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# Daily Current Affairs

## 3rd Feb 2026

## BANKING, FINANCE & BUSINESS

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF UNION BUDGET 2026-27

- **Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** presented the **Union Budget 2026–27** in the **Lok Sabha** on **February 1, 2026**, marking her record **ninth consecutive Budget presentation**.
- The speech clocked a duration of **1 hour and 25 minutes** (**85 minutes**)
- The Budget aims to boost capital expenditure, strengthen domestic manufacturing, promote technology and infrastructure development, and maintain fiscal discipline.
- This is the **first Union Budget** prepared in **Kartavya Bhawan** and is inspired by **three Kartavyas (duties)**.
- **First Kartavya**: Accelerate and sustain **economic growth** by enhancing **productivity**, **competitiveness** and **resilience** to global volatility.
- **Second Kartavya**: Fulfil **aspirations** and build **capacity** of people, making them **partners** in India's growth journey.
- **Third Kartavya**: Aligned with **Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas**, ensuring **inclusive access** to resources and opportunities.

### Key Highlights :

- **Budget Estimates & Fiscal Indicators**
- **Total Expenditure (BE 2026–27)**: ₹53.5 lakh crore
- **Non-debt Receipts (BE)**: ₹36.5 lakh crore
- **Net Tax Receipts (BE)**: ₹28.7 lakh crore
- **Fiscal Deficit (BE 2026–27)**: 4.3% of GDP
- **Fiscal Deficit (RE 2025–26)**: 4.4% of GDP
- **Debt-to-GDP Ratio (BE 2026–27)**: 55.6% (down from **56.1%** in RE 2025–26)
- **Capital Expenditure (RE 2025–26)**: ~₹11 lakh crore
- **Public Capex (FY 2026–27)**: ₹12.2 lakh crore
- **Gross Market Borrowings**: ₹17.2 lakh crore
- **Net Market Borrowings**: ₹11.7 lakh crore
- **First Kartavya – 6 Key Growth Interventions**
- **Biopharma SHAKTI** launched with **₹10,000 crore outlay** (5 years) to make India a **global biopharma hub**.
- **3 new NIPERs** to be set up and **7 existing NIPERs upgraded**.
- **1,000+ accredited clinical trial sites** to be created across India.
- **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) 2.0** to boost **equipment, materials, full-stack Indian IP** and **supply chains**.
- **Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme** outlay increased to **₹40,000 crore**.
- **Dedicated Rare Earth Corridors** to be developed in **Odisha, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu**.
- **3 Chemical Parks** to be established via **challenge-based, cluster plug-and-play model**.
- **Capital Goods & Manufacturing**
- **Hi-Tech Tool Rooms** to be set up by **CPSEs** for **precision manufacturing**.
- **Construction & Infrastructure Equipment (CIE) Scheme** introduced.
- **Container Manufacturing Scheme** with **₹10,000 crore** (5 years) announced.
- **Textiles & Traditional Sectors**

- **Integrated Textile Programme** launched covering **National Fibre Scheme**, **Textile Expansion & Employment Scheme**, and **Mega Textile Parks**.
- **Mahatma Gandhi Gram Swaraj Initiative** to strengthen **khadi, handloom and handicrafts**.
- **MSMEs & Legacy Industries**
- **200 legacy industrial clusters** to be revived through **technology and infrastructure upgrades**.
- **₹10,000 crore SME Growth Fund** to create **"Champion MSMEs"**.
- **Self-Reliant India Fund** gets **additional ₹2,000 crore**.
- **Corporate Mitras** to be developed via **ICAI, ICSI and ICMAI**, especially in **Tier-II & Tier-III cities**.
- **Infrastructure & Connectivity**
- **Infrastructure Risk Guarantee Fund** to **de-risk private investment**.
- **Dedicated Freight Corridor** from **Dankuni (East)** to **Surat (West)** announced.
- **20 new National Waterways** to be operationalised; starting with **NW-5 in Odisha**.
- **Coastal Cargo Promotion Scheme** to raise **waterway share to 12% by 2047**.
- **Ship repair hubs** to be set up at **Varanasi and Patna**.
- **Seaplane VGF Scheme** introduced to boost **regional connectivity and tourism**.
- **Energy & Urban Development**
- **₹20,000 crore allocation** (5 years) for **Carbon Capture, Utilisation & Storage (CCUS)**.
- **City Economic Regions (CERs)** to get **₹5,000 crore each** over **5 years**.
- **7 High-Speed Rail Corridors** announced including
  - Mumbai-Pune
  - Pune-Hyderabad,
  - Hyderabad-Bengaluru,
  - Hyderabad-Chennai
  - Chennai-Bengaluru,
  - Delhi-Varanasi,
  - Varanasi-Siliguri.
- **Second Kartavya – People & Capacity**
- **Education-to-Employment Standing Committee** to focus on the **Services Sector**.
- **100,000 Allied Health Professionals** to be added in **5 years**.
- **5 Regional Medical Hubs** to promote **medical tourism**.
- **3 new All India Institutes of Ayurveda** to be established.
- **20,000+ veterinary professionals** to be added; **capital subsidy** for **vet institutions**.
- **Orange Economy :** Indian Institute of Creative Technologies, Mumbai  to be provided support in setting up Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics (AVGC) Content Creator Labs in 15,000 secondary schools and 500 colleges.
- **AVGC Content Creator Labs** in **15,000 schools** and **500 colleges**.
- **One girls' hostel in every district** via **VGF/capital support**.
- **Khelo India Mission** launched to transform **sports** over the **next decade**.
- **Third Kartavya – Inclusion & Regional Focus**
- **Integrated development** of **500 reservoirs** and **Amrit Sarovars**.
- **Bharat-VISTAAR**, a **multilingual AI agri-platform**, to integrate **AgriStack** and **ICAR data**.
- **Divyangjan Kaushal Yojana** for employment in **IT, AVGC, hospitality and F&B**.
- **NIMHANS-2** to be set up in **North India**; institutes in **Ranchi and Tezpur upgraded**.
- **Purvodaya & North-East focus** with **East Coast Industrial Corridor**, **5 tourism destinations**, and **4,000 e-buses**.
- **Tax Reforms :**

- **New Income Tax Act, 2025** to come into force from **April 2026**.
- **Interest awarded by MACT** to individuals made **fully tax-exempt**.
- **TCS on overseas tour packages** reduced to **2%**, and **LRS education/medical remittances** reduced to **2%**.
- **One-time 6-month foreign asset disclosure scheme** for small taxpayers announced.
- **MAT made the final tax rate** reduced to **14%**, effective from **1 April 2026**.
- **STT on Futures** increased to **0.05%**, and **Options STT** raised to **0.15%**.
- **Cloud service providers** using **Indian data centres** get a tax **holiday till 2047**.
- **Indirect Taxes & Trade**
- **Basic Customs Duty exemptions** extended for **Lithium-ion batteries, solar glass, nuclear projects till 2035**, and **critical minerals**.
- **17 drugs and medicines** fully exempted from customs duty.
- **Duty-free courier export cap of ₹10 lakh removed**, boosting **e-commerce exports**.
- **Customs Integrated System (CIS)** to be rolled out within **2 years**.
- **Expenditure of Major Items :**

| Sector / Item | Expenditure (₹ crore) |
|---|---|
| Transport | 5,98,520 |
| Defence | 5,94,585 |
| Rural Development | 2,73,108 |
| Home Affairs | 2,55,234 |
| Agriculture and Allied Activities | 1,62,671 |
| Education | 1,39,289 |
| Energy | 1,09,029 |
| Health | 1,04,599 |
| Urban Development | 85,522 |
| IT and Telecom | 74,560 |
| Commerce and Industry | 70,296 |
| Social Welfare | 62,362 |
| Scientific Departments | 55,756 |
| Tax Administration | 45,500 |
| External Affairs | 22,119 |
| Finance | 20,649 |
| Development of North East | 6,812 |

**State Bank of India Enhances Trade Finance and Global Banking Services with GTFC**

## Launch in Kolkata

- **State Bank of India (SBI)**, India's **largest Public Sector Bank (PSB)**, launched a **Global Trade Finance Centre (GTFC)** in **Kolkata, West Bengal**, to strengthen **trade finance** and **global banking operations**.
- In **July 2025**, **SBI** inaugurated two specialised **GTFCs** located in **Kolkata (West Bengal)** and **Hyderabad (Telangana)** on the occasion of its **70th anniversary**.
- The **GTFC** follows a **centralized system** to streamline **inland trade** and efficiently process **import and export transactions**.
- The centre supports **SBI branches** across **eastern and northern India**, enabling **faster turnaround time**, **strong compliance oversight**, and an **enhanced customer experience** for **domestic and cross-border trade**.
- The **GTFC** is **technology-driven**, leveraging **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, **Machine Learning (ML)**, and **Blockchain**, marking a shift from traditional **paper-based systems**.
- The **total staff strength** of the **GTFC** is **277**, comprising **161 SBI employees**, **105 outsourced staff**, and **11 temporary personnel**.
- **Local hiring** accounts for **61% of the workforce**, with **169 employees** from **West Bengal**, supporting **regional employment generation**.
- Since **2024**, the **GTFC** has contributed **₹1.40 crore** as **Goods and Services Tax (GST)** to the **West Bengal economy**.

### Recent News :

- In Jan 2026, **State Bank of India (SBI)** surpassed **ICICI Bank** to regain its position as the **second-most valuable bank** by market capitalization after a gap of more than **six years**.

### About State Bank of India (SBI):

- Founded Year: 1955
- Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Chairman: Challa Sreenivasulu Setty
- Slogan: "The Banker to Every Indian"

## Union Budget 2026-27 Proposes Self-Help Entrepreneur Marts to Boost Women-Led Enterprises and Strengthen SHG Ecosystem

- The **Union Budget 2026-27** announced the establishment of **Self-Help Entrepreneur (SHE) Marts** as **community-owned retail outlets** to strengthen **women-led enterprises** and deepen the **self-help group (SHG)** ecosystem across states.
- The **SHE Marts initiative** aims to provide a **structured market platform** for products made by **women entrepreneurs**, with **Jharkhand** emerging as a **key beneficiary** due to its **strong SHG base**.
- The programme builds on the **Lakhpati Didi Programme** and aims to help women transition from **credit-based livelihoods** to **ownership of enterprises**.
- **SHE Marts** will be set up within **cluster-level federations** of SHGs and supported through **enhanced and innovative financing instruments** to enable women to access **organised retail** and **stable demand**.

- The **community-owned retail model** allows **women-led SHGs** to **collectively market and sell** their products, **reducing dependence on intermediaries** and improving **income realisation**.
- **Jharkhand** has mobilised around **39 lakh rural SHG members** through the **Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society**, and SHE Marts complement ongoing efforts to transform women from **borrowers into business owners**.
- The initiative aligns with the Budget's broader emphasis on **inclusive growth** and **women-led development**, focusing on **ownership, market access, and scale** to create **sustainable income opportunities**.
- **SHE Marts** aim to help women **reach larger markets**, **build brands**, and strengthen local institutions such as **self-help groups**.
- The **Lakhpati Didi Programme**, run by the **Ministry of Rural Development**, supports rural women in starting **small businesses** and earning a **steady income** of at least **Rs 1 lakh per year**.
- Under the programme, women are trained in skills like **plumbing**, **making LED bulbs**, and **using and repairing drones** to become **financially independent**.
- As per the **Economic Survey 2026**, raising **women's workforce participation** to around **55% by 2050** could be key to sustaining **strong annual GDP growth** in India.

## Union Budget 2026-27 Allocates ₹73,990.94 Crore to DoT to Revive Telecom Infrastructure and Strengthen BSNL

- The **Union Budget 2026-27** allocated **₹73,990.94 crore** to the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)**, focusing on **telecom infrastructure revival** and strengthening state-owned **BSNL**.
- The allocation for **FY27** is **8.65% lower** than the **FY26 Budget Estimate** of **₹81,005.24 crore** but **38.56% higher** than the **FY26 Revised Estimate** of **₹53,398.17 crore**.
- The **increase** over the revised FY26 figure is largely due to **higher capital infusion** into **Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)** for **network expansion** and **financial recovery**.
- The **total net allocation** for the DoT in FY27 is **₹80,927.94 crore**, including an additional **₹6,937 crore** from the **Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)**.
- Funds from **USOF** will be used for **compensation to telecom service providers**, the **BharatNet rural broadband programme**, and **research and development** in the telecom sector.
- Union Minister for Communications **Jyotiraditya Scindia** stated that the government is working to strengthen **BSNL's financial and operational position**, with **average revenue per user (ARPU)** rising from **₹90 to ₹99**, targeting **₹100**.
- The **capital infusion** along with **internal cash flows** will fund **spectrum costs**, **network rollout**, **towers**, and other **infrastructure needs** of BSNL.
- The **incremental allocation** also supports the **BharatNet programme**, including **expanding fibre connectivity**, **upgrading infrastructure**, and meeting BSNL's **internal capital expenditure requirements**.
- The **Budget strategy** reflects a focus on **consolidating public sector telecom capabilities** while continuing investments in **rural connectivity** and **long-term digital infrastructure**.

## Union Budget 2026-27 Proposes Excise-Duty Exemption on Biogas Component in Blended CNG to Boost Renewable Gas Use



- The **Union Budget 2026-27** proposed an **excise-duty exemption** on the **biogas** or **compressed biogas (CBG)** component in **blended compressed natural gas (CNG)** to promote **renewable gas use** and reduce India's **dependence on imported fossil fuels**.
- The measure aims to **correct double taxation**, as previously both pure CNG and blended CNG attracted **14% central excise duty**, **5% GST**, and **state-level VAT**, which dampened incentives for **biogas blending**.
- Under the new provision, **central excise duty** will **not be levied** on the **biogas portion** of blended CNG, lowering the **effective tax burden** and improving **cost competitiveness** for **city gas distribution companies (CGDs)**.
- India remains **heavily reliant on imported natural gas**, with **liquefied natural gas (LNG)** imports meeting nearly **50% of domestic demand**, prompting policy support for **renewable alternatives**.
- The **SATAT (Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation)** scheme, launched in **2018** by the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas**, targets **15 million tonnes** of **CBG production**, though only around **190 plants** have been commissioned so far.
- The **excise exemption** provides a **financial incentive** for **CGDs** to **increase CBG blending levels**: at **5% CBG blend**, only **95% of the volume** attracts excise duty; at **50:50 blend**, **half the volume is exempt**.
- Despite **central excise relief**, blended CNG is often treated as **natural gas by states**, with **VAT ranging from 5% to 15%**, so further benefits depend on **state-level exemptions** for the **CBG portion**.
- Combined with support under **rural renewable energy programmes**, the **excise exemption** signals **long-term policy support** for **renewable gas**, but its success depends on **coordinated Centre–state action** and **infrastructure development** by **city gas distributors**.

## Union Budget 2026-27 Promotes Astronomy Through New Telescopes and Planetarium Initiatives



- The **Union Budget 2026-27** announced a **major expansion** of India's **ground-based astronomy infrastructure**, with plans to **establish and upgrade four key facilities** across **Ladakh and southern India**.
- The initiatives aim to **strengthen India's capabilities** in **solar physics**, **deep-space observation**, and **public science education**.
- All projects will be implemented by the **Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA)**, headquartered in **Bengaluru**, including **two new national-class telescopes**, an **upgrade of the Himalayan Chandra Telescope** in Ladakh, and a **new planetarium-cum-training centre**.
- The **National Large Solar Telescope** will be set up near **Pangong Lake, Ladakh**, as a **two-metre class optical and near-infrared instrument** to study the **Sun's magnetic fields**, **solar flares**, and **coronal mass ejections**, complementing **ISRO's Aditya-L1 mission**.

- The **National Large Optical-Infrared Telescope**, a **10–12 metre facility** in **Hanle, Ladakh**, will observe **optical and infrared wavelengths**, enabling studies of **distant galaxies**, **star-forming regions**, and **exoplanets**.
- The **Himalayan Chandra Telescope**, operational in **Hanle since 2000**, will be **upgraded** to extend its scientific capabilities, supporting research on **variable stars**, **supernovae**, and **active galaxies**, reinforcing **Ladakh** as India's **principal astronomy hub**.
- The **Cosmos-2 planetarium and training centre** will be built in **Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh**, featuring **advanced digital projection** and **interactive exhibits** to promote **public science education**, following **Cosmos-1** in **Mysuru**.

## NATIONAL AND STATE NEWS

### Adampur Airport Renamed Sri Guru Ravidas Maharaj Ji Airport; Halwara Civil Terminal Inaugurated

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** renamed **Adampur Airport in Jalandhar** as **Sri Guru Ravidas Maharaj Ji Airport** and also inaugurated a **new civil terminal at Halwara Airport in Ludhiana**.
- The renaming honours **Guru Ravidas**, a revered **Bhakti movement saint and social reformer**, and carries strong **social and cultural significance**, especially in Punjab.
- The decision fulfilled a **long-pending demand** from various political parties and social groups.
- A **resolution for renaming** Adampur Airport was passed by the **Punjab Vidhan Sabha in 2020**, and the demand was reiterated by the current state government.
- The move combines **cultural recognition with infrastructure development**, strengthening **regional air connectivity** in Punjab.
- **Adampur Airport** was revamped at a cost of **₹125 crore under the UDAN 5.0 scheme** and serves the **Doaba region** of Punjab.
- The civil terminal at Adampur is spread over **40 acres** and operates using the **Adampur Air Force Station airstrip**.
- Airport operations at Adampur resumed on **31 March 2025** after a **four-year suspension due to the Covid-19 pandemic**.
- Currently, Adampur Airport operates limited flights by **Star Air and IndiGo**, connecting cities such as **Mumbai, Nanded and Bengaluru**.
- Connectivity challenges remain due to a **narrow 4.3-kilometre rural approach road**, with **land acquisition delays** cited as the main reason for non-expansion.
- Earlier air routes to **Delhi, Jaipur and Mumbai** were discontinued due to **low passenger demand**, highlighting sustainability challenges under regional connectivity schemes.
- At **Halwara Airport in Ludhiana**, a **new civil terminal** was virtually inaugurated by the Prime Minister.
- The Halwara civil terminal has been built at a cost of **₹54 crore** by expanding the **Halwara Air Force base**.
- The terminal has a capacity to handle **300 passengers at a time**, significantly improving civil aviation facilities for **Ludhiana, an important industrial hub**.
- The twin initiatives support the objectives of the **UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme**, boosting **regional connectivity and aviation growth** in Punjab.

### About Punjab:

- Chief Minister: Bhagwant Mann
- Governor: Gulab Chand Kataria
- Capital: Chandigarh
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Abohar Wildlife Sanctuary, Aishvan Wildlife Sanctuary, Bir Bhadson Wildlife Sanctuary, Bir Bunerheri Wildlife Sanctuary, Bir Dosanjh Wildlife Sanctuary

## RECENT NEWS

- The Punjab government has started a major healthcare scheme called Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojana. Under this scheme, every family in the state will get free and cashless medical treatment worth up to ₹10 lakh.

## Third Edition of Tri-Services Future Warfare Course Launched in New Delhi

- The **third edition of the Future Warfare Course** commenced in **New Delhi from February 2 to February 25, 2026**.
- The course is a **tri-services programme** conducted under the aegis of **Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS)** in collaboration with the **Centre for Joint Warfare Studies (CENJOWS)**.
- It brings together officers from the **Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force**, along with experts from the **defence industry**.
- The programme focuses on **future warfighting concepts**, **emerging and disruptive technologies**, **geopolitical challenges**, and **indigenous defence capabilities**.
- It aims to prepare military leadership for **technology-driven, multi-domain and integrated warfare scenarios**.
- Key areas of study include **cyber warfare**, **space domain**, **artificial intelligence-based systems**, **defence supply chains**, **rare-earth mineral dependencies**, and **innovation in combat operations**.
- Participants range from **Majors to Major Generals and equivalent ranks**, ensuring a blend of **technical expertise, operational experience and strategic perspective**.
- Representatives from **defence startups, Micro Small and Medium Enterprises, Defence Public Sector Undertakings and private industry** are also part of the programme.
- The expanded three-week course builds on the success of its **first edition held in September 2024**.
- The programme aligns with the vision of **Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan** to ensure the **Indian Armed Forces remain adaptive, integrated and future-ready** in addressing evolving security challenges.

## Gujarat Becomes India's Largest Renewable Energy Contributor

- **Gujarat emerged** as the **largest contributor to India's renewable energy capacity**, accounting for **16.50% of the national total** as of **31 December 2025**.
- Gujarat ranks **1st in India in total installed renewable energy capacity** with **42.583 GW**.
- The state contributes **16.50% of India's total renewable energy capacity**, reflecting strong

policy support and infrastructure readiness.

- Gujarat ranks **1st in wind power capacity** and **2nd in solar power capacity**.
- Total installed **solar capacity** stands at **25,529.40 MW** (December 2025), including **ground-mounted, rooftop, hybrid, and off-grid systems** such as **PM-KUSUM**.
- Major solar parks include **Charanka, Radhanesda, and Dholera**.
- **Khavda Renewable Energy Park (Kutch)** is planned for **37.35 GW**, with **11.33 GW already operational**, making it the **world's largest renewable energy park**.
- Installed **wind power capacity** is **14,820.94 MW** as of December 2025.
- **Kutch district** contributes the highest share, followed by **Jamnagar, Devbhumi Dwarka, Amreli, and Rajkot**.
- Gujarat has commissioned **2,398.77 MW of wind–solar hybrid projects**, supported by modern evacuation infrastructure and government-allotted land.
- The state has crossed **11 lakh rooftop solar installations**, generating **6,412.80 MW**, the highest in India.
- Since 2016, Gujarat has contributed **over 25% of India's total rooftop solar capacity**.
- Under **PM-KUSUM**, **12,700 off-grid solar water pumps** have been installed to support farmers and sustainable irrigation.
- Gujarat's renewable growth is backed by strong policies ranging from the **Wind Power Policy 1993** to the **Gujarat Integrated Renewable Energy Policy 2025**.
- Policies focus on **ease of grid connectivity, removal of capacity limits, promotion of hybrid systems and battery storage**.
- Digital platforms like **Akshay Urja Setu** ensure faster approvals, transparency, private investment, renewable manufacturing, and green job creation.

**About Gujarat:**

- **Chief Minister:** Bhupendra Patel
- **Governor:** Acharya Devvrat
- **Capital:** Gandhinagar
- **National Parks:** Gir National Park, Blackbuck National Park, Vansda National Park, Marine National Park
- **Wildlife Sanctuaries:** Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary, Velavadar Blackbuck Sanctuary, Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary, Barda Wildlife Sanctuary, Purna Wildlife Sanctuary

**RECENT NEWS**

- The Gujarat government will provide ₹1,250 crore financial assistance to over 12 lakh girls under the Namo Laxmi Scheme in 2025–26. The initiative supports girls studying in Classes 9–12, aiming to prevent dropouts, improve nutrition, and promote secondary and higher secondary education.

**INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

**UN Environment Programme Releases "State of Finance for Nature 2026" Report Highlighting Global Environmental Finance Imbalance**

- The **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)** released **The State of Finance for Nature 2026** report, highlighting a stark imbalance in global environmental financing.



**Key Highlights :**

- The report finds that for every **USD 1** invested in protecting nature, the world spends nearly **USD 30** on activities that damage it, with **USD 7.3 trillion** flowing into **nature-negative finance** in 2023.

- Of the total **nature-negative finance**, **USD 4.9 trillion** came from **private sources**, mainly in **energy**, **utilities**, **industrials**, and **basic materials**, while **USD 2.4 trillion** came from **environmentally harmful public subsidies** to **fossil fuels**, **agriculture**, and **infrastructure**.
- In contrast, **Nature-based Solutions (NbS)** received only **USD 220 billion**, with nearly **90% from public sources** and only **10% from private investment**.
- **UNEP** estimates that **NbS investments** must increase **2.5 times** to reach **USD 571 billion annually by 2030**, which is about **0.5% of global GDP**.
- **Nature-negative finance** refers to global financial flows to activities harming nature, such as **fossil fuel extraction**, **unsustainable agriculture**, and **deforestation**, accounting for **7% of global GDP** in 2023.
- **Environmentally Harmful Subsidies (EHS)**, totaling **USD 2.4 trillion**, distort market prices, making environmental destruction cheaper than conservation.
- **Nature-based Solutions (NbS)** involve actions to **protect**, **sustainably manage**, and **restore ecosystems**, addressing societal challenges like **climate change**, **food security**, and **disaster risk**, while providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits.
- **International frameworks** driving **NbS finance** include the **Rio Conventions**:
- **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**.
- **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**.
- **UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**.
- These set targets for **climate stability**, **biodiversity conservation**, and **land restoration** by **2030**.
- For **India**, scaling **Nature-based Solutions** through reforms like the **Nature Transition X-Curve**, **green taxonomy**, **subsidy rationalisation**, and **private capital mobilisation** is critical to protect biodiversity while sustaining long-term economic growth.

## AWARDS AND HONOURS

### Grammy Awards 2026: Major Winners List

- The **68th Grammy Awards 2026** celebrated global excellence in music, recognising top artists across pop, rap, rock, country, R&B, electronic, classical, and global music categories.
- The Grammy Awards are among the **most prestigious international music honours**, recognising artistic excellence, creativity, and cultural impact across genres.



The 68th Grammy Awards wrapped up on February 1st with plenty of surprises across its 95 categories. Bad Bunny walked away with his first album of the year trophy, a historic win for Latin music, while Kendrick Lamar continued his Grammy streak with multiple wins, including record of the year.

- The 2026 ceremony featured a mix of **established global stars and emerging artists**, reflecting changing listener preferences and musical diversity.
- Prominent winners included **Billie Eilish, Lady Gaga, Kendrick Lamar, and Olivia Dean**.
- **General / Major Categories:**
  - **Song of the Year:** Billie Eilish – *Wildflower*
  - **Best New Artist:** Olivia Dean
  - **Producer of the Year:** Cirkut
  - **Songwriter of the Year:** Amy Allen
- **Pop Music:**
  - **Best Pop Solo Performance:** Lola Young – *Messy*
  - **Best Pop Vocal Album:** Lady Gaga – *Mayhem*

- o **Best Pop Duo/Group Performance:** Cynthia Erivo & Ariana Grande – *Defying Gravity*
  - o **Best Dance-Pop Recording:** Lady Gaga – *Abracadabra*
- **Country Music:**
  - o **Best Contemporary Country Album:** Jelly Roll – *Beautifully Broken*
  - o **Best Country Solo Performance:** Chris Stapleton – *Bad As I Used to Be*
  - o **Best Traditional Country Album:** Zach Top – *Ain't In It for My Health*
  - o **Best Country Song:** Tyler Childers – *Bitin' List*
- **Rap / Hip-Hop:**
  - o **Best Rap Album:** Kendrick Lamar – *GNX*
  - o **Best Rap Performance:** Clipse – *Chains & Whips* (feat. Kendrick Lamar & Pharrell Williams)
  - o **Best Rap Song:** Kendrick Lamar feat. Lefty Gunplay – *TV Off*
  - o **Best Melodic Rap Performance:** Kendrick Lamar with SZA – *Luther*
- **R&B / Soul:**
  - o **Best R&B Album:** Leon Thomas – *Mutt*
  - o **Best R&B Performance:** Kehlani – *Folded*
  - o **Best Traditional R&B Performance:** Leon Thomas – *Vibes Don't Lie*
  - o **Best R&B Song:** Kehlani – *Folded*
- **Rock / Metal / Alternative:**
  - o **Best Rock Album:** Turnstile – *Never Enough*
  - o **Best Rock Performance:** Yungblud – *Changes* (Live from Villa Park)
  - o **Best Rock Song:** Nine Inch Nails – *As Alive as You Need Me to Be*
  - o **Best Metal Performance:** Turnstile – *Birds*
  - o **Best Alternative Music Album:** The Cure – *Songs of a Lost World*
  - o **Best Alternative Music Performance:** The Cure – *Alone*
- **Dance / Electronic:**
  - o **Best Dance/Electronic Album:** FKA twigs – *Eusexua*
  - o **Best Dance/Electronic Recording:** Tame Impala – *End of Summer*
- **Latin / Global:**
  - o **Best Música Urbana Album:** Bad Bunny – *Debí Tirar Más Fotos*
  - o **Best Global Music Performance:** Tyla – *PUSH 2 START*
- **Folk / Jazz / Classical:**
  - o **Best Folk Album:** I'm With Her – *Wild and Clear and Blue*
  - o **Best Jazz Performance:** Chick Corea, Christian McBride & Brian Blade – *Windows (Live)*
  - o **Best Orchestral Performance:** Andris Nelsons (Boston Symphony Orchestra) – *Messiaen: Turangalîla-Symphonie*
- **Visual Media / Soundtracks:**
  - o **Best Compilation Soundtrack for Visual Media:** *Sinners*
  - o **Best Song Written for Visual Media:** Huntr/x – *Golden* (from *KPop: Demon Hunters*)
  - o **Best Music Video:** Doechii – *Anxiety*
- **Other Important Categories:**
  - o **Best Audio Book, Narration and Storytelling Recording:** *Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness The Dalai Lama* – Dalai Lama
  - o **Best Comedy Album:** *Your Friend* – Nate Bargatze
  - o **Best Children's Music Album:** *Harmony* – FYÜTCH & Aura V
  - o **Best Contemporary Instrumental Album:** *Brightside* – ARKAI
  - o **Best Chamber Music / Small Ensemble Performance:** *Dennehy: Land of Winter*
  - o **Best Choral Performance:** *Ortiz: Yanga*

## RANKING AND INDEX

### India Emerges as a Major Engine of Global Urban Growth in 2025: UN Report

- A **United Nations report (2025)** states that **around 45% of the global population lives in urban areas**, a sharp rise from **20% in 1950**.
- **India has emerged as one of the biggest drivers of global urban growth**, placing it at the centre of worldwide urbanisation trends.
- India currently has **five megacities**, each with a population of **more than 10 million**.
- **New Delhi**, with a population of **over 30 million**, is among the **four largest cities in the world**, alongside **Jakarta, Dhaka and Tokyo**.
- Major Indian cities such as **Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai and Kolkata** continue to attract **migration, jobs and investment**.
- The 2025 UN report introduced the **"Degree of Urbanization" method**, which classifies cities based on **population size and density**, not just administrative boundaries.
- Under this method, **densely populated urban areas outside official city limits** are also counted as cities.
- Due to this revised methodology, **population estimates of many Indian and Asian cities have increased**, offering a **more accurate picture of urban living patterns**.
- **Asia dominates global urbanisation**, hosting **9 of the world's 10 largest cities** and nearly **60% of all megacities**.
- **India plays a central role in Asia's urban growth**, supported by its **young population, internal migration and expanding service and manufacturing sectors**.
- While megacities receive attention, the report highlights that **most urban growth is occurring in small and medium-sized cities**.
- Nearly **96% of cities globally have populations below 1 million**.
- In India, **smaller cities are growing faster than large metros** due to **improved road connectivity, digital infrastructure and emerging local industries**.
- Cities such as **Kozhikode**, with a population exceeding **5 million**, highlight the **shift away from metro-centric urban development**.
- The report underscores both **opportunities and challenges** for India in areas such as **urban planning, housing, employment, infrastructure and sustainability**.

India is emerging as one of the strongest contributors to global urban expansion in 2025, according to the United Nations' World's Cities in 2025 report, reflecting a long-term worldwide shift towards city-based living.

**India's Growing Role in the Global Urban Landscape**

Urban areas now accommodate around 45% of the world's population in 2025, a sharp rise from 20% in 1950, underlining the growing economic and social importance of cities.

India plays a major role in this trend, with 5 megacities, each having more than 10 million people. New Delhi, with an estimated population exceeding 30 million, ranks among the world's 4 largest cities, alongside Jakarta, Dhaka, and Tokyo.

Kolkata features in the global top 10, while Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai continue to act as major urban centres driving growth and employment.

### Global Soft Power Index 2026: Top Rankings and India's Position

- **Global Soft Power Index** 2026 ranks countries based on their ability to **influence and attract others through culture, values, governance, and ideas**, rather than military force or economic pressure.
- **Soft Power** refers to a nation's ability to shape preferences of other countries through **culture, diplomacy, values, innovation, and global reputation**.
- Strong soft power helps attract **tourists, investors, skilled talent**, and strengthens **international partnerships**.

**GLOBAL SOFT POWER INDEX 2026**

Global Soft Power Index 2026: Top 10 countries leading and where does India rank, in comparison to the US and China? (Image: iStock, edited on Canva)

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**Global Soft Power Index 2026 Top 10 Countries:** Ongoing economic uncertainty and geopolitical tensions have led to declining public trust and increased scrutiny of countries' behaviour, resulting in weaker national brand perceptions and lower scores in the Brand Finance Global Soft Power Index 2026 — ranking 193 UN member states across 55 metrics — published last Tuesday.

- It is often described as the **power of perception**, where a country's global image directly impacts its influence and growth.
- The **Global Soft Power Index** measures soft power using **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** and **nation brand attributes**.
- **Key KPIs include:**
  - **Familiarity:** How well a country is known globally
  - **Reputation:** How positively it is perceived
  - **Influence:** Its ability to affect international decisions and opinions
- The index evaluates **8 Soft Power pillars** covering **35 nation brand attributes**:
  - Business & Trade
  - International Relations
  - Education & Science
  - Culture & Heritage
  - Governance
  - Media & Communication
  - Sustainable Future
  - People & Values
- **Difference between Hard Power and Soft Power:**
  - **Hard Power:** Influence through military force or economic pressure
  - **Soft Power:** Influence through attraction, culture, values, and diplomacy

**Top 10 Countries in Global Soft Power Index 2026:**
- **1st – United States:** 74.9
- **2nd – China:** 73.5
- **3rd – Japan:** 70.6
- **4th – United Kingdom:** 69.2
- **5th – Germany:** 67.7
- **6th – France:** 65.8
- **7th – Switzerland:** 63.2
- **8th – Canada:** 63.2
- **9th – Italy:** 61.6
- **10th – United Arab Emirates:** 59.4

**India's Position:**
- India ranks **32nd globally** with a **score of 48.0**.
- India dropped **2 positions** and declined by **1.8 points** compared to the previous year.
- Despite strong cultural influence and international outreach, improvement is needed in **governance, media perception, and sustainable development**.
- **Key Insights from 2026 Rankings:**
  - The **United States** remains at the top, but its score declined, highlighting fragile global trust.
  - **China** narrowed the gap with the US, reflecting rising global influence.
  - **Japan** overtook the UK to rank third, showing strong nation branding.
  - Countries like **Switzerland and Italy** showed resilience despite global uncertainties.
  - India's decline underlines the need to strengthen core soft power pillars such as **governance, global diplomacy, and media engagement**.

**DEFENCE NEWS**

**Indian Army and Indo-Tibetan Border Police Conduct Joint "Agni Pariksha" Exercise in Arunachal Pradesh to Boost Combat Synergy**

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- The **Indian Army** and the **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)** conducted a joint training exercise named **"Agni Pariksha"** at **Sigar** in **East Siang** district, **Arunachal Pradesh** from **January 19 to 24,2026** to enhance **inter-force combat synergy** and **operational integration**.



- The **primary objective** of Agni Pariksha was to **familiarise non-artillery personnel** with **artillery procedures**, **coordination mechanisms**, and the **execution of firing missions**.
- The exercise aimed to **break traditional role-based silos** by exposing **infantry** and **ITBP personnel** to **realistic artillery employment** in **dynamic combat scenarios**.
- **Spearhead gunners** from the **Spear Corps** conducted training alongside **infantry regiments** and **ITBP units**, marking the **first-of-its-kind collaborative firepower training initiative**.
- **Non-artillery personnel** were **systematically trained** to **independently conduct multiple artillery firing drills** under the **close supervision** of **experienced gunners**.
- The exercise **significantly enhanced mutual trust**, **coordination**, and **operational responsiveness** among the participating forces.
- By **improving understanding of firepower integration**, the training helped in **rapid decision-making** and **effective battlefield coordination** in **high-intensity** and **border-related contingencies**.
- This was the **first phase** of a **broader initiative**, considered a **pioneering step** towards developing **integrated combat capabilities** required for **future battlefields**.
- The exercise reflects the **Indian Army's evolving doctrine** of **joint operations** and **closer coordination** with **central armed police forces** in **complex operational environments**.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Union Minister of State Dr Jitendra Singh Inaugurates ₹32 Crore CSIR–NIO Shore-Based Regional Centre at Visakhapatnam

- **Dr. Jitendra Singh**, **Union Minister of State (Independent Charge)** for **Ministry of Science & Technology (MoS&T)** and **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**, inaugurated the **Shore-Based Laboratory** of **CSIR–National Institute of Oceanography (CSIR–NIO) Regional Centre** at **Visakhapatnam**, Andhra Pradesh.



Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurates Rs 32 crore CSIR-NIO Shore-Based Regional Centre at Visakhapatnam

Project delayed for 20 years , completed within one year after the NDA government took over in the State; thus testifying the 'Double Engine Effect', says the Minister

Dr Jitendra Singh highlights PM Sh Narendra Modi's prioritisation of 'Blue Economy' and developing marine infrastructure

New CSIR-NIO facility to boost India's marine science, energy security, and coastal resilience: Dr Jitendra Singh

CSIR-NIO's Visakhapatnam Centre to play key role in offshore energy, disaster management, and climate studies

Eastern Continental Margin research to strengthen India's self-reliance in oil, gas and seabed minerals: Dr Jitendra Singh

- The **CSIR–NIO Regional Centre** has been established at **Yendada Village**, **Rushikonda**, Visakhapatnam, and was constructed by the **Central Public Works Department (CPWD)**.
- The facility was built at a cost of **₹32 crore** with a **built-up area** of **4,550 square metres (sq m)**.
- The centre focuses on **marine geological and geophysical surveys** of the **Eastern Continental Margin of India (ECMI)**.
- Key research areas include **bathymetry mapping**, **tectonic studies**, **deep-sea exploration**, and **monsoon research** in the **Bay of Bengal**.

- The laboratory strengthens **national energy security** by supporting **offshore oil**, **gas**, **hydrocarbon**, and **seabed mineral exploration**.
- The centre contributes to the **Blue Economy**, supporting **fisheries**, **coastal resilience**, **skill development**, **seaweed cultivation**, and **harmful algal bloom forecasting**.

## Indian Oil Corporation Limited Signs Letter of Intent with Akasa Air to Explore Future Supply of Sustainable Aviation Fuel at Wings India 2026 in Hyderabad

- **Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL)**, under the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG)**, signed a **Letter of Intent (LoI)** with **Akasa Air** to explore the future supply of **Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)** during the **Wings India 2026** airshow in **Hyderabad, Telangana**.
- The **LoI** establishes a **framework for collaboration** to assess how **IOCL** might supply **SAF** to **Akasa Air** in the future.
- **IOCL** and **Akasa Air** will evaluate potential **SAF supply volumes**, **delivery locations**, **timelines**, and approved **sustainable feedstocks** and **production pathways** that meet **global standards**.
- **Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)** is a **lower-carbon alternative** to conventional jet fuel that can significantly reduce **lifecycle greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions** from aviation.

### About IOCL :

- **IOCL**, a **Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)**, was established in **1959** (and took its current form in **1964** after a merger) in **New Delhi**, **Delhi**, under the **MoPNG**.
- **IOCL** is **India's largest integrated oil & gas company**, operating across **refining**, **pipelines**, **fuel marketing**, **petrochemicals**, and **clean energy initiatives**.

## ENVIRONMENT

## Archaeologists Unearth 1,400-Year-Old Zapotec Tomb in Oaxaca, Shedding Light on Indigenous Funerary Traditions

- Archaeologists in **southern Mexico** discovered a **1,400-year-old tomb** belonging to the **Zapotec civilization** at **San Pablo Huitzo, Oaxaca** in **2025**, providing insights into **Indigenous funerary traditions** and **social organisation**.
- The tomb dates to around **A.D. 600**, during the flourishing of the **Zapotecs**, also known as the **"Cloud People"**, who inhabited the **Oaxaca Valley**.
- The **Zapotec civilisation** emerged around **700 B.C.** and continued until the **Spanish conquest** in **1521**, with **Zapotec-speaking communities** still present in Mexico today.
- At the **entrance** of the tomb, archaeologists found a **large carved owl** with wide eyes, whose beak reveals the **painted face of a Zapotec lord**, symbolising **death, power, and honoured ancestors**.
- Inside, a **stone doorway** separates **two chambers**, with a **lintel engraved with calendrical names**, reflecting the **Zapotec system** of identifying individuals by **birth-date symbols**.

- **Carved figures** of a **man and a woman** flank the doorway, likely representing **ancestors or guardians**.
- The **burial chamber walls** preserve **vivid murals** in **white, green, red, and blue**, depicting a **funeral procession** carrying bags of **copal incense** used in **ritual ceremonies**.
- Officials described the **Huitzo tomb** as the **most significant archaeological discovery** in Mexico in a **decade** due to its **exceptional preservation**.
- An **interdisciplinary team** is **conserving the tomb** and studying **ceramics, iconography, and human remains**, contributing to knowledge about **Zapotec funerary practices** in **Oaxaca**.

## SPORTS NEWS

### Devika Sihag Wins Maiden BWF Super 300 Title at Thailand Masters 2026

- Indian badminton player **Devika Sihag** won her **first BWF Super 300 title** at the **Thailand Masters 2026**, marking the **biggest breakthrough of her career**.
- The **20-year-old shuttler from Haryana** defeated **Goh Jin Wei of Malaysia** in the **women's singles final**.
- The final ended after **Goh Jin Wei retired due to a hamstring injury**.
- At the time of retirement, **Devika Sihag was leading convincingly 21–8, 6–3**, showing complete dominance.

ined P. V. Sindhu and Saina Nehwal as the only Indians to win a Super 300 women's singles title. | Photo Credit: K. Murali

Devika Sihag became only the third Indian women's singles player to win a World Tour 300 title after triumphing at the USD 250,000 Thailand Masters in Bangkok on

- Devika's performance in the final highlighted her **aggressive stroke play, sharp net control and strong mental composure**.
- Despite the premature end, her **overall tournament performance clearly justified the title win**.
- This was Devika Sihag's **maiden title at the BWF Super 300 level**, making it her **most significant career achievement so far**.
- **BWF Super 300 tournaments** are part of the **BWF World Tour** and offer **important ranking points and international exposure**.
- The title win is expected to **boost her world ranking, confidence and visibility** on the international circuit.
- The victory will help Devika compete more regularly in **higher-level tournaments such as Super 500 and Super 750 events**.
- **Goh Jin Wei**, ranked **World No. 68**, is a **two-time former World Junior Champion** and was considered a strong contender in the final.

### Australian Open 2026: Carlos Alcaraz Wins Men's Singles Title and Completes Career Grand Slam

- Spain's **Carlos Alcaraz** defeated Serbia's **Novak Djokovic** in the **Australian Open 2026 men's singles final**, becoming the **youngest male player to complete a Career Grand Slam** at the age of **22 years**.
- The men's singles final of Australian Open 2026 was held.
- Novak Djokovic won the first set **6–2**, using his experience and baseline control.
- Carlos Alcaraz made a strong comeback and

Carlos Alcaraz celebrates with the trophy after winning against Serbia's Novak Djokovic in their men's singles match on day fifteen of the an Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on February 1, 2026. | Photo Credit: AFP

Carlos Alcaraz swept past Novak Djokovic to win his first Australian Open on Sunday and become the youngest man to complete a career Grand Slam, denying the Serbian great an unprecedented 25th major.

won the next three sets **6–2, 6–3, 7–5**.

- Alcaraz showed superior **physical endurance, aggressive baseline play, and tactical maturity**.
- The victory marked a symbolic **transition from the old generation to the new generation** in men's tennis.
- By winning the Australian Open 2026, Carlos Alcaraz completed the **Career Grand Slam**, having already won:
  - **French Open**
  - **Wimbledon**
  - **United States Open**
- He became the **youngest man in tennis history** to achieve this feat.
- This achievement placed him among an elite group of players to win all four Grand Slam titles.
- Novak Djokovic, despite the loss, delivered an emotional post-match speech.
- He praised Carlos Alcaraz and his team as **historic and legendary**.
- His remarks on longevity and gratitude led to speculation about the **closing phase of his illustrious career**, though no retirement was announced.
- The win confirms a **generational shift in men's tennis**, with Carlos Alcaraz emerging as the new dominant force.
- The era dominated by **Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, and Novak Djokovic** is gradually giving way to younger champions.

**Australian Open 2026 Winners:**

- **Men's Singles:** Carlos Alcaraz
- **Women's Singles:** Elena Rybakina
- **Men's Doubles:** Neal Skupski and Christian Harrison
- **Women's Doubles:** Elise Mertens and Zhang Shuai
- **Mixed Doubles:** Storm Hunter Gadecki and John Peers

## OBITUARIES

### Renowned Jesuit Priest and Educationist Father Thomas V. Kunnunkal Passed Away at 99 in New Delhi



- **Father Thomas V. Kunnunkal**, a **Jesuit priest** and a prominent personality in India's post-Independence **education system**, passed away at the age of **99** in **New Delhi, Delhi**.
- He was born on **July 03, 1926**, in **Alappuzha, Kerala**.
- He was awarded the **Padma Shri**, India's **4th highest civilian honor**, in **1974** in the field of **literature and education**.
- **Father Kunnunkal**, widely known as **Father Stany**, served as **Chairman** of the **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)** from **1980 to 1987**.
- He played a **pivotal role** in founding the **National Open School** in **November 1989** as an **autonomous organisation** in pursuance of the **National Education Policy (NEP 1986)** by the **Ministry of Education (MoE)**.
- In **2005**, he published a book titled **'The Role of Teachers on National Regeneration'**.

### Daily CA One- Liner: February 3

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** renamed **Adampur Airport in Jalandhar** as **Sri Guru Ravidas Maharaj Ji Airport** and also inaugurated a **new civil terminal at Halwara Airport in Ludhiana**
- The **third edition of the Future Warfare Course** commenced in **New Delhi from February 2 to February 25, 2026**.
- **Gujarat emerged** as the **largest contributor to India's renewable energy capacity**, accounting for **16.50% of the national total** as of **31 December 2025**
- The **68th Grammy Awards 2026** celebrated global excellence in music, recognising top artists across pop, rap, rock, country, R&B, electronic, classical, and global music categories
- A **United Nations report (2025)** states that **around 45% of the global population lives in urban areas**, a sharp rise from **20% in 1950**
- **Global Soft Power Index** 2026 ranks countries based on their ability to **influence and attract others through culture, values, governance, and ideas**, rather than military force or economic pressure
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- **Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** presented the **Union Budget 2026–27** in the **Lok Sabha** on **February 1, 2026**, marking her record **ninth consecutive Budget presentation**.
- **State Bank of India (SBI)**, India's **largest Public Sector Bank (PSB)**, launched a **Global Trade Finance Centre (GTFC)** in **Kolkata, West Bengal**, to strengthen **trade finance** and **global banking operations**.
- The **Union Budget 2026-27** announced the establishment of **Self-Help Entrepreneur (SHE) Marts** as **community-owned retail outlets** to strengthen **women-led enterprises** and deepen the **self-help group (SHG)** ecosystem across states.
- The **Union Budget 2026-27** allocated **₹73,990.94 crore** to the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)**, focusing on **telecom infrastructure revival** and strengthening state-owned **BSNL**.
- The **Union Budget 2026-27** proposed an **excise-duty exemption** on the **biogas** or **compressed biogas (CBG)** component in **blended compressed natural gas (CNG)** to promote **renewable gas use** and reduce India's **dependence on imported fossil fuels**.
- The **Union Budget 2026-27** announced a **major expansion** of India's **ground-based astronomy infrastructure**, with plans to **establish and upgrade four key facilities** across **Ladakh and southern India**.
- The **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)** released **The State of Finance for Nature 2026** report, highlighting a stark imbalance in global environmental financing.
- The **Indian Army** and the **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)** conducted a joint training exercise named **"Agni Pariksha"** at **Sigar** in **East Siang** district, **Arunachal Pradesh** from **January 19 to 24,2026** to enhance **inter-force combat synergy** and **operational integration**.
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