



Daily Current Affairs

4th & 5th Jan 2026



BANKING, FINANCE & BUSINESS

Securities and Exchange Board of India Tightens Capital, Compliance, and Governance Norms for Merchant Bankers from January 3, 2026

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has strengthened capital, compliance, certification, governance, and operational norms for merchant bankers to enhance financial stability and investor protection, effective from January 3, 2026.

Key Highlights :

- Tiered Net Worth and Liquidity Requirements
- Category I merchant bankers (permitted to manage main-board IPOs) must have a net worth of ₹25 crore by Jan 2, 2027, rising to ₹50 crore by Jan 2, 2028, with liquid net worth (unencumbered cash/near-cash) of ₹6.25 crore and ₹12.5 crore respectively.
- Category II merchant bankers (restricted from main-board IPOs but permitted for SME IPOs/advisory) must have a net worth of ₹7.5 crore and ₹10 crore, with liquid net worth of ₹1.875 crore and ₹2.5 crore in the two phases.
- Risk Exposure and Operational Penalties
- Merchant bankers failing to meet the norms will face automatic downgrade (Category I to II) or a ban on fresh activities (if Category II norms are not met).
- Underwriting exposure has been capped at 20 times liquid net worth, and half-yearly CA certification of compliance is mandatory, with full compliance by Jan 2, 2028.
- Revenue Benchmarks and Long-term Compliance
- Minimum revenue requirement over three years has been introduced: ₹25 crore for Category I and ₹5 crore for Category II, with the first assessment from April 1, 2029; failure may lead to cancellation of registration, subject to limited exemptions (like force majeure).
- Merchant bankers failing to meet Category II requirements will be barred from undertaking fresh permitted activities.

Merchant banker rules' rollout gets underway

FE BUREAU
Mumbai, January 2

THE SECURITIES & Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has introduced a phased roll out of the changes in merchant banker (MB) regulations which it had notified in early December.

The new rules effective in phases from January 2 next year and January 2, 2028 divides the bankers into two categories based on capital adequacy and liquidity based net worth.

According to Friday's circular, Category I merchant bankers will need to maintain net worth of ₹25 crore by January 2, 2027, rising to ₹50 crore by January 2, 2028, along with liquid net worth of ₹6.25 crore and ₹12.5 crore respectively. For Category II, the threshold rises to ₹7.5 crore and ₹10 crore in net worth and ₹1.875 crore and ₹2.5 crore in liquid net worth across the two phases.

Those failing to meet Category I norms will be automatically reclassified as Category II, and failing Category II requirements will lead them to be barred from taking up fresh permitted activities. The new rules also specify that the total underwriting obligations of MB shall not exceed 20 times of its liquid net worth and existing MBs shall comply with this requirement within two years from the effective date (January 2, 2028).

Ministry of Finance Maintains Small Savings Scheme Interest Rates for Q4 FY26

- The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA–Budget Division) under the Ministry of Finance (MoF) kept interest rates unchanged across all Small Savings Schemes (SSS) for Q4 FY26 (1 Jan–31 Mar 2026).
- This is the 8th consecutive quarter with no change in SSS interest rates; rates were last revised in Q4 FY24.
- The decision covers key schemes including Public Provident Fund (PPF) and Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY).



Key Highlights :

- Interest Rates on Small Savings Schemes – Q4 FY26
- Post Office Savings Deposit (POSD): 4.0%
- 1-Year Post Office Time Deposit (POTD): 6.9%

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- 2-Year POTD: 7.0%
- 3-Year POTD: 7.1%
- 5-Year POTD: 7.5%
- 5-Year Post Office Recurring Deposit (PORD): 6.7%
- Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP): 7.5% (Maturity: 115 months)
- Public Provident Fund (PPF): 7.1%
- Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY): 8.2%
- National Savings Certificate (NSC): 7.7%
- Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS): 8.2%
- Post Office Monthly Income Scheme (PO-MIS): 7.4%
- Mahila Samman Savings Certificate (MSSC): 7.5%

About Small Savings Schemes (SSS)

- SSS are Government of India (GoI)-backed instruments, aimed at promoting household savings with risk-free returns.
- Administration: Managed by DEA, implemented through designated banks and over 1.5 lakh post offices, offering sovereign guarantee.
- Quarterly Review: Since 2016, SSS interest rates are notified quarterly by DEA, linked to market trends and bond yields.
- Rate-setting Methodology: Based on recommendations of the Shyamala Gopinath Committee (January 2023).
- Committee Recommendation: SSS rates should be 25–100 basis points (bps) above government bond yields.

Raajmarg Infra Investment Trust (RIIT) Sponsored by NHAI Gets AAA (Stable) Rating from CARE Ratings

- Raajmarg Infra Investment Trust (RIIT), sponsored by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), has received a AAA (Stable) rating for its long-term bank facilities from CARE Ratings Limited.
- The AAA (Stable) rating is the highest credit rating, indicating very strong financial health and extremely low risk of default on debt.
- The Stable outlook suggests that RIIT's credit profile is expected to remain unchanged in the near to medium term.
- The rating reflects the experience, credibility, and track record of NHAI in the roads and highways sector, along with the strategic importance of NHAI's asset monetization programme, which has monetized assets worth around ₹1.43 lakh crore to date.
- RIIT has received SEBI approval (on December 24, 2025) to operate as a Public Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT), enabling the monetization of National Highway assets.
- The Public InvIT provides a safe, long-term investment option, primarily targeting retail and domestic investors, while supporting India's infrastructure growth and sustainable capital formation.
- The InvIT initiative broadens public participation in the National Highway infrastructure development story, strengthening NHAI's asset monetization programme.

NHAI's Raajmarg Infra Investment Trust Receives AAA Rating from CARE Ratings

Posted On: 02 JAN 2025 5:28PM by PIB Delhi

Achieving a significant milestone, NHAI sponsored Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) - Raajmarg Infra Investment Trust (RIIT) has received a AAA (Stable) rating for long-term bank facilities by CARE Ratings Limited. This top-tier rating underscores the high degree of safety and reliability offered by RIIT's debt instruments, making it among the most secure investment options available to investors. This milestone reinforces RIIT's position as a robust, investor-friendly platform supporting India's infrastructure growth and sustainable capital formation.

The AAA (Stable) rating represents the highest possible creditworthiness, reflecting RIIT's strong financial health and an extremely low risk of default on debt. The 'Stable' outlook indicates that the rating is expected to remain unchanged in the near to medium term.

CARE Ratings has highlighted that the rating draws significant strength from the experience, credibility, and proven track record of RIIT's sponsor, NHAI in the roads and highways sector. The strategic importance of NHAI's asset monetization programme was also a key consideration. To date, NHAI has successfully monetized road assets of around ₹1.43 lakh crore.

Strengthening NHAI's asset monetization program, Raajmarg Infra Investment Trust (RIIT) recently received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) as an Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT). The Public InvIT aims to unlock monetization potential of the National Highway assets while creating a high-quality, long-term investment instrument primarily targeting retail and domestic investors. The initiative marks an important step in broadening public participation in the National Highway infrastructure growth story.

Activate Windows

Finance Ministry Notifies New Tax Regime for Sin Goods Effective February 1, 2026

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- The Ministry of Finance (MoF) has notified a revised tax framework for 'sin goods' such as tobacco, pan masala, gutkha and cigarettes, effective from 1 February 2026.
- The new framework replaces the GST Compensation Cess with additional excise duty and a Health and National Security Cess.
- The objective is to rationalise taxation on sin goods while balancing government revenue and public health goals.
- GST rates remain unchanged, with pan masala, cigarettes and other tobacco products attracting 40% GST, while biris continue to be taxed at 18% GST.
- From 1 February 2026, tobacco products will attract an extra excise duty, and pan masala will be subject to a Health and National Security Cess, in addition to the existing GST.
- Additional excise duty rates have been fixed at 91% for gutkha, 82% for chewing tobacco and jarda scented tobacco, and 33% for hookah tobacco.
- Cigarettes will attract an additional excise duty ranging from ₹2,050 to ₹8,500 per 1,000 sticks, depending on length and filter type.
- Valuation norms will follow an MRP-based system along with a machine-capacity-linked levy for smokeless tobacco and gutkha.
- These valuation provisions will be implemented under the 2026 Packing Machine Rules, aimed at improving compliance and curbing tax evasion.



Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited Begins Maritime Lending, Sanctions ₹4,300 Crore in First Loan Approvals

- Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL), India's first NBFC dedicated to maritime financing, commenced lending operations and sanctioned loans worth around ₹4,300 crore during its 51st Board Meeting held on December 30, 2025.
- With this step, SMFCL formally entered the maritime lending space, in line with the strategy approved by its Board, strengthening India's port and maritime financing ecosystem.
- A major portion of funding includes ₹4,000 crore allocated for a Greenfield Port Project, reaffirming the Government of India's (GoI) commitment to port-led development under the Sagarmala vision.
- Under the same loan tranche, Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) received ₹150 crore, while Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) secured ₹110 crore, aimed at enhancing dredging capacity and indigenous shipbuilding capabilities.
- The SMFCL Board approved a ₹25,000 crore borrowing limit and a ₹8,000 crore lending target for FY 2025-26, outlining its strategic roadmap for maritime sector financing.
- SMFCL, launched in June 2025 (formerly known as Sagarmala Development Company Limited), has been appointed as the nodal agency for the ₹25,000 crore Maritime Development Fund (MDF), positioning it as a key financial pillar for India's maritime infrastructure development.



Asian Development Bank Sanctions ₹4,100 Crore Loan to Telangana for Musi Riverfront Development Project

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- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has granted in-principle approval for a ₹4,100 crore (\$500 million) loan to the Telangana Government for Phase-I of the Musi River Development Project.
- The Telangana Government submitted a Preliminary Project Report (PPR) to the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) seeking ₹3,188 crore under the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP).
- The Musi River Development Project is divided into five zones, with Phase-I covering 21 km of Zone-I, from Osman Sagar (Gandipet) to Babu Ghat and Himayatsagar to Babu Ghat, out of a total project length of 55 km.
- The Musi Riverfront Development Corporation Limited (MRDCL), a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) of the Telangana Government, is executing Phase-I.

ADB to offer loan for Musi rejuvenation project in Hyderabad

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Hyderabad, 2 January

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide a loan of Rs 4000 crore for the Musi Rejuvenation Project in Hyderabad and work on the project will begin once the final estimations of the project are completed by the end of the ongoing financial year. Announcing this in the Legislative Assembly, Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said the MLAs will be given a PowerPoint presentation after the detailed project report (DPR) gets finalised. The Chief Minister said that the Centre has given its approval for the development of the Gandhi Sarovar under the Musi project. According to Reddy, Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has agreed to give defence land for the



construction of the Gandhi Sarovar. The ashes of the Father of the Nation were immersed at the Babu Ghat, which is at the confluence of the Eas and Musi rivers. Under the Musi Rejuvenation Project, the Babu Ghat will also be renovated and a statue of Mahatma Gandhi will be set up. Reddy said a permanent solution will be provided to

against him. "The poison in the hearts of some people is far more dangerous than the pollution in the Musi River. Why are they speaking venom when I am explaining the details? They want to prevent the truth from reaching the people and stop any discussion."

MP POGO
OVERVIEW

Sl. No.	Index Specification No.	Name of the
1	TS.No. SEC/GM/3000/2024/1017/26, 02-02-2025	Minister of M&A
2	TS.No. SEC/GM/3000/2024/1017/26, 02-02-2025	Minister of M&A

Key Highlights :

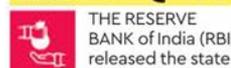
- The Detailed Project Report (DPR) is prepared by a consortium led by Meinhardt (Singapore), along with Cushman & Wakefield India and RIOS Design Studio.
- Phase-I works are expected to begin after cost estimates finalization by 31 March 2026.
- Key features include Babu Ghat redevelopment, the Gandhi Sarovar, and the Mahatma Gandhi memorial, aiming to create a major riverfront landmark.
- The project focuses on cultural restoration of temples, mosques, gurudwaras, churches, and the 800-year-old Lord Shiva temple at Manchirevula.
- Infrastructure plans include the Gateway of Hyderabad, a 55-km elevated corridor from Gandipet to Gourella, and a greenfield road connecting the Outer Ring Road.
- The Musi River, also called Muchukunda or Musunuru River, is a tributary of the Krishna River, flowing through Telangana, with Hyderabad built on its banks.
- The river originates in the Ananthagiri Hills near Vikarabad, flows east then south at Chittaloor, and joins the Krishna River at Vadapally near Miryalaguda, Nalgonda district, spanning about 245 km.
- The Musi River flows into Himayatsagar and Osman Sagar reservoirs, which historically supplied drinking water, and were constructed after 1908 floods to prevent future calamities.
- The project aims to rejuvenate the Musi River, enhance ecological health, and develop the riverfront as a vibrant socio-economic corridor.

States and Union Territories Likely to Borrow ₹5 Lakh Crore in Q4FY26, Up from Last Year

- States and Union Territories (UTs) are expected to borrow around ₹5 lakh crore in Q4FY26 (January–March 2026), higher than ₹4,73,477 crore borrowed in the same quarter last year.
- The Q4FY26 borrowing is about 1.77 times higher than the borrowing in the previous quarter (Q3FY26).
- The borrowing for Q4FY26 is slightly above market expectations, which may impact the interest rate environment.

QUICK PICK

States to borrow ₹5 L-cr in Q4FY26



THE RESERVE BANK OF India (RBI) released the state government borrowing calendar on Friday, signalling a moderate 5.6% rise in funding appetite for the January–March 2026 quarter. The RBI has pegged total market borrowings at ₹4,99,821 crore, higher than the ₹4,73,477 crore raised in the same period last year. The RBI has emphasised that the actual amounts may shift depending on state requirements, market conditions, and approvals under Article 293(3) of the Constitution.

Securities and Exchange Board of India Grants In-Principle Approval to Ashika Group to Sponsor and Set Up Ashika Mutual Fund

- **Ashika Group** received in-principle approval from **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** to act as a **Sponsor** and establish **Ashika Mutual Fund (MF)**, enabling the formation of an **Asset Management Company (AMC)**, subject to final registration.
- The approval allows **Ashika Mutual Fund** to begin preparations for scheme launches, once final **SEBI registration** is granted.
- **Ashika Group**, established in **1994**, operates as a diversified **financial services platform** offering **Retail and Institutional Broking, Investment Banking & Advisory, Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), Research & Advisory, Global Family Office Services, NBFC operations, and distribution services.**



Securities and Exchange Board of India Makes National Institute of Securities Markets Certification Mandatory for AIF Compliance Officers Starting January 2027

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has mandated **National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM)** certification for **Compliance Officers of Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) managers**, effective from **January 1, 2027**, to strengthen regulatory compliance.
- Only individuals who **clear the NISM Series-III-C: Securities Intermediaries Compliance (Fund) Certification Examination** will be **eligible to be appointed or continue as Compliance Officers of AIF managers** from the effective date.
- **Trustees, Sponsors and Managers of AIFs** must **explicitly disclose compliance** with the **NISM certification mandate** in the **Annual Compliance Test Report** as directed by **SEBI**.
- **AIF managers and existing compliance officers** are advised to **register early and complete the NISM Series-III-C exam** well before the **January 1, 2027 deadline** to ensure uninterrupted eligibility.
- Firms are required to **update internal compliance frameworks**, including **policies, compliance records and reporting systems**, to reflect the **new certification requirement in annual reports**.
- The move gains significance as **India's AIF industry has expanded rapidly**, with **AIF assets growing from ₹28,000 crore to over ₹15 lakh crore in a decade**, registering a **CAGR of 49%**, highlighting the need for **stronger compliance standards**.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Bulgaria Switches to Euro as Official Currency Effective January 1, 2026

- **Bulgaria** adopted the **Euro (EUR)** as its official currency from **January 1, 2026**, replacing the **Bulgarian lev (BGN)** after approval by the **Council of the European Union (EU)** on **July 8, 2025**, confirming compliance with all **Maastricht convergence criteria**.

- The **irrevocable conversion rate** was fixed at **1 EUR = 1.95583 BGN**, ensuring a smooth and legally binding transition from the national currency to the euro.
- With this move, **Bulgaria became the 21st member of the Eurozone**, marking a significant step toward deeper economic integration with the European Union.
- During **January 2026**, both **BGN and EUR** will be accepted for payments across Bulgaria, but **change will be given only in euros**, facilitating a gradual transition for citizens and businesses.
- From **February 1, 2026**, the **euro becomes the sole legal tender**, and the **Bulgarian lev will be completely withdrawn from daily circulation**, completing the currency changeover.
- The **Bulgarian National Bank (BNB)** has joined the **Eurosysteem**, integrating into the **European Central Bank (ECB) framework**, strengthening monetary coordination.
- As a result, **Bulgarian banks** will come under the **Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM)**, enhancing **banking supervision, financial stability, and regulatory oversight**.



About Bulgaria :

- **President** : Rumen Radev
- **Capital** : Sofia
- **Currency** : Euro

NATIONAL AND STATE NEWS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurates Grand International Exposition of Sacred Piprahwa Relics

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **Grand International Exposition of Sacred Piprahwa Relics in New Delhi**, showcasing rare Buddhist relics linked to **Bhagwan Buddha** and highlighting India's civilisational and spiritual heritage.
- The exhibition features the **Piprahwa relics discovered in 1898**, which are among the **earliest archaeological remains directly associated with Buddha**.
- Archaeological evidence links **Piprahwa with ancient Kapilavastu**, believed to be the place where **Buddha spent his early life before renunciation**, making the relics crucial to understanding early Buddhism.
- The exposition is titled **"The Light and the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One"** and is being held at the **Rai Pithora Cultural Complex, New Delhi**.
- **For the first time, Piprahwa relics preserved at the National Museum and the Indian Museum have been brought together** under a single global-level exhibition.
- The exhibition presents sections on the **life, teachings, and legacy of Lord Buddha**, offering insights into the origins and spread of Buddhism.
- The event underlines **India's role as the spiritual homeland of Buddhism** and strengthens **cultural diplomacy and soft power**, especially with Buddhist nations across Asia.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi today inaugurated the Grand International Exposition of Sacred Piprahwa Relics related to Bhagwan Buddha, titled The Light and the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One, at the Rai Pithora Cultural Complex in New Delhi. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the Prime Minister said that after one hundred and twenty-five years of waiting, India's heritage has returned, and its legacy has come back.

- The exposition also reflects **India's efforts in heritage preservation and cultural repatriation**, as many relics were **recently brought back to India after more than a century**.
- The initiative aligns with the government's focus on **protecting civilisational heritage, promoting spiritual tourism, and making historical artefacts accessible to scholars, devotees, and the public**.

Delhi Mandates QR Codes on Road Signages for Transparency and Quality Control

- **Delhi Public Works Department has made QR codes mandatory on all new road signages**, as per guidelines issued on **January 1, 2026**, to improve transparency, accountability, and quality standards.
- **All future road signages on Public Works Department roads must carry a QR code**, printed on the **bottom-right corner** of the signboard.
- The **QR code will provide key manufacturing details**, including **manufacturer name, manufacturing date, material used, reflective sheeting code, and warranty information**.
- The requirement has been made **mandatory in the tendering process**, ensuring compliance by all contractors executing road signage works.
- The QR codes will be **linked with the PWD Sewa mobile application**, enabling citizens to **scan the signboard and lodge complaints** related to damaged signages, potholes, road repairs, and streetlights.
- In the **initial phase**, QR codes will display basic information, while **grievance-redressal features will be integrated gradually**, strengthening citizen participation.
- The move aims to ensure **uniformity and improved visibility of road signages** across Delhi through the use of **retro-reflective sheeting**, especially for night-time visibility.
- The guidelines mandate a **10-year warranty on reflective sheeting**, ensuring **free replacement of defective materials during the warranty period** and reducing repeated maintenance costs.
- The initiative reflects Delhi government's focus on **technology-driven governance, improved road safety, and enhanced public accountability** in urban infrastructure management.



Surat Set to Become India's First Slum-Free City

- **Surat in Gujarat is close to becoming India's first slum-free city**, due to large-scale redevelopment of slum clusters into permanent housing with basic civic amenities.
- The initiative is being implemented by the **Surat Municipal Corporation**, using a **mission-mode approach** under central and state housing schemes.
- Most slum areas are being redeveloped through **in-situ slum redevelopment**, where **multi-storey apartment complexes** are constructed at the same location.
- Slum-dwelling families are provided **permanent and legal housing**, ensuring they are not displaced far from livelihoods, schools, or social networks.



Gandhinagar: State govt spokesperson Jitu Vaghani said on Wednesday that Surat was poised to become India's first slum-free city with a population of over 70 lakh. He said that in the past two decades, the population living in Surat's slum areas had decreased from 38% to 5%.

Vaghani said, "The CM has directed senior officials, including the CS, to take effective measures to make Surat the state's first slum-free city, considering the favourable circumstances." He added that if Surat achieves this milestone, it will become India's first major slum-free city.

- The housing projects provide **durable flats with essential civic amenities**, including piped drinking water, proper drainage and sewage systems, street lighting, paved internal roads, sanitation, and waste management facilities.
- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)** provides central financial assistance, while **Gujarat state housing policies** complement funding and implementation.
- Strong coordination between **local, state, and central agencies** has enabled Surat to achieve faster and more effective slum redevelopment compared to many other Indian cities.
- Achieving slum-free status is expected to **improve urban living standards and public health**, reduce inequality and social exclusion, and enhance efficient land use and city aesthetics.
- The initiative supports **Sustainable Development Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities** and serves as a **replicable model for urban housing and slum rehabilitation** across India.

India's Broadband Subscriber Base Crosses 100 Crore in November 2025

- **India crossed the historic milestone of 100 crore broadband subscribers in November 2025**, reflecting rapid digital expansion and deepening internet penetration across the country.
- As per data released by the **Press Information Bureau**, the total number of broadband subscribers stood at **100.37 crore** by the end of November 2025, making India one of the **largest digitally connected nations in the world**.
- The growth represents a **more than six-fold increase over the last decade**, highlighting the success of sustained policy support and technological adoption.
- In **November 2015**, India had **13.15 crore broadband subscribers**, which rose sharply to **100.37 crore by November 2025**, indicating accelerated digital transformation.
- Key drivers behind this surge include **affordable mobile data, intense competition in the telecom sector, expansion of 4G and 5G networks, and large-scale optical fibre rollout** across urban and rural areas.
- Government initiatives under **Digital India**, along with rising **smartphone penetration in rural and semi-urban regions**, have played a critical role in making internet access more inclusive.
- Crossing the **100 crore subscriber mark** strengthens **digital governance**, improves **public service delivery**, and supports **financial inclusion through digital payments**.
- Enhanced broadband connectivity has also enabled growth in **online education, telemedicine, e-commerce, startups**, and the **overall digital economy**, making it a key pillar of India's socio-economic development.



Broadband subscriber base in India has crossed the 100 crore mark in the month of November this year. Ministry of Communications today said that in the last 10 years, the broadband subscriber base in India has increased by more than six times. It added that there were 13.15 crore Broadband subscribers at the end of November in 2015, which grew to 100.37 crore at the end of last month.

Goa to Get a Third District with Headquarters at Quepem

- The **Goa government** has announced the formation of a **third district**, carved out of the existing **South Goa district**, to improve administrative efficiency and governance outreach.
- The **headquarters of the new district will be at Quepem**, aimed at making administration more accessible to people in southern and hinterland regions of the state.

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- The new district will comprise **four talukas: Sanguem, Dharbandora, Quepem, and Canacona**, which are largely hinterland and semi-rural areas.
- At present, **Goa has only two districts: North Goa and South Goa**. After reorganisation, **South Goa is expected to retain Ponda, Salcete, and Mormugao**, while the remaining four talukas will form the new district.
- The decision was **approved by the Goa Cabinet** after consultations with legislators across party lines, as stated by **Chief Minister Pramod Sawant**.
- One of the key rationales for the move is a **recommendation by NITI Aayog**, which advocates **smaller districts** to ensure governance reaches the grassroots and benefits a larger population.
- In **November 2023**, the state government had constituted a **seven-member committee headed by the Chief Secretary** to study the feasibility of creating a third district.
- The committee examined factors such as **population growth, infrastructure availability, economic conditions, geography, public opinion, and administrative and financial implications**.
- The committee observed that the proposed district satisfies criteria for inclusion under the **Aspirational District Programme**, especially due to the presence of **backward and tribal-dominated talukas**.
- Inclusion under the Aspirational District Programme is expected to help attract **central assistance** for sectors such as **health, education, agriculture, water supply, infrastructure, and financial inclusion**.
- The Goa government believes that the **long-term developmental benefits** of the new district will **outweigh the initial administrative costs**, supporting balanced regional development.



Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. (Express/File)

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Tuesday said that a third district would be formed in the state.

The state currently has two districts — South Goa and North Goa. The third district will comprise the four hinterland talukas of Sanguem, Dharbandora, Quepem and Canacona, which currently fall under the South Goa district. The headquarters for the third district will be located in Quepem.

Gujarat Sets Up Cyber Security Panels to Protect Energy Infrastructure

- The **Gujarat government** has constituted an **11-member Core Committee** and a **19-member Task Force** to protect the state's **energy infrastructure from cyber-attacks**.
- The decision has been taken by the **Energy and Petrochemicals Department (EPD), Gujarat**, in view of rising cyber risks due to increased digitalisation in the power sector.
- The move focuses on securing **smart grids, SCADA systems, smart meters, and digital power supply networks** that support **24x7 electricity services**.
- The **Core Committee** will review the overall **cyber security strategy** in the energy sector and examine **policies, preparedness, and system resilience**.
- It will also suggest **long-term frameworks and improvements** to strengthen cyber security of critical energy infrastructure.
- The **Task Force** will focus on **operational and technical implementation** of cyber security measures across the power sector.
- It will support **training programmes, cyber drills, coordination activities, and on-ground execution** of security protocols.



Gandhinagar: Gujarat govt on Wednesday constituted an 11-member core committee and a 19-member task force to ensure cybersecurity of the state's power sector, noting that there was a "distinct possibility of enhancement of deliberate cyber intrusions and systemic disruptions in the current geopolitical climate".

While the core committee will be headed by the ACS/principal secretary/secretary of the energy and petrochemicals department (EPD), the task force will be headed by the managing director of Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Ltd (GUVNL).

- Both bodies will review existing **IT and cyber security arrangements** and assess the state's **preparedness to handle cyber incidents**.
- They will recommend **policy improvements** and develop a **clear roadmap** for building a robust cyber security system in the energy sector.
- The initiative includes **capacity building measures**, such as regular **cyber drills, awareness programmes, and training for officials**.
- The state will promote **coordination with academic institutions, cyber security experts, and state and national agencies**.
- The step reflects Gujarat's focus on **protecting critical infrastructure**, ensuring **uninterrupted power supply**, and strengthening **technology-driven governance**.

India Records Sharp Rise in Tiger Deaths in 2025

- India recorded **166 tiger deaths in 2025**, which is **40 more than in 2024**, according to data released by the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**.
- This increase has raised concerns despite India hosting the **largest tiger population in the world**.
- **Madhya Pradesh** reported the **highest number of tiger deaths at 55**, followed by **Maharashtra (38), Kerala (13), and Assam (12)**.
- Out of the total deaths, **31 were cubs**, indicating increased vulnerability of younger tigers.
- The number of deaths rose significantly from **126 in 2024 to 166 in 2025**, reflecting rising stress on tiger habitats.
- Wildlife experts have identified **territorial infighting, habitat saturation, and space crunch** as the main reasons for the increased mortality.
- With rising tiger numbers and limited forest space, **young and dispersing tigers** often clash with resident adults while searching for territory, leading to fatal encounters.
- India's tiger population increased from **2,967 in 2018 to 3,682 in 2022**, showing an annual growth rate of about **6 percent**.
- In Madhya Pradesh, tiger numbers rose sharply from **308 in 2014 to 785 in 2022**, intensifying competition for territory.
- In Madhya Pradesh, over **38 of the 55 deaths** were attributed to **natural causes**, mainly involving cubs and young tigers.
- Around **10 deaths** were linked to **poaching**, including cases of electrocution and non-targeted killings.
- As per protocol, **all tiger deaths are treated as poaching cases unless proven otherwise**.
- The **NTCA**, a **statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, was established in **2006 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
- NTCA prescribes **strict Standard Operating Procedures** for investigating tiger deaths, and states like Madhya Pradesh have deployed **Tiger Strike Forces** to combat wildlife crime.
- India is home to nearly **75 percent of the global tiger population**, and the **All India Tiger Estimation** is conducted every **four years** to monitor population trends.



Tigress and cubs in the wild

According to the latest figures made available by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), India, home to nearly three-fourths of the world's population of tigers, documented the deaths of as many as 166 tigers in 2025. The figure has increased by 40 tiger mortalities compared to 2024, when 126 mortalities were reported, according to the latest figures made available by the National Tiger Conservation Authority. This triggers fresh concerns regarding habitat pressure, territorial competition, and conservation challenges—issues that either stagnated or barely improved amidst

E-Bill System for Fertiliser Subsidy Launched to Enhance Transparency

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- The **E-Bill System for fertiliser subsidies** has been inaugurated by **Jagat Prakash Nadda, Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers**, in **New Delhi**.
- The system will be used to process fertiliser subsidy payments of around **₹2 lakh crore**, marking a major shift towards **digital, transparent, and efficient financial governance**.
- The E-Bill System is an **end-to-end online digital platform** designed to process **fertiliser subsidy claims electronically**.
- Earlier, fertiliser subsidy bills were processed through **physical files, manual verification, and multiple approval layers**, which often resulted in **delays and inefficiencies**.
- Under the new system, subsidy claims will move **digitally from fertiliser companies to the government** through an **integrated electronic workflow**.
- The system eliminates paperwork, speeds up approvals, and ensures that **payments are released only after system-based verification**.
- Built-in checks and controls have been introduced to strengthen **financial discipline and transparency**.
- Each bill is verified against **predefined rules** before payment approval.
- All actions taken on a bill are **digitally recorded**, creating a complete **audit trail**.
- The system reduces the risk of **errors, duplication, and misuse of public funds**.
- By minimising human intervention, the E-Bill System promotes **objective decision-making** and supports a **technology-driven and corruption-free administration**.
- Fertiliser subsidies play a critical role in ensuring **food security and agricultural stability** in India.
- The government provides subsidies to keep fertilisers such as **urea and phosphatic fertilisers** affordable for farmers.
- India incurs a **large fiscal expenditure on fertiliser subsidies** due to high global prices and import dependence.
- Efficient management of fertiliser subsidies is essential to **control fiscal burden, ensure uninterrupted fertiliser supply, and protect farmers from price volatility**.



Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers JP Nadda has inaugurated the e-Bill System that will enable the government to process the fertiliser subsidies amounting to approximately 2 lakh crore rupees. Addressing the event in New Delhi today, the Minister said this online system would play a significant role in strengthening transparent, efficient and technology-driven governance. The integrated e-Bill system significantly enhances

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Appointments Committee of the Cabinet Names Lav Aggarwal as Directorate General of Foreign Trade Chief, Rabindra Kumar Agarwal Appointed Chairman and Managing Director of Food Corporation of India

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, appointed **Lav Aggarwal** as **Director General (DG) of Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** under the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoC&I)** and **Rabindra Kumar Agarwal** as **Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Food Corporation of India (FCI)** as part of a major **bureaucratic reshuffle** involving **25 senior civil servants**, including **in-situ promotions and reassignments**.
- **Lav Aggarwal**, a **1996-batch IAS officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre**, succeeded **Ajay Bhadoo** as **DG, DGFT** after **Santosh Kumar Sarangi** was transferred as **Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**.



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- He earlier served as **Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)** from **August 2016 to August 2022** and was also **Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD)**.
- **Rabindra Kumar Agarwal**, a **1997-batch IAS officer of Kerala cadre**, was appointed **CMD, FCI**, replacing **Ashutosh Agnihotri**, who moved as **Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.
- Prior to this, **Rabindra Kumar Agarwal** served as **Additional Secretary, Ministry of Cooperation, Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS), Joint Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)**, and **Deputy Director (Administration) at AIIMS, New Delhi**.

About Food Corporation of India (FCI) :

- **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** was established in **1965** under the **Food Corporation Act, 1964** and functions under the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (MoCAF&PD)** to ensure **food security and stable foodgrain supply** across India.
- **Headquarters : New Delhi**.

Karthikeyan Manickam Appointed as Chairman of ESAF Small Finance Bank

- **ESAF Small Finance Bank**, headquartered in **Thrissur, Kerala**, appointed **Karthikeyan Manickam** as its **Chairman**, strengthening the bank's leadership.
- **Karthikeyan Manickam** brings over **36 years of experience in public sector banking**, having previously served as **Executive Director of Bank of India (BoI)**.
- During his banking career, he held several **senior leadership positions at Indian Bank**, gaining extensive operational and managerial expertise.
- He has served as a **Board Member of Tamil Nadu Grama Bank and BOI STAR Investment Managers Pvt. Ltd.**, contributing to governance and strategic oversight.
- He also served as **Chairman of Star Union Dai-ichi Life Insurance Company Limited (SUD Life)**, adding experience in the **insurance and financial services sector**.



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Defence Research and Development Organisation Carries Out Successful Simultaneous Test Launch of Two Pralay Missiles from Odisha Coast

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully conducted a **salvo launch (simultaneous firing)** of two **indigenously developed Pralay missiles** in quick succession from the **same launcher** at the **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha**, as part of **user evaluation trials**.
- During the **flight-test**, both **Pralay missiles** accurately followed their **intended trajectories** and **achieved all mission objectives**, confirming their **operational reliability**.



Key Highlights :

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- Missile performance was validated using **tracking sensors deployed at ITR, Chandipur**, while **terminal events** were confirmed through **onboard telemetry systems** installed on **ships near designated impact points**.
- The trials were **witnessed by senior DRDO scientists**, officials from the **Indian Army (IA), Indian Air Force (IAF)**, and **industry representatives**, indicating user-level confidence.
- The **Pralay missile programme**, sanctioned in **2015**, is an **evolution of the Prahaar missile**, which was first tested in **2011**.
- **Pralay** is a **short-range, solid propellant, quasi-ballistic Surface-to-Surface Missile (SSM)** with **state-of-the-art guidance and navigation systems** ensuring **high precision strike capability**.
- The missile has a **strike range of 150–500 km** and can carry **conventional warheads weighing 500–1000 kg**, enhancing **tactical battlefield effectiveness**.
- **Pralay** is equipped with an **advanced Inertial Navigation System (INS)**, enabling **high accuracy and precision** in target engagement.
- The missile has been developed by **Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad**, in collaboration with **DRDO laboratories** including **ASL, ARDE, HEMRL, TBRL, R&DE (Engineers)**, and **DMRL**.
- **Development-cum-production partners** include **Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**, and other **Indian industry partners**, reflecting strong **indigenous defence manufacturing**.

About DRDO :

- Established : **1958**
- Headquarters : **New Delhi**
- **Chairman Dr. Samir V. Kamat.**
- **DRDO** is the **R&D wing of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), Government of India**

Hyderabad Space Start-ups Integrate Mini Satellite in Ahmedabad, Send to Sriharikota for ISRO PSLV Launch

- **Two Hyderabad-based space start-ups – TakeMe2Space and EON Space Labs – have successfully tested and integrated a 14-kg Earth observation satellite (MOI-1) along with a miniature space telescope (MIRA).**
- The satellite was tested and integrated at **Azista BST Aerospace, Ahmedabad**, and has been **shipped to Sriharikota** for its **upcoming launch**.
- **MOI-1 will be deployed in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) at ~500 km altitude**, with an **expected mission life of 3–5 years**, serving **both commercial and defence applications**.
- The **entire mission was completed in just six months at a cost of ₹2.5 crore**, making it **40–70% cheaper** and **significantly lighter** than typical global satellites weighing **100–200 kg**.
- The satellite is equipped with a **9.2-metre resolution camera, 18.7-km swath**, and **nine multispectral bands**, enabling **agriculture monitoring, urban mapping, ship detection, and infrastructure tracking**.
- **Onboard computing and AI-based processing** allow **MOI-1 to transmit processed, actionable data instead of raw images**, thereby **reducing data transmission costs**.



- The mission will be launched as a **co-passenger** aboard ISRO's PSLV-C62 from the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre**, scheduled for **January 10, 2026**.
- This marks the **first space payload** developed by **EON Space Labs** and the **first satellite** in **TakeMe2Space's** planned orbital data-centre constellation.

Indian Space Research Organisation Successfully Tests Enhanced SSLV Third Stage (SS3) at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** successfully conducted a **static ground test** of the **enhanced 3rd stage (SS3)** of the **Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)** at the **Solid Motor Static Test Facility, Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh**.
- **SSLV** is a **three-stage, all-solid launch vehicle** designed for **quick, on-demand missions** and to support **industrial-scale production** of launch services.
- During the test, the **enhanced SS3 motor** was fired for **108 seconds**, with **all performance parameters** **closely matching pre-test predictions**.
- The motor was equipped with **around 233 sensors** to monitor **pressure, thrust, temperature, vibration**, and the **performance of control electronics**.
- Following the successful test, the **enhanced SS3 stage** has **qualified for induction into flight missions**.
- The **performance upgrades**, including a **new carbon-epoxy motor case**, have increased **SSLV payload capacity** by about **90 kg**.
- Additional improvements such as an **upgraded igniter and nozzle system** have further enhanced the **efficiency, reliability, and overall performance** of the **SSLV**.



PERSON IN NEWS

Mumbai's Kaamya Karthikeyan, 18, Becomes Youngest Woman to Complete Seven Summits

- **Kaamya Karthikeyan**, an **18-year-old** from **Mumbai**, became the **youngest female in the world** to scale the **Seven Summits** (the highest peaks on all seven continents).
- She is a **Class 12 student** of **Navy Children School, Mumbai**, and completed her **final summit in Antarctica** (Mount Vinson) followed by a trek to the **South Pole** on **December 27, 2025**.
- Kaamya has successfully climbed:
 - **Mount Kilimanjaro (Africa)**
 - **Mount Elbrus (Europe)**
 - **Mount Kosciuszko (Australia)**
 - **Mount Aconcagua (South America)**
 - **Mount Denali (North America)**
 - **Mount Everest (Asia)**
 - **Mount Vinson (Antarctica)**
- She is the **second-youngest female** in the world and the **youngest Indian** to climb **Mount Everest from the Nepal side**, which she scaled at the age of **16** in **May 2024**.



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- The **Indian Navy** congratulated her, noting that she is the **daughter of a naval officer** (Commander S. Karthikeyan) and praised her **endurance, courage, and resilience**.
- Kaamya now aims to become the **youngest person to complete the Explorers Grand Slam**.
- This ultimate adventure challenge includes **climbing the Seven Summits** and **skiing to both the North and South Poles**.

SPORTS NEWS

National Sports Governance Act, 2025 Comes into Force from January 1, 2026

- **Select provisions of the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 came into effect from January 1, 2026**, marking a major reform in **India's sports governance framework**.
- The Act was **notified in August 2025** and provides **statutory backing** to reforms that were earlier implemented only through government guidelines.
- The law applies to key sports institutions including the **National Olympic Committee, National Paralympic Committee, and National Sports Federations**, bringing them under a uniform legal framework.
- The primary objective of the Act is to ensure **transparency, accountability, ethical governance, and athlete-centric decision making** in sports administration.
- The Act seeks to align India's sports governance with **Olympic Charter and Paralympic Charter norms**, promoting global best practices.
- A key institutional reform under the Act is the establishment of the **National Sports Board (NSB)** as a **three-member oversight body**.
- The **National Sports Board** is empowered to **grant affiliations, monitor financial functioning, decide eligibility for government funding, and take action against misconduct** by sports federations.
- The Act also establishes the **National Sports Tribunal (NST)** for **speedy and specialised resolution of sports-related disputes**, reducing prolonged litigation and administrative delays.
- The creation of the National Sports Board and National Sports Tribunal is expected to **reduce political interference** and improve institutional discipline in sports bodies.
- Under the Act, **Executive Committees of national and regional sports federations are capped at a maximum of 15 members**.
- Each Executive Committee must include **at least two Sportspersons of Merit**, ensuring **mandatory athlete representation** in decision making.
- The provision for athlete representation addresses long-standing concerns regarding **administrator dominance and lack of athlete voice** in sports governance.
- **Elections of sports federations will be conducted after full implementation of the Act**, allowing a smooth transition to the new governance structure.
- Overall, the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 aims to **professionalise sports administration**, strengthen **financial and ethical discipline**, and create a **fair and athlete-friendly sports ecosystem** in India.



e match. Image used for representational purposes. File | Photo Credit: PTI

The National Sports Governance Act partially came into effect on Thursday (January 1, 2026) with provisions that will set the ball rolling for the institution of an all-powerful National Sports Board (NSB) and a Tribunal to handle sporting disputes notified as enforced by the Central government.

World Blitz Chess Championship 2025: Magnus Carlsen Wins 9th Title, Arjun Erigaisi Secures Bronze

- The **World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship 2025** was held in **Doha, Qatar**, featuring elite players from across the world and delivering high-intensity competition.
- **Magnus Carlsen** won the **World Blitz Chess Championship** for a **record ninth time**, reaffirming his dominance in the fastest format of the game.
- Despite struggling in the round-robin stage with **blunders, time trouble, and forfeits**, Carlsen showed exceptional **experience and mental resilience** in the knockout rounds.
- In the final, Carlsen defeated **Nodirbek Abdusattorov**, later describing the victory as **one of the hardest-earned world titles** of his career.
- **Arjun Erigaisi** delivered a strong performance, winning the **bronze medal** in the Blitz event and emerging as one of the **standout players** of the tournament.
- Erigaisi topped the league stage among **252 players**, losing only **one out of 19 games**, and registered victories against top players, including **Magnus Carlsen**.
- A dip in form during the **semi-finals** denied Erigaisi a chance at the gold medal, resulting in a **joint bronze finish**.
- Magnus Carlsen and Arjun Erigaisi were the **only two players** to win **two medals each** at the Doha championship.
- **India finished the tournament with three bronze medals**, highlighting its growing strength in global chess.
- Along with Arjun Erigaisi's **Rapid and Blitz bronze medals**, **Koneru Humpy** won **bronze in the Women's Rapid Championship**.
- The performances underlined **India's rising stature in international chess** and the depth of talent across formats and categories.
- **Blitz chess**, recognised by the **International Chess Federation (FIDE)**, is a fast-paced format where players get **three to five minutes per game**, testing **speed, intuition, and composure under pressure**.



World No.1 Magnus Carlsen showed his endgame genius yet again to add a record-extending ninth world Blitz title to the Rapid gold medal he won two days back, but Indian Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi suffered a massive meltdown in the semifinal to settle for a bronze in the World Blitz Championship in Doha on Tuesday (December 30, 2025).

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation Launches New Logo and Mascot to Strengthen Data-Driven Governance

- The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** has unveiled a **new official logo and mascot** as part of its efforts to modernise institutional identity and strengthen public outreach.
- The initiative aims to **improve trust in official statistics**, promote **data-driven governance**, and highlight the role of reliable data in **policy formulation and nation-building**.
- The new logo is based on the theme **“Data for Development”**, underscoring the importance of statistics in India's **economic and social progress**.
- It reflects MoSPI's mission to provide **credible, timely, and transparent data** to support evidence-based decision-making across sectors such as **economy, health, education, and infrastructure**.
- The logo incorporates the **Ashoka Chakra**, symbolising **truth, transparency, and good governance**.



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- The **Rupee symbol** at the centre represents the role of statistics in **economic planning and fiscal policymaking**.
- **Numerical motifs and an upward growth bar** signify modern data systems and progress driven by accurate statistical analysis.
- The colour scheme includes **saffron, white, green, and deep blue**, drawing from the national tricolour and conveying **growth, sustainability, stability, trust, and knowledge**.
- Along with the logo, MoSPI introduced its mascot “**सांख्यिकी (Sankhyiki)**”, designed as a **friendly, citizen-centric character** to make statistics more approachable.
- The mascot will be used in **surveys, awareness campaigns, educational initiatives, digital platforms, and public events** to simplify complex statistical concepts.
- It is expected to encourage **greater public participation** in surveys conducted by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)** and improve response quality.
- The launch reinforces MoSPI’s commitment to **integrity, transparency, and modern statistical science** in support of national development.

Hockey India Appoints Sjoerd Marijne as Chief Coach of Indian Women’s Hockey Team

- **Hockey India** has announced the appointment of **Sjoerd Marijne** as the **Chief Coach of the Indian women’s hockey team**, giving a major boost to the team ahead of key international events.
- The appointment comes at a crucial time as India prepares for the **FIH Women’s Hockey World Cup Qualifiers**, scheduled to be held in **March**.
- **Sjoerd Marijne** is an experienced **Dutch international hockey coach** with a strong track record at the global level.
- He previously coached the Indian women’s team and guided them to a **historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics**, which remains **India’s best-ever performance in women’s hockey at the Olympic Games**.
- The Tokyo 2020 achievement came after a gap of **over 36 years** since India’s earlier Olympic appearance in women’s hockey.
- His familiarity with **Indian players, team dynamics, and playing conditions** is expected to strengthen preparation and performance in upcoming tournaments.
- Marijne’s first major assignment will be the **FIH Hockey Women’s World Cup Qualifiers**, to be held in **Hyderabad, Telangana**, from **8th to 14th March**.
- These qualifier matches are crucial for **securing India’s qualification for the upcoming Women’s Hockey World Cup**.
- He is expected to **arrive in India on 14th January**, and the **National Coaching Camp** will commence on **19th January** at **Sports Authority of India (SAI), Bengaluru**.
- The camp will focus on **player fitness, tactical planning, and team coordination**.
- **Dilip Tirkey**, President of Hockey India, welcomed the appointment and thanked the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** and the **Sports Authority of India (SAI)** for expediting the process.
- The timely appointment highlights the government’s and hockey administration’s commitment to strengthening India’s performance in international sports competitions.



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IMPORTANT DAYS

World Braille Day 2026 Observed on January 4

- **World Braille Day 2026 is observed on 4 January** every year across the world.
- The day is celebrated to **honour the birth anniversary of Louis Braille**, the inventor of the Braille system.
- **Louis Braille invented the raised-dot reading and writing system** that transformed the lives of **millions of blind and visually impaired people** globally.
- The term **“Braille” is named after its inventor Louis Braille**.
- Louis Braille **lost his vision in childhood** after accidentally injuring his eye with his father’s awl.
- At the age of **10 years**, Louis Braille joined the **Royal Institute for Blind Youth in France**, where he began developing the raised-dot technique.
- He created a **six-dot cell-based code**, enabling readers to feel an entire character with a single fingertip touch.
- The **Braille system allows fast reading by moving fingers from one cell to the next**, while retaining clarity and accuracy.
- Braille eventually became the **primary global method of written communication for blind persons**.
- **Louis Braille died in 1852**, two years before Braille was officially adopted for teaching at the Royal Institute, and could not witness the global impact of his invention.
- The **United Nations General Assembly recognised Braille as a vital tool** that provides access to education, communication, and opportunities for the blind and visually impaired.
- In **November 2018**, the **United Nations General Assembly designated January 4 as World Braille Day**.
- The **first-ever World Braille Day was observed in 2019** as an internationally recognised observance.
- The date **January 4 was chosen as it coincides with Louis Braille’s birthday**.



Daily CA One- Liner: January 4th & 5th

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Grand International Exposition of Sacred Piprahwa Relics in New Delhi**, showcasing rare Buddhist relics linked to **Bhagwan Buddha** and highlighting India’s civilisational and spiritual heritage
- **Delhi Public Works Department has made QR codes mandatory on all new road signages**, as per guidelines issued on **January 1, 2026**, to improve transparency, accountability, and quality standards.
- **The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has strengthened capital, compliance, certification, governance, and operational norms for merchant bankers** to enhance **financial stability and investor protection**, effective from **January 3, 2026**.
- **The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA–Budget Division) under the Ministry of Finance (MoF) kept interest rates unchanged across all Small Savings Schemes (SSS) for Q4 FY26 (1 Jan–31 Mar 2026)**.
- **Raajmarg Infra Investment Trust (RIIT)**, sponsored by **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)**, has received a **AAA (Stable) rating** for its **long-term bank facilities** from **CARE Ratings Limited**.

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- The Ministry of Finance (MoF) has notified a revised tax framework for 'sin goods' such as tobacco, pan masala, gutkha and cigarettes, effective from 1 February 2026.
- Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL), India's first NBFC dedicated to maritime financing, commenced lending operations and sanctioned loans worth around ₹4,300 crore during its 51st Board Meeting held on December 30, 2025.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has granted in-principle approval for a ₹4,100 crore (\$500 million) loan to the Telangana Government for Phase-I of the Musi River Development Project.
- States and Union Territories (UTs) are expected to borrow around ₹5 lakh crore in Q4FY26 (January–March 2026), higher than ₹4,73,477 crore borrowed in the same quarter last year.
- Ashika Group received in-principle approval from Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to act as a Sponsor and establish Ashika Mutual Fund (MF), enabling the formation of an Asset Management Company (AMC), subject to final registration.
- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has mandated National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM) certification for Compliance Officers of Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) managers, effective from January 1, 2027, to strengthen regulatory compliance.
- Bulgaria adopted the Euro (EUR) as its official currency from January 1, 2026, replacing the Bulgarian lev (BGN) after approval by the Council of the European Union (EU) on July 8, 2025, confirming compliance with all Maastricht convergence criteria.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, appointed Lav Aggarwal as Director General (DG) of Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoC&I) and Rabindra Kumar Agarwal as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Food Corporation of India (FCI) as part of a major bureaucratic reshuffle involving 25 senior civil servants, including in-situ promotions and reassignments.
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- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully conducted a static ground test of the enhanced 3rd stage (SS3) of the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) at the Solid Motor Static Test Facility, Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- Kaamyaa Karthikeyan, an 18-year-old from Mumbai, became the youngest female in the world to scale the Seven Summits (the highest peaks on all seven continents).
- Surat in Gujarat is close to becoming India's first slum-free city, due to large-scale redevelopment of slum clusters into permanent housing with basic civic amenities

- **India crossed the historic milestone of 100 crore broadband subscribers in November 2025**, reflecting rapid digital expansion and deepening internet penetration across the country
- The **Goa government** has announced the formation of a **third district**, carved out of the existing **South Goa district**, to improve administrative efficiency and governance outreach
- The **Gujarat government** has constituted an **11-member Core Committee** and a **19-member Task Force** to protect the state's **energy infrastructure from cyber-attacks**
- India recorded **166 tiger deaths in 2025**, which is **40 more than in 2024**, according to data released by the **National Tiger Conservation Authority**
- The **E-Bill System for fertiliser subsidies** has been inaugurated by **Jagat Prakash Nadda, Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers**, in **New Delhi**
- **Select provisions of the National Sports Governance Act, 2025** came into effect from **January 1, 2026**, marking a major reform in **India's sports governance framework**
- The **World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship 2025** was held in **Doha, Qatar**, featuring elite players from across the world and delivering high-intensity competition
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