks: Simlipal, Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuaries: Chandaka, Nandankanan, Kuldiha, Debrigarh, Kotagarh, Lakhari Valley, Baisipalli

Category	Entity	Key Details
UT	Jammu & Kashmir	CM: Omar Abdullah • LG: Manoj Sinha • Capital: Srinagar (Summer), Jammu (Winter) • National Parks: Dachigam, Hemis, Kishtwar • Wildlife Sanctuaries: Overa-Aru, Gulmarg, Nandini, Surinsar-Mansar
Country	Chile	Capital: Santiago • Currency: Chilean Peso
Country	Brazil	President: Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva • Capital: Brasília • Currency: Real
Country	Argentina	President: Javier Milei • Capital: Buenos Aires • Currency: Argentine Peso
Country	Vietnam	Capital: Hanoi • PM: Pham Minh Chinh • Currency: Vietnamese Dong
Country	Finland	Capital: Helsinki • President: Alexander Stubb • Currency: Euro

