



Daily Current Affairs

6th Feb 2026



BANKING, FINANCE & BUSINESS
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Tables 16th Finance Commission Report; States' Tax Share Retained at 41% for 2026–31

- **Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** tabled the **16th Finance Commission (16th FC)** report in Parliament alongside the **Union Budget 2026–27**.
- The government accepted the key recommendation of the 16th FC to **retain the states' share** in central taxes at **41%** for the period **2026–31**.
- The 16th Finance Commission was **chaired by Arvind Panagariya** and covers the award period **2026–31**.
- The recommendations signal a shift from “**entitlement-based**” transfers to “**compliance-driven**” fiscal federalism.
- The 16th FC retains states' tax share at **41%** and moves fiscal transfers toward **performance- and compliance-based criteria**, including a **new weight for contribution to GDP**.
- It emphasises **fiscal discipline** by **capping state deficits at 3% of GSDP**, ending **off-budget borrowings**, rationalising subsidies, and warning against **unconditional cash transfers**.
- **Vertical Devolution** under the 16th FC remains at **41%** of the Central Government's **divisible pool of taxes**, unchanged from the 15th FC, **excluding cesses, surcharges, and cost of collection**.
- **Horizontal Devolution** decides the exact allocation to each state from the 41% share, with a **revised formula rewarding economic performance**.
- The **revised horizontal devolution formula** assigns weightage as follows: **income distance – 42.5%**, **population (2011 Census) – 17.5%**, **demographic performance – 10%**, **area – 10%**, **forest & ecology – 10%**, and **contribution to GDP – 10%**, while **excluding tax and fiscal effort** parameter used by the 15th FC.
- The 16th FC recommendations aim to strengthen **efficiency, transparency, and performance incentives**, but may **reduce untied funds** and impact **state fiscal autonomy**, especially for southern and poorer states.


About Ministry of Finance:

- Cabinet Minister: Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman
- Minister of State (MoS): Shri Pankaj Chaudhary

Goldman Sachs Raises India's Calendar Year 2026 Gross Domestic Product Growth Projection to 6.9%

- **Goldman Sachs** upgraded **India's CY26 (Calendar Year 2026) real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast** by **20 basis points (bps)** from **6.7% to 6.9%**.
- The **upgrade** follows the conclusion of the **United States of America (USA)–India trade deal**, which reduced **reciprocal tariffs** on Indian goods from **25% to 18%**.
- The **forecast** is based on **goods export exposure** of about **4% of GDP** to **USA final demand** and an **export demand elasticity** of around **0.7**.

Goldman Sachs upgrades India's 2026 GDP growth to 6.9% after US cuts tariffs
THE ECONOMIC TIMES, FEBRUARY 04, 2026



Goldman Sachs, in its report, projected a stronger macroeconomic outlook for India after the US-India trade deal under which Donald Trump reduced reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods from 25% to 18%. The firm estimates the move could add about 0.2 percentage points to GDP and has raised its CY26 growth forecast by 20 basis points to 6.9%, citing improved exports, stronger investment sentiment, and easing trade-policy uncertainty.

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- The **trade agreement** is expected to **reduce trade-policy uncertainty** and improve **private investment intentions** in India.
- A **capex (capital expenditure) recovery** is likely in the **second half of CY26** due to improved **business confidence**.
- **Lower tariffs** are projected to **narrow India's Current Account Deficit (CAD)** by about **0.25% of GDP** to nearly **0.8% in CY26**.
- **Easing trade tensions** may support **higher capital inflows** and reduce pressure on the **Indian Rupee (INR)**.
- **India's bilateral goods trade surplus** with the **USA** has **doubled** from about **USD 20 billion in CY15** to nearly **USD 40 billion in CY25**.
- The **expansion in trade surplus** has been driven mainly by **electronics, pharmaceuticals, and textiles** sectors.

Reserve Bank of India Levies ₹18.76 Lakh Compounding Penalty on One 97 Communications for Foreign Exchange Management Act Breach

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed a **compounding fee of ₹18.76 lakh** on **One 97 Communications Limited (OCL)**, the parent company of **Paytm Payments Services Limited (PPSL)**.
- The penalty was issued under the provisions of the **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999** for contraventions related to **foreign investment transactions** in its subsidiary.
- The transaction involved investments worth approximately **₹33 crore** made by **Little Internet Singapore Private Limited** into **Little Internet Private Limited (LIPL)**.
- The investments were carried out during the period **March 2016 to June 2017**.
- The violation pertained to contravention of **Regulation 5(1)** read with **Regulation 13** of **FEMA Notification No. 120/RB-2004**.
- **One 97 Communications Limited (OCL)** disclosed the compounding order under **Regulation 30** of **SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements – LODR) Regulations, 2015**.
- **Compounding under FEMA** is a **voluntary settlement process** involving admission of contravention and payment of a fee, after which the matter is disposed of **without litigation**.
- Additionally, the RBI compounded another case involving **Nearby India Private Limited**, a subsidiary of OCL, imposing a fee of **₹4.28 lakh**.
- This additional compounding took place in **Quarter 3 (Q3)** of **Financial Year 2025–26 (FY26)**.



What is FEMA ?

- The **FEMA** was enacted in **1999** as a successor to the **Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA), 1973**, adapting to **post-liberalisation** economic conditions in India.
- The act aims to **regulate foreign exchange transactions, currency transactions, and foreign payments** to ensure **orderly development** and maintenance of the foreign exchange market in India.
- The **main objectives** of FEMA are: to **facilitate external trade and payments**, to promote the **orderly development** of the foreign exchange market, and to **regulate transactions** related to foreign exchange.

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- The act empowers the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to make **rules and regulations** to implement its provisions.

Equitas Small Finance Bank Enters Strategic Bancassurance Tie-Up with Bharti AXA Life to Boost Insurance Reach in India

- **Equitas Small Finance Bank (Equitas SFB)** signed a **strategic bancassurance partnership** with **Bharti AXA Life Insurance**, backed by Bharti Enterprises and France's AXA, to expand life insurance reach across India.
- The partnership aims to boost **life insurance penetration** and help customers secure their **long-term financial future**.
- Under the partnership, Bharti AXA Life Insurance will offer its **life insurance products**, including **protection, savings, and retirement plans**, to Equitas SFB customers.
- The collaboration will use both **physical and digital channels** to provide wider access to customers.
- The partnership focuses on **deepening life insurance adoption** in **semi-urban and rural areas**, where insurance penetration has been limited.



About Equitas Small Finance Bank:

- Founded: 2007
- Headquarters: Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India
- Managing Director & CEO: P. N. Vasudevan
- Tagline: "It's Fun Banking"

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

United States Congress Approves \$200 Million Security Aid for Baltic Nations Amid Rising Russian Activity

- The **United States Congress** approved a **\$200 million security assistance package** for the **Baltic nations** amid intensified **Russian military activity** along **NATO's eastern flank**.
- The funding is part of the **Fiscal Year 2026 Defence Appropriations Act**, which is included in the **\$838.7 billion US defence budget**.
- The **Baltic Security Initiative** under this act ensures continued support for **Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania**.
- The bill was signed into law by **US President Donald Trump** on **February 3, 2026**, despite earlier **Pentagon proposals** to discontinue the programme.
- An additional **\$10 million** was allocated to **Estonia** through the **Foreign Military Financing (FMF)** programme for procurement of US-made defence equipment, including **HIMARS ammunition, Javelin anti-tank missiles, and large-calibre artillery shells**.
- The funding strengthens **deterrence for NATO allies** and reflects **bipartisan commitment** to the transatlantic alliance.
- Rising **regional tensions** are linked to incidents such as **Russian fighter jets entering Estonian airspace** and increased **hybrid activities** attributed to Russia and Belarus.



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Recent News :

- In Jan 2026, **Donald Trump, President of the United States**, officially launched the **Board of Peace** initiative at the **World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland**, aimed at promoting **global geopolitical stability**.

About United States :

- President : Donald Trump
- Capital : Washington, D.C.
- Currency : U.S. dollar

NATIONAL AND STATE NEWS

Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs Unveils Upgraded National Youth Parliament Scheme (NYPS 2.0) Portal

- The **Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA)** launched an upgraded version of the **National Youth Parliament Scheme (NYPS) web portal**, known as **NYPS 2.0**, to expand the **reach, inclusivity and participation** of the Youth Parliament Programme across India.

Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs unveiled an upgraded version of NYPS web portal

Posted On: 04 FEB 2026 5:11PM 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. In the previous version, participation was limited to recognised educational institutions only. However, under NYPS 2.0, all the educational institutions, groups and even individual citizens across the country can participate through Institution Participation, Group Participation and Individual Participation respectively.

It enables participation of all the citizens regardless of gender, caste, creed, religion, race, region and place of residence in the country including rural areas, small institutions and groups in the state of Chhattisgarh. Further, to expand the outreach of the NYPS, the Ministry has written to all State Governments, Union Territory Administrations, Legislatures of States/UTs, various educational boards (CBSE, CISCE), and also a publicity video is broadcast from time to time on Saansad TV.

The details of participation and the conduct of the Youth Parliament Sessions are as follows-

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

- The upgraded portal builds on the original NYPS, which was launched on **11 September 2024**, and has shown strong nationwide engagement.
- As of **27 January 2026**, the scheme recorded **95,319 participants** who took part in **660 Youth Parliament Sittings**.
- NYPS 2.0 focuses on **inclusive access**, particularly aiming to increase participation from **remote and rural areas** by removing limitations present in the earlier version of the portal.
- The upgrade has expanded **eligibility criteria**.
- Earlier, participation was limited to students from **recognised educational institutions** only.
- Under NYPS 2.0, participation is now open to **all educational institutions, organised groups, and individual citizens** across India.
- The upgraded portal supports multiple **modes of participation**.
- **Institution Participation** allows schools, colleges and universities to organise **Youth Parliament Sittings (YPSs)**.
- These sittings are conducted under **Kishore Sabha** for younger students and **Tarun Sabha** for **Undergraduate and Postgraduate** students.
- In addition, NYPS 2.0 enables **Group Participation** for citizen groups and **Individual Participation**, ensuring wider democratic engagement beyond formal educational settings.
- Overall, NYPS 2.0 aims to **deepen democratic values, parliamentary awareness and civic engagement among youth and citizens**, making the Youth Parliament Programme more accessible and representative nationwide.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Narendra Modi's Visit to Punjab

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** visited **Punjab** to take part in **commemorative, developmental and infrastructure-related programmes**.
- The visit coincided with the **649th birth anniversary of Sant Guru Ravidas**, a **15th-century saint, poet and social reformer**, known for his teachings on **equality, social justice and human dignity**.

- PM Narendra Modi **arrived at Adampur Airport in Jalandhar, Punjab** as part of his visit.
- During the visit, the Prime Minister **unveiled the new name of Adampur Airport** as **‘Shri Guru Ravidass Maharaj Ji Airport, Adampur’**, in honour of **Sant Guru Ravidas** and his lasting spiritual and social legacy.
- PM Modi **virtually inaugurated the new civil terminal building at Halwara Airport in Ludhiana (Punjab)**.
- The new terminal is aimed at **improving regional air connectivity for Ludhiana and nearby industrial and agricultural regions**, strengthening **economic activity, trade and mobility**.
- The Prime Minister **visited Dera Sachkhand Ballan**, a prominent **spiritual centre of the Ravidassia community in Jalandhar**, and **paid tribute on the occasion of Guru Ravidas Jayanti**.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Punjab today to mark the 648th birth anniversary of Sant Guru Ravidas. Mr Modi will visit Adampur airport, where he will unveil the new name of the Airport as Sri Guru Ravidas Ji Airport, Adampur. The Prime Minister's office said that the renaming of Adampur Airport honours the revered saint and social reformer whose teachings of equality, compassion, and human dignity continue to inspire India's social

About Punjab

- Chief Minister – Bhagwant Singh Mann
- Governor – Gulab Chand Kataria
- Capital – Chandigarh
- Ramsar Sites – Beas Conservation Reserve and Harike Lake

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.

India–Arab Engagement and West Asia Diplomatic Balancing

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** received a **delegation of Arab Foreign Ministers, the Secretary General of the League of Arab States**, and heads of Arab delegations in New Delhi during the **2nd India–Arab Foreign Ministers’ Meeting**.
- The meeting underlined India’s **growing strategic engagement with the Arab world**, focusing on **economic collaboration, regional stability, and shared security concerns**.
- In parallel, India demonstrated a **nuanced diplomatic balancing act in West Asia** amid preparations for the **Prime Minister’s visit to Israel**.
- The **3rd India–Saudi Arabia Security Working Group Meeting** was held in **Riyadh**, agreeing to enhance cooperation against **terror financing, cyber-terrorism, and the crime–terror nexus**.
- This mechanism functions under the **Strategic Partnership Council (SPC)** established in **2019**, within the **Political, Consular and Security Cooperation Committee**.
- The **India–Arab Foreign Ministers’ Meeting** in Delhi was attended by leaders including **Palestine’s Foreign Minister**.
- India expressed support for **international efforts to restore peace in Gaza**, referring to the **Sharm-el-Sheikh Peace Summit (2025)** and **United Nations**



Security Council Resolution 2803, which supports a **transitional administration and an International Stabilisation Force for Gaza**.

- India has **not yet responded** to the **United States invitation** to join the **Board of Peace for Gaza**, responsible for overseeing the **ceasefire between Israel and Hamas** and **reconstruction of Gaza**.
- India also flagged **wider instability in West Asia**, including **Libya, Sudan, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen**, and raised concerns over **maritime security** and its **United Nations peacekeeping role in Lebanon**.
- Simultaneously, India's **Deputy National Security Advisor** visited **Tehran** for discussions with **Iranian security officials**, amid regional tensions related to a potential **United States–Israel strike on Iran**.

India Adds Two New Wetlands to Ramsar List Ahead of World Wetlands Day 2026

- Ahead of **World Wetlands Day 2026**, the **Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change** announced the inclusion of **two new wetlands** in India's **Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance**.
- The newly added sites are **Patna Bird Sanctuary (Uttar Pradesh)** and **Chhari Dhand Wetland Reserve (Gujarat)**.
- With this addition, **India's total Ramsar sites have increased to 98**, marking a **276% expansion since 2014**, reflecting India's growing commitment to **wetland conservation, biodiversity protection, and climate resilience**.
- The **Ramsar Convention** is an **international treaty signed in 1971 at Ramsar, Iran**, aimed at the **conservation and wise use of wetlands**.
- **India became a Contracting Party on 1 February 1982**.
- Ramsar sites function as **model ecosystems** supporting **biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods, water security, and climate adaptation**.
- **Patna Bird Sanctuary**, also known as **Patna Vihar Bird Sanctuary**, is a **protected wetland ecosystem** recognised for its **rich avifaunal diversity**.
- It is located in **Etah district, Uttar Pradesh**, and was **established in 1991**.
- The sanctuary covers an area of **108 hectares**, with the wetland area around **1 square kilometre**, making it the **smallest bird sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh**.
- It supports nearly **3 lakh birds belonging to over 300 species**, including **more than 106 migratory and resident species**.
- Dominant aquatic vegetation includes **Water hyacinth** and **Potamogeton species**.
- Important bird species found here include **Lesser Whistling Duck, Graylag Goose, Ruddy Shelduck, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, and Northern Pintail**.
- **Chhari Dhand Wetland Reserve** is an **ecologically unique seasonal desert wetland**, characterised by **interactions between saline and freshwater systems**.
- It is located in **Kutch district, Gujarat**, situated **between the Banni grasslands and the Rann of Kutch**.
- The local term "**Chhari**" means **salty** and "**Dhand**" means **shallow wetland**.
- The wetland becomes **swampy during the monsoon**, fed by **north-flowing rivers and surrounding hill runoff**.
- It serves as a **critical habitat for migratory birds during monsoon and winter seasons**.
- Endangered and threatened bird species recorded include **Dalmatian Pelican, Oriental Darter, Black-necked Stork, and Indian Skimmer**.

Union Environment Minister Shri Bhopender Yadav announces Addition of 2 New Wetlands to India's Ramsar List, ahead of World Wetlands Day 2026

Patna Bird Sanctuary In Uttar Pradesh And Chhari-Dhand In Gujarat get International Recognition

Posted On: 31 JAN 2026 10:11AM by PIB Delhi

Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhopender Yadav has announced the addition of two new wetlands to India's Ramsar network, ahead of World Wetlands Day on 02.02.2026. The Minister stated in a post on social media platform 'X' that Patna Bird Sanctuary in Etah district of Uttar Pradesh and Chhari Dhand in Kutch district of Gujarat have been included in the Ramsar sites list.

Bhopender Yadav @bpyadav

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Congratulations Team Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat and the Wetland community!

With World Wetlands Day close by, I am delighted to announce that there are two new additions to India's Ramsar-growing network.

Government of India Withdraws 18% Central Excise Duty on Unmanufactured Tobacco

- The **Government of India (GoI)** withdrew the **18% Central Excise Duty** on **unmanufactured tobacco or tobacco refuse**.
- The withdrawal applies to **unmanufactured tobacco cleared without a brand name and not packed for retail sale**.
- The decision is **effective from 1 February 2026**.
- Earlier, **all unmanufactured tobacco cleared from factories or warehouses** was subject to **18% excise duty**.
- Under the **new amendment**, **unbranded and non-retail packed unmanufactured tobacco** will now attract **nil excise duty**.
- The move provides **major relief to tobacco farmers, small suppliers and businesses**, especially those operating in the **unorganised sector**.
- Other forms of unmanufactured tobacco that are **branded or packaged for retail sale** will **continue to attract 18% Central Excise Duty**.
- The government has also clarified that **excise duty on cigarettes remains unchanged**, irrespective of **stick length**.



The levy on unmanufactured tobacco was issued on February 1, the day the Union Budget was presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Photo Credit: M. A. Srinam

Tobacco traders, who had stayed off auction platforms in the State since January 24 to oppose the central excise duty of 18% levied on unmanufactured tobacco, have announced their return to auctions from February 5 in the wake of the Centre's decision to withdraw the levy.

National Statistical Office to Conduct India's First National Household Income Survey and ASISSE

- The **National Statistical Office (NSO)**, under the **Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**, announced plans to conduct **India's first-ever National Household Income Survey (NHIS)** and the **Annual Survey of Incorporated Service Sector Enterprises (ASISSE)**.
- Both **NHIS and ASISSE** will be conducted for a **one-year period starting from April 2026**.
- The announcement was made during the **two-day All-India Workshop of Trainers (AIWOT)** for NHIS and ASISSE, held from **28 to 29 January 2026** in **Chennai, Tamil Nadu**.
- **National Household Income Survey (NHIS)** aims to collect **detailed data on household income, living conditions and income distribution**. It will enable **comparisons across regions and households** and support **policy formulation and assessment of household well-being**.
- **Annual Survey of Incorporated Service Sector Enterprises (ASISSE)** focuses on the **incorporated services sector** and will use **Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN)** data. It will provide **state-level and industry-level estimates of Gross Value Added (GVA), capital formation, employment, and emoluments**.
- Both surveys will be conducted using a **digital mode through Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI)** to improve **data accuracy and efficiency**.
- The **coverage of the surveys** will extend to **all parts of India, except hard-to-access villages in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.
- These surveys mark a **significant step in strengthening India's statistical system**, especially in understanding **household income patterns** and the **performance of the service sector** for evidence-based policymaking.

National Household Income Survey (NHIS) and Annual Survey of Incorporated Service Sector Enterprises (ASISSE) on 28th and 29th January 2026 at Chennai

Posted On: 27 JAN 2026 3:00PM by PIB Delhi

The National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India is organising an All-India Workshop of Trainers (AIWOT) for the National Household Income Survey (NHIS) and Annual Survey of Incorporated Service Sector Enterprises (ASISSE) in Chennai during 28th-29th January 2026. Among the existing surveys, a key new initiative is the National Household Income Survey (NHIS) and Annual Survey of Incorporated Service Sector Enterprises (ASISSE). These surveys will be conducted for a period of one year starting from April 2026. These two first-ever pan-India surveys mark a significant milestone in addressing long-standing data gaps. The AIWOT is a preparatory training programme prior to the launch of the field work of the survey on all India basis in digital mode.

The workshop will be attended by the senior officers from the various NSO divisions of MoSPI, Field Practitioners from all Zonal, Regional and Sub-Regional offices of the Field Operations Division (FOD) will also be participating in the workshop who will serve as the Master Trainers for subsequent Zonal and Regional trainings. The NHIS aims to provide comprehensive information on people's living conditions and income distribution. The data will support analysis of the relationship between income patterns, economic activity and returns to labour, capital and land, as well as inform policy decisions on universal and targeted interventions for different socio-economic groups. Further, the survey findings will enable assessment of the impact of income distribution on household well-being and access to essential goods and services.

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About NSO:

- National Statistics Office (NSO) is a subordinate office of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- It was formed in 2019 through the merger of the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).
- Headquarters – New Delhi, Delhi.

Government Launches Survey and Waqf Property Lease Modules on UMEED Portal

- The **Government of India** has launched the **Survey Module** and the **Waqf Property Lease Management Module** on the **UMEED Central Portal** to ensure **transparent, people-friendly, and accountable management of Waqf properties**.
- According to the **Ministry of Minority Affairs**, the **Survey Module** provides a **comprehensive digital framework for capturing, managing, and updating information related to the survey of Waqf properties** on the portal.
- The **Waqf Property Lease Management Module** has been designed to facilitate end-to-end management of leasing-related information of Waqf properties.
- This lease module enables systematic recording and monitoring of key details such as lease information, lease period, lease amount, and other relevant particulars in a structured and transparent manner.
- **Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs, Dr. Chandra Shekhar Kumar**, has encouraged **all State and Union Territory Waqf Boards** to ensure **effective implementation** of these modules and to **create awareness among eligible beneficiaries**.
- The **UMEED Central Portal** was **inaugurated in June last year** by **Union Minister for Minority Affairs Kiren Rijju**.
- The portal serves as a **centralised digital platform for real-time uploading, verification, and monitoring of Waqf properties**, strengthening governance and oversight in Waqf administration.



The Government has launched the Survey Module and the Waqf Property Lease Module on the UMEED Portal to make the management of Waqf properties transparent, people-friendly, and accountable. The Ministry of Minority Affairs said the Survey Module provides a comprehensive digital framework for capturing, managing, and updating information related to the survey of Waqf properties on the portal.

The Ministry said the Waqf Property Lease Management Module has been designed to facilitate end-to-end management of leasing-related information of Waqf properties. The module enables systematic recording and monitoring of key details such as lease information, lease period, lease amount, and other relevant particulars in a structured and transparent manner.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh Launches First RDI Fund Call to Support High-Risk Technology Commercialisation

- **Union Minister of State Dr. Jitendra Singh** launched the **first Open Call** of the **Technology Development Board (TDB)** under the **RDI Fund** of the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)** to strengthen India's innovation ecosystem.
- The initiative aims to support the **commercialisation of indigenous technologies** through structured, **long-term financing**.
- Dr. Singh highlighted that the **RDI Fund** represents a shift from conventional government funding models, providing **direct financial support to private sector innovation**, which was previously limited.

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh launches first RDI Fund call, unveils unique initiative of Innovation financing: Unveils First TDB Window to Fund High-Risk Technology Commercialisation

TDB Launches First RDI Call, Offering Up to 50% Project Funding for TRL-4+ Technologies

TDB's First RDI Call Brings Collateral-Free Loans at 2-4%, 15-Year Tenure, with 8-Week Approval Timeline

TDB Bets on AI, Energy and Deep-Tech, Invites TRL-4+ Startups under RDI Framework

Posted On: 04 FEB 2026 5:14PM by PIB Delhi

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, and MoS (PMO), Personnel, Public Grievances, Pension, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today launched the First Open Call of the Technology Development Board (TDB) under the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), with the objective of strengthening India's innovation ecosystem by supporting the commercialisation of indigenous technologies through structured, long-term financing.

Addressing the event, Dr. Jitendra Singh, said that the initiative represents a rare and significant departure from conventional government funding models. He observed that while governments have traditionally encouraged philanthropy or CSR-led investments, direct government-backed financial support to private sector innovation has been limited. He said the RDI Fund seeks to bridge this gap by enabling private enterprises to scale technologies in sectors that were earlier largely confined to the public domain.

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- The RDI Fund facilitates **private sector participation** in sectors like **space and nuclear technology** by reducing financial risk and ensuring accountability.
- The RDI Fund has a total **corpus of ₹1 lakh crore**, offering financing at **concessional interest rates of 2–4%** with tenures of up to **15 years**, including **moratorium provisions**.
- The **first TDB Call** received **191 proposals**, with the majority (160) coming from the **private sector**, indicating growing confidence in the government's support for innovation-led growth.
- The first TDB Call focuses on **Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 4 and above** projects.
- Funding support will be provided through **Second Level Fund Managers (SLFMs)** in the form of **loans, equity, or hybrid instruments**, covering up to **50% of the total project cost** with matching contributions from companies or private investors.
- The framework provides **collateral-free financing** with **no personal or corporate guarantees** required.
- Proposal evaluation will consider **scientific, technological, financial, and commercial merit**, with defined timelines for evaluation (**8 weeks**) and disbursement.
- The initiative **does not provide grants** and is focused on **sustainable commercial deployment** of technologies.
- The **RDI Fund** was approved by the Union Cabinet in **July 2025** and launched by **PM Narendra Modi** in **November 2025** to build indigenous technological capabilities and strengthen India's innovation-led economy.

Walmart Becomes First Retail Company Worldwide to Reach USD 1 Trillion Market Capitalisation

- **Walmart Inc.**, an American multinational retail corporation, became the **first retail company globally** to achieve a **market capitalisation of USD 1 trillion**.
- The milestone followed a **strong rally** in Walmart's share price over the past year.
- Walmart's stock rose by nearly **26% in the last 12 months** and about **468% over the past decade**.
- This performance **outpaced the S&P 500 Index**, which gained around **264%** during the same decade.
- In **December 2025**, Walmart was added to the **Nasdaq-100 Index**, a tech-focused index comprising the world's most valuable non-financial companies.
- Walmart has invested **billions of dollars** in **Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled supply chains** to enhance operational efficiency.
- **AI investments** improved **inventory planning, fresh produce delivery, and delivery speed**.
- These technology upgrades helped Walmart exceed **same-store sales estimates** for **15 consecutive quarters**.
- Other companies with **market capitalisation above USD 1 trillion** include **Nvidia, Alphabet, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Meta, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), Tesla, and Broadcom**.



HMG Stones Secures ISO 9001:2015 and 5S Gold Grade Certifications for Quality and Workplace Excellence

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- **HMG Stone LLP (HMG Stones)**, a premium natural stone importer, exporter, manufacturer, and supplier, achieved **ISO 9001:2015 certification** for its **Quality Management System (QMS)** and **5S Gold Grade certification** for workplace excellence.
- With this achievement, **HMG Stones** became the **first company in India's natural stone industry** to simultaneously secure both **ISO 9001:2015** and **5S Gold Grade** certifications.
- The **ISO 9001:2015 certification** was awarded by **TÜV India Private Limited**, accredited by the **German accreditation body DAkkS**, recognising a robust **quality management system** ensuring consistent quality and customer satisfaction.
- The company received the **5S Gold Grade (Basic Level Category)** from **Asia Bunka Kaikan – Association for Overseas Technical Scholarship (ABK-AOTS) DOSOKAI, Japan**, for excellence in **workplace organisation** and **operational discipline**.
- The implemented **Japanese 5S framework** includes **Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardise, and Sustain** to enhance **efficiency and accountability**.
- The **5S system** is supported by **regular training programmes** covering **5S awareness**, internal audits, fire safety, first aid, emergency drills, **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** usage, and **waste management**.
- These practices aim to strengthen **workplace safety culture, operational discipline, and organisational accountability**.
- The certifications cover multiple facilities, including **Attibele Manufacturing Unit I, Yadavanahalli Manufacturing Unit II, Wilson Garden Flagship Showroom (Unit III)**, and the **Sankey Road Experience Centre**.



DEFENCE NEWS

India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise KHANJAR Begins in Assam

- The **13th edition** of the **India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise KHANJAR (KHANJAR-XIII)** is being conducted from **4 to 17 February 2026** at **Missamari, Assam**.
- **Exercise KHANJAR** is an **annual joint military exercise** conducted **alternately** between India and Kyrgyzstan since **2011**.
- The **Indian Army** contingent comprises **20 personnel** from the **Parachute Regiment (Special Forces)**, while the **Kyrgyzstan** contingent comprises **20 personnel** from the **ILBRIS/Scorpion Special Forces Brigade**.
- The exercise aims to exchange **best practices** in **Counter Terrorism** and **Special Forces Operations** in **urban and mountainous terrain**.
- Training activities include **urban warfare, counter-terrorism, sniping, reconnaissance, surveillance, room intervention, building clearance, and mountain craft** under a **United Nations (UN)** mandate.
- The exercise enhances **interoperability** between the **Special Forces** of both nations and **strengthens defence ties**.

INDIA - KYRGYZSTAN JOINT SPECIAL FORCES EXERCISE KHANJAR COMMENCES IN ASSAM

Posted On: 04 FEB 2026 5:38PM by PIB Delhi

The 13th edition of the India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise KHANJAR, scheduled from 04 to 17 February 2026, has commenced in Missamari, Assam. Exercise KHANJAR is an annual training event conducted alternately between India and Kyrgyzstan. The last edition of the exercise was conducted in Kyrgyzstan in March 2025. The Indian Army contingent comprising 20 personnel is represented by troops from the Parachute Regiment (Special Forces) and the Kyrgyzstan contingent also comprising equal strength is represented by ILBRIS Special Forces Brigade.

Aim of the exercise is to exchange best practices and experience in Counter Terrorism and Special Forces Operations in urban and mountainous terrain. The exercise will also focus on developing advanced Special Forces skills of sniping, complex building interventions and mountain craft.

Exercise KHANJAR will provide an opportunity for both sides to fortify defence ties while addressing common concerns of international terrorism and extremism. The exercise reaffirms the commitment of India and Kyrgyzstan towards fostering peace, stability and security in the region.



- **Exercise KHANJAR** addresses common concerns of **international terrorism and extremism**, reaffirming the commitment of India and Kyrgyzstan towards peace, stability, and security in the region.
- The exercise provides an opportunity to develop **advanced Special Forces skills**, including **sniping, complex building intervention, and mountain craft**.
- **KHANJAR** facilitates sharing of experiences, **best practices**, and **joint drills** in special operations to strengthen **bilateral military cooperation**.

Note :

- The **12th edition** of Exercise KHANJAR was held from **10-23 March 2025** in **Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan**, and the **1st edition** was held in **December 2011** at **Nahan, India**.

About Kyrgyzstan :

- **President : Sadyr Japarov**
- **Capital : Bishkek**
- **Currency : Kyrgyzstani som**

INS Sudarshini of Indian Navy Makes First Lokayan 26 Port Call at Salalah, Oman

- Indian Navy's sail training ship **INS Sudarshini** arrived at the port of **Salalah, Oman**, marking the **first international port call** of her transoceanic voyage – **Lokayan 26**.
- The arrival at Oman represents a key milestone in the **ten-month long deployment**, aimed at showcasing India's **maritime heritage** and fostering **international maritime cooperation**.
- **INS Sudarshini** sailed from her home port, **Kochi**, on **20 January 2026**, navigating the seasonal winds of the **Arabian Sea**, completing the first leg of her voyage.
- The port call strengthens **maritime ties** and **strategic partnership** between **India and Oman**.
- During the **three-day visit**, **professional interactions** and **training engagements** with the **Royal Navy of Oman** are planned.
- The ship will be open to **school children** and local residents, promoting **maritime awareness** and **people-to-people connect**.
- The **Lokayan 26** voyage serves as a symbol of India's **seafaring legacy** and the Indian Navy's commitment to **maritime diplomacy**, goodwill, and international cooperation across the oceans.

INDIAN NAVAL SAIL TRAINING SHIP INS SUDARSHINI MAKES FIRST PORT CALL OF LOKAYAN 26 AT SALALAH, OMAN

Posted On: 04 FEB 2026 4:56PM by PIB Delhi

Indian Navy's sail training ship INS Sudarshini arrived at the port of Salalah, Oman, on 02 Feb 2026, marking the first international port call of her iconic transoceanic voyage – Lokayan 26. The arrival at Oman represents a key milestone in the ship's ten-month long deployment, aimed at showcasing India's rich maritime heritage and fostering international maritime cooperation.

INS Sudarshini sailed from her home port, Kochi on 20 Jan 2026, steering through the seasonal winds of the Arabian Sea, completing the first leg of her voyage. The port call underscores the deep-seated maritime ties and strategic partnership between India and Oman. During the three-day visit, a range of professional interactions and training engagements with the Royal Navy of Oman are planned. The ship will also be open to school children and local residents, promoting maritime awareness and people-to-people connect.

The ongoing voyage of Lokayan 26 continues to serve as a symbol of India's seafaring legacy and the Indian Navy's enduring commitment to maritime diplomacy, goodwill, and international cooperation across the oceans.



APPS & PORTALS

North Eastern Region Agri-Commodity E-Connect Portal Fully Operational, Linking North Eastern Farmers and FPOs with Buyers Across India

- The **North Eastern Region Agri-Commodity E-Connect (NE-RACE)** portal is fully operational and facilitates **market linkages** between farmers, **Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)**, **Self Help Groups (SHGs)**, cooperatives in the **North Eastern Region (NER)** and buyers across India.

North Eastern Region Agri-Commodity e-Connect (NERACE) app

Posted On: 05 FEB 2026 1:10PM by PIB Delhi

The North Eastern Region Agri-Commodity E-Connect (NE-RACE) portal is fully operational and facilitates market linkages between Farmer Producer Organisations, Self Help Groups, Cooperatives of the North Eastern Region (NER) and buyers across the country. As on 23.1.2026, 8997 farmers/Farmer Producer Organisations and 755 buyers have been onboarded, with 197 agri-commodities listed on the platform. The total value of sales facilitated through the portal stands at ₹985.56 lakh.

The NE-RACE platform has significantly benefited farmers of North Eastern States including Sikkim by strengthening their access to national markets and enabling direct buyer-seller linkages. Through the NE-RACE portal, buyers from Sikkim have procured 138 metric tons of agri-products valued at ₹24.60 lakh.

The multi-lingual helpline and helpdesk services under NE-RACE are utilized for farmer onboarding and operational support in Sikkim. As on 23.1.2026, 251 farmers from Sikkim have been onboarded on the portal.

Five outreach and onboarding programmes have been conducted in the State of Sikkim as on 23.1.2026. Further, International Buyer-Seller Meets are among the measures identified for enhancing outreach.

The NE-RACE platform supports buyer-seller matchmaking and provides logistics-related guidance through a multi-lingual helpline, field-level support, and State Coordinators, who assist in onboarding, resolving operational issues, and facilitating communication. These measures aim to strengthen digital market access and improve market procedures of farmers in Sikkim.

This information was given by the Minister of State, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region Dr. Sukanta Majumdar in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha today.

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- As of **23 January 2026**, **6807 sellers/farmers/FPOs** and **735 buyers** have been onboarded on the NE-RACE platform, with **1797 agri-commodities** listed.
- The **total value of sales** facilitated through the portal stands at **₹895.56 lakh**.
- The NE-RACE platform has strengthened farmers' access to **national markets**, enabling **direct buyer–seller linkages** in North Eastern States, including **Sikkim**.
- Buyers from **Sikkim** have procured **130 metric tons** of agri-produce valued at **₹54.40 lakh** through the portal.
- The platform provides **multi-lingual helpdesk** and helpline services for farmer onboarding and operational support in **Sikkim**.
- As of **23 January 2026**, **251 farmers from Sikkim** have been onboarded on the NE-RACE portal.
- **Five outreach and onboarding programmes** have been conducted in **Sikkim** to increase farmer participation.
- The platform supports **buyer–seller matchmaking**, provides **logistics-related guidance**, and has **State Coordinators** to assist in onboarding and resolving operational issues.
- Measures such as **International Buyer–Seller Meets** are planned to enhance outreach and strengthen **digital market access** for farmers in Sikkim.

Recent News :

- In Jan 2026, The **Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD)**, **Government of Karnataka** launched the '**Gruha Lakshmi Digital Marketing**' portal at **Karmani Utsav–2026** in **Bengaluru** to promote **women entrepreneurship**, economic independence, and **digital inclusion**.

OBITUARIES

Padma Shri Awardee and Renowned Travel Writer Hugh Gantzer Passed away at 95 in Mussoorie

- Prominent **travel writer** and **Padma Shri** awardee **Hugh Gantzer** passed away at the age of **95** on **February 2, 2026**, in **Mussoorie, Uttarakhand**.

About Hugh Gantzer :

- **Hugh Gantzer** was born on **January 9, 1931**, in **Patna, Bihar**.
- He was honoured with the **Padma Shri** (India's **fourth highest civilian award**) in **2025** in the field of **Literature and Education**.
- **Hugh Gantzer** was widely known for his **travel writing**, showcasing India's **diverse landscapes and cultures** through **books, articles, and documentaries**.
- Earlier, he served in the **Indian Navy (IN)** and retired with the rank of **Commander** before becoming a full-time **travel writer**.
- He worked closely with his wife **Colleen Gantzer**, forming a well-known **travel writing duo**; she passed away in **2024**.
- He was associated with **The Times of India (ToI)** for several decades.
- He authored the iconic weekly column "**Sexes and the City**", which ran for over **40 years**, making it one of the longest-running in **Indian journalism**.
- His contributions include producing **52 travel documentaries** for **Doordarshan**.
- He also authored over **30 books** on **travel and culture**, including the "**Intriguing India**" series.



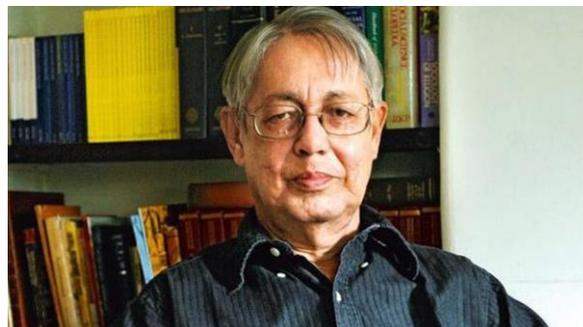
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- He contributed **travel columns** to several leading English newspapers, expanding public interest in **tourism and heritage**.

Andre Beteille, Renowned Sociologist and Public Intellectual, passed away at 91 in Delhi

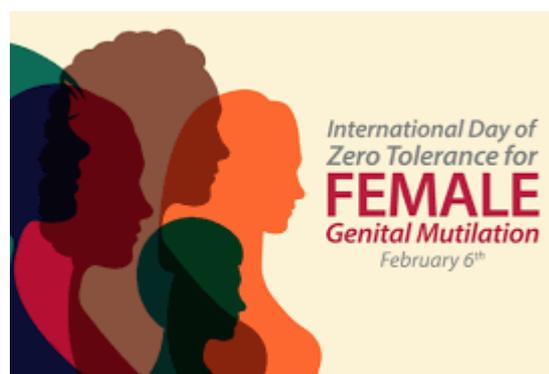
- Renowned sociologist and public intellectual **Andre Beteille** passed away in **Delhi** at the age of **91** due to age-related illness, marking the end of an era in **Indian sociology**.
- Andre Beteille served as **Professor Emeritus of Sociology** at the **University of Delhi** from 2003 onwards.
- Born in **West Bengal** to a French father and an Indian mother, he pursued higher education at the **University of Calcutta** before moving to Delhi.
- He was widely known for his **empirical studies** and **comparative approach to social stratification**, particularly **caste and class** in India.
- His methodology bridged sociology with **economics, political science, and law**.
- Major works include **“Caste, Class and Power”**, **“Society and Politics in India”**, and **“The Idea of Natural Inequality and Other Essays”**, which remain essential reading for social science students.
- He was awarded the **Padma Bhushan in 2005** by the Government of India for his contribution to **literature and education**.
- Historian **Ramachandra Guha** described Beteille as a **“moral and intellectual anchor”** for generations of scholars.
- He served as **Chancellor of Ashoka University** from 2014 to 2017, shaping its academic foundations with integrity and wisdom.



IMPORTANT DAYS

International Day Against Female Genital Mutilation – 6 February

- **International Day Against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** is observed annually on **6 February** to spread awareness and education about the serious **physical, psychological and social problems** faced by females due to genital mutilation.
- The observance aims to **accelerate global efforts to eliminate Female Genital Mutilation**, a harmful practice and a violation of **human rights of women and girls**.
- The **Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting** was launched in **2007** by the **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** and **United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)** to support countries and communities in **abandoning the practice of FGM**.
- In **2008**, the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, along with **9 other United Nations partners**, released the declaration titled **“Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation: An Interagency Statement”**, reinforcing global commitment towards the **abolition of FGM**.



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- In **2010**, **WHO** published the “**Global strategy to stop health care providers from performing female genital mutilation**”, in collaboration with key UN agencies and international organisations, to prevent the **medicalisation of FGM**.
- In **2012**, the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** adopted **Resolution A/RES/67/14**, calling for the **elimination of Female Genital Mutilation worldwide** and urging countries to take **legislative, educational and policy measures** to end the practice.
- The day reinforces the global message that **FGM has no health benefits**, causes **lifelong harm**, and must be **completely eradicated** through awareness, legal action and community participation.

About United Nations General Assembly (UNGA):

- President – Annalena Baerbock
- Headquarters – New York, the United States of America (USA)
- Established – 1945

International Day of Human Fraternity – 4 February

- The **United Nations International Day of Human Fraternity** is observed **annually on 4 February** across the world to promote **peace, tolerance, inclusion, mutual understanding and solidarity** among people of different faiths and cultures.
- **4 February 2026** marks the **6th observance** of the International Day of Human Fraternity.
- The observance coincides with **World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW)**, which is celebrated every year during the **first week of February** and has been observed since **2010**.
- On **21 December 2020**, the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** adopted **Resolution A/RES/75/200**, officially declaring **4 February** as the International Day of Human Fraternity.
- The resolution was **co-facilitated by Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)**.
- The International Day of Human Fraternity was observed for the **first time on 4 February 2021**.



About United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC):

- The **UNAOC** works to improve understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples across cultures and religions.
- **Secretariat:** Miguel Ángel Moratinos
- **Headquarters:** New York, United States of America (USA)
- **Established:** 2005

Daily CA One- Liner: February 6th

- The **Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA)** launched an upgraded version of the **National Youth Parliament Scheme (NYPS) web portal**, known as **NYPS 2.0**, to expand the **reach, inclusivity and participation** of the Youth Parliament Programme across India
- **Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** tabled the **16th Finance Commission (16th FC)** report in Parliament alongside the **Union Budget 2026–27**.

- **Goldman Sachs** upgraded **India's CY26 (Calendar Year 2026)** real **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** growth forecast by **20 basis points (bps)** from **6.7% to 6.9%**.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed a **compounding fee of ₹18.76 lakh** on **One 97 Communications Limited (OCL)**, the parent company of **Paytm Payments Services Limited (PPSL)**.
- **Equitas Small Finance Bank (Equitas SFB)** signed a **strategic bancassurance partnership** with **Bharti AXA Life Insurance**, backed by **Bharti Enterprises** and **France's AXA**, to expand life insurance reach across India.
- The **United States Congress** approved a **\$200 million security assistance package** for the **Baltic nations** amid intensified **Russian military activity** along **NATO's eastern flank**.
- The **13th edition** of the **India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise KHANJAR (KHANJAR-XIII)** is being conducted from **4 to 17 February 2026** at **Missamari, Assam**.
- Indian Navy's sail training ship **INS Sudarshini** arrived at the port of **Salalah, Oman**, marking the **first international port call** of her transoceanic voyage – **Lokayan 26**.
- **Union Minister of State Dr. Jitendra Singh** launched the **first Open Call** of the **Technology Development Board (TDB)** under the **RDI Fund** of the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)** to strengthen India's innovation ecosystem.
- **Walmart Inc.**, an American multinational retail corporation, became the **first retail company globally** to achieve a **market capitalisation of USD 1 trillion**.
- **HMG Stone LLP (HMG Stones)**, a premium natural stone importer, exporter, manufacturer, and supplier, achieved **ISO 9001:2015 certification** for its **Quality Management System (QMS)** and **5S Gold Grade certification** for workplace excellence.
- The **North Eastern Region Agri-Commodity E-Connect (NE-RACE)** portal is fully operational and facilitates **market linkages** between farmers, **Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)**, **Self Help Groups (SHGs)**, cooperatives in the **North Eastern Region (NER)** and buyers across India.
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- Renowned sociologist and public intellectual **Andre Beteille** passed away in **Delhi** at the age of **91** due to age-related illness, marking the end of an era in **Indian sociology**.
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** visited **Punjab** to take part in **commemorative, developmental and infrastructure-related programmes**
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** received a **delegation of Arab Foreign Ministers**, the **Secretary General of the League of Arab States**, and heads of Arab delegations in **New Delhi** during the **2nd India–Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting**
- Ahead of **World Wetlands Day 2026**, the **Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change** announced the inclusion of **two new wetlands** in India's **Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance**.
- The **Government of India (GoI)** withdrew the **18% Central Excise Duty** on **unmanufactured tobacco or tobacco refuse**
- The **National Statistical Office (NSO)**, under the **Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**, announced plans to conduct **India's first-ever National Household Income Survey (NHIS)** and the **Annual Survey of Incorporated Service Sector Enterprises**

- The **Government of India** has launched the **Survey Module** and the **Waqf Property Lease Management Module** on the **UMEED Central Portal** to ensure **transparent, people-friendly, and accountable management of Waqf properties**
- **International Day Against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** is observed **annually on 6 February** to spread **awareness and education** about the serious **physical, psychological and social problems** faced by females due to genital mutilation
- The **United Nations International Day of Human Fraternity** is observed **annually on 4 February** across the world to promote **peace, tolerance, inclusion, mutual understanding and solidarity** among people of different faiths and cultures

