



Daily Current Affairs

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BANKING, FINANCE & BUSINESS

Punjab National Bank Announces 'Soldierathon 2026' Themed Half Marathon in New Delhi

- Punjab National Bank (PNB), a leading Public Sector Bank (PSB), announced 'PNB Soldierathon 2026', a themed half marathon, at its Corporate Office in Dwarka, New Delhi.
- The announcement was made ahead of PNB's 132nd Foundation Day Celebrations to be observed on April 12, 2026.
- The event is branded under the theme "PNB Soldierathon 2026 – Run with Soldiers, Run for Soldiers", marking the second edition of PNB's marquee half marathon.
- The initiative aims to honour the Indian Armed Forces while promoting fitness, discipline, national pride, and community engagement.
- It is part of the bank's social responsibility and nation-building efforts.
- During the launch event, PNB unveiled the official name, theme, T-shirt, and medal of PNB Soldierathon 2026.
- A short film was also showcased highlighting the growing scale and impact of PNB's flagship fitness initiatives.



About Punjab National Bank (PNB):

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

EximPe Receives Reserve Bank of India Approval as Payment Aggregator-Cross Border

- EximPe, a Singapore-headquartered cross-border payments fintech, secured final Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Payment Aggregator-Cross Border (PA-CB) authorisation.
- The approval enables international merchants to collect payments from Indian customers via Unified Payments Interface (UPI), cards, wallets, and net banking.
- Notably, the company obtained the PA-CB licence without holding a prior domestic Payment Aggregator (PA) licence.
- With this authorisation, EximPe can now operate under the PA-CB framework for both import and export transactions.
- Prior to approval, the firm functioned as a technology service provider to banking partners, facilitating over USD 500 million in bank-led cross-border trade payments across key Asia corridors.
- The fintech has set a target to achieve USD 1 billion in annualised UPI payments over the next 24 months, driven by merchant adoption across Asia corridors.
- EximPe was founded by Arjun Zacharia and operates offices in Bengaluru (Karnataka) and Mumbai (Maharashtra).
- The company raised USD 5 million in seed funding in 2022, backed by Leo Capital along with other venture funds and angel investors.



Shri M. Nagaraju Chairs Meeting in New Delhi to Formulate Roadmap for Financial

Inclusion 2.0

- **Shri M. Nagaraju, Secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance**, chaired a meeting in **New Delhi** to deliberate on the preparation of the **roadmap for Financial Inclusion 2.0**.
- The meeting was attended by senior officials from key institutions such as Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Department of Secondary Education and Training, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeiTY), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHUA), Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoLE), Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Indian Banks Association (IBA), Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) etc.among others.
- Discussions focused on preparation of a **plan document** to further **financial inclusion** in India.
- The roadmap aims to ensure **access to banking services** for all citizens, including **rural and vulnerable populations**.
- It seeks **augmentation of banking infrastructure** in villages to improve service delivery.
- The initiative emphasizes **availability of formal credit**, especially for **women and vulnerable sections** of society.
- One of the goals is to achieve **insurance and pension coverage** for all citizens by **2047**.
- The plan promotes the development of **innovative digital and financial products** to cater to diverse needs.
- Efforts will be made to increase **penetration of digital transactions**, particularly in **rural and semi-urban areas**.
- Raising **awareness on financial frauds**, including **digital frauds**, is a key component of the initiative.
- The roadmap includes imparting **financial and digital literacy** to adults as well as **secondary and senior secondary students**.

Secretary, DFS Chairs Meeting to Prepare Roadmap for Financial Inclusion 2.0

The meeting deliberates on universal banking access, digital payment adoption, and wider insurance and pension coverage, among others

Posted On: 11 FEB 2026 7:27PM by PIB Delhi

Shri M. Nagaraju, Secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, chaired a meeting at New Delhi today to deliberate on the preparation of the roadmap for Financial Inclusion 2.0. The meeting was attended by senior officials from various Ministries/Departments and institutions, such as Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Department of Secondary Education and Training, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeiTY), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHUA), Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoLE), Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Indian Banks Association (IBA), Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) etc.



NATIONAL NEWS AND STATE NEWS

Global Finance and Technology Network and Startup Policy Forum Announce Strategic Collaboration at Black Swan Summit 2026

- **Global Finance and Technology Network (GFTN)** and the **Startup Policy Forum (SPF)** announced a **strategic collaboration** to accelerate **financial technology and digital innovation**.
- The partnership focuses on **coordinated policy engagement, ecosystem development, and cross-border growth initiatives**.
- The collaboration was formally unveiled at the **Black Swan Summit India 2026** held in **Bhubaneswar, Odisha**.
- The partnership aims to **strengthen global-India innovation corridors** and enable **structured policy dialogue** between **regulators and industry stakeholders**.

The Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN), a Singapore-headquartered platform established by the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) and spanning a network of policy, technology, and finance leaders across more than 130 countries, and the Startup Policy Forum (SPF), India's premier industry platform representing over 65 high-growth startups collectively valued at more than USD 100 billion, today announced a strategic collaboration to accelerate fintech and digital innovation through coordinated policy engagement, ecosystem development, and cross-border growth programmes.

- It will also support the **international expansion of Indian startups**.
- Key focus areas include **digital finance infrastructure, responsible Artificial Intelligence, digital assets, cross-border payments, and regulatory innovation**.
- The **Global Finance and Technology Network** is headquartered in **Singapore** and was established by the **Monetary Authority of Singapore**.
- The **Startup Policy Forum** represents **over 65 high-growth Indian startups** with a **combined valuation exceeding USD 100 billion**.

Gujarat Government Signs Letter of Intent with Starlink for Satellite Internet Connectivity

- The **Government of Gujarat** signed a **Letter of Intent (LoI)** with **Starlink**, the satellite internet subsidiary of **SpaceX (founded by Elon Musk)**.
- The agreement was exchanged in **Gandhinagar** in the presence of **Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel** and **Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi**.
- The initiative aims to provide **reliable, high-speed satellite-based internet connectivity to remote, tribal, and border regions** of Gujarat, where traditional telecom infrastructure faces geographical constraints.
- Under the proposed **pilot projects**, Starlink technology will connect **Common Service Centres (CSCs)** and **e-Governance facilities in Aspirational Districts** such as **Narmada and Dahod**.
- The objective is to ensure **last-mile delivery of government services**.
- The collaboration will also provide connectivity to **Primary Health Centres** and **tele-medicine hubs**, strengthening digital healthcare services.
- Digital infrastructure will be upgraded in **government schools, port facilities, and wildlife sanctuaries**.
- A **Joint Working Group** comprising **state government officials and Starlink representatives** will be formed.
- The group will oversee **capacity building of disaster management teams** and integration of **robust digital networks across district control rooms**.
- The initiative supports the broader objective of the **Digital India vision** by enhancing digital inclusion and connectivity in underserved regions.



In a major stride towards achieving the 'Digital India' vision, the Government of Gujarat has signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with Starlink, the satellite internet subsidiary of Elon Musk's SpaceX. The agreement was exchanged today in Gandhinagar in the presence of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi.

About Gujarat:

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

Recent news

- Girls education in Gujarat has received a major boost with a large-scale financial support announcement. To ensure that economic hardship does not interrupt schooling after primary education, the state government has expanded direct assistance for adolescent girls.

Unemployment Rate Declines to 4.8% in Q3 FY 2025–26: PLFS Data

- India's unemployment rate eased to a **three-quarter low of 4.8 per cent in October–December (Q3) FY 2025–26**, as per the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** released by the **National Statistics Office (NSO)**.
- This marks a **sequential decline** in unemployment during the financial year.
- In **rural areas (Current Weekly Status - CWS)**, the unemployment rate for persons aged **15 years and above** declined to **4 per cent in Q3** from **4.4 per cent in Q2 (July–September)**.
- In **urban areas**, it fell to **6.7 per cent** from **6.9 per cent** during the same period.
- Under the **Current Weekly Status (CWS)** framework, a person is classified as unemployed if they **did not work for even one hour on any day during the reference week**, but were **seeking or available for work** for at least one hour during that week.
- The **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** increased to **55.8 per cent in Q3** from **55.1 per cent in Q2**.
- The rise was driven by **higher participation of women** in both rural and urban labour markets.
- **Youth unemployment rate (15–29 years)** declined to **14.3 per cent** from **14.8 per cent** in the previous quarter.
- Among **young women**, unemployment fell to **16.6 per cent** from **17 per cent**.
- Among **young men**, it declined to **13.5 per cent** from **14.1 per cent**.
- The youth cohort is considered a key indicator as it largely comprises **first-time job seekers**.
- The share of **self-employed workers** (including unpaid household workers and own-account workers) increased to **56.3 per cent in Q3** from **55.8 per cent in Q2**.
- The proportion of **regular salaried workers** declined to **24.9 per cent** from **25.4 per cent**.
- Sector-wise, employment in **agriculture** increased to **43.2 per cent** from **42.4 per cent**.
- Employment in the **secondary sector** declined marginally to **24 per cent** from **24.2 per cent**.
- The **National Statistics Office** revamped the **Periodic Labour Force Survey sampling methodology** in January of the previous year to generate **monthly and quarterly estimates** of employment indicators for rural and urban areas using the **Current Weekly Status approach** at the all-India level.
- A key methodological change is the adoption of a **rotational panel sampling design**, under which each selected household is surveyed **four times** — once initially and three revisits in subsequent months — in both rural and urban areas.



India's unemployment rate eased to 4.8% in October-December 2025 from 5.2% in the previous quarter, with improvement across rural and urban areas, showed official data released on Tuesday. The jobless rate in rural areas declined to 4% in the December quarter from 4.4% in the preceding three-month period, while the rate in urban

BHASHINI Migrated to Sovereign AI Cloud on Yotta Infrastructure

- **Yotta Data Services**, India's leading **sovereign cloud infrastructure and platform services provider**, successfully deployed **BHASHINI's end-to-end sovereign Artificial Intelligence cloud transformation**.
- The deployment was carried out on **Yotta's Government Community Cloud and Shakti Cloud**.
- With this migration, **BHASHINI now operates entirely on Indian cloud and Graphics Processing Unit infrastructure**, ensuring that **language datasets**,

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Artificial Intelligence models, and citizen interactions remain within India's jurisdiction.

- The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** stated that the deployment is aligned with the objectives of the **IndiaAI Mission**.
- It represents a major step towards building **self-reliant, secure, and scalable Artificial Intelligence capabilities** in India.
- The development was showcased at **The India Artificial Intelligence Sovereignty Dialogues**, an official **Pre-Summit Event of the Artificial Intelligence Impact Summit 2026**.

Yotta and BHASHINI Collaborate to Enable Sovereign AI Cloud, Showcasing India's Readiness for Population-Scale AI

The migration from a global hyperscaler to an Indian sovereign operator demonstrates how BHASHINI's national language AI platform and Yotta's indigenous cloud and GPU infrastructure together enable mission-critical AI at scale.

The joint initiative establishes a national reference architecture for Indian organizations transitioning to sovereign, population-scale AI platforms.

Posted On: 09 FEB 2026 2:15PM by PIB Delhi

Yotta Data Services, India's leading sovereign cloud infrastructure and platform services provider, today announced the successful deployment of BHASHINI's end-to-end sovereign AI cloud infrastructure on Yotta's Government Community Cloud (GCC) and State Cloud. The key milestone closely aligns with IndiaAI Mission objectives and represents a major step forward in India's journey towards self-reliant and scalable AI capabilities. With this development, BHASHINI now operates entirely on Indian cloud and GPU infrastructure, ensuring that language datasets, models, and citizen interactions remain within India's jurisdiction.

Dr. Jitendra Singh Launches First Technology Development Board Open Call under RDI Fund of ANRF

- **Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, and Minister of State for Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh**, launched the **first Open Call of the Technology Development Board (TDB)**.
- The Open Call is launched under the **Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)**.
- The objective is to **strengthen India's innovation ecosystem** by supporting the **commercialisation of indigenous technologies** through **structured, long-term financing**.
- The initiative marks a **departure from conventional government funding models**, as it provides **direct government-backed financial support to private sector innovation**, beyond philanthropy or Corporate Social Responsibility-led funding.
- The **RDI Fund** aims to enable **private enterprises** to scale technologies in sectors that were earlier largely **confined to the public domain**.
- Opening of strategic sectors such as **space and nuclear energy** for private participation has influenced the design of the fund.
- The fund provides **long-term, affordable financing with equity-linked options** to share risk, while ensuring accountability and responsible commercialisation.
- The **total corpus of the RDI Fund is ₹1 lakh crore**.
- Financing is offered at **concessional interest rates of around 2–4 per cent**.
- The fund provides **long tenures of up to 15 years**, including **moratorium provisions**.
- Under the **first Open Call**, nearly **191 proposals** were received, with a **majority from the private sector**, indicating growing confidence in the government's innovation support framework.
- The **first TDB Call** focuses on projects at **Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 4 and above**.
- Funding will be routed through **Second Level Fund Managers (SLFMs)**.
- Support will be provided in the form of **loans, equity, or hybrid instruments**, based on project needs.
- The **maximum funding support** will be **up to 50 per cent of the total project cost**, with **matching contributions** from companies or private investors.

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 M&S PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, 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.

- The funding framework offers **collateral-free financing**, with **no requirement for personal or corporate guarantees**.
- Proposals will be evaluated based on **scientific, technological, financial, and commercial merit**, with defined timelines for evaluation and disbursement.
- The scheme **does not provide grant funding** and focuses on **sustainable commercial deployment of technologies**.
- The **RDI Fund** was approved by the **Union Cabinet in July 2025**.
- It was launched by **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in November 2025** to build **indigenous technological capabilities** and strengthen **innovation-led economic growth**.
- The event was attended by senior officials, including **Shri Rajesh Pathak, Secretary, Technology Development Board**, and **Professor Abhay Karandikar, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology**.

Delhi Government Launches 'Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana' for Girl Child Welfare

- The **Delhi Government** launched the **Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana** in **2026** to secure the educational and financial future of girl children in the **National Capital Territory of Delhi**.
- The scheme was announced by **Chief Minister Rekha Gupta**.
- The scheme provides **financial assistance from birth till completion of graduation**, making it a long-term education-linked welfare initiative.
- Under the scheme, each eligible beneficiary will receive **₹56,000 in phased instalments**.
- The instalments will be released at **key educational milestones**, starting from birth and continuing through different stages of education.
- After **successful completion of graduation**, the accumulated amount will **mature into more than ₹1 lakh**, providing financial security at the beginning of adulthood.
- The scheme follows a **fully digital process**, covering application, verification, and fund transfer.
- Beneficiaries are not required to visit government offices.
- The system ensures **transparency, efficiency, and updated digital records** for each beneficiary.
- The objective of the scheme is to promote **gender equity, financial inclusion, and human capital development**.
- By linking benefits with education, it encourages families to support **girls' education up to graduation level**.
- The scheme aims to **reduce dropout rates**, increase **female participation in higher education**, and strengthen overall **socio-economic development indicators**.



Delhi government today announced the launch of a new welfare scheme, Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana for the bright future of the girls of the national capital. Under the new scheme, daughters in Delhi will receive a total assistance of 56 thousand rupees in instalments, starting from birth and continuing until the completion of their graduation.

About Delhi:

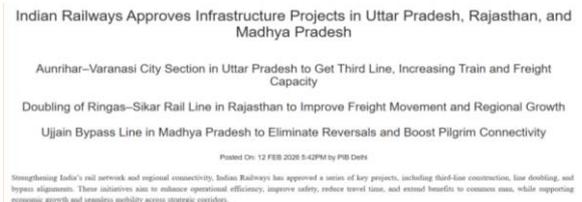
- Chief Minister: Rekha Gupta
- Lieutenant Governor: Vinai Kumar Saxena
- Capital: New Delhi
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary, Yamuna Biodiversity Park, Aravalli Biodiversity Park

RECENT NEWS

- PLASTINDIA 2026, one of the world's largest and most influential plastics exhibitions, is set to begin on 5 February 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The six-day event will run until 10 February 2026 and is expected to bring together industry leaders, policymakers, innovators, and global exhibitors on a single platform.

Indian Railways Approves Key Line Expansion and Bypass Projects in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh

- **Indian Railways** approved major infrastructure projects including **third-line construction, line doubling, and bypass alignment** to enhance **operational efficiency, safety, capacity and regional connectivity**.
- **Third Line between Aunrihar – Varanasi City (31.36 km), Uttar Pradesh** approved at a cost of **₹497.07 crore** under **North Eastern Railway**.
- The section handles heavy **passenger and freight traffic**, including **cement, coal, food grains, iron, steel and industrial materials**.
- The third line will allow **7.13 additional trains per direction per day** and support **freight growth of 1.99 million Tonnes Per Annum (MTPA)**.
- Existing line capacity of **87.93 per cent** will increase to **over 102 per cent**, reducing congestion and improving punctuality.
- The project will strengthen **logistics efficiency and trade corridors in eastern Uttar Pradesh** and adjoining regions.
- **Doubling of Ringas – Sikar (50.06 km), Rajasthan** approved at a cost of **₹470.34 crore** under **North Western Railway**.
- The project will enable **five additional trains per direction daily** and increase freight capacity by **2.36 MTPA**.
- Current capacity utilisation of **77 per cent** is projected to rise to **210 per cent by 2029–30**.
- It will enhance **connectivity to key pilgrimage sites** such as **Khatu Shyamji and Salasar Balaji**.
- The project aims to improve reliability, reduce delays and support economic activity in the region.
- **Ujjain Bypass Line connecting Naikheri – Chintaman Ganesh (8.60 km), Madhya Pradesh** approved at a cost of **₹189.04 crore** under **Western Railway**.
- The bypass will eliminate the need for **train reversals at Ujjain Junction**, improving sectional capacity and operational efficiency.
- The project is significant in view of the **Simhastha Kumbh Mela 2028** and heavy pilgrim traffic to **Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga**.
- It will ensure smoother train movement, reduced delays and improved timetable reliability during peak seasons.
- These projects aim to promote **inclusive and sustainable transport development**, strengthen connectivity, and support **economic growth and seamless mobility across strategic corridors**.



RECENT NEWS

- Indian Railways has achieved an important milestone by launching the country's first LNG–Diesel dual-fuel DEMU train. The train has been operationalised at ****Sabarmati** in Ahmedabad, marking a big move towards sustainable and environment-friendly rail operations.

Union Government Releases 2nd Installment of XV Finance Commission Untied Grants to Five States

- The **Union Government** sanctioned and released the **2nd installment of Fifteenth Finance Commission Untied Grants for FY 2025–26** to **Panchayati Raj Institutions/Rural Local Bodies** in **Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal**.
- The objective is to **strengthen grassroots governance** and enable **need-based local development**.
- **Bihar** received **Rs. 80,240.00 lakh (Rs. 802.40 crore)** covering **38 District Panchayats, 533 Block Panchayats and 8,053 Gram Panchayats**.
- An additional **Rs. 139.10 lakh (Rs. 1.39 crore)** from the withheld portion of the 1st installment was released to **3 Block Panchayats and 7 Gram Panchayats** that became eligible.
- **Haryana** was provided **Rs. 19,762.70 lakh (Rs. 197.627 crore)** covering **19 District Panchayats, 138 Block Panchayats and 6,194 Gram Panchayats**.
- A further **Rs. 249.80 lakh (Rs. 2.50 crore)** was released from the earlier withheld amount to **1 District Panchayat, 4 Block Panchayats and 30 Gram Panchayats**.
- **Himachal Pradesh** received **Rs. 6,830.03 lakh (Rs. 68.30 crore)** for **12 District Panchayats, 80 Block Panchayats and 3,602 Gram Panchayats**.
- Additionally, **Rs. 34.53 lakh (Rs. 0.35 crore)** was released to **26 newly eligible Gram Panchayats**.
- **Uttar Pradesh** received **Rs. 1,55,940.00 lakh (Rs. 1,559.40 crore)** for **75 District Panchayats, 826 Block Panchayats and 57,694 Gram Panchayats**.
- An additional **Rs. 1,101.64 lakh (Rs. 11.016 crore)** was released from the withheld portion to **2 District Panchayats, 13 Block Panchayats and 61 Gram Panchayats**.
- **West Bengal** was allocated **Rs. 68,085.79 lakh (Rs. 680.86 crore)** covering **21 District Panchayats, 335 Block Panchayats and 3,225 Gram Panchayats**.
- The grants are recommended by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** and the **Ministry of Jal Shakti (Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation)** and released by the **Ministry of Finance**.
- The grants are released in **two installments in a financial year**.
- **Untied Grants** can be used by Panchayati Raj Institutions/Rural Local Bodies for **location-specific needs** under the **Twenty-Nine Subjects of the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution**, excluding salaries and establishment costs.
- **Tied Grants** are to be utilised for basic services such as:
 - **Sanitation and maintenance of Open Defecation Free status**, including household waste management, human excreta and fecal sludge management.
 - **Drinking water supply, rainwater harvesting and water recycling**.

The Union Government has sanctioned and released the second installment of Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV FC) Untied Grants for the financial year 2025-26 to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Rural Local Bodies (RLBs) in Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

The release is aimed at further empowering grassroots governance structures and enabling need-based, location-specific development at the village, block and district levels.

State-Wise Allocation Details

Under the current tranche, substantial financial assistance has been provided to eligible rural local bodies across the five states.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India Signs Social Security Agreement with United Kingdom to Facilitate Cross-Border Workforce

- **India** signed a bilateral **Social Security Agreement (SSA)** with the **United Kingdom (UK)** focusing on **social security contributions** for cross-border workers.
- The agreement prevents **double taxation** on social security payments and facilitates **smoother mobility** for Indian professionals working in the UK.

- Under the pact, **employees on short-term assignments** (up to **36 months**) will **not pay** social security contributions in both countries, reducing the **financial burden** for individuals and employers.
- Approximately **75,000 Indian professionals**, especially in **IT, engineering, finance, and consultancy**, are expected to benefit from the agreement.
- **Indian companies** operating in the UK will find it more **cost-effective** to deploy staff for short-term assignments.
- To claim **exemption** from dual contributions, workers must obtain a **Certificate of Coverage (CoC)** through the **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** under the **Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoL&E)** or via the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)**, while UK workers follow a similar process through their authorities.
- The **SSA** strengthens **India-UK cooperation in labour mobility and social security protection** for professionals.



About Ireland:

- President : Catherine Connolly
- Capital : Dublin
- Currency : Euro (EUR)

DEFENCE NEWS

Indian Navy Takes Command of Combined Task Force (CTF) 154 for the First Time

- The **Indian Navy** has assumed command of **Combined Task Force (CTF) 154**, a multinational training task force under the **Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)**, reflecting India's growing role in **maritime security and capacity building** in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** and beyond.
- The change of command ceremony took place on **11 Feb 2026** at **CMF Headquarters, Manama, Bahrain**, presided over by **VAdm Curt A Renshaw**, Commander, CMF / US NAVCENT / US Fifth Fleet.
- **Cmde Milind M Mokashi**, Shaurya Chakra, formally took over as **Commander CTF 154** from the outgoing **Italian Navy** Commander, with **VAdm Tarun Sobti**, DCNS, Indian Navy, in attendance.
- **CTF 154**, established in **May 2023**, focuses on **training and capacity building** of CMF member nations and strengthens India's position as a **Preferred Security Partner** among the **47 CMF nations**.
- The task force enhances maritime security through **multinational training programs** across the **Middle East** and wider region.
- **Training programs** of CTF 154 focus on **five pillars: Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), Law of the Sea, Maritime Interdiction Operations, Maritime Rescue and Assistance, and Leadership Development**.

INDIAN NAVY ASSUMES FIRST-EVER COMMAND OF COMBINED TASK FORCE (CTF) 154

Posted On: 12 FEB 2026 10:39AM by PIB Delhi

In a landmark development underscoring India's commitment to collaborative maritime security and capacity building in the Indian Ocean Region and beyond, the Indian Navy has assumed command of Combined Task Force (CTF) 154, a key multinational training task force under the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).

The change of command ceremony was conducted on 11 Feb 2026 at CMF Headquarters in Manama, Bahrain, and was presided over by VAdm Curt A Renshaw, Commander, CMF / US NAVCENT / US Fifth Fleet. VAdm Tarun Sobti, Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff (DCNS), Indian Navy, and senior military leaders from other member nations were in attendance. Cmde Milind M Mokashi, Shaurya Chakra, of the Indian Navy, formally took over as Commander CTF 154 from the outgoing Commander of the Italian Navy.

CTF 154 is specifically oriented towards training and capacity building of member nations of CMF. It reflects the region's growing trust in India's professional expertise, operational experience, and a role as a Preferred Security Partner among the 47 nations of the CMF.

CTF 154, established in May 2023, is dedicated to enhancing maritime security through multinational training programs across the Middle East and wider region.

The training focuses on five core pillars: Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), Law of the Sea, Maritime Interdiction Operations, Maritime Rescue and Assistance, and Leadership Development. The task force conducts regular Maritime Security Enhancement Training (MSET) events, exercises like Compass Rise and Southern/Southern Readiness, and outreach to build partner nations' operational capabilities against common threats such as illegal trafficking, piracy, and irregular migration.

CTF 154 operates alongside CMF's other task forces: CTF 150 (Maritime Security), CTF 151 (Counter-Piracy), CTF 152 (Maritime Security in Arabian Gulf) and CTF 153 (Maritime Security in Red Sea).

The Indian Navy looks forward to a productive tenure, delivering high-impact training initiatives and reinforcing global maritime partnerships for peace, prosperity, and security.

- **CTF 154** conducts regular **Maritime Security Enhancement Training (MSET)** events, exercises such as **Compass Rose** and **Northern/Southern Readiness**, and operational capacity-building for partner nations.
- The task force addresses common maritime threats, including **illegal trafficking**, **piracy**, and **irregular migration**.
- **CTF 154** operates alongside other CMF task forces: **CTF 150** (Maritime Security), **CTF 151** (Counter-Piracy), **CTF 152** (Arabian Gulf Security), and **CTF 153** (Red Sea Security).
- The **Indian Navy** aims to deliver **high-impact training initiatives** and reinforce **global maritime partnerships** for peace, prosperity, and security during its tenure as **CTF 154 commander**.

Defence Acquisition Council Approves ₹3.60 Lakh Crore Defence Procurement to Strengthen Armed Forces' Combat Capabilities

- The **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**, chaired by **Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh**, approved **Acceptance of Necessity (AoN)** for various proposals of the Services valued at about **₹3.60 lakh crore** on **12 February 2026**.

Key Highlights :

- **Indian Air Force (IAF):**
- **AoN approved** for procurement of **Multi Role Fighter Aircraft (MRFA) [Rafale]**, **Combat Missiles**, and **Air-Ship Based High Altitude Pseudo Satellite (AS-HAPS)**.
- **MRFA** procurement will enhance **air dominance**, **long-range offensive strikes**, and **deterrence capabilities**, with the majority manufactured in India.
- **Combat Missiles** will boost **stand-off ground attack capability**, **deep strike power**, and **high accuracy**.
- **AS-HAPS** will be used for persistent **ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance)**, **Electronic Intelligence**, **telecommunication**, and **remote sensing** for military purposes.
- **Indian Army:**
- **AoN approved** for **Anti-Tank Mines (Vibhav)** and **overhaul of Vehicle Platforms** including **ARVs**, **T-72 Tanks**, and **BMP-II Infantry Combat Vehicles**.
- **Vibhav mines** serve as **anti-tank obstacle systems** to delay enemy mechanized forces.
- **Overhaul** of vehicle platforms ensures **extended service life**, **readiness**, and **operational effectiveness**.
- **Indian Navy:**
- **AoN cleared** for **04 MW Marine Gas Turbine based Electric Power Generator** and **P8I Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance Aircraft**.
- **Marine Gas Turbine Power Generator** under **Make-I** category reduces **foreign dependency** and ensures **self-reliance** in power generation.
- **P8I aircraft** enhances **long-range anti-submarine warfare**, **maritime surveillance**, and **maritime strike capabilities**.
- **Indian Coast Guard (ICG):**
- **AoN approved** for **Electro-Optical/Infra-Red system** for **Dornier aircraft**.
- The procurement improves **maritime surveillance efficiency** of the **ICG**.

DAC clears Rs 3.60 lakh crore worth of capital acquisition proposals to enhance the combat readiness of defence forces

Posted On: 12 FEB 2026 4:57PM by PIB Delhi

The Defence Acquisition Council, under the chairmanship of Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, accepted acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for various proposals of the Services to an estimated value of about Rs 3.60 lakh crore, on February 12, 2026. For the Indian Air Force (IAF), AoN was approved for the procurement of Multi Role Fighter Aircraft (MRFA) [Rafale], Combat Missiles and Air-Ship Based High Altitude Pseudo Satellite (AS-HAPS).

The procurement of MRFA will enhance the capability of undertaking air dominance roles across the spectrum of conflict and significantly boost the deterrence capability of IAF with long range offensive strikes. The majority of MRFA to be procured will be manufactured in India. The Combat Missiles will enhance the stand-off ground attack capability with deep strike power and very high accuracy. The AS-HAPS will be utilized towards intercept and persistent intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Electronic Intelligence, telecommunication and remote sensing for military purposes.

For the Indian Army, AoN was accepted for the procurement of Anti-Tank Mines (Vibhav) and overhaul of Vehicle Platforms of Armoured Recovery Vehicle (ARV), T-72 Tanks and Infantry Combat Vehicle (BMP-II). Vibhav mines will be laid on anti-tank obstacle systems to delay the advance of enemy mechanized forces. The overhaul of vehicle platforms of ARV, T-72 Tanks and BMP-II will enhance service life of equipment ensuring readiness and operational effectiveness of the Indian Army.

For the Indian Navy, AoN was cleared for 04 MW Marine Gas Turbine based Electric Power Generator and P8I Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance Aircraft. Induction of 04 MW Marine Gas Turbine based Electric Power Generator under Make-I category of Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 will minimise the dependency on foreign manufacturers, ensure self-reliance in power generation requirement of Indian Navy. The acquisition of P8I aircraft will significantly boost the Navy's counter-submarine capability of long range anti-submarine warfare, maritime surveillance and maritime strike capability.

For the Indian Coast Guard (ICG), AoN was accepted for the procurement of Electro-Optical/Infra-Red system for Dornier aircraft. The procurement will assist in enhancing the efficacy of maritime surveillance capability of the ICG.

Ministry of Defence Signs ₹2,312 Crore Hindustan Aeronautics Limited Contract for

Eight Dornier 228 Aircraft Under Buy (Indian) Scheme

- The **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** signed a contract with **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**, Transport Aircraft Division, Kanpur, for the acquisition of **eight Dornier 228 aircraft** along with **Operational Role Equipment** for the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** at a cost of **₹2,312 crore** under the **Buy (Indian)** category.
- The contract signing took place in the presence of **Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh** in **New Delhi** on **12 February 2026**.
- The programme is expected to generate significant **direct and indirect employment** by strengthening **HAL's production ecosystem** and supporting a broad network of **MSMEs** and ancillary industries.
- The procurement reinforces the Government of India's commitment to **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** and **Make-in-India** initiatives while bolstering India's **maritime security architecture**.
- The **Dornier 228 aircraft** will enhance **coastal surveillance, maritime reconnaissance, and search-and-rescue** operations across India's coastline and **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**.
- The **Dornier 228** is a **twin-turboprop utility** and maritime patrol aircraft, widely used for maritime patrol and utility roles, **manufactured domestically** by HAL.
- The **Buy (Indian)** category prioritises procurement from **domestic manufacturers**, reducing dependence on **foreign defence imports**.
- The procurement will strengthen the **supply chain** involving **micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** and ancillary industries.
- The **Indian Coast Guard**, operating under the **Ministry of Defence**, plays a key role in **anti-smuggling operations, environmental protection, disaster response, and safeguarding sea lanes**.
- The induction of additional **Dornier aircraft** will bolster **maritime domain awareness** and enhance India's **coastal security framework**.
- The contract has **strategic and economic significance**, promoting **self-reliance** in defence production, improving **coastal surveillance**, and supporting India's **maritime presence** amid evolving regional security and economic challenges.
- The **Dornier 228 programme** aligns with the government's focus on **indigenous manufacturing, maritime security, and Aatmanirbhar Bharat** vision.

Aatmanirbhar Bharat: MoD inks Rs 2,312 crore contract with HAL for eight Dornier 228 Aircraft under Buy (Indian) category

Posted On: 12 FEB 2026 4:15PM by PIB Delhi

Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Transport Aircraft Division, Kanpur for the acquisition of eight Dornier 228 Aircraft along with Operational Role Equipment for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) at a cost of Rs 2,312 crore under Buy (Indian) category. The contract was signed in the presence of Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh in New Delhi on February 12, 2026.

The programme is expected to generate significant direct & indirect employment by strengthening the HAL's production ecosystem and supporting a broad network of MSMEs & ancillary industries. It will also create sustained opportunities in Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul and life cycle technical support.

The contract reinforces the Government's commitment to Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Make-in-India while bolstering India's maritime security architecture.



Agneevasthraa Partners with Indian Army to Provide Advanced Carbon and Composite Materials

- **Agneevasthraa**, a domestic manufacturer of **carbon fabrics** and **advanced composite materials**, signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **Indian Army (IA)** to supply materials for **defence applications**.
- The **MoU** covers **carbon fabrics**, which are lightweight, **high-strength textiles** made from carbon fibers, and **composite materials**, combining two or more constituent materials for **defence-specific properties**.



- The supplied materials will be used in **armour systems, protective gear, structural components, and high-performance defence platforms.**
- The collaboration aligns with the **Government of India (GoI)**'s vision of **'Make in India'** and **'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'**, promoting **domestic defence manufacturing.**
- **Agneevasthraa** has a long-standing association with the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** in delivering world-class **material innovations.**
- The **MoU** ensures the **Indian Army** has access to **cutting-edge, locally sourced carbon-related technology** meeting **rigorous global standards.**
- The collaboration focuses on **custom design and manufacturing** of advanced carbon and allied materials for **critical, high-stakes defence applications.**

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Dr. Jitendra Singh Launches ₹2,000 Crore BIRAC–RDI Fund Under ₹1 Lakh Crore RDI Programme to Scale Biotechnology Innovations

- Union Minister **Dr. Jitendra Singh** announced the **first national call** for the **BIRAC–RDI Fund**, under the **₹1 lakh crore Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI)** initiative of the Government of India.
- The launch reflects India's shift from **late entrant to early mover** in emerging technologies and **science-led growth.**

Dr Jitendra Singh Announces First National Call of ₹2,000 Crore BIRAC–RDI Fund Under ₹1 Lakh Crore RDI Initiative to Boost Biotech Sector

India No Longer a Late Starter in Biotech: Dr Jitendra Singh Announces Biotech-Focused RDI Fund to Bridge Lab-to-Industry Gap

India Emerges as a Global Bioeconomy Leader; Biotechnology to Drive the Nation's Next Growth Phase says Dr Jitendra Singh

India Targets \$300 Billion Bioeconomy by 2030 with Major Biotech Scale-Up Push: Dr Jitendra Singh

Posted On: 13 FEB 2025 3:47PM by PIB Delhi

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh today announced the first national call for the BIRAC–RDI Fund, marking a major push to scale high-impact biotechnology innovations under the Government of India's ₹1 lakh crore Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) initiative. Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, and MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh said the launch reflects a decisive shift in India's approach to science-led growth and signals that the country is no longer a late entrant but an early mover in emerging technologies.

The launch event was attended by Dr. Vinod Paul, Member, NITI Aayog; Dr. Rajesh S. Gokhale, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology; Dr. Jitendra Kumar, Managing Director, BIRAC; senior officials from DST and ANRF; industry leaders, venture capital representatives, and members of the scientific community.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that over the past decade, India has moved from policy hesitation to policy acceleration in biotechnology. He said the transformation is visible in the expansion of the startup ecosystem, from around 50 biotech startups in 2014 to more than 11,000 today, reflecting what he described as a quantum jump in scale and ambition. The bioeconomy, which stood at about 8 billion dollars in 2014, has expanded rapidly, placing India among leading global players.

Key Highlights :

- India's **biotech startup ecosystem** expanded from **~50 startups in 2014** to **11,000+ today**, reflecting a quantum jump in scale and ambition.
- The **bioeconomy** grew from **\$8 billion in 2014** to **\$165.7 billion in 2024**, targeting **\$300 billion by 2030** and **\$1 trillion by 2047.**
- **Biotechnology** is expected to drive the **next industrial revolution**, complementing IT-led transformation, and focus areas include **advanced manufacturing, biotech innovation, and new-age entrepreneurship.**
- The **RDI Fund** supports **long-gestation, high-risk research** requiring **patient capital** and advanced infrastructure, and complements the **BioE3 Policy.**
- Focus sectors include **biopharma, bio-industrial manufacturing, bioenergy, blue economy, and biocomputation**, aiming to convert research outputs into **scalable industrial outcomes.**
- **BIRAC** is appointed as **second-level fund manager**, deploying **₹2,000 crore** over five years, with scope for expansion.
- **BIRAC's ecosystem** includes **100+ bio-incubation centres, 10 lakh sq. ft. incubation space**, and engagement with **15 lakh startup entrepreneurs.**
- The **BIRAC–RDI Fund** is part of the national RDI initiative approved by the **Union Cabinet in July 2025** and launched in **November 2025** under Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), anchored by the Department of Science & Technology..
- The fund supports technologies from **TRL-4 to TRL-9** through **equity, convertible instruments, and long-term debt.**
- The national call for applications is open to **startups, SMEs, and industry partners**, with Phase 1 submission deadline on **March 31, 2026**, via the portal **<https://biracrdif.org>.**

- Director General, BRIC and Chairman BIRAC : Dr. Rajesh S. Gokhale
- Managing Director, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) : Dr. Jitendra Kumar

Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre Selects Three Indian Startups for Satellite Bus as a Service Initiative

- The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACE), the commercial arm of ISRO, selected three Indian private startups — **Astrome Technologies Private Limited, Azista Industries Private Limited, and Dhruva Space Private Limited** — under the **Satellite Bus as a Service (SBaaS)** initiative.
- The initiative focuses on developing **indigenous small satellite bus platforms** capable of carrying and operating **multiple customer payloads**.



Key Highlights :

- A **satellite bus** provides essential services to payloads and acts as a **cost-effective, modular platform** for domestic and international missions.
- Under **SBaaS**, each selected company will receive a **₹5 crore grant** for the development and demonstration of a **robust, modular, and scalable** satellite bus.
- **IN-SPACE** will provide access to **ISRO** and **Department of Space (DoS)** infrastructure, along with **testing facilities** and technical guidance.
- The **SBaaS initiative** was announced through an **Announcement of Opportunity (AO)** in **April 2025**, inviting proposals from Indian **Non-Governmental Entities (NGEs)**.
- A total of **15 proposals** were received by **July 2025**, and the three firms were selected after a **rigorous multi-stage evaluation process**.
- **Contract agreements** have been signed, marking the formal commencement of implementation under the scheme.
- **SBaaS** is a **business model** where companies provide a **ready-to-use satellite bus platform** with services, instead of customers building satellites independently.
- **Milestone-linked grant disbursement** and continued support through **IN-SPACE, ISRO, and DoS** infrastructure will be provided in subsequent phases.
- Future phases will enable **hosted payload missions** on these platforms, expanding **public-private partnership (PPP)-led space programmes**.
- The initiative strengthens **private sector capability building** in satellite platforms and **hosted payload services**.
- Chairman, IN-SPACE : Pawan Goenka

Recent News :

- In Jan 2026, **IN-SPACE** also signed a **concession agreement** with **PixxelSpace India and Allied Orbits Private Limited (Pixxel-led consortium SPV)** to establish an **Earth Observation constellation** under the **PPP** framework.

Defence Research and Development Organisation and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Join Hands for Collaborative Research and Development

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**, under the **Ministry of Defence (MoD)**, signed a collaborative agreement with the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**, under the **Ministry of Science and**

Technology (MoS&T), to jointly undertake **Research and Development (R&D)** activities.

- The collaboration aims to develop technologies that enhance **human sustenance and performance** in **extreme and challenging environments**.
- Key focus areas include **high-altitude survival, human performance enhancement, off-grid energy systems, and waste management solutions** for extreme and remote environments.
- The agreement provides for **resource sharing**, including **personnel, laboratories, technology platforms, and scientific equipment**.
- The initiative aligns with the **Government of India (GoI)**'s vision of **Atmanirbhar Bharat**, promoting **technological self-sufficiency**.
- The partnership is expected to accelerate the **development and application of next-generation technologies** in both **defence and civilian sectors**.
- By collaborating and sharing **expertise and equipment**, **DRDO and CSIR** aim to enhance India's overall **innovation base** and mitigate challenges posed by **extreme climate conditions**.
- The model is likely to promote **technology transfer** and boost **scientific research and innovation-driven development** in sectors such as **defence, energy, and environment**.

DRDO Signs Agreement With Council Of Scientific And Industrial Research For Collaborative Research



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

ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS

Reserve Bank of India Approves ICICI Prudential AMC to Acquire Shareholdings in Eight Banks

- **ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company**, along with group entities of **ICICI Bank**, received **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** approval to acquire up to **9.95% paid-up share capital or voting rights** in select banks.
- The approval marks a **strategic expansion** of the **ICICI Group's** presence in the banking sector.
- The **eight banks** covered under this approval include **Bandhan Bank, City Union Bank, Equitas Small Finance Bank, Federal Bank, IDFC FIRST Bank, HDFC Bank, Karur Vysya Bank, and RBL Bank**.
- As per approval conditions, **major shareholding** must be completed within the **one-year validity period**.



- The **aggregate holding** must remain **below 9.95%**, and **fresh RBI approval** will be required if the stake **falls below 5%** and is later increased.
- The acquisition must comply with the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949; RBI (Commercial Banks – Acquisition and Holding of Shares or Voting Rights) Directions, 2025; Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999; and SEBI Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements (LODR) Regulations, 2015.**
- The investment will be executed through schemes of **ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund (MF), Specialised Investment Fund (SIF), Alternative Investment Fund (AIF), and Portfolio Management Services (PMS) clients.**

MOUS AND AGREEMENT

India Post Signs MoU with NSE for Mutual Fund Distribution

- The **Department of Posts (DoP)**, also known as **India Post** under the **Ministry of Communications**, signed a **three-year renewable Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE)**.
- The MoU aims to enable **distribution of Mutual Fund products** through **India Post's nationwide network**.
- Under the partnership, India Post will utilise its network of **over 1.64 lakh post offices** to facilitate Mutual Fund investments through the **NSE MF Invest platform**.
- The **NSE MF Invest platform** provides **end-to-end services**, including **electronic Know Your Customer, investor onboarding, transaction processing, and back-office integration**.
- The implementation will be carried out in a **phased manner**.
- Initially, **simple Do-It-Yourself investment options** will be offered.
- In later phases, access will be expanded to a **comprehensive Mutual Fund ecosystem**.
- **Selected Department of Posts employees** will be trained and onboarded as **certified Mutual Fund distributors**.
- Mandatory **National Institute of Securities Markets certification** and **Employee Unique Identification Number registration** will be required before offering Mutual Fund services.

Department of Posts and National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE) Sign MoU to Expand Mutual Fund Access Through India Post Network

Posted On: 10 FEB 2026 3:50PM by PIB Delhi

The Department of Posts (DoP), Ministry of Communications, Government of India, today announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE), India's leading stock exchange, to enable the distribution of mutual fund products through India Post's extensive postal network.

The Department of Posts, using its vast network of over 1.64 lakh post offices across the country, will work with NSE, which has a strong online system for handling mutual fund transactions that covers everything from placing orders to settling them, all while following SEBI rules. This collaboration aims to significantly enhance last-mile access to mutual fund products, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas.

This strategic partnership aligns with the Government of India's vision of deepening financial inclusion by combining the trust, accessibility, and wide outreach of India Post with NSE's market infrastructure and technological expertise. The initiative is expected to promote investor awareness, transparency, and participation in capital market-linked financial products.

The MoU was signed in New Delhi by Mr. Manisha Bansal Bahl, General Manager (Citizen Centric Services & Rural Business), Department of Posts, and Shri Satish Krishnan, Chief Business Development Officer, NSE, in the presence of senior officials from the Department of Posts and NSE.

Technology Development Board Signs Agreement with Prantae Solutions for Proflo-U Renal Diagnostic Platform

- The **Technology Development Board (TDB)** under the **Department of Science and Technology** signed an agreement with **M/s Prantae Solutions Private Limited, Odisha** for financial assistance.
- The project titled **"Manufacturing and Commercialization of Renal Care Innovative Diagnostic Product: Proflo-U for Point-of-Care Kidney Health Assessment"** aims to enable **early detection and monitoring of kidney disease and pregnancy-related complications** at the **primary healthcare level**.

"TDB-DST signs Agreement with Prantae Solutions for Commercialisation of Indigenous Point-of-Care Renal Diagnostic Platform "Proflo-U"

"Strengthening Primary Healthcare: TDB Backs Indigenous Kidney and Maternal Health Diagnostic Technology"

Posted On: 12 FEB 2026 3:15PM by PIB Delhi

In alignment with the Government of India's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and its emphasis on strengthening affordable, accessible, and technology-driven healthcare systems, the Technology Development Board (TDB), Department of Science and Technology, has signed an agreement with M/s Prantae Solutions Private Limited, Odisha, for financial assistance towards the project titled "Manufacturing and Commercialization of Renal Care Innovative Diagnostic Product: Proflo-U for Point-of-Care Kidney Health Assessment" aimed at enabling early detection and monitoring of kidney disease and pregnancy-related complications at the primary healthcare level.

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) continues to pose a growing public health challenge in India, with over two lakh patients estimated to be added annually to the end-stage renal disease category. Early detection through biomarkers such as urine albumin, creatinine, and Albumin-to-Creatinine Ratio (ACR) is essential, especially among high-risk populations including patients with diabetes, hypertension, and the geriatric demographic. These biomarkers are also vital for early diagnosis of pregnancy complications such as preeclampsia and are included in the ICMR essential diagnostics list for antenatal care. However, reliable quantitative solutions at the primary healthcare level remain limited, as gold-standard immunoturbidometric methods are laboratory-restricted and conventional dipstick methods lack sensitivity in early diagnostic ranges.

- The initiative aligns with the vision of **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** and promotes **affordable, accessible, and technology-driven healthcare systems**.
- **Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)** remains a major public health challenge, with over **two lakh patients added annually** to the end-stage renal disease category in India.
- Early detection through biomarkers such as **urine albumin, creatinine, and Albumin-to-Creatinine Ratio (ACR)** is crucial, especially among **diabetes, hypertension patients and the geriatric population**.
- These biomarkers are also important for detecting **pregnancy-related complications such as preeclampsia** and are included in the **Indian Council of Medical Research essential diagnostics list for antenatal care**.
- To address limitations of laboratory-restricted and low-sensitivity methods, Prantae Solutions developed **Proflo-U**, an **indigenous, patented point-of-care diagnostic platform** comprising:
 - **Urine Albumin Measurement Kit**: Nano-sensor based in vitro diagnostic device built on **three Indian patents (Nos. 360496, 308432, 543714)** and **one Patent Cooperation Treaty application (PCT/IN2023/050508)**, with detection range of **20–1200 mg/L** and ambient stability.
 - **Urine Creatinine Measurement Kit**: In vitro diagnostic device with detection range of **150–4000 mg/L**, stable at room temperature.
 - **Portable Urine Analyzer**: Indigenous, patent-granted device integrating **absorbance and fluorescence technologies**, Bluetooth and Internet of Things enabled, integrated with **Proflo-U mobile application** using **Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning features** and calibration-free functionality.
- The project includes setting up a **manufacturing and commercialization facility in Odisha** to scale production and expand availability across **Primary Health Centres, diagnostic networks and antenatal care systems**.
- The product has been validated against **gold-standard clinical methods**, combining **laboratory-grade accuracy with point-of-care simplicity**.

Daily CA One- Liner: February 14

- **Global Finance and Technology Network (GFTN)** and the **Startup Policy Forum (SPF)** announced a **strategic collaboration** to accelerate **financial technology and digital innovation**
- The **Government of Gujarat** signed a **Letter of Intent (LoI)** with **Starlink**, the satellite internet subsidiary of **SpaceX (founded by Elon Musk)**.
- India's **unemployment rate** eased to a **three-quarter low of 4.8 per cent** in **October–December (Q3) FY 2025–26**, as per the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** released by the **National Statistics Office**
- **Yotta Data Services**, India's leading **sovereign cloud infrastructure and platform services provider**, successfully deployed **BHASHINI's end-to-end sovereign Artificial Intelligence cloud transformation**
- **Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences**, and **Minister of State for Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space**, **Dr. Jitendra Singh**, launched the **first Open Call of the Technology Development Board**
- The **Delhi Government** launched the **Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana** in **2026** to secure the educational and financial future of girl children in the **National Capital Territory of Delhi**
- **Indian Railways** approved major infrastructure projects including **third-line construction, line doubling, and bypass alignment** to enhance **operational efficiency, safety, capacity and regional connectivity**

- The **Union Government** sanctioned and released the **2nd installment of Fifteenth Finance Commission Untied Grants for FY 2025–26 to Panchayati Raj Institutions/Rural Local Bodies** in Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal
- The **Department of Posts (DoP)**, also known as **India Post** under the **Ministry of Communications**, signed a **three-year renewable Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **National Stock Exchange of India Limited**
- The **Technology Development Board (TDB)** under the **Department of Science and Technology** signed an agreement with **M/s Prantae Solutions Private Limited, Odisha** for financial assistance\
- **Punjab National Bank (PNB)**, a leading **Public Sector Bank (PSB)**, announced ‘**PNB Soldierathon 2026**’, a themed **half marathon**, at its **Corporate Office** in **Dwarka, New Delhi**.
- **EximPe**, a **Singapore-headquartered** cross-border payments fintech, secured final **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Payment Aggregator-Cross Border (PA-CB)** authorisation.
- **Shri M. Nagaraju, Secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS)**, Ministry of Finance, chaired a meeting in **New Delhi** to deliberate on the preparation of the **roadmap for Financial Inclusion 2.0**.
- **India** signed a bilateral **Social Security Agreement (SSA)** with the **United Kingdom (UK)** focusing on **social security contributions** for cross-border workers.
- The **Indian Navy** has assumed command of **Combined Task Force (CTF) 154**, a multinational **training task force** under the **Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)**, reflecting India’s growing role in **maritime security** and **capacity building** in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** and beyond.
- The **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**, chaired by **Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh**, approved **Acceptance of Necessity (AoN)** for various proposals of the Services valued at about **₹3.60 lakh crore** on **12 February 2026**.
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- The **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACE)**, the commercial arm of **ISRO**, selected three Indian private startups — **Astrome Technologies Private Limited, Azista Industries Private Limited, and Dhruva Space Private Limited** — under the **Satellite Bus as a Service (SBaaS)** initiative.
- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**, under the **Ministry of Defence (MoD)**, signed a collaborative agreement with the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**, under the **Ministry of Science and Technology (MoS&T)**, to jointly undertake **Research and Development (R&D)** activities.
- **ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company**, along with group entities of **ICICI Bank**, received **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** approval to acquire up to **9.95% paid-up share capital** or **voting rights** in select banks.