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BANKING, FINANCE & BUSINESS

Reserve Bank of India Reinstates Default Loss Guarantees for NBFCs, Reversing May 2025 Provisioning Norms

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has restored the use of **Default Loss Guarantees (DLGs)** for **Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs)**, reversing the stricter provisioning norms imposed in **May 2025**.
- **NBFCs** can now consider **DLGs** when calculating **loan-loss provisions**, provided the guarantee is an **integral part** of the loan arrangement.
- The move **reduces provisioning pressure**, **improves profitability**, and **frees up capital** for greater **credit expansion**.
- **DLGs** are generally **capped at 5%** of the loan portfolio and are often backed by **fixed deposits** from digital lending partners.
- The **revised framework harmonises DLG** treatment across **digital lending, co-lending, and credit risk transfer** guidelines.
- **NBFCs** must **revise expected loss estimates** each time a guarantee is invoked, as the **available cover reduces** with usage.
- The **May 2025 directive** had increased provisioning requirements, raising **credit costs** and affecting **profitability of NBFCs**.
- **Earlier impact examples: SMFG India Credit** saw a **44% decline** in FY25 profit (₹115 crore provision); **Credit Saison India** reported a **22% fall** (₹178 crore provision); **Northern Arc Capital** had an overall impact of **₹780 crore** (₹763 crore provision).
- The earlier rules reduced **returns on fintech-originated loans**, causing a **slowdown in digital lending** and **lower fintech origination volumes**.
- The **latest amendment** aligns DLG treatment with **revised co-lending norms** that became effective in **January 2026**.
- Overall, the change is expected to **strengthen NBFC profitability, capital efficiency, and credit growth** while ensuring **regulatory consistency**.

CREDIT PUSH NBFCs can cut buffers, lend more; boost for digi lending

Reserve Bank Restores Default Loss Guarantees for NBFCs

Sangita Mehta

Mumbai: In a move that could support stronger credit expansion, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has restored the use of default loss guarantees (DLGs) for non-bank lenders, rolling back last year's curbs that had forced them to make higher provisions on loans sourced through fintech partners.

Non-banking finance companies (NBFC) can now factor in DLGs when setting aside buffers for potential loan losses, provided the guarantee forms an integral part of the loan arrangement, the RBI said last week. The regulator also said lenders must update their loss estimates each time the guarantee is invoked as the protection available reduces with every use.

For NBFCs, this change reduces provisioning pressure, improves profitability, and frees up balance-sheet capacity for fresh lending. For fintechs, meanwhile, it would encourage greater loan origination. The revised framework takes effect immediately.

"This is a significant relief for NBFCs like us that are engaged in digital lending partnerships with fintech lending service providers (LSPs)," said Ravi Narayanan, MD & CEO, SMFG India Credit.

"This regulatory clarity will support the industry in safely scaling digital lending, enabling NBFC-fintech partnerships to expand access to under-penetrated retail customer segments," he added.

The move marks a reversal from the central bank's May 2025 directive. Back then, the regulator had instructed NBFCs to exclude DLGs offered by fintech lending service providers when calculating the loss buffers required for stressed or risky loans. The earlier stance, mandatory from March 31, 2025, had led lenders to build up provisions on these portfolios, raising credit costs and dampening the appeal of fintech-originated loans.

THE PROVISIONING POSE The earlier rules had forced several NBFCs to take sizable additional provisions in the March quarter. ET had reported on May 27 last year SMFG India Credit reported a 44% fall in FY25 profit after booking its increase in extra DLG-related buffers, while Credit Saison India's profit dropped 22% following a 77% rise in additional provisioning.

Northern Arc Capital also reported an impact of ₹80 crore and had provided ₹63 crore on its books as of March 31, 2025. The RBI had mandated NBFCs to make provisions across the March, June and September quarters of 2025.

"This amendment shall result in reversal of additional provisions carried thus far by the entities and free up the capital. This will be favourable for lending partners in such loan arrangements and support overall credit expansion. It is also timely considering that the revised co-lending guidelines are effective from January this year," said AM Karthik, co-group head, financial services, Fera Ratings.

DLGs – usually capped at 5% and often backed by fixed deposits provided by digital lending partners – had been widely used in digital lending and co-lending structures. The 2025 rules had effectively neutralised their benefit, leading to a pullback in origination volumes for fintechs and higher credit costs for NBFCs.

With the latest amendment, the RBI aims to harmonise the treatment of DLGs across digital lending, co-lending and credit risk transfer guidelines, while ensuring lenders do not sacrifice the protection offered by such guarantees.

THE ROLLBACK reverses the May 2025 directive

THE ORDER had raised provisioning and credit cost burdens for NBFCs

THE MOVE is expected to free up capital and improve profitability



Reserve Bank of India Permits Bank Loans to National Cooperative Development Corporation for On-Lending to Cooperatives to Qualify as Priority Sector Lending

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has allowed **bank loans** to the **National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)** for **on-lending** to cooperative societies to be classified as **Priority Sector Lending (PSL)** from **January 19, 2026**.
- This provision applies to all banks **except Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs), Small Finance Banks, and Local Area Banks**, and must comply with the **PSL Master Direction 2025** activities.

RBI Rolls Out Measures to Strengthen Cooperative Banks' Financial Health, Governance and Digital Inclusion

Loans sanctioned by banks to NCDC for on-lending to cooperative societies eligible for classification as priority sector lending under the respective categories w.e.f. Jan. 19, 2026

Reforms include facilitating greater credit flow to cooperative societies through NCDC under revised Priority Sector Lending norms

'Sahakar Sarthi' set up as a Shared Services Entity to deliver technological services to Rural Cooperative Banks

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The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in consultation with the Government of India, has announced that loans sanctioned by banks to National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) w.e.f. January 19, 2026, for on-lending to cooperative societies are eligible for classification as priority sector lending under the respective categories. This applies to banks other than Regional Rural Banks, Urban Cooperative Banks, Small Finance Banks and Local Area Banks. These loans are for purposes and activities as laid down in the Master Direction on Priority Sector Lending, 2025.

National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), a statutory corporation under the administrative control of the Ministry of Cooperation, provides financial assistance to Cooperatives and contributes directly in accelerating the growth of cooperative movement.

The Government of India and RBI have taken various measures to strengthen cooperative banks' financial health, governance and digital inclusion along with enhancing deposit security, credit availability and product innovation, which inter-alia include:

Key Highlights :

- **NCDC**, a **statutory corporation** under the **Ministry of Cooperation**, provides financial assistance to cooperatives and directly supports the growth of the **cooperative movement** in India.

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- **Reforms** to strengthen cooperative banks include allowing **Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs)** to **open new branches** and increasing **housing loan limits** from **10% to 25%** of total loans and advances.
- **Governance reforms** include extending the **tenure of cooperative bank directors** from **8 to 10 years** and reducing **Aadhaar-enabled Payment System (AePS)** onboarding fees to promote **digital inclusion**.
- Cooperative banks now benefit from **RBI's Integrated Ombudsman Scheme** and **Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC)** coverage up to **₹5 lakh per depositor per bank**, enhancing **depositor protection**.
- **Additional support structures** include the **National Urban Co-operative Finance and Development Corporation (NUCFDC)** for **IT infrastructure** and operational support, and the **Shared Services Entity (SSE) Sahakar Sarthi** for **technological services** to **Rural Cooperative Banks**.
- These measures aim to strengthen **financial health, governance, credit availability, and digital adoption** in cooperative banks, contributing to a **robust cooperative banking system** in India.

DBS First in Asia-Pacific to Pilot Visa Intelligent Commerce for Everyday Payments

- **DBS Bank Limited**, Southeast Asia's largest lender, entered into a **strategic partnership** with **Visa** to drive the future of **agent-initiated payments** under a joint pilot of **Visa Intelligent Commerce (VIC)**.
- With this collaboration, **DBS** became the **1st issuer in Asia Pacific** to drive **real-world agentic commerce** use cases.
- **VIC** provides a comprehensive suite of **integrated APIs** and partner programmes, leveraging Visa's **secure infrastructure** to enable safe, transparent, and **consent-driven payments** by **AI agents** on behalf of consumers.
- Under the **pilot project**, **AI-powered agents** successfully executed **food and beverage transactions** using **DBS/POSB credit and debit cards**, with payments processed through **secure issuer-controlled flows** and **customer consent mechanisms**.
- Following the successful pilot, **DBS and Visa** plan expansion into **online shopping, travel bookings**, and other routine digital payment transactions.
- The pilot validates **AI-ready credentials, advanced authentication systems, and intent-driven transaction controls** to ensure secure and scalable **agent-led commerce**.
- A related study highlighted that **8 in 10 consumers in Singapore** rely on **AI assistance** while shopping online, underscoring growing adoption of **AI-driven digital payments**.



Reserve Bank of India Imposes Rs 1.35 Crore Penalties on 5 Banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies for Regulatory Non-Compliance

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed **monetary penalties** totaling **Rs 1.35 crore** on **5 financial institutions (FIs)**, including **3 banks—CSB Bank Limited, Bank of Maharashtra (BoM), DCB Bank Limited—and 2 Non-Banking**

RBI imposes monetary penalty on CSB Bank Limited

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has, by an order dated February 06, 2026, imposed a monetary penalty of ₹53.60 lakh (Rupees Fifty Three Lakh Sixty Thousand only) on CSB Bank Limited (the bank) for non-compliance with certain directions issued by RBI on 'Scope of activities to be undertaken of Business Correspondents (BCs) and Customer Service in Banks'. This penalty has been imposed in exercise of powers conferred on RBI under the provisions of section 47A(1)(c) read with section 46(4)(j) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

The Statutory Inspection for Supervisory Evaluation (SISE, 2025) of the bank was conducted by RBI with reference to its financial position as on March 31, 2025. Based on supervisory findings of non-compliance with the provisions of RBI directions and related correspondence in that regard, a notice was issued to the bank advising it to show cause as to why penalty should not be imposed on it for its failure to comply with the said provisions of RBI directions.

After considering the bank's reply to the notice and additional submissions made by it, RBI found, inter alia, that the following charges against the bank were sustained, warranting imposition of monetary penalty:

- The bank entered into an arrangement with BCs for undertaking activities, which are not covered within the scope of activities that can be undertaken by BCs; and
- The bank levied charges in certain savings bank accounts without ensuring that customers were made aware of such charges upfront.

This action is based on deficiencies in statutory and regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers. Further, imposition of monetary penalty is without prejudice to any other action that may be initiated by RBI against the bank.

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Financial Companies (NBFCs)—IIFL Finance Limited and Navi Finserv Limited.

- **CSB Bank** received the **highest penalty** of **Rs 63.60 lakh** for **non-compliance** with RBI directions on **Business Correspondents (BCs)** and **Customer Service in Banks**.
- **DCB Bank** was penalized **Rs 29.60 lakh** for failing to maintain the required **Loan-To-Value (LTV) ratio** in certain **gold loan accounts**.
- **Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)** was fined **Rs 32.50 lakh** for **non-compliance** with RBI directions on **credit information reporting** for **Self-Help Group (SHG) members** and **KYC rules**.
- **IIFL Finance Limited** was penalized **Rs 5.30 lakh** for **non-compliance** with RBI directions on **asset classification**.
- **Navi Finserv Limited** was fined **Rs 3.80 lakh** for **non-compliance** regarding **Recovery Agents**.
- The penalties highlight **RBI's focus** on **regulatory compliance** in areas like **loan management, KYC norms, BC operations, and asset classification** across banks and NBFCs.

Union Minister Amit Shah Launches India's First CBDC-Based Digital Food Currency Pilot under PDS in Gandhinagar, Gujarat

- **Union Minister Amit Shah**, Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) and Ministry of Cooperation (MoC), launched **India's first Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)-based Digital Food Currency pilot** under the **Public Distribution System (PDS)** in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.
- Under the **CBDC framework**, **digital coupons** generated through the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** will be credited directly to beneficiaries as **programmable digital currency (e₹)**.
- **Beneficiaries** can **redeem foodgrains** at **Fair Price Shops (FPS)** using **CBDC coupons or voucher codes**, ensuring **transparent, modern, and leakage-free** ration distribution.
- The new system addresses **operational challenges** related to **biometric authentication** and **e-POS (Point of Sale) devices**, enabling **secure, traceable, and real-time transactions**.
- The **pilot** was launched in **Ahmedabad, Anand, Valsad, and Surat** districts of Gujarat, in collaboration with the **Government of Gujarat and RBI**.
- **Subsequent phases** will expand the initiative to **Union Territories (UTs)** including **Puducherry, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, and Daman & Diu**.
- The **e-vouchers in PDS** can help **reduce physical grain distribution, curb burgeoning food subsidies, and control open-ended procurement** of grains.



NATIONAL AND STATE NEWS

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs Approves India's First Underwater Road-Cum-Rail Tunnel Under River Brahmaputra in Assam

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, approved the construction of a **4-lane access-controlled greenfield corridor** in **Assam**.
- The project includes a **15.79 km twin-tube Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) based underwater road-cum-rail tunnel** under the



The Centre has approved the construction of the country's first underwater twin tube road-cum-rail tunnel project that will be built under the Brahmaputra River in Assam.
The 33.7-kilometre-long four-lane access-controlled Greenfield connectivity project, which will include a 15.79-kilometre twin tube tunnel under the river, has been approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA).

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Brahmaputra River.

- **Total project length:** 33.7 km
- **Tunnel length under Brahmaputra:** 15.79 km
- **Configuration:** 4 lanes (2 lanes in each tube)
- One tube will include **railway infrastructure provision**
- **Execution model:** Engineering, Procurement & Construction (EPC)
- **Total cost:** ₹18,662 crore
- It will be **India's first underwater road-cum-rail tunnel** and the **second such project globally**.
- The corridor will connect **Gohpur (National Highway-15)** to **Numaligarh (National Highway-715)**.
- Present distance between Numaligarh and Gohpur is about **240 km**, requiring nearly **6 hours** of travel.
- The new tunnel will significantly reduce travel time and distance.
- Currently, vehicles pass through:
 - **Kaziranga National Park**
 - Silghat region (historic port town in Nagaon district, Assam)
 - Biswanath Town
- The tunnel will ensure seamless connectivity without disturbing ecologically sensitive areas like **Kaziranga National Park**.
- The project will benefit **Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and other North Eastern States**.
- It will enhance **strategic connectivity in border regions**, improving civilian and defence logistics mobility.
- Faster freight movement will reduce **logistics costs** and strengthen **regional economic growth**.
- Integration with major transport infrastructure:
 - **National Highway-15 (NH-15)**
 - **National Highway-715 (NH-715)**
 - Rangia–Mukongselek Railway Section (Northeast Frontier Railway)
 - Furkating–Mariani loop line (Northeast Frontier Railway)
- The project ensures **multi-modal connectivity**, integrating road and rail under one corridor.
- Connectivity coverage includes:
 - 11 Economic Nodes
 - 03 Social Nodes
 - 02 Tourist Nodes
 - 08 Logistic Nodes
 - 04 Major Railway Stations
 - 02 Airports
 - 02 Inland Waterways
- The initiative aligns with India's vision of strengthening connectivity and infrastructure in the **North East Region**.
- **Twin Tube Tunnel:** Consists of two parallel tunnels, generally for separate traffic flows.
- **Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM):** Advanced machinery used for underground or underwater tunnel construction with precision and safety.
- TBM-based tunnelling ensures **minimal environmental disturbance** and **high structural safety**.

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- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved an additional \$182 million loan to strengthen flood and riverbank erosion management in Assam. This new funding comes on top of an existing \$200 million Climate Resilient Brahmaputra Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Project, approved in October 2023.

About Assam:

- Chief Minister: Himanta Biswa Sarma
- Governor: Lakshman Prasad Acharya
- Capital: Dispur
- National Parks: Kaziranga National Park, Manas National Park, Dibru-Saikhowa National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, Orang National Park, Bura-Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary, Nameri Wildlife Sanctuary

India to Establish First National Cow Culture Museum in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh

- **India** will establish its first-ever **National Cow Culture Museum** in **Mathura, Uttar Pradesh**
- The museum will be developed within the campus of **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Veterinary Science University**
- The initiative aims to present a comprehensive understanding of cattle by blending **cultural heritage with scientific awareness**



ion | Photo Credit: Vijay Soneji

On the initiative of the Uttar Pradesh Braj Teerth Vikas Parishad, the country's first national 'cow culture' museum will be established on Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Veterinary Science University campus in Mathura, an official announced, adding that the land for the project has been selected.

- The project moves beyond religious symbolism to highlight the role of cattle in **agriculture, economy and sustainability**
- Objectives of the Museum
 - To showcase the **cultural importance of cattle in Indian society**
 - To highlight the **economic role of bovines in rural livelihoods**
 - To promote **scientific awareness about cattle conservation**
 - To encourage **sustainable agricultural practices**
 - To position cattle as a key component of **rural development and food security**
- Blending Tradition with Science
- The museum will present both **spiritual and practical dimensions** of cattle
- Mathura, located in the **Braj region**, holds strong traditional associations with cattle
- The project is being implemented under the direction of the **Government of Uttar Pradesh**
- It aims to strengthen the **cultural identity of the Braj region** while promoting scientific knowledge
- A **dairy parlour** is also planned within the campus to provide fresh dairy products

About Uttar Pradesh:

- **Chief Minister:** Yogi Adityanath
- **Governor:** Anandiben Patel
- **Capital:** Lucknow
- **National Parks:** Dudhwa National Park
- **Wildlife Sanctuaries:** Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, Kaimoor Wildlife Sanctuary, Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary (Shahid Chandra Shekhar Azad Bird Sanctuary), Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary, Sur Sarovar Bird Sanctuary, Chandraprabha Wildlife Sanctuary, Mahavir Swami Wildlife Sanctuary, Ranipur Wildlife

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- The Uttar Pradesh government has presented its first-ever Economic Survey 2025-26 in the state legislature, outlining a comprehensive roadmap to transform the state into a \$1 trillion economy over the medium term. The survey provides a data-driven framework focusing on investment-led growth, infrastructure expansion, industrial diversification, fiscal discipline, and human development.

Union Cabinet Approves Conversion of North and South Blocks into 'Yuge Yugeen Bharat' National Museum; Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurates Seva Teerth

- The **Union Cabinet** approved the conversion of **North Block and South Block** into the '**Yuge Yugeen Bharat**' **National Museum**

- The decision follows **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** dedicating the new **Prime Minister's Office (PMO) – Seva Teerth** to the nation.

- Cabinet meetings will no longer be held in **South Block**, ending nearly **95 years of administrative functioning** in the colonial-era complex

- North Block and South Block were constructed during **British rule** and served as the nerve centre of India's governance

- Since **Independence in 1947**, the Prime Minister's Office operated from South Block

- Successive Cabinets under **16 Prime Ministers from Jawaharlal Nehru to Narendra Modi** took key policy decisions in South Block

- The final Cabinet meeting in South Block symbolises India's transition from a **colonial administrative legacy to modern governance aligned with Viksit Bharat**

- Seva Teerth and Kartavya Bhavans

- The redesign aims to improve **administrative efficiency, productivity and digital governance**

- Historical Importance of South Block

- South Block witnessed major historical decisions including:

- Policy decisions during **Partition**

- Wartime and national security deliberations

- Decisions during the **Emergency**

- **Economic reforms and liberalisation**

- Landmark reforms approved from South Block include:

- **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)**

- **Swachh Bharat Mission**

- **Digital India**

- **Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

- Major constitutional and security decisions such as the **abrogation of Article 370** and legislation against **triple talaq** were also taken there

- Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum

- North and South Blocks will be integrated into the **Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum**

- The museum will showcase India's **civilisational journey spanning thousands of years**

- It aims to connect:

- Ancient cultural heritage

- Freedom struggle legacy

- Post-independence nation-building

- Modern global aspirations



The Union Cabinet on Friday approved a proposal to convert the historic North and South Blocks into part of the proposed "Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum", marking a major shift in the administrative and symbolic landscape of the national capital.

The decision comes a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the new Prime Minister's Office – now named 'Seva Teerth' – to the nation on February 13, 2025. With the transition, Cabinet meetings will no longer be held in South Block, ending nearly 95 years of continuous administrative use of the iconic colonial-era complex.

President Droupadi Murmu Inaugurates Centenary Celebrations of Ol Chiki Script in New Delhi

- President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the centenary celebrations of the Ol Chiki script in New Delhi.
- The event was organised by the Ministry of Culture to mark 100 years (1925–2025) of the Ol Chiki script
- The Ol Chiki script was invented in 1925 by Pandit Raghunath Murmu for the Santhali language

History and Importance of Ol Chiki Script

- The Ol Chiki script was developed to provide a **standard writing system** for the Santhali language
- Earlier, Santhali was written using **Roman, Devanagari, Oriya and Bengali scripts**, which did not accurately represent its pronunciation
- The invention of Ol Chiki ensured accurate phonetic representation of the Santhali language
- Over the last century, the script has strengthened **Santal cultural identity and language preservation**
- Members of the Santal community in **Nepal, Bhutan and Mauritius** also benefited from a unified script system

About Ol Chiki Script

- Invented in 1925 by **Pandit Raghunath Murmu**, a writer and teacher from Mayurbhanj (now in Odisha)
- Also known as **Ol Cemet', Ol Ciki, Ol, or Santali alphabet**
- Structure: **30 letters**, fully phonetic in nature
- First publicised in **1939** at the Mayurbhanj State exhibition
- Pandit Murmu authored over **150 works** in Santhali using Ol Chiki, including novels, poetry, dramas, grammars and dictionaries

About Santhali Language

- Belongs to the **Munda branch of the Austroasiatic language family**
- Spoken mainly in **Jharkhand and West Bengal**, and also in parts of **Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan**
- Included in the **Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution in 2003**, with Ol Chiki as its official script



President Droupadi Murmu on Monday inaugurated the centenary celebrations of the Ol Chiki script at an event organised by the Ministry of Culture in New Delhi, highlighting its role as a powerful symbol of Santal identity and linguistic pride.

Addressing the gathering, the President said the Santal community possesses a rich language, literature and culture. However, in the absence of its own script, the Santhali language was earlier written in Roman, Devanagari, Oriya and Bengali scripts. Members of the community residing in Nepal, Bhutan and Mauritius also used the scripts prevalent in those countries.

Unique Identification Authority of India Reports 14 Million Downloads of Aadhaar App; Over 1 Million Mobile Updates Completed

- **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** reported nearly **14 million downloads** of the **Aadhaar App**
- The app was dedicated to the nation on **January 28, 2026**
- The app is witnessing an average of **1 lakh downloads per day**
- Over **1 million residents** have updated their mobile numbers using the Aadhaar App
- The adoption reflects rising public trust in **secure, digital and privacy-first Aadhaar services**

UIDAI observes almost 14 million downloads of Aadhaar App

Aadhaar App promotes data minimisation, consent control & selective sharing among many key features

Posted On: 16 FEB 2026 8:23PM by PIB Delhi

The Unique Identification Authority of India is witnessing strong public adoption of the new Aadhaar App, underlining the growing trust of residents in secure, digital, and convenient Aadhaar services.

UIDAI has observed almost 14 million downloads of the new Aadhaar App so far. This achievement highlights the app's role in making Aadhaar more accessible, user-friendly, and instantly available to people across the country.

The Aadhaar App is a next-generation mobile application designed to provide Aadhaar Number Holders (ANH) with a secure, convenient and privacy-first way to carry, share, show and verify their digital identity. It is available in both android and Apple IOS platforms.

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- The Aadhaar App is a next-generation mobile application available on **Android and iOS platforms**
- It is designed to provide **Aadhaar Number Holders (ANH)** with a secure and convenient way to carry and share digital identity
- Key features of the Aadhaar App:
 - **Face verification** for proof of presence
 - **One-click biometric lock/unlock**
 - Viewing authentication history
 - **Quick Response (QR) code-based contact card** for easy sharing
 - **e-Aadhaar download** facility
- The app promotes **data minimization, consent control and selective sharing**, ensuring privacy-first identity management
- Additional update services are planned in future versions
- Real-life use cases supported by the Aadhaar App:
 - Hotel check-ins using **Offline Verification Seeking Entity (OVSE) QR scanning**
 - **Age verification (age gating)**
 - Hospital visitor admissions
 - Event entry validation
 - Verification of gig workers and service partners
- UIDAI is expanding the offline verification ecosystem by registering more entities to enable seamless Aadhaar-based verification
- The Aadhaar App supports the **“One Family – One App”** concept
- It allows management of up to **five Aadhaar profiles on a single device**
- This feature enhances convenience for families, especially elderly citizens and children, by centralising digital identity management
- Rapid adoption highlights UIDAI’s focus on **technology-driven governance**
- Regular updates, enhanced security layers and simplified user interface have contributed to widespread acceptance
- The Aadhaar App strengthens India’s digital infrastructure and supports the broader vision of **Digital India**
- **Aadhaar** is India’s unique digital identity system covering over a billion residents
- It is managed by the **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)**
- Aadhaar serves as a foundational identity for welfare delivery, banking, telecom and digital services
- Over time, Aadhaar has incorporated enhanced security features such as **biometric locking and One Time Password (OTP)-based authentication**
- The Aadhaar App marks a shift towards **mobile-first, privacy-centric identity management**, aligning with India’s push for digital governance and inclusive access

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurates India AI Impact Expo 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **India AI Impact Expo 2026** at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**
- The Expo showcases India’s leadership in **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and commitment to responsible and inclusive innovation
- The Prime Minister described the event as a convergence of **ideas, innovation and intent**
- The Expo highlights India’s AI talent and its vision to shape Artificial Intelligence for **global good**



India AI Impact Summit 2026 Live: AI Impact Summit will be attended by tech leaders from around the world. (Express Photo)

India AI Impact Summit 2026 Live Updates: Day 2 of the AI Impact Summit 2026, hosted by India at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, throws open the doors of the massive AI Impact Expo to the public, with several homegrown startups such as Sarvam AI and IIT Bombay-led BharatGen expected to unveil their sovereign large language models (LLMs) today (February 17).

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- The event brought together policymakers, startups, researchers and global technology leaders
- AI solutions developed in India are expected to contribute to global technological advancement
- The initiative aligns with the vision of **Digital India**, which leverages technology to improve governance, healthcare, education, agriculture and financial inclusion
- Hosting the Expo positions India as a **responsible Artificial Intelligence innovator in the global technology ecosystem**
- Artificial Intelligence refers to machines performing tasks that normally require human intelligence such as learning, reasoning and decision-making
- India has expanded its AI ecosystem through government initiatives, startup growth and research institutions
- National Artificial Intelligence strategies aim to integrate AI into governance, healthcare, agriculture and education while ensuring ethical and safe usage
- With a strong Information Technology workforce and innovation-driven policies, India is emerging as a **global Artificial Intelligence hub**

India's Sugar Exports Cross 2.01 Lakh Tonnes in Marketing Year 2025–26; United Arab Emirates Emerges as Top Importer

- **India's sugar exports** have reached **2,01,547 tonnes** till February in the **2025–26 marketing year (October 2025 – September 2026)**, as per data released by the **All India Sugar Trade Association (AISTA)**.



India has exported 2,01,547 tonnes of sugar through February in the current 2025-26 marketing year, with the United Arab Emirates the top destination, the All India Sugar Trade Association (AISTA) said on Monday.

- Total sugar exports till February: **2,01,547 tonnes**
- White sugar exports: **1,63,000 tonnes**
- Refined sugar exports: **37,638 tonnes**
- Marketing year: **October to September**
- Sugar exports regulated under **Government quota control system**
- India's sugar exports are managed through a **quota-based allocation system**, distributed proportionally among sugar mills to ensure **balanced domestic supply** while promoting exports.
- The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has emerged as the largest destination for Indian sugar exports during the current marketing year.
- Major export destinations:
 - **United Arab Emirates – 47,006 tonnes**
 - **Afghanistan – 46,163 tonnes**
 - **Djibouti – 30,147 tonnes**
 - **Bhutan – 20,017 tonnes**
- Strong demand from **West Asia and neighbouring countries** has supported India's foreign exchange earnings and strengthened its position in the global sugar market.
- The **Central Government** has approved total sugar exports of **2 million tonnes** for the 2025–26 marketing year.
- Break-up of approved exports:
 - Initial quota: **1.5 million tonnes**
 - Additional approval: **5 lakh tonnes**
 - Additional quota **cannot be swapped between mills**
 - Allocation made on **pro-rata basis**

- According to **Praful Vithalani, Chairman of AISTA**, the two-tier quota system aims to reduce premium trading and ensure that genuine exporting mills benefit without paying additional charges.
- India's sugar production is projected to increase by **13 per cent** to **29.6 million tonnes** in the 2025–26 marketing year, excluding diversion for ethanol production.

About All India Sugar Trade Association (AISTA):

- Full Form: **All India Sugar Trade Association**
- Established on **January 17, 2016**
- Formed to unify India's fragmented sugar industry
- Represents traders, millers, refiners, bulk consumers, trade houses, service providers, farmers and food processors
- Acts as the collective voice of India's sugar economy
- Focused on industry collaboration, progress and shared growth

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Reunion Island's Piton de la Fournaise Volcano Erupts Again in 2026

- **Piton de la Fournaise** volcano on **Reunion Island** erupted for the **second time in 2026**, marking a period of **renewed activity**.
- The volcano is located at the **east-southeastern end of La Réunion**, a **French island** in the western **Indian Ocean**.
- This is the **second eruption within a month**, following an eruption on **January 18, 2026**, after **two years of inactivity**, which lasted about **48 hours**.
- **Piton de la Fournaise** is a massive **basaltic shield volcano**, built on the flank of the older **Piton des Neiges** volcano.
- It is one of the **most active volcanoes** in the world, currently in a phase of **frequent but short-lived eruptions** producing **lava fountains** and extensive **lava flows**.
- The volcano is around **500,000 years old** and has been listed as a **UNESCO World Heritage natural site** since **2010**.
- **Shield volcanoes**, like Piton de la Fournaise, are the **largest volcanoes on Earth** and have **broad, gentle slopes**, unlike conical composite volcanoes.
- They primarily erupt **basaltic lava**, which has **low viscosity**, allowing lava to flow over **large distances**.
- **Shield volcanoes** are formed by **repeated intermittent eruptions** over vast periods; famous examples include **Hawaiian volcanoes**.



Smoke and lava erupting and flowing from the Piton de la Fournaise volcano, on the southeast of the French overseas island of La Réunion on February 12. The Piton de la Fournaise volcano on Réunion Island erupted for the second time this year on February 12 and is one of the most active volcanoes in the world. AP

Australia Allocates US\$2.8 Billion for Nuclear Submarine Facility under AUKUS Pact

- **Australia** announced an initial investment of **US\$2.8 billion (AU\$3.9 billion)** to build a new facility for **nuclear-powered submarines** under the **AUKUS security pact**.
- The **AUKUS partnership** involves **Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States**, focusing on **advanced defence and technology cooperation**.
- The facility in **Osborne, near Adelaide**, will support **construction and maintenance** of **US-designed nuclear submarines**, enhancing Australia's naval capabilities.

- **Deliveries** of the submarines are expected to begin **around 2032**, strengthening Australia's **long-range strike capacity** in the **Indo-Pacific region**.
- Prime Minister **Anthony Albanese** described the initial investment as a **"down payment"** on the facility.
- **Long-term projections** estimate **AU\$30 billion** to be spent on the **submarine construction facility**.
- The **AUKUS pact**, announced in **2021**, is Australia's **largest-ever defence investment** aimed at countering **China's growing influence** in the Indo-Pacific.
- From **2027**, **US-commanded Virginia-class submarines** will be based in Australia, with several **Virginia submarines sold to Canberra** around **2030**.
- The **defence deal** includes **technology transfer** for Australia to build its own **nuclear submarines** in the future.
- The **Osborne submarine construction yard** will generate almost **10,000 jobs** in design and construction and train up to **1,000 apprentices per year**.
- In **September, 2025** Australia unveiled **US\$8 billion** to upgrade shipyard facilities in **Perth**, transforming it into a **maintenance center** for the future fleet of nuclear-powered submarines.

Australia Unveils Initial \$2.8 Billion for New N-Subs Facility

Canberra: Australia on Sunday unveiled AU\$3.9 billion (US\$2.8 billion) in funding as a "down payment" on a new facility to build nuclear-powered submarines under the trilateral AUKUS security pact with Britain and the United States.

The AUKUS agreement aims to equip Australia with a fleet of advanced US-designed submarines and expand cooperation on a range of defence technologies.

The submarines — with deliveries set to begin in 2032 — are central to Canberra's strategy to strengthen long-range strike capabilities in the Indo-Pacific, particularly amid concerns over China's military rise. The programme could cost Australia up to US\$235 billion over the next three decades and includes technology transfers enabling the country to eventually build its own vessels. AP



About Australia :

- Prime Minister : Anthony Albanese
- Capital : Canberra
- Currency : Australian dollar (\$)

du, Datawave Networks Join Hands to Deploy Singapore-India-Gulf Submarine Cable System in UAE

- Dubai-based telecom **du** signed a **strategic partnership** with Cyprus-based **Datawave Networks Limited** to invest in the **Singapore-India-Gulf (SING)** submarine cable system.
- The project creates a next-generation **undersea fiber-optic corridor** connecting the **Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia**.
- The initiative aims to position the **UAE** as a **global hub for data, cloud computing, and Artificial Intelligence (AI)** by providing **high-capacity, low-latency** connectivity.
- The **SING Cable System** will connect **Kalba (UAE), Muscat (Oman), Mumbai (Maharashtra), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Kedah (Malaysia), and Singapore**.
- The cable will feature **16 fibre pairs** with a minimum design capacity of **18 Terabits per second (Tbps)** per fiber pair, supporting **AI, cloud, hyperscale data centres, streaming, and e-commerce**.
- **SubCom**, owned by **Cerberus Capital Management (USA)**, will handle the **design, manufacture, and deployment** of the cable system.
- The system enhances **resilience** by **reducing Red Sea dependency**, diversifying routes, and mitigating risks to **digital trade**.
- **du** will host the cable at its **landing station in Kalba**, further strengthening the **UAE's data hub role**.



- **Datawave** signed a **financing agreement** with **Cerberus affiliates** in January 2026, and the cable is targeted to be **Ready for Service (RFS)** by 2030.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Barbados Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley Wins Third Straight Term in Office

- **Mia Amor Mottley** has been re-elected as **Prime Minister of Barbados** for the **third consecutive term** after the **2026 general election**.
- The ruling **Barbados Labour Party (BLP)** achieved a **historic clean sweep**, winning **all 30 seats** in the **House of Assembly**, leaving no opposition representation.
- In terms of **vote share**, the **BLP** secured about **69.83%** of the total votes polled, while the **Democratic Labour Party (DLP)** received around **27.31%**.
- **PM Mia Amor Mottley** defeated opposition leader **Ralph Thorne**, with the **DLP** failing to win even a **single seat** in the election.



About Barbados :

- Capital : **Bridgetown**.
- Currency : **Barbadian Dollar (BBD)**.

DEFENCE NEWS

United States Conducts First Airlift of Micro Nuclear Reactor Demonstrating Rapid Deployment Capability

- The **United States (US)** conducted its **first-ever air transport** of a **micro nuclear reactor** aboard a **military cargo aircraft**, demonstrating **rapid nuclear deployment capability**.
- The **Departments of Energy and Defense** jointly transported a **Ward microreactor** developed by **Valar Atomics** from California to **Hill Air Force Base, Utah** aboard a **C-17 aircraft**; the reactor was flown **without nuclear fuel**.
- The demonstration signals the US's intent to expand **advanced nuclear energy** for both **military and civilian applications** amid rising energy demands and **strategic competition**.
- The **Trump administration** views **small nuclear reactors** as critical for **boosting domestic energy production** and supporting **national security needs**.
- **Executive orders** were issued to **accelerate nuclear deployment** to meet growing demands from **defense infrastructure** and **artificial intelligence (AI)** sectors.
- The **Energy Department** has awarded **grants** to support **small modular reactor (SMR)** and **microreactor technologies**.
- The **Ward microreactor**, slightly larger than a **minivan**, can generate up to **5 megawatts (MW)** of electricity, enough to power around **5,000 homes** at full capacity.
- The reactor is scheduled to begin operations in **July** at **100 kilowatts**, gradually scaling to **250 kilowatts** this year before reaching **full output**.
- **Valar Atomics** aims for **limited commercial power sales** by **2027** and **full commercialization** by **2028**.
- **Reactor fuel** will be transported **separately** from the **Nevada National Security Site** to a designated facility in **Utah**.



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

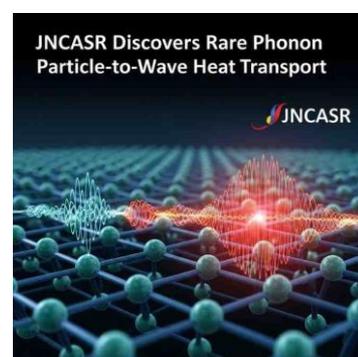
GalaxEye Ties Up with NewSpace India Limited to Market Satellite Imagery Services

- **GalaxEye**, a leading Indian **space-tech startup**, signed a **Data Reseller Partnership Agreement (MoU)** with **NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)**.
- **NSIL** is the **commercial arm** of the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, responsible for the commercialisation of Indian space products and services.
- Following the agreement, **GalaxEye** became the **first private Indian satellite operator** to formally collaborate with NSIL for **reselling Earth Observation data**.
- Under the MoU, **NSIL** will resell GalaxEye's **entire satellite imagery portfolio** in both **domestic and global markets**.
- The portfolio includes '**SyncFused OptoSAR**' imagery products, which deliver **high-precision Earth observation insights**.
- Key **application sectors** of GalaxEye data include **agriculture, disaster management, natural resource and inventory management, infrastructure planning, and environmental monitoring**.
- **GalaxEye** is an **Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M)**, Tamil Nadu-incubated space-tech startup.
- The company specialises in building **advanced satellite payloads** such as **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)**, a space-based imaging radar capable of **all-weather observation**.
- The collaboration promotes **Opto-SAR products** and services at a **global level**, strengthening **India's space exports**.
- The agreement reflects the **Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative** by promoting Indian space products internationally.
- The agreement will help **expand advanced Earth observation capabilities** to a wider user base while supporting India's **strategic and developmental priorities**.
- **CMD of NSIL : M Mohan**
- **Co-founder & CEO of GalaxEye Space : Suyash Singh**



Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research Bengaluru Scientists Uncover Unusual Heat Transport Mechanism in Solids

- Researchers at **Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR)**, Bengaluru, discovered an **unusual mechanism of heat transport** in solids, challenging conventional understanding.
- The study revealed a **rare particle-to-wave crossover** in **phonon behaviour** within a **crystalline material** exhibiting **local disorder**.
- Findings were published in **Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)** and have implications for **next-generation thermoelectrics** and **thermal management technologies**.
- Traditionally, heat in solids is carried by **phonons** behaving as **particle-like entities**, forming the classical "**phonon gas**" model.
- The new research demonstrates a **wave-like coherence regime** in heat transport, showing a **breakdown of the classical phonon gas model**.
- The team studied **Tl₂AgI₃**, a **zero-dimensional inorganic metal halide** with discrete cluster-like units and very low **lattice thermal conductivity (~0.18 W/m·K)**.



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- **Thermal conductivity** becomes nearly **temperature-independent** above **125 K**, with **wave-like phonon transport** dominating around **175 K**.
- **Local structural distortions** caused by strong **cation–cation repulsion** (based on **Pauling’s third rule**) induce **extreme lattice anharmonicity**, shortening the **phonon mean free path**.
- The heat transport transitions from **particle-based scattering** to **wave-like coherence and tunnelling** between **localized vibrational states**.
- **Advanced tools** used include **synchrotron X-ray pair distribution function analysis**, **Raman spectroscopy**, **low-temperature thermal transport measurements**, and **first-principles calculations**.
- Analysis employed a **linearised Wigner transport equation** to separate **particle-like and wave-like contributions**, confirming the **coherence-driven transport regime**.
- **Tl₂AgI₃** behaves like a **crystal and glass simultaneously**, conducting heat in a **glass-like manner** while retaining **long-range order**.
- The research proposes **engineering local lattice instability** to induce **phonon localisation and coherence**, paving the way for **advanced thermoelectric materials** and **efficient thermal management systems**.
- The study highlights **India’s growing contribution to fundamental materials research**.

APPS & PORTALS

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Launches Upgraded DND and MySpeed Apps to Fight Spam and Monitor Network Quality

- The **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** launched **revamped versions** of its citizen-centric mobile apps — **TRAI DND** and **TRAI MySpeed** — to help consumers **curb spam** and assess **telecom service quality**.
- India’s telecom sector serves over **1.31 billion subscribers**, including more than **1 billion broadband users**, yet only a **small fraction** of spam incidents are formally reported.
- The upgraded **TRAI DND app** features a **multilingual interface**, simplified **spam complaint filing**, complaint tracking via **reference ID**, a **“Know Your Sender”** feature, **dual-SIM support**, and enhanced **DND preference management**.
- The revamped **TRAI MySpeed app** allows users to measure **download/upload speeds, latency, jitter, and packet loss**, along with **video streaming and web browsing tests** to evaluate real-world network performance.
- **TRAI DND app** enhancements include a **simplified and feature-rich home screen**, fewer steps for **complaint registration**, and integration with all **Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) via APIs** to ensure timely regulatory compliance.
- In **2025**, over **17 lakh spam complaints** were registered through the DND app, helping **regulatory scrutiny** and action against **unregistered telemarketers** and repeat offenders.
- **TRAI** encourages consumers to download and actively use the **DND app** to report **spam calls and SMS**, strengthening **enforcement mechanisms** nationwide.
- **TRAI MySpeed app** enables consumers to assess service provider networks under **real-world conditions**, including **continuous and scheduled tests** and **location-based historical performance** through **interactive geospatial maps**.

TRAI Revamps DND and MySpeed Apps to Curb Spam and Check Real-time Network Performance

Expanded multilingual access, simplified reporting and real-world testing features reinforce inclusive, data-driven insights

Posted On: 13 FEB 2026 4:35PM by PIB Delhi

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) today announced revamped versions of its citizen-centric mobile apps - TRAI DND and TRAI MySpeed - aimed at enabling consumers to actively curb spam communications and know service provider's performance and submit feedback.

India's telecom sector today serves over 1.31 billion subscribers, including more than 1 billion broadband users. Despite billions of legitimate voice calls and SMS transactions every day, only a small fraction of spam incidents is formally reported. Through these revamped platforms, TRAI has improved the technological tools that simplify reporting process and contribute to quality of service, in time further empowering citizen.

TRAI DND App

A key highlight of the enhancement is the expanded multilingual interface of the TRAI DND application, widening access across India's diverse linguistic landscape and encouraging greater participation in spam reporting.

The revamped DND app offers:

- **Simplified and feature-rich home screen** to enable ease of spam reporting and complaint tracking
- **Complaint registration in fewer steps** with tracking through a **complaint reference ID**
- **Know Your Sender** feature to know about registered handlers and designated 1000 number series
- **Improved interface for DND preference management** for continuous tracking of promotional communications

- The app allows **video streaming and web browsing tests** and provides a **structured feedback loop** to improve **network reliability** and enhance the mobile connectivity experience.
- **Data collected** via MySpeed tests is **anonymised and analysed** by TRAI to support **regulatory oversight** and **data-driven network monitoring**.
- **TRAI** is an **independent statutory body** established under the **TRAI Act, 1997**, regulating **telecommunications, broadcasting, and cable TV services**, ensuring fair rules, transparent practices, and better **quality of service**.

SPORTS NEWS

Magnus Carlsen Wins 2026 FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship; Claims 21st World Title

- **Magnus Carlsen** won the **2026 FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship**
- He defeated **Fabiano Caruana** in the final with a score of **2.5–1.5**
- The final was held in **Weissenhaus, Germany**
- A draw in the fourth and final game was sufficient for Carlsen to seal the title
- The victory marks his **21st world title across formats**
- It is his **first official Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE)-recognized title in the Freestyle (Chess960) format**

About Freestyle (Chess960) Chess

- Also known as **Chess960** or **Fischer Random**
- The starting positions of pieces on the back rank are randomized
- Reduces reliance on deep opening preparation
- Carlsen had previously fallen short in the FIDE Fischer Random format but secured the official Freestyle title in 2026



Magnus Carlsen with the trophy, alongside Fabiano Caruana (left) and Nodirbek Abdusattorov. (Photo: Lennart Osofski/Freestyle Chess.)

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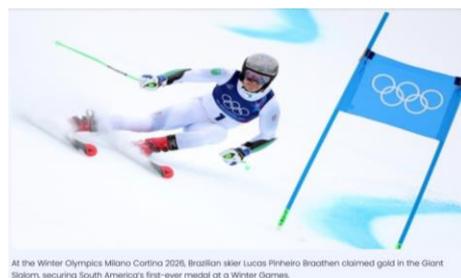
On a dramatic day in the seaside German town of Weissenhaus, **Magnus Carlsen** won the FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship—his 21st World Championship title—after defeating Fabiano Caruana in a four-game finale late on Sunday. Carlsen has five classical World Championships besides six World Rapid Championships and nine World Blitz Championships. Now **Carlsen adds a world title in the one format that was missing.**

Other Key Results

- **Nodirbek Abdusattorov** defeated **Vincent Keymer** to secure third place and qualify for 2027
- **Hans Niemann** claimed fifth place with a 2–0 win over **Arjun Erigaisi**
- **Levon Aronian** won the Armageddon game against **Javokhir Sindarov** to take seventh place
- In the women's exhibition match, **Bibisara Assaubayeva** defeated **Alexandra Kosteniuk**
- Both Carlsen and Caruana qualified for the **2027 FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship**

Lucas Pinheiro Braathen Wins Giant Slalom Gold; Brazil Secures First-Ever Winter Olympics Medal at Milano Cortina 2026

- **Lucas Pinheiro Braathen** won **gold** in the **giant slalom** event at the **Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics**
- The victory marks **Brazil's first-ever medal in Winter Olympics history**
- Brazil becomes the **first South American nation** to win a medal at the Winter Olympic Games
- The 25-year-old skier delivered a strong performance on the **Stelvio course** under challenging snow and fog conditions



At the Winter Olympics Milano Cortina 2026, Brazilian skier Lucas Pinheiro Braathen claimed gold in the Giant Slalom, securing South America's first-ever medal at a Winter Games.

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- He clocked a combined time of **2 minutes 25 seconds**
- He defeated Switzerland's defending champion **Marco Odermatt** by **0.58 seconds**
- **About Giant Slalom**
- Giant slalom is a discipline of **alpine skiing**
- Athletes race down a course marked by widely spaced gates
- The event requires **high-speed technical turns**
- Emphasis on **precision and control**
- Final results are based on the combined time of **two timed runs**

Medal Standings – Winter Olympics 2026

- **Norway – 20 medals (10 gold medals)**
- **Italy – 18 medals**
- **United States – 17 medals**
- Norway leads the overall medal tally

India's Participation

- **Arif Mohammad Khan** is set to compete in the **alpine skiing slalom event**
- Cross-country skier **Stanzin Lundup** finished **104th in the men's 10 kilometre race**
- India has not yet won a medal at the Winter Olympic Games but continues to expand its participation
- The historic gold by Lucas Pinheiro Braathen represents a breakthrough moment for Brazil and South America in winter sports, while Norway continues to dominate the medal standings at Milano Cortina 2026.

Johannes Klaebo Wins Record 9th Winter Olympic Medal as Norway Secures Gold in Men's 4×7.5km Relay at Milano Cortina 2026

- **Johannes Klaebo** won his **ninth Winter Olympic medal** at the **Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics**
- He achieved the milestone after Norway secured gold in the **men's 4×7.5 kilometre relay**.
- With this victory, he became the **most decorated athlete in Winter Olympic history**
- The 29-year-old Norwegian star has already won **four gold medals at Milano Cortina 2026**
- His ninth medal marks a major milestone for both Klaebo and **Norway** in cross-country skiing
- The Norwegian team comprised **Johannes Klaebo, Emil Iversen, Martin Loewstroem Nyenget and Einar Hedegart**
- Norway finished the race in **1 hour, 4 minutes and 24.5 seconds**
- Norway finished **22.2 seconds ahead of France**, which won silver
- **Italy** secured bronze, finishing **47.9 seconds behind Norway**
- The event was held in **Tesero, Italy**
- The victory was significant as Norway had won **silver in the relay at the Beijing Winter Olympics**
- Klaebo described the win as the "perfect way" to break the Olympic record and celebrate with his team



Johannes Klaebo, of Norway, competes in the cross country skiing men's 4 x 7.5km relay at the 2026 Winter Olympics, in Tesero, Italy | Photo: AP/Matthias Schrader

Rashid Khan Becomes First Bowler to Reach 700 T20 Wickets During ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026

- Afghanistan spinner **Rashid Khan** became the **first bowler in history** to take **700 T20 wickets**

- He achieved the milestone during the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026** match against **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** in **Delhi**
- He reached the landmark by dismissing **Muhammad Arfan**
- He had earlier surpassed **Dwayne Bravo (631 wickets)** in February 2025 to become the leading wicket-taker in T20 cricket
- Rashid Khan reached 700 wickets in **518 matches**
- He has dismissed **432 different batters**, the highest in T20 history
- The achievement establishes a new global benchmark in **Twenty20 (T20) cricket**
- International and T20 International Records
- **191 T20 International (T20I) wickets** – highest in T20I history
- 130 international batters among his total 432 dismissals
- Closing in on the **200 T20I wickets milestone**
- **11 four-wicket hauls in T20Is** – record
- **22 four-wicket hauls in overall T20s** – most in history
- Hat-tricks and Unique Bowling Records
- **4 T20 hat-tricks** across different competitions:
 - Caribbean Premier League (CPL)
 - Big Bash League (BBL)
 - Indian Premier League (IPL)
 - T20 International
- **145 wickets as captain** – second-highest in T20 history
- **379 wickets bowled or Leg Before Wicket (LBW)** – 54% of total career wickets
- **225 bowled dismissals** – most in T20 history
- **154 LBW dismissals** – highest in T20 cricket
- Dominance Across Countries and Leagues
- 181 wickets in **India**
- 131 wickets in **United Arab Emirates**
- 102 wickets in **Australia**
- **406 wickets in Asia** – record
- **442 franchise wickets** – third-highest overall
- He has taken 50 or more wickets for four teams:
 - 195 for **Afghanistan**
 - 98 for **Adelaide Strikers**
 - 93 for **Sunrisers Hyderabad**
 - 65 for **Gujarat Titans**
- Milestone Progression in T20 Cricket
 - 50 wickets – **Nayan Doshi** (29 matches)
 - 100 wickets – **Dirk Nannes** (70 matches)
 - 200 wickets – **Dirk Nannes** (166 matches)
 - 250 wickets – **Lasith Malinga** (187 matches)
 - 300 wickets – **Dwayne Bravo** (292 matches)
 - 400 wickets – **Dwayne Bravo** (365 matches)
 - 500 wickets – **Dwayne Bravo** (459 matches)
 - 600 wickets – **Dwayne Bravo** (545 matches)
 - 700 wickets – **Rashid Khan** (518 matches)



an during a practice session on the eve of ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, cricket match between Afghanistan and they Stadium in New Delhi on February 15, 2026. | Photo Credit: Shiv Kumar Pushpakar
 Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan became the first player to achieve 700 T20 wickets during Afghanistan's group-stage match against the United Arab Emirates (UAE), being played at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi on Monday (February 16, 2026).

Daily CA One- Liner: February 18

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- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, approved the construction of a **4-lane access-controlled greenfield corridor** in **Assam**
- **India** will establish its first-ever **National Cow Culture Museum** in **Mathura, Uttar Pradesh**
- The **Union Cabinet** approved the conversion of **North Block and South Block** into the **‘Yuge Yugeen Bharat’ National Museum**
- **President Droupadi Murmu** inaugurated the **centenary celebrations of the OI Chiki script** in **New Delhi**
- **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** reported nearly **14 million downloads** of the **Aadhaar App**
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **India AI Impact Expo 2026** at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**
- **India’s sugar exports** have reached **2,01,547 tonnes** till February in the **2025–26 marketing year (October 2025 – September 2026)**, as per data released by the **All India Sugar Trade Association**
- **Magnus Carlsen** won the **2026 FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship**
- **Lucas Pinheiro Braathen** won **gold** in the **giant slalom** event at the **Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics**
- **Johannes Klaebo** won his **ninth Winter Olympic medal** at the **Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics**
- **Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan** became the **first bowler in history** to take **700 T20 wickets**
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has **restored the use of Default Loss Guarantees (DLGs)** for **Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs)**, reversing the stricter provisioning norms imposed in **May 2025**.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has allowed **bank loans** to the **National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)** for **on-lending** to cooperative societies to be classified as **Priority Sector Lending (PSL)** from **January 19, 2026**.
- **DBS Bank Limited**, Southeast Asia’s largest lender, entered into a **strategic partnership** with **Visa** to drive the future of **agent-initiated payments** under a joint pilot of **Visa Intelligent Commerce (VIC)**.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed **monetary penalties** totaling **Rs 1.35 crore** on **5 financial institutions (FIs)**, including **3 banks—CSB Bank Limited, Bank of Maharashtra (BoM), DCB Bank Limited—and 2 Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)—IIFL Finance Limited and Navi Finserv Limited**.
- **Union Minister Amit Shah**, Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) and Ministry of Cooperation (MoC), launched **India’s first Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)-based Digital Food Currency pilot** under the **Public Distribution System (PDS)** in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.
- **Piton de la Fournaise** volcano on **Reunion Island** erupted for the **second time in 2026**, marking a period of **renewed activity**.
- **Australia** announced an initial investment of **US\$2.8 billion (AU\$3.9 billion)** to build a new facility for **nuclear-powered submarines** under the **AUKUS security pact**.
- Dubai-based telecom **du** signed a **strategic partnership** with Cyprus-based **Datawave Networks Limited** to invest in the **Singapore-India-Gulf (SING)** submarine cable system.
- **Mia Amor Mottley** has been re-elected as **Prime Minister of Barbados** for the **third consecutive term** after the **2026 general election**.
- The **United States (US)** conducted its **first-ever air transport** of a **micro nuclear reactor** aboard a **military cargo aircraft**, demonstrating **rapid nuclear deployment capability**.

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- **GalaxEye**, a leading Indian **space-tech startup**, signed a **Data Reseller Partnership Agreement (MoU)** with **NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)**.
- Researchers at **Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR)**, Bengaluru, discovered an **unusual mechanism of heat transport** in solids, challenging conventional understanding.
- The **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** launched **revamped versions** of its citizen-centric mobile apps — **TRAI DND** and **TRAI MySpeed** — to help consumers **curb spam** and assess **telecom service quality**.

