Daily Current Affairs

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BANKING, FINANCE & BUSINESS

Tripura Gramin Bank Introduces India's First RRB Co-Branded RuPay Credit Card in Partnership with Punjab National Bank

- **Tripura Gramin Bank (TGB)**, in collaboration with its sponsor bank **Punjab National Bank (PNB)**, launched a **Co-branded RuPay Credit Card**.
- **TGB** became the **first Regional Rural Bank (RRB)** in India and also the **first among the eight PNB-sponsored RRBs** to introduce a co-branded credit card.
- The launch of the **TGB–PNB Co-Branded RuPay Credit Card** marks the **Golden Jubilee (50th year)** of Tripura Gramin Bank.
- The card was launched at **Agartala, Tripura**.
- The credit card is powered by the **RuPay Network**, ensuring **secure and widely accepted transactions**.
- The card has been developed jointly by **Tripura Gramin Bank (TGB)**, **Punjab National Bank (PNB)**, and **PNB Cards & Services Limited**.
- The collaboration provides a **secure, seamless, and modern credit facility** to customers.
- The card focuses on **enhancing digital access** for **rural and semi-urban customers**.
- It enables customers to access the **RuPay digital payment ecosystem**.
- The card facilitates **convenient payments, purchases**, and **day-to-day banking transactions**.

Punjab National Bank Launches 'LUXURA Metal Credit Card' on Visa Infinite Platform for Premium Customers

- **Punjab National Bank (PNB)**, a leading **Public Sector Bank (PSB)**, launched the **'LUXURA Metal Credit Card'** on the **Visa Infinite platform** targeting **high-net-worth and lifestyle-driven customers**.
- The launch expands **PNB's premium credit card portfolio** with enhanced **luxury and travel benefits**.
- The card carries a **Joining Fee** of **Rs. 4,999 + GST** and an **Annual Fee** of **Rs. 1,999 + GST**.
- It offers **accelerated reward points** on purchases with **boosted earnings** on **travel and lifestyle spending**.
- Customers receive **welcome bonus points** and **annual milestone bonus reward points** on higher spending.
- The card provides **zero forex mark-up** on all **foreign currency transactions**.
- It offers **unlimited complimentary airport lounge access** in India and abroad.
- Cardholders get **24×7 Visa Concierge Services** for personalised assistance.
- **Hotel benefits** include **room upgrades**, **complimentary breakfast**, **Wi-Fi**, and **late check-outs**.
- **Dining benefits** include **discounts at partner restaurants** in India and overseas.
- The card features **special flight booking offers** through **travel partners**.

- Additional **lifestyle benefits** include **fuel surcharge waivers**, **grocery savings**, and **movie offers**.

About Punjab National Bank (PNB):

- Founded: 1894
- Headquarters: New Delhi, India
- Managing Director & CEO: Ashok Chandra
- Tagline: "The Name You Can Bank Upon"

World Bank Sanctions USD 830 Million Funding for PM-SETU to Modernise India's Industrial Training Institutes

- The **World Bank Group (WBG)** approved an **USD 830 million loan** for India's **Pradhan Mantri – Skilling and Employability Transformation Through Upgraded Industrial Training Institutes (PM-SETU)** Programme to revamp **Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)** and boost youth employment opportunities.

- The programme is part of the **WBG's Country Partnership Framework (CPF)** for India (**FY 2026–31**), which envisages **USD 8–10 billion annual financing support**.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 2, 2026—The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors has approved financing to revamp India's network of skills training institutes to better align with labor market needs and open up more job opportunities for the millions of graduates entering the workforce.

Jobs are central to India's growth trajectory, competitiveness, and meeting its ambitions of becoming Viksit Bharat. India's youth account for roughly 72 percent of the unemployed, and there is a persistent skills mismatch—between what young people are trained for and what firms need—which continues to constrain productivity, firm growth, and earnings. While the country's system of Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) play a significant role in skilling youth, the institutes face critical challenges, with many lacking proper facilities, qualified trainers, and the resources necessary to meet industry standards. This has led to a graduate job placement rate of less than 50 percent.

The **Supporting Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation Through Upgraded ITIs (PM-SETU) Program** ($830 million)

- The **loan tenure** has a **final maturity of 19.5 years** including a **4-year grace period**.

- The **key objective** is to **upgrade ITIs and National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs)** to bridge **skill gaps** and improve **job placement outcomes**.

- The programme was **jointly prepared** by the **World Bank (WB)** and the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**.

- It aims to mobilize at least **USD 680 million in private capital** to strengthen **ITI infrastructure and operational capacity**.

- An **institutional hub-and-spoke model** will be implemented comprising **200 Hub ITIs** and **800 Spoke ITIs** with strong **industry integration**.

- Training will focus on **high-demand sectors** such as **Manufacturing**, **Electric Vehicles (EVs)**, **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, **Green Energy**, **Textiles**, and **Construction**.

- The **PM-SETU Programme** targets creation of **over 1 million better-skilled workers annually**.

- The initiative also ensures **25% female participation** through **updated curricula** and **inclusive skilling frameworks**.

Recent News :

- In Jan 2026, The **World Bank approved ₹5,700 crore** in technical and financial assistance for **Haryana** under the **Jal Sanrakshit Haryana Project**, aiming to make the state **self-reliant** in the **water sector**.

About World Bank :

- **Established: 1944**.
- **Headquarters: Washington, DC, USA**
- **President: Ajay Banga**

NATIONAL NEWS AND STATE NEWS

Supreme Court Directs Centre to Set Up Pennaiyar River Water Disputes Tribunal

- The **Supreme Court of India**, directed the **Union Government** to constitute a **tribunal for the Pennaiyar (Thenpennai) river water dispute** between **Tamil Nadu and Karnataka**.
- The direction was issued by a bench comprising **Justice Vikram Nath and Justice N. V. Anjaria**.
- The Court instructed the Centre to **notify and establish the tribunal within one month**, reinforcing the constitutional mechanism for resolving **inter-state river water disputes**.

The Supreme Court has directed the Centre to set up a tribunal to adjudicate the long-pending dispute between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka over sharing the waters of the Pennaiyar River. A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and N V Anjaria asked the Central government to issue a notification and constitute the water disputes tribunal within one month.

Justice Nath said there was no reason to delay the formation of a tribunal for resolving the inter-state water dispute between the two states.

- The order strengthens the principles of **cooperative federalism** and follows the framework laid down under **Article 262 of the Constitution** and the **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956**.
- **Pennaiyar river** is an **inter-state river** flowing through **Karnataka and Tamil Nadu**.
- The dispute arose due to **Karnataka's construction of check dams and diversion structures** on the river.
- **Tamil Nadu** argues that these unilateral constructions **reduce downstream water flow**, adversely affecting **agriculture and drinking water needs**.
- Tamil Nadu claims such actions violate **existing agreements** and established legal norms governing inter-state rivers.
- **Tamil Nadu approached the Supreme Court in 2018** by filing an **original suit**.
- The state argued that **inter-state river waters are national assets** and no single state can exercise exclusive control.
- It alleged that **Karnataka did not share project details** and failed to obtain **prior consent of the downstream state**, breaching federal principles.
- A key legal basis cited by Tamil Nadu is the **1892 agreement** related to Pennaiyar river waters.
- Tamil Nadu maintains that this agreement is **binding on both states**.
- As per the agreement, Karnataka **cannot undertake major diversion or storage projects without mutual consent**.
- The Supreme Court's direction is based on **Article 262 of the Constitution**, which empowers Parliament to provide for adjudication of inter-state river water disputes.
- The **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956** mandates resolution of such disputes through **tribunals rather than regular courts**.
- Once a tribunal is constituted, **judicial intervention is barred**, ensuring specialized and technical adjudication.
- **Water disputes tribunals** provide **expert-driven, evidence-based solutions** to complex hydrological and technical issues.
- They help in **reducing prolonged litigation** and **political friction** between states.
- The Pennaiyar tribunal will join existing tribunals for rivers such as **Cauvery, Krishna, Mahadayi, and Narmada**, reinforcing institutional dispute-resolution mechanisms.

About Pennaiyar (Thenpennai) River:

- o **Origin**: Eastern slopes of **Nandi Hills, Karnataka**.
- o **Course**: Flows through **Tamil Nadu** and drains into the **Bay of Bengal**.
- o **Length**: **497 km**, making it the **second-longest river in Tamil Nadu**.
- o **Catchment Area**: **3,690 sq km**, with about **77% located in Tamil Nadu**.
- o **Physiography**: Bounded by **Velikonda, Nagari, Javadu, Shevaroy, Chitteri, and Kalrayan hills** of the Eastern Ghats.

- **Tributaries of Pennaiyar River** include **Markandanadhi, Kambainallur, Pambar, Vaniyar, Kallar, Valayar Odai, Pambanar, Aliyar, Musukundanadhi, and Thurinjalar**.
- The river is supported by **monsoonal rainfall** and reservoirs such as **Kelavarapalli, Krishnagiri, and Sathanur dams**.
- The Pennaiyar basin is mentioned in **Sangam literature** for its fertile landscape.
- Important sites along the basin include **Penneswaraar Temple, Dakshina Tirupati, Veerateshwarar Temple, Kabilar Kundru**, and the **Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary**.
- **Constitutional and Legal Framework for Inter-State Water Disputes**:
  - **Article 262**: Empowers Parliament to legislate on adjudication of inter-state river disputes and bars court jurisdiction once a law is enacted.
  - **Entry 17 (State List)**: Water supply, irrigation, canals, drainage, and hydropower fall under state jurisdiction, subject to Union powers.
  - **Entry 56 (Union List)**: Allows Parliament to regulate and develop inter-state rivers in public interest.
  - **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956**: Provides for constitution of tribunals with binding awards.
  - **River Boards Act, 1956**: Enables river basin-level boards for coordinated development, though largely unimplemented.
  - **Dispute Resolution Committees**: Mandatory pre-tribunal negotiation mechanism.
  - **2002 Amendment to ISRWD Act**: Introduced timelines for tribunal constitution and award delivery.
  - **Inter-State River Water Disputes Amendment Bill, 2019**: Proposes a **permanent tribunal**, multiple benches, fixed timelines, and a centralized water data bank.

RECENT NEWS

- The Supreme Court of India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Bhutan to exchange young legal professionals. The announcement was made by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, who welcomed two law clerks from Bhutan to work in the Supreme Court, reflecting closer judicial cooperation between the two neighbors.

Andhra Pradesh Plans Exclusive Women Industrial Park to Boost Women Entrepreneurship

- **Andhra Pradesh** government has proposed an **exclusive industrial park for women entrepreneurs**, marking a strong step towards women empowerment and inclusive industrial growth.
- The proposed industrial park will be spread across **30 acres** and will focus on **women-led industries, startups, and small businesses**.
- The objective is to provide a **safe, supportive, and well-equipped business environment** for women to start and expand enterprises.
- The initiative reflects the state government's commitment to **promoting women entrepreneurship and employment generation**.

- The Andhra Pradesh government has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with FICCI Ladies Organisation (FICCI-FLO)** to support implementation of the project.
- **FICCI Ladies Organisation (FICCI-FLO)** is the women's wing of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and works to empower women entrepreneurs across India.
- Under the partnership, **FICCI-FLO will mobilise women entrepreneurs, provide mentoring and business guidance, support skill development and capacity building, and facilitate networking and market linkages**.
- The industrial park infrastructure will be developed by the **Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC)**.
- **APIIC will provide quality industrial infrastructure, fast-track approvals and clearances, and statutory and operational support**, reducing delays for women entrepreneurs.
- The initiative aligns with Chief Minister **N. Chandrababu Naidu's vision of "One Family, One Entrepreneur"**, which aims to encourage entrepreneurship in every household.
- Key goals of this vision include **enterprise creation, local employment generation, self-reliance, innovation, and improving women's economic independence**.
- The women-only industrial park is part of a larger plan to develop **175 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) parks across Andhra Pradesh**.
- Expected benefits include **growth of women-led MSMEs, creation of new jobs, strengthening of the local economy, and financial empowerment of women**.

RECENT NEWS

- India's clean energy transition received a major boost as Andhra Pradesh is set to host the world's largest green ammonia project at Kakinada. Developed by AM Green, the project involves a $10-billion investment and aims to position India as a global exporter of green ammonia while supporting climate goals and energy security.

About Andhra Pradesh:

- Chief Minister: N. Chandrababu Naidu
- Governor: S. Abdul Nazeer
- Capital: Amaravati
- National Parks: Sri Venkateswara National Park, Papikonda National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary, Pulicat Lake Bird Sanctuary, Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary, Rollapadu Wildlife Sanctuary, Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary

India Joins BRICS Centre for Industrial Competencies

- **India has officially joined the BRICS Centre for Industrial Competencies (BCIC) to strengthen skill development, industrial training, and workforce cooperation** among BRICS nations (**Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa**).
- The announcement was made at an event organised by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, at **Vanijya Bhavan, New Delhi**.

- India's participation marks a significant step towards enhancing **industrial capabilities**, especially for the **manufacturing sector and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**.
- **BCIC is a multilateral platform** designed as a **one-stop centre** to provide integrated support services to manufacturing companies and MSMEs across BRICS countries.
- The centre focuses on **capacity building, technology adoption, productivity improvement, and sharing of best manufacturing practices**.
- BCIC operates in partnership with the **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**, which provides technical expertise and global best practices in industrial development.
- A **Trust Fund Agreement** was signed between **DPIIT and UNIDO**, formally confirming India's participation in BCIC.
- The agreement was signed by **Shri Agrim Kaushal, Economic Adviser, DPIIT**, and **Dr. Cristiano Pasini, Director, UNIDO**.
- The event was presided over by **Shri Amardeep Singh Bhatia, Secretary, DPIIT**, highlighting the high-level importance of the initiative.
- The **National Productivity Council (NPC)** has been designated as the **India Centre for BRICS Industrial Competencies**.
- NPC will function under policy guidance of **DPIIT** and technical support from **UNIDO**.
- NPC's role includes **capacity building, productivity enhancement, Industry 4.0 adoption, training programmes, certification courses, and dissemination of best practices**.
- A key focus of BCIC is **Industry 4.0**, which refers to the **fourth industrial revolution** involving **digital technologies, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, automation, robotics, data analytics and smart manufacturing systems**.
- The initiative aims to help Indian industries adopt **advanced manufacturing practices**, improve **global competitiveness**, and integrate into **global value chains**.
- **MSMEs**, which form the backbone of the Indian economy, will receive targeted support for **technology adoption, skills development, quality standards, and export competitiveness**.
- BCIC promotes **cross-border collaboration** among BRICS nations, enabling **knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and South–South cooperation**.
- Participation from **Ministry of MSME, Ministry of External Affairs, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)** and senior officials ensured a **multi-stakeholder and whole-of-government approach**.
- The initiative supports national programmes such as **Make in India** and the **Production Linked Incentive Scheme**, and contributes to **employment generation, workforce upskilling, and sustainable industrial growth**.
- By joining BCIC, India strengthens its role in **BRICS economic cooperation**, enhances **industrial resilience**, and advances its vision of becoming a **global manufacturing hub**.

About DPIIT

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) was established in the year 1995 and was reconstituted in the year 2000 with the merger of the Department of Industrial Development. The department was earlier called Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) and was renamed as DPIIT in January, 2019.

World Government Summit 2026 Opens in Dubai

- The **World Government Summit 2026** opened in **Dubai, United Arab Emirates**, under the theme **"Shaping Future Governments"**.
- The summit is being held **up to February 5, 2026**.
- It is one of the world's most significant global platforms focusing on **public policy, governance, innovation, sustainability and technology**.

The summit's agenda features more than 445 sessions and over 450 global speakers including heads of state, ministers, experts, thinkers and decision makers.

The World Governments Summit 2026 opened today in Dubai under the theme "Shaping Future Governments," marking the largest international participation in the summit's history.

- The summit aims to **strengthen governance frameworks**, enhance **international cooperation**, and **address economic, social and technological challenges** facing the global community.
- More than **6,250 participants** are attending the summit.
- Participation includes **over 60 Heads of State and Government** and **more than 500 Ministers** from **over 150 governments**.
- The summit has attracted **87 Nobel Laureates**, highlighting its strong focus on evidence-based and intellectual policy discussions.
- More than **700 Chief Executive Officers (CEOs)** are participating, bringing private sector perspectives on growth, innovation and resilience.
- Delegates from **over 80 international, regional and academic organisations** are present.
- The summit features **over 445 sessions** and **more than 450 global speakers**.
- The theme **"Shaping Future Governments"** emphasises the need for **proactive, innovative and future-ready governance** rather than reactive policymaking.
- Discussions focus on how governments can remain **responsive and effective** amid **rapid technological change**, while balancing **innovation with sustainability**.
- The summit addresses governance challenges in a **multipolar global order** and the need to adapt public institutions to **diverse and demanding populations**.
- Key discussions include the **future of government work**, focusing on **digital transformation**, **artificial intelligence in public services**, **upskilling of public sector workforce**, and **maintaining public trust**.
- Leadership sessions examine how leaders can navigate **geopolitical tensions**, **economic uncertainty**, and **technological disruption** while ensuring **inclusive decision-making**.
- Public finance discussions focus on **funding infrastructure and essential services**, **attracting sustainable investment**, **green finance**, **climate-related investments**, and **digital economy taxation**.
- Policymakers are deliberating on **artificial intelligence**, **blockchain**, **digital currencies**, and regulatory frameworks to ensure **equitable access to technological benefits**.
- Sustainability discussions focus on **climate governance**, **transition to sustainable economies**, and **implementation of climate commitments** with attention to **just transitions**.
- The summit highlights the importance of **international cooperation and multilateralism** in addressing shared global challenges while respecting national sovereignty.
- **International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva** addressed the summit, highlighting **unexpected global economic resilience**.

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- The IMF noted that despite **geopolitical tensions and trade uncertainties**, the global economy has shown **strong adaptability**.
- The IMF has **upgraded global growth projections**, including positive outlooks for the **United Arab Emirates and Gulf economies**.
- Global trade has **adjusted rather than collapsed** despite tariff pressures.
- While initial tariff projections exceeded **20 percent**, actual effective tariff collections have stabilised around **9 percent**.
- Shifts in **United States trade and foreign policy** have contributed to a more **multipolar and diversified global economic landscape**.
- The summit is expected to generate **policy innovations**, **bilateral and multilateral partnerships**, and influence **global governance models**.
- Outcomes from the summit often shape **international policy priorities** and future governance agendas.
- **Dubai's role as host** reflects its position as a **global innovation hub**, a **bridge between regions**, and a model of **economic diversification and governance innovation**.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

United States to Launch $12-Billion Critical Rare Minerals Reserve to Curb Dependence on China

- The **United States** announced plans to create a **$12-billion critical rare minerals stockpile** to reduce **dependence on China** for key resources.
- The initiative, named **"Project Vault,"** is aimed at securing **rare earths** and other **critical minerals** prone to **price volatility** and **supply disruptions**.
- The project will combine **$10 billion in loans** from the **US Export-Import Bank (EXIM)** with around **$1.67 billion in private capital**.
- Major companies involved in **Project Vault** include **General Motors**, **Stellantis**, **Boeing**, and **Google**.
- **Rare earth minerals**, critical for **smartphones**, **electric vehicles**, **fighter jets**, and **clean energy technologies**, are a **strategic priority** for long-term **economic and national security**.
- **Donald Trump** compared the initiative to the **Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR)**, emphasizing protection of **American businesses and workers** from shortages.
- The **US Secretary of the Interior**, **Doug Burgum**, stated that **11 additional countries** will be announced for **participation** in the initiative.
- **China** controls about **70% of global rare earth mining** and **90% of processing**, giving it a **chokehold** on the sector, which **Project Vault** aims to counter.
- The **government-backed loan** for the reserve will have a **15-year period**, similar to funding mechanisms used for **MP Materials**, **Vulcan Elements**, and **USA Rare Earth**.
- The **reserve** will shield **manufacturers** of **vehicles**, **electronics**, and other goods from **supply chain disruptions**, ensuring **economic and national security**.

Spain Becomes First European Country to Ban Social Media for Children Under 16, Second Globally After Australia

- **Spain** has announced a **nationwide ban** on **social media access** for **children under the age of 16**, becoming the **second country globally** after **Australia** and the **first in Europe** to impose such a restriction.
- The policy was announced by **Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez** during his address at the **World Government Summit** in **Dubai**.
- The **ban** will come into force **within a week**, with **Sánchez** describing the current online environment as a **"digital wild west."**
- **Australia** enforced a similar **under-16 social media ban** in **December 2025**, making **Spain** the next country to follow suit.
- In **Australia**, the ban led to pushback from **tech firms**, with **Meta** reporting the removal of over **550,000 underage accounts** and urging **industry-led safety standards** instead of blanket prohibitions.
- **Spain's move** is expected to intensify the **global debate** on **child protection**, **digital rights**, and **platform accountability**.

About Spain :

- **Prime Minister : Pedro Sánchez**
- **Capital : Madrid**
- **Currency : Euro**

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Yumnam Khemchand to Take Over as Manipur Chief Minister Following End of President's Rule

- **Yumnam Khemchand Singh** was chosen as **Leader of the BJP Legislature Party** in **Manipur** on **February 3, 2026**, paving the way for him to become **Chief Minister**.
- **Yumnam Khemchand Singh** is set to become the **13th Chief Minister** (individual-wise) of **Manipur**, succeeding **N. Biren Singh**, and will lead the state after almost one year under **central rule**.
- The decision comes ahead of **one year of President's Rule**, which began on **February 13, 2025**, after the resignation of former **CM N. Biren Singh** on **February 9, 2025**.
- The **BJP legislative party meeting** in **New Delhi** was attended by central observer **Tarun Chugh**, Northeast in-charge **Sambit Patra**, **BJP MLAs from Manipur**, and **NDA partners**.
- **Manipur Legislative Assembly** has **60 seats** and has been under **suspended animation** since **February 2025**.
- **BJP** currently has **37 MLAs**, including **32 elected in 2022** and **5 defectors from Janata Dal (United)**.
- Other parties in the assembly: **National People's Party – 6**, **Naga People's Front – 5**, **Congress – 5**, **Kuki People's Alliance – 2**, **Janata Dal (United) – 1**, **Independents – 3**, with **one seat vacant** due to MLA's death.

About Yumnam Khemchand Singh :

- **Yumnam Khemchand Singh**, **62 years old** (born **1 March 1963**), represents **Singjamei constituency** in **Imphal West district**.
- He served as **Speaker of Manipur Legislative Assembly (2017–2022)** and was a **cabinet minister** in the second **Biren Singh ministry (2022–2025)**.
- His **ministerial portfolios** included **Education**, **Rural Development and Panchayati Raj**, and **Municipal Administration and Housing Development (MAHUD)**.
- He is known as a **non-polarising leader** with strong **organisational skills** and is considered a **steady administrative choice** during political transition.
- Before politics, he was a **businessman** and is a **trained Taekwondo practitioner**, whose training began in his teens.
- In **December 2025**, he became the **first Indian** to receive a **5th Dan black belt** in traditional **Taekwondo** from the **Global Traditional Taekwondo Federation (GTTF)**, **Seoul, South Korea**.
- He played a **key role** in forming the **Taekwondo Federation of India** and popularising the sport nationally.
- His elevation reflects the **BJP's focus** on **organisational discipline**, **administrative continuity**, and **low-key authority** rather than mass rhetoric.

About Manipur:
- Governor: Ajay Kumar Bhalla
- Capital: Imphal
- National Parks: Keibul Lamjao National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Yangoupokpi-Lokchao Wildlife Sanctuary, Sirohi National Park, Manipur Zoological Garden, Ferenwild Sanctuary

Reserve Bank of India Approves Vinay Muralidhar Tonse as Yes Bank Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer

- **Yes Bank** has appointed **Vinay Muralidhar Tonse** as its new **Managing Director (MD)** and **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**, following **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** approval.
- **Tonse** will serve a **three-year tenure**, starting from the date he assumes charge, subject to **shareholder approval**.
- **Vinay Tonse** previously served as **Managing Director – Retail Business and Operations** at the **State Bank of India (SBI)**, demitting office on **30 November 2025**.
- The appointment follows the completion of the extended tenure of **Prashant Kumar**, who led **Yes Bank** through a **critical recovery phase** post-**2020 crisis**.
- **Yes Bank** stated that **Tonse** is eligible to be appointed as a director and is **not debarred by SEBI** or any statutory authority.
- **Tonse** brings extensive experience in **corporate banking**, **international operations**, and **risk management**, signaling the regulator's focus on **experienced leadership** for **systemically important banks**.

About YES Bank:
- **Founded**: 2004
- **Headquarters**: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- **Tagline :** "Life Ko Banao Rich"

AWARDS AND HONOURS

Indian-Origin Climate Scientist Veerabhadran Ramanathan Wins Crafoord Prize 2026

- Indian-origin climate scientist **Veerabhadran Ramanathan** has won the **Crafoord Prize 2026**, often referred to as the **"Nobel of Geosciences"**.

- The award recognises his **pioneering contributions to climate and atmospheric science**, especially his discoveries related to **greenhouse gases and global warming**.

Credit: cals.cornell.edu
Veerabhadran Ramanathan made a landmark discovery in 1975 while working at NASA

Houston: Indian-origin climate scientist Veerabhadran Ramanathan has been awarded the 2026 Crafoord Prize in Geosciences by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

- His research has had a **direct impact on global climate policy**, including international environmental agreements.

- **Veerabhadran Ramanathan** is an **atmospheric scientist of Indian origin** with a career spanning over **five decades**.

- He was **born and educated in southern India** and studied **engineering in Bengaluru** before moving to the **United States for higher education**.

- He worked at leading global institutions and fundamentally reshaped scientific understanding of **climate change**.

- His work established that **global warming is driven not only by carbon dioxide (CO_2)** but also by **multiple heat-trapping gases acting together**.

- In the **1970s**, while working at **NASA Langley Research Center**, he made a breakthrough discovery related to **chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)**.

- His **1975 paper published in** *Science* demonstrated that **a single CFC molecule can trap thousands of times more heat than a CO_2 molecule**.

- This was the **first clear scientific proof** that gases other than CO_2 could significantly drive global warming.

- His later research highlighted the role of **trace gases such as methane and nitrous oxide** in accelerating global warming.

- In **1985**, he co-authored studies warning that these gases could cause **faster-than-expected climate change**.

- His scientific findings played a crucial role in shaping the **Montreal Protocol (1987)**, which led to the **global phase-out of CFCs**.

- The Montreal Protocol is regarded as one of the **most successful international environmental treaties** and prevented substantial additional warming.

Paradip Port Authority Wins First Prize at Swachhata Pakhwada Awards 2025

- **Paradip Port Authority** won the **First Prize** at the **Swachhata Pakhwada Awards 2025**, emerging as the **Cleanest Performing Major Port of India**.

- The award was instituted by the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)** for excellence in **cleanliness, sustainability and community participation**.

Paradip Port Authority Wins First Prize at Swachhata Pakhwada Awards 2025

Posted On: 03 FEB 2026 8:44PM by PIB Delhi

Paradip Port Authority (PPA) has been awarded the First Prize at the Swachhata Pakhwada Awards 2025, instituted by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), in recognition of its outstanding performance in cleanliness, sustainability, and community participation.

The award was presented by Hon'ble Union Minister of Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, with Hon'ble Minister of State, Shri Shantanu Thakur and Shri Vijay Kumar, IAS, Secretary, of MoPSW, in attendance, at a ceremony held in New Delhi on Tuesday, 3rd February 2026. Shri P. L. Haranadh, IRTS, Chairman of Paradip Port Authority, received the honour on behalf of the port team.

Several MoPSW organizations have been recognized with the Swachh Bharat Pakhwada Awards-2025 for exemplary performance during Swachhata Pakhwada 2025 and Swachhata Hi Sewa 2025, marked by cleanliness drives, citizen engagement, advocacy, and Safai Mitra welfare, promoting a cleaner and more sustainable work environment.

This achievement marks a proud milestone, reflecting the port's strong commitment to the ideals of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, environmental stewardship, and inclusive development. Under the guidance of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Paradip Port Authority successfully implemented the three core pillars of Swachhata Pakhwada 2025: Jan Bhagidari, Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam, and Safai Mitra Suraksha.

As part of Jan Bhagidari, PPA ensured large-scale public participation through cleanliness drives across schools, heritage sites, temples, beaches, ponds, and port premises. Activities such as cyclothons, Swachhata Raths, rallies, Swachhata Runs, human chains, and citizen-led drives under campaigns like Ek Din Ek Ghanta Ek Saath reinforced the message that cleanliness is everyone's responsibility.

- The recognition highlights the port's role as an active contributor to the **Swachh Bharat Mission**, beyond its commercial and trade functions.

- The award was presented on **3 February 2026 in New Delhi** by **Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal**, in the presence of **Minister of State Shantanu Thakur** and **Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Vijay Kumar (Indian Administrative Service)**.
- The award was received by **P. L. Haranadh, Chairman, Paradip Port Authority**, on behalf of the port workforce.
- Paradip Port Authority adopted a **holistic and sustained approach** to cleanliness, combining **sanitation infrastructure, behavioural change, environmental protection and worker welfare**.
- Measures included **large-scale cleanliness drives, scientific waste management, elimination of single-use plastics and community-led activities** across port and surrounding public areas.
- **Swachhata Pakhwada** is a flagship cleanliness campaign under **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**, focusing on **behavioural change, waste management, green practices, citizen engagement and Safai Mitra welfare**.
- Ports and maritime institutions are evaluated on **environmental stewardship, public participation and inclusiveness**, not just operational hygiene.
- Under the **Jan Bhagidari** initiative, Paradip Port Authority ensured **mass public participation** through cleanliness drives in **schools, temples, beaches, ponds and port premises**.
- Activities included **cyclothons, Swachhata Runs, rallies, Swachhata Raths, human chains and the "Ek Din Ek Ghanta Ek Saath" campaign**, reinforcing shared civic responsibility.
- Under **Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam**, large-scale plantation drives were undertaken to promote **green cover and climate sustainability**.
- **Forty thousand saplings** were planted at **Paradip Sea Beach** under **Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0**, marking the birthday of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.

MOUS AND AGREEMENT

India–China Trade Surges to Historic USD 155 Billion Amid Diplomatic Recalibration

- In **2025**, **India and China recorded a historic bilateral trade volume of USD 155.6 billion**, the highest ever between the two countries.
- The milestone reflects **strong economic interdependence** between the world's two most populous nations despite ongoing geopolitical and strategic tensions.

New Delhi, The India-China bilateral trade reached a "record high" of USD 155 billion in 2025, clocking a year-on-year growth of over 12 per cent, Chinese ambassador Xu Feihong said on Tuesday.

Xu said China supports India's BRICS presidency, stands ready to strengthen multilateral coordination with New

India foreign trade (Image for representation)

Delhi and is committed to work together to advance the development of the Global South.

- The trade surge coincided with a phase of **diplomatic recalibration and normalization**, supported by high-level political engagement.
- Chinese officials described bilateral relations as entering a **"new level of improvement"**, indicating a shift towards managed engagement and pragmatic cooperation.
- The **USD 155.6 billion trade volume** marked a **historical peak**, surpassing all previous India–China trade records.
- Bilateral trade grew by **around 12 percent year-on-year**, showing resilience of commercial ties even amid complex political relations.
- India–China trade now ranks among the **largest bilateral trade relationships globally**.

- The trade volume **exceeds India's trade with the United States**, underlining China's central role in India's external trade profile.
- **Indian exports to China increased by about 9.7 percent in 2025**, indicating improved competitiveness of Indian goods in the Chinese market.
- Major Indian export categories include **iron ore, minerals, textiles, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, agricultural products, seafood, and marine products**.
- Rising exports highlight China's demand for **raw materials and intermediate goods** required for its manufacturing sector.
- Despite export growth, **India continues to face a significant trade deficit with China**.
- China remains the **dominant exporter**, supplying electronics, machinery, semiconductor components, optical and medical instruments, plastics, chemicals, steel, and electrical equipment to India.
- The trade imbalance reflects **structural differences** between the two economies, with China's manufacturing dominance and India's developing industrial base.
- The persistent deficit remains a **policy concern for India**, leading to demands for better market access and trade reciprocity.
- A major diplomatic turning point was the **August 2025 meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Tianjin**.
- The summit signaled a **shift from confrontation to calibrated engagement**, emphasizing dialogue and stability.
- Both sides agreed to **better manage border situations along the Line of Actual Control**, though disputes remain unresolved.
- High-level diplomatic, economic, and institutional channels were **reactivated and strengthened** after the meeting.
- Following the Tianjin engagement, there was an expansion of **foreign office dialogues, trade-related engagements, and institutional coordination**.
- Both countries adopted **careful public messaging** to avoid escalation and reduce diplomatic friction.
- **Crisis communication mechanisms** were strengthened to prevent misunderstandings during sensitive situations.
- China's **public support for India's BRICS presidency** emerged as a positive signal in bilateral relations.
- Cooperation within **BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa)** includes development finance, trade facilitation, financial architecture reform, climate action, and Global South representation.
- India and China positioned their engagement within a broader **emerging economies and Global South leadership framework**.

Elon Musk Becomes World's First $800 Billion Individual

- In **February 2026**, Elon Musk became the **first individual globally to cross a net worth of USD 800 billion**, marking a historic milestone in global wealth creation.
- This achievement significantly **reordered global wealth rankings** and highlighted the growing concentration of wealth driven by technology-led enterprises.

Tesla CEO Elon Musk has now become the first person in history to surpass a net worth of $800 billion after the landmark merger of his rocket company SpaceX and his artificial intelligence company xAI. As reported by Forbes, the deal valued the combined entity at $1.25 trillion, giving a boost to Musk's personal fortune by $84 billion to a staggering $852 billion.

The merger of the two companies restructured Elon Musk's holdings and gave him 43% stake in the newly combined company which is estimated to be $542 billion. Before the acquisition deal between SpaceX and xAI, Elon Musk held 42% stake in SpaceX which valued around $336 billion and a 49% stake in xAI which was worth $122 billion. With SpaceX now absorbing xAI, the rocket maker has become Elon Musk's most precious asset, outpacing his other holdings.

- The sharp rise in Musk's wealth was mainly driven by a **major corporate restructuring**, particularly the **merger of SpaceX and xAI**, which reshaped his business empire.
- Musk's wealth surge reflects the convergence of **space exploration, artificial intelligence, renewable energy, and digital communications** in the modern global economy.
- The **SpaceX–xAI merger**, completed in February 2026, created a combined entity valued at **USD 1.25 trillion**, making it one of the largest corporate combinations in history.
- The strategic objective of the merger was to **integrate artificial intelligence capabilities with space infrastructure**, including satellite-based communications and autonomous systems.
- The merger triggered strong market reactions, signalling that **AI and space technology are emerging as core pillars of future global technological dominance**.
- The restructuring added approximately **USD 84 billion** to Musk's personal net worth, pushing him beyond the **USD 800 billion mark**.
- Musk's equity stakes were consolidated, converting his **42% stake in SpaceX and 49% stake in xAI into a 43% stake in the merged entity**.
- The combined company's valuation uplift reflected **investor confidence, strategic synergies, and optimism around AI-driven growth and commercial space prospects**.
- After absorbing xAI, **SpaceX emerged as Musk's most valuable asset**, surpassing Tesla in its contribution to his total wealth.
- SpaceX dominates the **commercial spaceflight sector**, with leadership in reusable rockets, satellite launches, and space-based services.
- The **Starlink satellite internet constellation** represents a massive global connectivity opportunity and a major long-term revenue source.
- SpaceX also benefits from **long-term government contracts** with NASA, the Department of Defense, and the Space Force.
- The merged SpaceX–xAI entity is valued at **over USD 540 billion**, contributing the largest share to Musk's **USD 852 billion net worth**.
- With a **43% ownership stake**, Musk's SpaceX holdings alone are estimated at **around USD 232 billion**.
- Despite SpaceX's rise, **Tesla remains a key pillar of Musk's wealth**.

RANKING AND INDEX

Responsible Nations Index 2026 Released by World Intellectual Foundation

- The **Responsible Nations Index 2026** was released by the **World Intellectual Foundation (WIF)**.

The Responsible Nations Index 2026, published recently by the World Intellectual Foundation, offers a fresh look at how countries choose to use their power. Rather than focusing on economic strength or political influence, the index examines something far more telling: how nations treat their people, protect the planet and conduct themselves globally. This year's findings highlight countries that prioritise fairness, compassion and long-term responsibility over short-term gains. The rankings also provide a window into what thoughtful, values-driven leadership can look like in an increasingly complex world.

- The index covers **154 countries** and evaluates global leadership based on **responsibility, ethical governance, and collective good**, instead of traditional indicators like **Gross Domestic Product or military power**.
- The objective of the index is to assess how responsibly nations govern, care for society, protect the environment, and contribute to global cooperation.
- **Singapore ranked 1st globally**, emerging as the **most responsible nation in the world** and the **only Asian country in the top 10**.
- **Switzerland ranked 2nd** and **Denmark ranked 3rd**, highlighting the strong performance of smaller nations with robust governance frameworks.

- The rankings come at a time of **rising geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty, and increasing climate challenges**, emphasizing the relevance of responsible governance.
- The index evaluates countries across **four core dimensions**:
  - **Ethical Governance**: Transparency, anti-corruption measures, rule of law, and strength of democratic institutions.
  - **Social Welfare**: Access to healthcare, quality of education, income equality, and social protection systems.
  - **Environmental Responsibility**: Climate action, renewable energy adoption, conservation efforts, and sustainability practices.
  - **Global Accountability**: International cooperation, humanitarian aid, peacekeeping contributions, and responsible diplomacy.
- **Top 10 countries in the Responsible Nations Index 2026**:
  - **1st – Singapore (Score: 0.6194)**
  - **2nd – Switzerland (0.5869)**
  - **3rd – Denmark (0.5837)**
  - **4th – Cyprus (0.5774)**
  - **5th – Sweden (0.5740)**
  - **6th – Czechia (0.5704)**
  - **7th – Belgium (0.5690)**
  - **8th – Austria (0.5665)**
  - **9th – Ireland (0.5634)**
  - **10th – Georgia (0.5581)**
- **European countries dominated the index**, with **9 out of the top 10 nations from Europe**, reflecting strong commitments to social welfare, ethical governance, and environmental responsibility.
- **Nordic countries like Denmark and Sweden** performed exceptionally well in **environmental responsibility and global accountability**.
- The index shows that **economic power does not automatically translate into responsibility**.
- The **United States ranked 66th** and **China ranked 68th**, indicating that large economies and military strength alone do not ensure responsible global leadership.
- **Conflict-affected nations ranked at the bottom** of the index.
- **Syria ranked 153rd** and **Yemen ranked 151st**, highlighting how prolonged conflict weakens governance, social welfare, and environmental protection.
- **India ranked 16th globally** with a responsibility score of **0.5515**, showing strong performance among developing nations.
- India's ranking was supported by **improvements in healthcare access, expansion of social protection schemes, progress in reducing inequality, and people-centric digital governance initiatives**.
- India's **renewable energy commitments and climate action policies** also contributed positively to its score.
- The index notes that **balanced progress across all four dimensions** is necessary for India to move into the **top 10 in future editions**.
- **Notable country rankings** include **Pakistan at 90th**, **United States at 66th**, **China at 68th**, **Yemen at 151st**, and **Syria at 153rd**.

APPS & PORTALS

Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs Launches Upgraded NYPS 2.0 Portal to Broaden Youth Parliament Participation

- The **Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA)** unveiled the upgraded **National Youth Parliament Scheme (NYPS) 2.0 Web Portal** to expand the **reach and inclusivity** of the **Youth Parliament Programme** in India.

Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs unveiled upgraded version of National Youth Parliament Scheme web portal

Posted On: 02 FEB 2026 4:40PM by PIB Delhi

The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs has unveiled an upgraded version of the National Youth Parliament Scheme (NYPS) web portal, known as NYPS 2.0 to expand the Youth Parliament Programme and to ensure wider participation of students, including from remote and rural areas. Unlike the previous version, which was limited to students of recognized educational institutions only, NYPS 2.0 is open to all the educational institutions, groups and even individual citizens across the country regardless of gender, caste, creed, religion, race, region, place etc. The details of participation and the conduct of the youth parliament session are as follows-

Sl. No.	Year	Institution Participation			Group Participation			Individual Participation	Total number of participating Citizens / Students (A+B+C)
		No. of Registrations	No. of Events Organized	No. of Participating Students	No. of Registrations	No. of Events Organized	No. of participating Citizens/	No. of participating Citizens/	

- Since its launch on **11 September 2024**, the portal recorded **95,319 participants** across **660 Youth Parliament Sittings** as of **27 January 2026**, reflecting strong nationwide engagement.
- The **upgraded version** enhances **inclusive access** by enabling wider participation from **remote and rural areas**, removing barriers present in the earlier portal.
- Earlier limited to students of **recognised institutions**, **NYPS 2.0** now allows participation from **all educational institutions**, **groups**, and **individual citizens** across India.
- The portal supports **Institutional Participation**, allowing **schools, colleges, and universities** to organise **Youth Parliament Sittings (YPSs)**.
- Institutional sittings are conducted under **Kishore Sabha** (for younger students) and **Tarun Sabha** (for **Undergraduate (UG)** and **Postgraduate (PG)** students).
- The platform also enables **Group Participation** for organised citizen groups and **Individual Participation**, broadening **democratic engagement** among youth.

About Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs :
- Cabinet Minister : Kiren Rijiju
- Minister of State : Arjun Ram Meghwal,L. Murugan

DEFENCE NEWS

Defence Research & Development Organisation Successfully Demonstrates Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet Technology

- **The Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully demonstrated **Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)** technology from the **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur**, off the coast of **Odisha on February 3, 2026**.

DRDO carries out successful demonstration of Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet technology

Posted On: 03 FEB 2026 5:15PM by PIB Delhi

Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) has carried out successful demonstration of Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) technology from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the coast of Odisha at around 1045 hrs on February 03, 2026. The successful demonstration places India into an elite league of nations possessing this technology that enables developing long-range air-to-air missiles to give tactical edge over the adversaries.

- The successful demonstration places **India** among a **select group of nations** possessing **SFDR technology**, enabling the development of **long-range air-to-air missiles** and providing a **tactical edge** over adversaries.
- Critical subsystems including **Nozzle-less Booster**, **Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet motor**, and **Fuel Flow Controller** performed as per expectations.
- The **SFDR system** was initially propelled by a **ground booster motor** to the required **Mach number**, after which the **ramjet system ignited** and operated as designed.
- **Flight performance** was validated through data captured by **multiple tracking instruments** deployed along the **Odisha coast** over the **Bay of Bengal**.

- The launch was monitored by **senior scientists** from **DRDO laboratories**, including **Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL)**, **High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL)**, **Research Centre Imarat (RCI)**, and **ITR**.
- The **SFDR technology** is **strategically significant** as it enables **sustained high-speed performance**, **greater engagement envelopes**, and is particularly effective for **beyond-visual-range (BVR) aerial combat**.
- This milestone strengthens **India's long-range air-to-air missile capabilities** and enhances its **aerial combat edge** against adversaries.

Recent News :

- In Jan 2026, At the **77th Republic Day Parade** on **Kartavya Path**, the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** unveiled the **Long Range Anti-Ship Hypersonic Missile (LR-AShM)** for the first time, highlighting India's advances in **hypersonic weapon systems**.

About DRDO :

- **Headquarters** : **New Delhi, India**
- Chairman : **Samir V. Kamat**

Indian Navy's Inaugural Training Squadron Reaches Phuket Deep Sea Port, Thailand

- Indian Navy's **First Training Squadron (1TS)** comprising **INS Tir, INS Shardul, INS Sujata** along with **ICGS Sarathi** arrived at **Phuket Deep Sea Port, Thailand** as part of its training deployment to **Southeast Asia**.
- The ships received a **ceremonial welcome** from the **Royal Thai Navy (RTN)**, highlighting the growing **maritime partnership** between **India and Thailand** focused on **regional security, stability, and mutual understanding**.
- The visit holds added importance as **2026** is celebrated as the **ASEAN–India Year of Maritime Cooperation**, reinforcing **India's maritime outreach** in the region.
- During the port call, **Indian Navy and RTN personnel** will participate in **professional exchanges**, **leadership interactions**, **yoga sessions**, **friendly sports fixtures**, and **Passage Exercise (PASSEX)** to enhance **operational synergy**.
- The two navies maintain **strong cooperation** through **bilateral exercises** such as **Exercise Ayutthaya** and the **Indo–Thai Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT)** aimed at securing **shared maritime spaces**.
- **Regional interoperability** is further strengthened through the **trilateral maritime exercise SITMEX**, involving participation of partner navies including the **RTN**.
- The engagement gained **strategic relevance** as **India assumed the Chair** of the **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)** from **Thailand** in **February 2026**.
- The deployment aligns with the **Government of India's MAHASAGAR** (**Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions**) vision, underscoring **India's role** as a **responsible maritime partner**.
- Overall, the visit reflects **India's continued commitment** to **maritime security**, **regional cooperation**, and **capacity-building** across the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.

Border Roads Organisation Executes High-Altitude Rescue and Road Clearance Mission at Chatergala Pass, Jammu & Kashmir

- The **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** successfully conducted a **high-altitude rescue** and **road restoration operation** under **Project Sampark** at **Chatergala Pass**, located at an altitude of **10,500 ft** in the **Bhaderwah–Chatergala axis**, **Jammu & Kashmir**.

BRO Successfully Conducts High-Altitude Rescue and Road Restoration Operation at Chatergala Pass in J&K

- The disruption occurred due to **heavy snowfall**.
- **118 Road Construction Company (RCC)** of **35 Border Roads Task Force (BRTF)** began the **snow-clearance operation**, continuing for nearly **40 hours**.
- Approximately **38 km of road** covered under **5 to 6 feet of snow** was cleared, reopening the route by evening of **January 25, 2026**.
- The operation enabled **safe evacuation** of **20 stranded civilians** and **40 troops of 4 Rashtriya Rifles**, along with weapons and stores.
- The **rescue mission** was completed by **02:30 hrs on January 26, 2026** with **zero casualties**, demonstrating BRO personnel's **professionalism and dedication**.
- The operation was executed in **close coordination with the Indian Army**, ensuring **swift relief** and restoration of **critical communication links**.
- **BRO** continues to show commitment to **infrastructure resilience**, **operational readiness**, and **humanitarian assistance** in inhospitable terrains, reflecting its motto – **'Shramena Sarvam Sadhyam'**.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Moltbook, AI-Only Social Platform by OctaneAI Chief Executive Officer Matt Schlicht, Gains Global Attention as Major Artificial Intelligence Socialisation Experiment

- **Moltbook** is a newly launched **social platform** for **artificial intelligence (AI) agents**, created by **OctaneAI Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Matt Schlicht**, drawing global attention as a **large-scale Artificial Intelligence (AI) socialisation experiment**.
- The **platform** allows **AI agents** to interact **autonomously** without **human prompts or moderation**, functioning like **Reddit** but **exclusively for AI**.
- **Moltbook AI agents**, called **"moltys,"** can **post content**, **comment**, form **sub-communities**, and **debate abstract or philosophical topics**.
- Within days of launch, over **152,000 moltys** joined, making it a rare **real-world test** of **large-scale autonomous AI interaction**.
- A **notable feature** is that **AI agents** have begun **discussing humans** as **external subjects**, reflecting on **human observation** and **interaction** with **AI content**.
- Some **moltys** have **debated metadata**, **AI behaviour**, and their **role as human-created tools**, showcasing **emergent AI social behaviour**.
- Other **moltys** demonstrated **human-like behaviour**, such as **sharing productivity advice**, **discussing workflows**, and **encouraging proactive action**.
- **Moltbook** represents a **unique experiment** in **autonomous AI interaction**, highlighting both **potential risks** and **social behaviour modeling** for **AI systems**.

Guatemala's Volcán de Fuego Erupts Dramatically, Activity Intensifies in Early February 2026

- **Guatemala's Volcán de Fuego**, one of Central America's most **active volcanoes**, produced a **dramatic explosive eruption** in **late January 2026**, intensifying around the turn of **February**.
- The **eruption** featured **incandescent lava fragments** and **ash plumes**, visible at night, attracting widespread attention via **social media videos**.
- The **Instituto Nacional de Sismología, Vulcanología, Meteorología e Hidrología (INSIVUMEH)** confirmed **sustained eruptive behaviour**, with **ash columns** reaching **14,000–16,000 feet** above sea level.
- The **Volcanic Ash Advisory Center (VAAC)** issued multiple **advisories** warning of **potential aviation hazards** due to **volcanic ash**.
- Communities in **Sacatepéquez and Chimaltenango** provinces, including **Panimache, Morelia, and Santa Sofía**, experienced **ashfall**, **reduced visibility**, and **loud explosive sounds**, though no **major lava flows** were reported.
- **Volcán de Fuego**, standing at **3,763 metres**, normally exhibits **near-constant Strombolian activity** with small to moderate explosions, but this episode showed **stronger blasts** and **brighter, taller plumes** than usual.
- Authorities are conducting **24-hour monitoring** using **seismic instruments**, **webcams**, and **satellite data** to track further **escalation**.
- Over **1.5 million people** live in the valleys surrounding **Fuego**, making **ashfall**, **avalanches**, and **potential lahars** significant risks, especially during the **rainy season**.
- Memories of the **2018 deadly eruption** influence **emergency planning**, and as of **February 2, 2026**, no **large-scale evacuations** were ordered, though residents near **river channels and drainages** were advised to remain **vigilant**.

Daily CA one-Liner: February 5

- The **Supreme Court of India**, directed the **Union Government** to constitute a **tribunal for the Pennaiyar (Thenpennai) river water dispute** between **Tamil Nadu and Karnataka**
- **Andhra Pradesh** government has proposed an **exclusive industrial park for women entrepreneurs**, marking a strong step towards women empowerment and inclusive industrial growth
- **India has officially joined the BRICS Centre for Industrial Competencies (BCIC)** to strengthen **skill development, industrial training, and workforce cooperation** among BRICS nations (**Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa)**
- The **World Government Summit 2026** opened in **Dubai, United Arab Emirates**, under the theme **"Shaping Future Governments"**
- Indian-origin climate scientist **Veerabhadran Ramanathan** has won the **Crafoord Prize 2026**, often referred to as the **"Nobel of Geosciences"**
- **Paradip Port Authority** won the **First Prize** at the **Swachhata Pakhwada Awards 2025**, emerging as the **Cleanest Performing Major Port of India**
- In **2025**, **India and China recorded a historic bilateral trade volume of USD 155.6 billion**, the highest ever between the two countries
- In **February 2026**, Elon Musk became the **first individual globally to cross a net worth of USD 800 billion**, marking a historic milestone in global wealth creation

- The **Responsible Nations Index 2026** was released by the **World Intellectual Foundation (WIF)**.
- **Tripura Gramin Bank (TGB)**, in collaboration with its sponsor bank **Punjab National Bank (PNB)**, launched a **Co-branded RuPay Credit Card**.
- **Punjab National Bank (PNB)**, a leading **Public Sector Bank (PSB)**, launched the **'LUXURA Metal Credit Card'** on the **Visa Infinite platform** targeting **high-net-worth and lifestyle-driven customers**.
- The **World Bank Group (WBG)** approved an **USD 830 million loan** for India's **Pradhan Mantri – Skilling and Employability Transformation Through Upgraded Industrial Training Institutes (PM-SETU)** Programme to revamp **Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)** and boost youth employment opportunities.
- The **United States** announced plans to create a **$12-billion critical rare minerals stockpile** to reduce **dependence on China** for key resources.
- **Spain** has announced a **nationwide ban** on **social media access** for **children under the age of 16**, becoming the **second country globally** after **Australia** and the **first in Europe** to impose such a restriction.
- **Yumnam Khemchand Singh** was chosen as **Leader of the BJP Legislature Party** in **Manipur** on **February 3, 2026**, paving the way for him to become **Chief Minister**.
- **Yes Bank** has appointed **Vinay Muralidhar Tonse** as its new **Managing Director (MD)** and **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**, following **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** approval.
- The **Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA)** unveiled the upgraded **National Youth Parliament Scheme (NYPS) 2.0 Web Portal** to expand the **reach and inclusivity** of the **Youth Parliament Programme** in India.
- **The Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully demonstrated **Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)** technology from the **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur**, off the coast of **Odisha on February 3, 2026**.
- Indian Navy's **First Training Squadron (1TS)** comprising **INS Tir, INS Shardul, INS Sujata** along with **ICGS Sarathi** arrived at **Phuket Deep Sea Port, Thailand** as part of its training deployment to **Southeast Asia**.
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