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BANKING, FINANCE & BUSINESS

Reserve Bank of India proposes mandatory reporting of OTC forex and interest rate derivatives by AD Cat-I banks

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has proposed **mandatory reporting** of **Over-the-Counter (OTC)** foreign exchange and interest rate derivative contracts by **Authorised Dealer Category-I (AD Cat-I) banks**.
- The reporting requirement covers transactions done **directly or via overseas related parties**, including **parent companies, subsidiaries, and entities under common control**, while **associate companies are excluded**.

OTC Fx derivatives contracts reporting may be mandatory

FE BUREAU
Mumbai, February 16

THE RESERVE BANK of India (RBI) on Monday released draft regulations regarding reporting instructions for authorised dealer category-1 banks.

Under the proposed guidelines, those banks are required to report over-the-counter (OTC) foreign exchange derivative contracts and foreign currency interest rate derivative contracts, undertaken by them directly or through their overseas entities, to the trade repository of Clearing Corporation of India.

"There is, however, an element of non-transparency because the sizeable number of offshore rupee derivative transactions are not reported and therefore, not available to market participants...Carrying this process of enhancing transparency of rupee derivative markets, it is now proposed that all authorised dealer category – I banks shall report foreign exchange derivative transactions involving rupee undertaken by their related parties globally," the RBI said.

The resultant transparency shall enable better pricing decisions by market participants, it added. OTC deriva- tives refer to those traded outside the stock exchanges, including on electronic trading platforms, according to the draft.

When reporting, banks must include all key transaction details, such as notional value, counterparty name, maturity date, currency, and other specifications, the RBI said. The regulator mandated that transactions should be reported preferably on the transaction date, but no later than two working days after. The RBI has given the option to not to report if the contract's notional value is $1 million or equivalent.

Key Highlights :

- Banks must report all such trades to the **Clearing Corporation of India Ltd (CCIL) trade repository**, ensuring transparency in **offshore rupee derivative markets**.
- Transactions must be reported on the **trade date or within two working days**; contracts with a **notional value of $1 million or less** may be exempt from reporting.
- The **RBI** has proposed a **phased implementation**:
- **Within 12 months**: At least **70%** of the notional value must be reported.
- **After 18 months**: Threshold rises to **80%**.
- **After 24 months**: Threshold reaches **90%**.
- The directions apply to all **OTC rupee derivative contracts**, including those traded on **electronic platforms**, but **exclude exchange-traded derivatives**.
- **Back-to-back transactions** and trades between **related parties and other AD Cat-I banks in India** are **exempted** from reporting.
- Reported transaction details must include **notional value, counterparty name, maturity, currency**, and other specifications, with reporting formats prescribed by **CCIL** and approved by **RBI**.
- The proposed framework extends existing reporting norms under the **Master Direction on Risk Management** and **Master Direction on Rupee Interest Rate Derivatives (2025)** to include global rupee-linked OTC derivatives by **offshore related parties**.
- The initiative aims to improve **transparency, risk monitoring, and regulatory oversight** in offshore rupee derivative markets where many transactions currently remain **unreported**.

Recent News :

- In Jan 2026, The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued the **Priority Sector Lending** (**PSL**) **(Targets and Classification) Amendment Directions, 2026**, to align the **Priority Sector Lending (PSL)** framework with updated capital adequacy, credit risk transfer, securitisation, and regulatory norms notified in 2025.

National Stock Exchange Gets Securities and Exchange Board of India Nod to Introduce Indian Natural Gas Futures

- The **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** has received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to launch **Indian Natural Gas futures**.
- The move aims to enable **market-based price discovery** and improve the **availability** of natural gas in India.
- The **NSE Indian Natural Gas futures** will be **monthly contracts**, with up to **12 contracts** available for trading at any point.
- **NSE** is collaborating with the **Indian Gas Exchange (IGX)** to leverage **IGX's gas trading infrastructure** for futures development.
- **Natural gas futures** will benefit **gas producers**, **city gas distributors**, **power generators**, **fertiliser manufacturers**, industrial consumers, traders, and financial participants.
- The contracts provide a **transparent, efficient, and robust risk management tool** aligned with India's evolving **natural gas pricing framework**.
- **Futures** will enable **effective hedging** against **price volatility** and support **long-term planning** for market participants.
- The launch reinforces **India's strategy** to develop a **market-based mechanism** for natural gas pricing and availability.

About SEBI :
- Established : 12 April 1988 as an executive body and was given statutory powers on 30 January 1992 through the SEBI Act, 1992
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Chairman : Tuhin Kanta Pandey
- SEBI is the regulatory body for securities and commodity markets in India under the ownership of the Ministry of Finance (MoF), GoI.

Reserve Bank of India revises External Commercial Borrowings rules, allows companies to raise up to $1 billion

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** released the **final guidelines** on **External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs)**, aiming to **rationalise fundraising** through the route.
- Under the new guidelines, companies can raise **ECBs up to $1 billion or 300% of net worth**, whichever is higher, compared to the previous **$750-million annual cap**.
- **Eligible borrowers** must raise ECBs with a **minimum average maturity of three years**.
- **Manufacturing sector borrowers** can raise ECBs with a **1–3 year average maturity**, provided the outstanding amount does not exceed **$150 million**.
- The **cost of borrowing** through ECBs should be **market-determined**, with **fixed-rate loans** linked to **floating rate plus spread** capped at the ceiling.

- **RBI expanded the borrower and lender base**, allowing any entity, including **firms under restructuring or investigation**, to raise funds through ECBs.
- **Proceeds of ECBs** can be utilised in **deposits or other debt instruments** with maturity **up to one year**.
- **End-use restrictions** apply: ECB funds **cannot be used** for **chit funds, Nidhi companies, real estate, construction of farmhouses, or stock market investments**.
- The guidelines aim to **simplify reporting**, **rationalise borrowing limits**, and **remove restrictions on cost of borrowing**, promoting **greater flexibility** in overseas fundraising.

Recent News :

- In Jan 2026, **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** mandated banks and eligible **non-banking financial companies (NBFCs)** to implement a **fully automated Complaint Management System (CMS)** with direct access for the **Internal Ombudsman (IO)** and **Deputy IO (DIO)**.

India's Wholesale Price Index inflation climbs to 1.81% in January 2026, marking a 10-month high

- **India's Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation** rose to a **10-month high of 1.81% (YoY)** in **January 2026**, up from **0.83% in December 2025**.
- The **rise in WPI** was driven by higher **prices of basic metals, manufactured goods, food items, textiles, and non-food articles**.

Index Numbers of Wholesale Price in India for the Month of January, 2026 (Base Year: 2011-12)

- **DPIIT** releases the **index number of wholesale prices in India** on a **monthly basis** on **14th of every month** (or next working day if 14th is a holiday), with a **time lag of two weeks** of the reference month.
- In the **WPI basket**, **Manufactured Products** carry the **highest weight (64.23%)**, followed by **Primary Articles (22.62%)** and **Fuel & Power (13.15%)**.

16th Finance Commission boosts Urban Local Government grants by 230% to ₹3.56 trillion

- The **16th Finance Commission (2025–30)** has increased **grants to Urban Local Governments (ULGs)** by **230%**, allocating **₹3.56 trillion**, up from ₹1.55 trillion under the 15th FC.

Urban local govts see a 230% rise in grant allocations

- The share of grants to **ULGs** has risen to a **record 45%**, compared to 36% in the previous Finance Commission period.
- The **16th Finance Commission** has retained **41% vertical devolution** while introducing **GDP contribution** as a new criterion for horizontal distribution.

- The **Finance Commission** is a **constitutional body** under **Article 280** that strengthens India's **fiscal federalism**.
- The **Finance Commission** is constituted by the **President of India** every **five years**.
- **Shri Arvind Panagariya**, former Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog, is the **Chairman** of the **16th Finance Commission**.

NATIONAL AND STATE NEWS

India's Unemployment Rate Rises to 5% in January 2026 – Periodic Labour Force Survey

- India's **unemployment rate** increased to **5% in January 2026**, marking a **three-month high**, as per the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** released by the **National Statistics Office (NSO)**.
- The data is based on the **Current Weekly Status (CWS)** methodology.
- **Urban unemployment rate: 7%** (increased from **6.7% in December 2025**).
- **Rural unemployment rate: 4.2%**, reflecting a three-month high.

India's unemployment rate rose slightly to 5% in January 2026, up from 4.8% in December, according to government survey data.

- The rise indicates **seasonal weakness in rural labour markets** and a **post-harvest slowdown**.
- Labour force participation rate also softened, indicating fewer individuals actively seeking work.
- The increase in rural unemployment is attributed to:
  – **Post-harvest slowdown** reducing agricultural activities
  – **Seasonal decline in temporary farm jobs**
  – Temporary exit of individuals from the labour force
- Under **Current Weekly Status (CWS):**
  – A person is considered employed if he/she worked for **at least one hour in the previous seven days**.
  – A person is classified as unemployed if he/she **did not work even one hour but was available or seeking work** during that week.
- The 5% unemployment rate remains moderate by global standards but signals:
  – **Short-term rural job contraction**
  – Mild pressure in **urban job markets**
  – Need for continued **employment generation measures**
- The **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** was introduced in **2017**, replacing earlier quinquennial employment surveys.
- PLFS provides:
  – **Monthly estimates for urban areas**
  – **Quarterly rural-urban combined data**
  – Annual employment and unemployment estimates

About National Statistics Office (NSO):

- Established in **2019**
- Created by merging:
  - **Central Statistics Office (CSO)**
  - **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)**
- Headquarters: New Delhi, India
- Under: **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**
- **Key Publications:**
- National Accounts Statistics
- Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)
- Consumer Price Index (CPI) Reports
- Annual Survey of Industries (ASI)

Union Health Minister Launches SAHI and BODH at India Artificial Intelligence Summit 2026

- Union Health Minister **Jagat Prakash Nadda** will launch **SAHI** and **BODH** at the **India Artificial Intelligence Summit 2026** held at **Bharat Mandapam**.
- The initiatives aim to strengthen **Artificial Intelligence adoption in India's healthcare sector** and build a **safe, ethical and globally competitive Health Artificial Intelligence ecosystem**.
- The launch aligns with India's broader **digital health vision under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission**.
- **SAHI (Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for India)** is a national guidance framework for responsible Artificial Intelligence adoption in healthcare.
- SAHI focuses on:
  – Governance and data stewardship
  – Ethical and evidence-based Artificial Intelligence deployment
  – Monitoring and validation mechanisms
  – Alignment with public health priorities
  – Support to States and health institutions for safe implementation
- SAHI aims to ensure **safe, inclusive and transparent Artificial Intelligence integration** while protecting patient rights and ensuring data security.
- **BODH (Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health Artificial Intelligence)** is a privacy-preserving digital platform for evaluating Artificial Intelligence models in healthcare.
- BODH has been developed by the **Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur** in collaboration with the **National Health Authority**.
- BODH enables evaluation of Artificial Intelligence models using **real-world health data without sharing underlying datasets**, thereby ensuring data privacy.
- It functions as a **Digital Public Good under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission**.

- BODH promotes transparency, quality assurance and rigorous testing of Artificial Intelligence tools before deployment.
- The launch of SAHI and BODH signals India's commitment to **innovation-driven yet ethically governed Artificial Intelligence in healthcare**.

India Hosts AI Impact Summit 2026 at Bharat Mandapam

- **India is hosting** the **AI Impact Summit 2026** at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**, marking the first-ever global AI summit held in the **Global South**.
- The five-day summit brings together world leaders, policymakers, industry experts and international organisations to shape the global agenda on **Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance and cooperation**.
- Over **100 countries** have been invited, with ministerial delegations from **45+ nations** participating. Leaders from more than **20 countries** are attending.
- The presence of the **UN Secretary-General** and senior officials from global organisations underlines the summit's international significance.
- The summit strengthens India's position as a bridge between developed and developing nations in digital governance.
- Key global leaders attending include:
  – **Emmanuel Macron** (President, France)
  – **Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva** (President, Brazil)
  – **Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón** (President, Spain)
  – **Guy Parmelin** (President, Switzerland)
  – **Dick Schoof** (Prime Minister, Netherlands)
  – **Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan** (Crown Prince, UAE)
  – **Navinchandra Ramgoolam** (Prime Minister, Mauritius)
  – **Anura Kumara Dissanayake** (President, Sri Lanka)
  – **Sebastien Pillay** (Vice President, Seychelles)
  – **Tshering Tobgay** (Prime Minister, Bhutan)
- The summit is guided by three core pillars known as **"Sutras"**:
  – **People** – Human-centric, ethical and inclusive AI
  – **Planet** – Sustainable and climate-aligned AI systems
  – **Progress** – Innovation-driven and equitable development
- Discussions are organised under seven thematic working groups called **"Chakras"**:
  – Human Capital
  – Inclusion for Social Empowerment
  – Safe and Trusted AI

- Science
- Resilience
- Innovation and Efficiency
- Democratizing AI Resources & AI for Economic Development

- The summit has received over **two lakh online registrations**, reflecting global interest.
- The event highlights India's leadership in **responsible AI development, digital diplomacy, and multilateral cooperation**.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurates Kumar Bhaskar Varma Setu and Northeast's First Emergency Landing Facility in Assam

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated major infrastructure projects in **Assam** worth over **₹5,450 crore**, aimed at boosting connectivity and strategic preparedness in the Northeast.
- The projects include the **Kumar Bhaskar Varma Setu** over the **Brahmaputra River** in Guwahati and the Northeast's first **Highway Emergency Landing Facility (ELF)** in Dibrugarh district.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today inaugurated the Emergency Landing Facility on Moran Bypass, developed along a national highway in Dibrugarh district of Assam.

- **Kumar Bhaskar Varma Setu** is a **2.86 km-long, six-lane extradosed Prestressed Concrete (PSC) bridge** built at a cost of approximately **₹3,030 crore**.
- It connects **Guwahati** with **North Guwahati** and is the **first extradosed bridge in Northeast India**.
- The bridge reduces travel time between the two sides of the city to **seven minutes**.
- It improves access to major landmarks, including the **Kamakhya Temple**.
- Advanced engineering features include:
  - **Base isolation technology** using friction pendulum bearings
  - High-performance stay cables
  - **Bridge Health Monitoring System (BHMS)** for real-time structural monitoring
- The **Northeast's first Highway Emergency Landing Facility (ELF)** was inaugurated on the **Moran Bypass** in **Dibrugarh district**.
- The ELF has been developed in coordination with the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** as a dual-use infrastructure for both military and civilian aircraft during emergencies.
- After inauguration, **Sukhoi Su-30MKI** and **Dassault Rafale** fighter jets conducted successful take-offs and landings on the highway stretch.
- The ELF is a **4.2 km-long reinforced concrete highway stretch** designed to function as an emergency runway.
- It can handle:
  - Fighter aircraft up to **40 tonnes**
  - Transport aircraft up to **74 tonnes maximum take-off weight**

- The stretch has **no central divider**, and fencing along with removal of temporary structures ensures operational readiness.
- Located in **Upper Assam**, near the **India-China border**, the facility strengthens India's strategic and defence preparedness.
- The ELF provides an alternative landing option if **Dibrugarh Airport** or **Chabua Air Force Station** becomes unavailable.

RECENT NEWS

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated major infrastructure projects in Assam, including the Kumar Bhaskar Varma Setu over the Brahmaputra River in Guwahati and the Northeast's first Emergency Landing Facility (ELF) on a national highway in Dibrugarh district.

Union Cabinet Approves ₹10,000 Crore Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0

- The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, approved the **Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 (FoF 2.0)** with a **₹10,000 crore corpus**.
- The scheme aims to mobilise **venture capital** for India's startup ecosystem, particularly in **deep tech, innovative manufacturing, and early-growth sectors**.
- The initiative seeks to strengthen India's **domestic venture capital ecosystem** and accelerate innovation-led economic growth.

The Government on Saturday (February 14, 2026) said it has approved a ₹10,000 crore Fund of Funds to mobile venture capital and support deep tech, tech-driven innovative manufacturing startups, and early-growth stage enterprises.

- Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 is a government-backed initiative that channels capital into startups through **Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs)**.
- The Government does not invest directly in startups; instead, it invests in AIFs, which further invest in startups.
- The model aims to:
  – Expand venture capital availability
  – Crowd in private investment
  – Strengthen domestic venture capital funds
  – Reduce funding gaps in high-risk sectors
- The scheme builds upon the success of the **Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS 1.0)** launched in 2016.
- FoF 2.0 focuses on **Deep Tech and Innovative Manufacturing**, prioritising sectors such as:
  – Artificial Intelligence
  – Robotics
  – Semiconductor design
  – Clean energy
  – Advanced manufacturing
- The scheme provides support for **early-growth stage startups**, addressing funding gaps that often lead to early-stage failure.

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- It promotes venture capital expansion beyond metro cities into **Tier-II and Tier-III cities**, ensuring wider geographic participation.
- Priority sectors linked to **economic resilience and self-reliance** will receive focused capital allocation.
- Since the launch of the **Startup India Initiative (2016)**:
  – Startups have increased from fewer than **500 in 2016**
  – To over **2 lakh Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)-recognised startups**
  – **2025 recorded the highest annual startup registrations**

Cabinet Approves PM RAHAT Scheme to Ensure Cashless Treatment for Road Accident Victims

- The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, approved the launch of **PM RAHAT (Road Accident Victim Hospitalization and Assured Treatment)**.
- The scheme ensures that **no road accident victim is denied life-saving treatment due to lack of money**.
- Under PM RAHAT, eligible victims will receive **cashless treatment up to ₹1.5 lakh per person**.
- Coverage is available for **7 days from the date of accident**.
- The scheme strengthens India's **emergency healthcare system** and promotes timely trauma care.
- India records a high number of road accident fatalities annually, and nearly **50% of deaths can be prevented** if treatment is provided within the **Golden Hour**.
- The scheme ensures:
  – Immediate hospital admission
  – Financial certainty for hospitals
  – Structured emergency coordination
  – Protection for vulnerable citizens
- Key features of PM RAHAT:
  – **₹1.5 lakh cashless treatment per victim**
  – Coverage for **7 days**
  – Stabilization treatment up to **24 hours (non-life-threatening cases)**
  – Stabilization treatment up to **48 hours (life-threatening cases)**
  – Police authentication through digital system
  – Applicable on **any category of road**
- The scheme is integrated with the **Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) 112 helpline**, allowing victims, Good Samaritans (Rah-Veer), or bystanders to dial **112** for ambulance support and nearest designated hospital details.
- PM RAHAT is digitally integrated with:
  – **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Electronic Detailed Accident**

Report (eDAR) platform
– **National Health Authority Transaction Management System (TMS) 2.0**

- This ensures seamless coordination from accident reporting to hospital admission, police authentication, treatment, and payment settlement.
- Reimbursement will be made through the **Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (MVAF)**.
- If the offending vehicle is insured, payment will be made by **General Insurance Companies**.
- In **uninsured or Hit and Run cases**, payment will be made through **Government of India budget allocation**.
- Claims approved by the **State Health Agency** will be settled within **10 days**, ensuring financial certainty for hospitals.
- Grievances will be handled by a **Grievance Redressal Officer** nominated by the **District Road Safety Committee**.
- The District Road Safety Committee is chaired by the **District Collector/District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner**.
- Police confirmation timelines are fixed at:
  – **24 hours for non-life-threatening cases**
  – **48 hours for life-threatening cases**

Union Cabinet Approves ₹1 Lakh Crore Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) to Transform Urban Infrastructure

- The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, approved a **₹1 lakh crore Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)** to strengthen urban infrastructure.
- The scheme aims to shift India's urban development model from **grant-based funding** to **market-linked and reform-driven growth**.
- The fund is expected to mobilise **₹4 lakh crore investment** over five years with mandatory private participation and competitive project selection.
- The **Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)** is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** providing **₹1 lakh crore as Central Assistance (CA)**.
- The Centre will fund **25% of project cost**, while a minimum of **50% must be raised through market sources** such as municipal bonds, bank loans, and **Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs)**.
- The remaining contribution will be borne by **States, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), or other sources**.
- The scheme will operate from **Financial Year 2025-26 to Financial Year 2030-31**, extendable up to **Financial Year 2033-34**.
- It introduces an **outcome-based funding model** linked to governance reforms and private investment mobilisation.
- A dedicated **₹5,000 crore corpus** has been approved to enhance the

creditworthiness of 4,223 cities, particularly **Tier-II and Tier-III cities**, making ULBs bankable entities.

- The Cabinet also approved a **₹5,000 crore Credit Repayment Guarantee Scheme** to support smaller and first-time borrowing cities.
- Key features of the Credit Guarantee Scheme:
  – Central guarantee up to **₹7 crore or 70% of first loan (whichever is lower)**
  – For second loan: **₹7 crore or 50% guarantee**
  – Supports projects worth **₹20–28 crore** in smaller cities
- The scheme will benefit **Northeastern states, hilly states, and ULBs with population below 1 lakh**.
- Projects under UCF will be selected through a **competitive challenge-based mode**.
- Selection criteria include:
  – Transformative economic impact
  – Sustainability focus
  – Reform orientation
  – Defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
  – Third-party verification
- Fund release will be linked to **reform implementation and milestone achievement**.
- Monitoring will be conducted digitally through a single portal of the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**.
- Project verticals under UCF include:
  – **Cities as Growth Hubs**: Transit-oriented development, greenfield projects, economic corridors, mobility infrastructure
  – **Creative Redevelopment of Cities**: Heritage core redevelopment, Central Business District (CBD) revamp, brownfield redevelopment, climate resilience, decongestion
  – **Water and Sanitation**: Water supply, sewerage, storm water systems, solid waste management, legacy waste remediation under Swachhata goals
- Coverage under UCF includes:
  – Cities with population above **10 lakh**
  – All **State and Union Territory capitals**
  – Industrial cities with population above **1 lakh**
  – Smaller ULBs through credit guarantee support
- The Urban Challenge Fund promotes **private sector participation**, encourages **municipal bond market growth**, strengthens **financial autonomy of ULBs**, supports **climate-resilient infrastructure**, and aligns with **Budget 2025-26 urban development vision**.

<mark>**APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS**</mark>

<mark>**Om Birla to Represent India at Bangladesh PM Tarique Rahman's Swearing-In Ceremony**</mark>

- **Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla** represented India at the **oath-taking ceremony** of Bangladesh's newly elected government in **Dhaka** on **February 17, 2026**.
- The new government is led by **Tarique Rahman**, Chairman of the **Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)**.
- The **BNP** secured a **landslide victory** in the **February 2026 general elections**, winning over **200 seats** (212 seats for the BNP-led alliance), marking a democratic transition of power.
- The **Chief Adviser** of the interim government, **Muhammad Yunus**, invited heads of government from **13 countries**, including **India, China, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Turkey, UAE, Qatar, Malaysia, Brunei, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, and Bhutan**.
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** was invited but could not attend due to prior commitments (meeting French President Emmanuel Macron) in **Mumbai**.
- The **oath of office** for **Tarique Rahman** was administered by **President Mohammed Shahabuddin** (while the **Chief Election Commissioner** oversaw the earlier oath for MPs), signifying a constitutional transition.
- The ceremony took place at the **Southern Plaza** of the **Bangladesh Parliament House (Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban)**.
- **Tarique Rahman** succeeds an **interim government** that had governed since the student-led uprising ended **Sheikh Hasina's rule** in **August 2024**.
- **BNP chief Rahman** returned from **17 years of exile** in Britain in **December 2025**, marking a significant political comeback.
- The **BNP alliance** won **212 seats**, while the **Jamaat-e-Islami-led alliance** secured **77 seats**, according to the **Election Commission**.

Ramalingam Sudhakar steps down as President of the National Company Law Tribunal

- **Ramalingam Sudhakar** demitted office as **President of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)** after completing a distinguished tenure.
- He joined the **Tribunal** in **November 2021** and served for **over four years** at its helm.
- During his tenure, he significantly strengthened the institution and enhanced the **dispensation of justice** in **corporate and insolvency matters**.
- His leadership was marked by **diligence, integrity**, and an unwavering commitment to **judicial excellence**.
- At the **farewell reference**, he highlighted that the **resolution rate** of cases increased substantially due to **collective cooperation** of all stakeholders.

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- In the last **four years**, nearly **54,800 cases** were instituted before the Tribunal.
- Out of these, more than **48,000 cases were disposed of**, achieving an impressive **resolution rate of over 85 percent**.
- Apart from **judicial functions**, he focused on strengthening **administrative systems** and improving **infrastructural facilities**.
- These initiatives ensured the **smooth functioning** of the Tribunal and created an **efficient and conducive working environment** for **Bar Members, litigants, and staff**.

About NCLT :
- The **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)** is a **quasi-judicial body** in India that adjudicates issues relating to **Indian companies**.
- It was **established under the Companies Act, 2013**, to handle corporate legal and insolvency matters.
- The Tribunal was **constituted on 1 June 2016** by the **Government of India**.
- Its formation was based on the **recommendations of the V. Balakrishna Eradi Committee** on laws relating to **insolvency and winding up of companies**.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Bodhan AI to Build Bharat EduAI Stack as Digital Public Infrastructure for Education on the Lines of UPI

- The **Government of India** plans to integrate **Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools** in school education from **pre-primary to higher secondary levels** starting from the next academic session.
- The initiative is driven by **Bodhan AI**, a not-for-profit entity under the **Centre of Excellence in AI for Education** at **IIT Madras**, with an initial budget allocation of **₹500 crore**.

Key Highlights :
- **Bodhan AI** will develop the **Bharat EduAI Stack** as a **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** for education, modeled after scalable systems like **UPI**.
- The platform will support **Indian languages**, integrating **speech recognition**, **speech synthesis**, and **AI-based learning tools** tailored to local needs.
- The initiative aligns with **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, promoting **technology-enabled learning**, **multilingual education**, and **adaptive assessment systems**.
- **Academic content** and implementation frameworks will draw from **NCERT and SCERT** guidelines.
- **AI in education** will enable **personalised learning**, **real-time assessments**, **automated feedback**, and **intelligent tutoring systems** for students.
- Tools will generate **instant feedback**, **personalised worksheets**, and **targeted practice modules**, specifically supporting **foundational literacy and numeracy**.
- **Voice-based learning solutions** will be deployed via **phones, tablets, and laptops** to reduce **screen dependency**.

- **Teachers** will receive **AI-generated performance reports** and **diagnostic insights** to design **remedial interventions**.
- **Parents** may access **AI dashboards** tracking their child's **academic progress** and **learning gaps**.
- At the **administrative level**, AI will support **data-driven policymaking**, **school performance analysis**, and **targeted resource allocation**.
- The **funding model** begins with **Union Budget support** and may evolve through **state contributions**, **edtech partnerships**, and **start-up equity participation**.
- The **long-term vision** is to create a **community-driven, open-ecosystem** AI infrastructure similar to **open-source innovation models**.
- **Data privacy safeguards** will protect **student inputs**, **voice data**, and **written responses**, aligning with **digital data protection frameworks**.
- **Implementation challenges** include **digital infrastructure gaps**, **device access**, **internet connectivity**, and **teacher training** needs.
- The initiative aims to build **sovereign AI capabilities**, strengthen **multilingual education**, reduce **regional disparities**, and improve **national learning outcomes**.

Rocket debris bearing Indian Space Research Organisation logo discovered near uninhabited island in Maldives

- **Debris bearing the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) logo** and **India's National Emblem** was found on **L. Kunahandhoo island** in the **Maldives** in **December 2025**.
- The debris is believed to be part of the **Payload Fairing** from **ISRO's LVM3 (Launch Vehicle Mark-3)** rocket.
- The **LVM3-M6 mission** on **18 December 2025** successfully launched the **BlueBird Block-2 satellite** for **AST SpaceMobile** from **Sriharikota**.
- The **LVM3** is **India's heaviest rocket**, a **three-stage vehicle** with **solid strap-ons**, a **liquid core stage**, and a **cryogenic upper stage**.
- The **debris washed up** on an **uninhabited island** in the Maldives, causing **no damage** to human life or property.
- **ISRO** has not yet **confirmed** whether the debris belongs to an **Indian launch vehicle**.
- Earlier in **November 2025**, the **LVM3** was also used to launch the **CMS-03 communication satellite**.

Defence Research and Development Organisation shortlists Tata, L&T-Bharat Forge consortium for AMCA fighter jet prototype development

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has shortlisted **Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL)** and a consortium led by **Larsen & Toubro (L&T) with Bharat Forge** for the **prototype design and development** of the **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)**.

- The **AMCA Project** focuses on building India's **indigenous fifth-generation stealth fighter jet**, marking a major leap in advanced aerospace and defence technology.

AIR FORCE MODERNISATION PUSH

Tata, two consortia led by L&T, Bharat Forge shortlisted for making fighter jets

Aanchal Magazine, Sandeep Singh & Anil Sasi
New Delhi, February 16

TATA ADVANCED Systems Ltd as a standalone contender, a consortium of Larsen & Toubro and Bharat Electronics Ltd, and a Bharat Forge-BEML Ltd-Data Patterns consortium have been shortlisted by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to design and develop prototypes of the proposed Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA).

The AMCA project is aimed at developing India's home-grown fifth-generation stealth fighter, a single-seat twin-engine jet with advanced stealth coatings and internal weapons bays. It is expected to produce

EXPRESS exclusive

over 125 fighter jets that could be ready for induction into the Air Force by 2035. India would then join a small list of countries with fifth-generation fighters like the US (F-22 and F-35), China (J-20), and Russia (Su-57).

The DRDO, through the Aeronautical Development Agency, had floated tenders in July 2025. Originally seven consortiums, including Adani Defence and HAL, had bid to partner with the DRDO for the AMCA project. The shortlisted bidders are expected to receive funding support from the government to build models of the AMCA, before manufacturing rights are given.

The AMCA project marks India's push to modernise its »CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Key Highlights :

- The **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)** will be a **single-seat, twin-engine stealth aircraft** equipped with **advanced stealth coatings**, **next-generation sensors**, **avionics**, and **internal weapons bays**.
- The programme supports the **Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative** by strengthening **indigenous defence manufacturing** and technological self-reliance.
- The project envisions the production of **over 125 fighter jets**, with **induction into the Indian Air Force** targeted around **2035**.
- If operationalised, **India will join an elite group of nations** operating fifth-generation fighters such as **F-35 Lightning II**, **Chengdu J-20**, and **Sukhoi Su-57**.
- The **tender for AMCA prototype development** was floated in **July 2025** by DRDO through the **Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA)**.
- Initially, **seven consortiums**, including **Adani Defence & Aerospace** and **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**, submitted bids to participate in the programme.
- **Shortlisted firms** are likely to receive **government funding** for prototype construction, while **final manufacturing rights** will be decided after prototype evaluation.
- Separately, the **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**, chaired by **Rajnath Singh**, approved the procurement of **six additional P-8I maritime surveillance and anti-submarine aircraft** for the Indian Navy.
- The developments coincide with the **scheduled India visit of Emmanuel Macron** (February 17–19, 2026), highlighting ongoing **strategic defence cooperation** engagements.

About DRDO:

- Founded: 1958
- Headquarters: New Delhi, India
- Parent Ministry: Ministry of Defence, Government of India
- Chairman: Dr. Samir V. Kamat

ENVIRONMENT

Zoological Survey of India Scientists Discover New Diplura Species "Lepidocampa sikkimensis" in Eastern Himalayas

- Scientists from the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** have discovered a **new species of Diplura** in the **eastern Himalayas**, named **"Lepidocampa sikkimensis"**, marking a milestone in **Indian entomology**.

- The discovery ends nearly **five decades** of limited research on **Diplura** in India and is the **first species of its kind** formally described by an **Indian research team**.
- The findings were published on **7 January 2026** in the international taxonomic journal **"Zootaxa"**.
- **Diplurans** are **primitive hexapods**, blind, **soil-dwelling micro-arthropods** commonly called **two-pronged bristletails**, belonging to an **ancient evolutionary lineage**.
- Until now, **17 Diplura species** had been recorded in India, all identified by **foreign scientists**, making this discovery a **revival of indigenous taxonomic research**.
- The species was discovered near **Ravangla in Sikkim**, and later confirmed in **Kurseong**, indicating a wider distribution across the **eastern Himalayan region**.
- **Lepidocampa sikkimensis** is distinguished by **unique body scale arrangement**, specific **chaetotaxy pattern** (bristle patterns), and **specialised appendage structures**.
- Documenting **soil biodiversity** is essential for understanding **ecosystem functioning**, as Diplurans contribute to **nutrient cycling** and **soil structure maintenance**.
- The study also rediscovered **"Lepidocampa juradii bengalensis"**, a **rare subspecies** not recorded for nearly **50 years**, and generated **DNA barcode data** for the first time for an Indian Lepidocampa species.

DEFENCE NEWS

INS Tarangini to Participate in IFR 2026 and MILAN Exercises at Visakhapatnam

- **INS Tarangini**, the Indian Navy's **sail training ship**, is among the prominent vessels arriving at **Visakhapatnam** for the **International Fleet Review (IFR) 2026** and multinational naval exercise **MILAN**, commencing **February 18, 2026**.
- Around **75 naval vessels** are expected to participate, including **20 foreign warships**, highlighting India's expanding **naval diplomacy** in the **Indo-Pacific**.
- **INS Tarangini** was **commissioned in 1997** and became the **first Indian naval vessel to circumnavigate the globe** in **2003–2004**.
- The ship represented India at the **International Fleet Review** during the **Sri Lankan Navy's diamond jubilee** in **December 2010**, being the **only tall ship present** and the **first reviewed by the Sri Lankan President**.
- **INS Vikrant**, India's **first indigenously built aircraft carrier**, will headline **IFR 2026**, symbolising **naval self-reliance** and **blue-water capability**.
- **IFR 2026** provides a platform to showcase **naval strength**, **operational readiness**, and **defence manufacturing achievements**.
- **Foreign naval participation** includes the Philippine Navy's **BRP Miguel Malvar**, Maldives' **CGS Huravee**, Seychelles Coast Guard **SCGS Zoroaster (P609)**, and Vietnam People's Navy frigate **VNPS 17**.

- Participation from **20 foreign navies** reflects India's focus on **cooperative security**, **interoperability**, and **maritime partnerships** in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** and **Indo-Pacific**.
- The simultaneous conduct of **IFR 2026 and MILAN** underscores India's emphasis on **strategic maritime engagement** and promoting **regional stability**.

RANKING AND INDEX

Henley & Partners Henley Passport Index 2026: India Climbs 10 Places Despite Slight Drop in Visa-Free Access

- The **Henley & Partners Henley Passport Index 2026** ranked **199 passports** based on access to **227 destinations** worldwide.
- The ranking is based on data from the **International Air Transport Association (IATA)**.
- Access categories considered under the index include:
  – Visa-free entry
  – Visa on arrival
  – Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)
- Destinations requiring prior approval before departure (such as full e-visa applications) score **zero points**.
- **India's Performance:**
  – 2025: Rank 85 | 57 visa-free destinations
  – January 2026: Rank 80 | 55 destinations
  – February 2026: Rank 75 | 56 destinations
- India gained access to **The Gambia** but lost visa-free status for **Iran** and **Bolivia**, resulting in a net decline compared to 2025.
- Despite having one fewer destination than in 2025, India climbed **10 places** in global rankings due to relative performance changes among other countries.
- The index follows a **relative ranking system**, meaning rankings shift based on global visa policy changes across countries.
- **Reason for Loss of Access:**
  – **Iran** suspended visa-free entry for ordinary Indian passport holders in November 2025 after fraud and trafficking concerns. Advance visa approval became mandatory.
  – **Bolivia** shifted from visa-on-arrival to a pre-approved e-visa system in 2026, removing it from visa-free scoring criteria.
- **The Gambia** was added back in February 2026, increasing India's accessible destinations from 55 to 56.
- **Current Visa-Free Access (2026):**
  – 56 destinations without prior visa approval
  – Includes visa-on-arrival and limited ETAs
  – Excludes full pre-approved e-visa destinations

- India shares its 75th rank with countries having similar mobility scores.
- **Top Passport Rankings (Visa-Free Score):**
  – Singapore – 192
  – Japan, South Korea – 187
  – Sweden, United Arab Emirates – 186
  – Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland – 185
  – Austria, Greece, Malta, Portugal – 184
  – Hungary, Malaysia, New Zealand, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia – 183
  – Australia, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, United Kingdom – 182
  – Canada, Liechtenstein, Lithuania – 181
  – Iceland – 180
  – United States – 179
- **Lowest Ranked Passports (91–101):**
  – Afghanistan – 24
  – Syria – 26
  – Iraq – 29
  – Yemen – 31
  – Pakistan – 32
  – Somalia – 33
  – Nepal – 35
  – North Korea – 36
  – Bangladesh – 37
  – Eritrea – 38
  – Libya, Palestinian Territory, Sri Lanka – 39
- **Scoring Methodology:**
  – 1 point awarded for visa-free access, visa on arrival, border permit, or basic ETA (without embassy approval).
  – 0 points if embassy approval is required before departure.
- Total points determine the **Mobility Score**, which determines the **Global Passport Ranking**.

SPORTS NEWS

Smriti Mandhana Wins BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025

- **Smriti Mandhana** was named the **BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025** for her outstanding role in India's historic **Women's World Cup 2025 victory**.
- The award ceremony was held in **New Delhi on February 16, 2026**.
- At 29 years of age, Mandhana played a pivotal role in India's World Cup triumph, marking a landmark moment in Indian women's cricket history.

Mandhana named BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year

BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025
SMRITI MANDHANA

- She described 2025 as a "special year for women's cricket" in a video message while touring Australia with the Indian team.
- Major achievements of Smriti Mandhana include:
  – **Second-highest centuries in Women's One Day Internationals**
  – **Third-highest total runs among current women cricketers**
  – **Fastest 50-over international century (50 balls) by an Indian**, surpassing the record of **Virat Kohli**
- **Divya Deshmukh** won the **Emerging Player of the Year Award** for her victory at the **International Chess Federation Women's World Cup** at the age of 20.
- **Para-Sportswoman of the Year** was awarded to **Preethi Pal** for winning **two bronze medals at the Paris Paralympics 2024 (Track and Field)**.
- The **Lifetime Achievement Award** was conferred on **Anjali Bhagwat**, India's first woman shooter to reach an Olympic final.
- **BBC Star Performers of the Year** included:
  – Indian Women's Cricket Team – Women's World Cup victory
  – Indian Women's Cricket Team for the Blind – World Cup win
  – Indian Women's Kabaddi Team – World Cup champions
  – Ekta Bhyan, Deepthi Jeevanji and Preethi Pal – Para Athletics achievements
- **BBC Changemakers of the Year** included:
  – Indian Women's Ice Hockey Team
  – Rajbir Kaur
  – Savita Punia
  – Paani Devi
- The winners were selected by a distinguished jury including **Leander Paes**, **Deepa Malik**, and **Anju Bobby George**.
- The award highlights the growing global recognition of Indian women's sports and reflects increasing investment, visibility, and inspiration for young athletes across the country.

Paras Dogra Becomes Fastest to 10,000 Runs in Ranji Trophy History

- **Paras Dogra**, captain of **Jammu & Kashmir**, created history by completing **10,000 runs in the Ranji Trophy** during the semi-final against **Bengal**.
- He scored **58 runs** in the match to reach the milestone.
- Paras Dogra became the **fastest batter to score 10,000 runs** in Ranji Trophy history, achieving the feat in just **147 innings**.
- He surpassed the previous record of **Wasim Jaffer**, who had taken **196 innings** to reach the landmark.
- Paras Dogra is now only the **second batter** to cross **10,000 runs** in the history of the Ranji Trophy.

- o With this achievement, he became the **second-highest run-scorer** in Ranji Trophy history after Wasim Jaffer.
- o The milestone came during **Jammu & Kashmir's first-ever Ranji Trophy semi-final appearance**, adding greater significance to the achievement.
- o Paras Dogra made his **first-class debut in the 2001–02 season** and has represented **Himachal Pradesh**, **Puducherry**, and **Jammu & Kashmir** in domestic cricket.
- o He has scored **33 Ranji Trophy centuries** and has also represented **India A**, though he remains uncapped at the senior international level.
- **Top Run-Scorers in Ranji Trophy History**
  - o **Wasim Jaffer** – 12,038 runs
    - • **Paras Dogra** – 10,000+ runs
    - • **Amol Muzumdar** – 9,202 runs
    - • **Devendra Bundela** – 9,201 runs
    - • **Yashpal Singh** – 8,700 runs
  - o The **Ranji Trophy**, started in **1934–35**, is India's premier domestic first-class cricket tournament and is named after **Kumar Shri Ranjitsinhji**.

India Defeats Pakistan in ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026

- **India defeated Pakistan** in the **27th Match of Group A** of the **International Cricket Council Men's T20 World Cup 2026** at **R. Premadasa Stadium, Colombo**.
- India successfully defended a competitive total of **175/7 in 20 overs**, strengthening their position in the tournament standings.
- Pakistan won the toss and opted to bowl first.

- **Ishan Kishan** scored a brilliant **77 runs off 40 balls**, including **10 fours and 3 sixes**, anchoring India's innings.
- **Suryakumar Yadav** contributed **32 runs**, while **Tilak Varma** added **25 runs**, providing stability during the middle overs.
- **Shivam Dube** scored **27 runs off 17 balls**, and **Rinku Singh** remained unbeaten on **11 runs off 4 balls**, accelerating the scoring in the death overs.
- India scored **52 runs in the powerplay** phase.
- A crucial **87-run partnership between Ishan Kishan and Tilak Varma** laid the foundation for the competitive total.
- For Pakistan, **Saim Ayub** was the standout bowler with **3 wickets for 25 runs**.
- The all-round performance highlighted India's dominance in high-pressure matches against Pakistan in ICC tournaments.
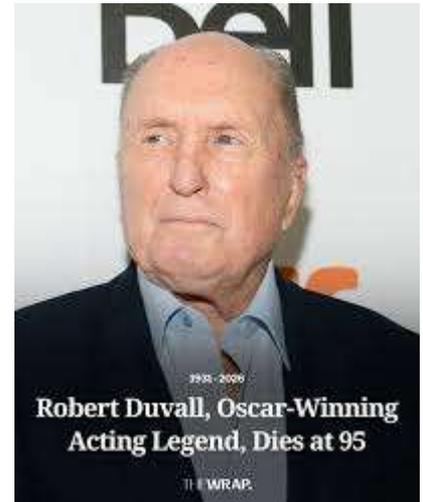
OBITUARIES

Robert Duvall, Oscar-winning Hollywood legend, Passed away at 95 in Middleburg

- **Robert Duvall**, legendary Hollywood actor and **Academy Award winner**, passed away at the age of **95** in **Middleburg**.

About Robert Duvall :

- He was born on **January 5, 1931**, in **San Diego**.
- He was widely known for **iconic roles** such as **Tom Hagen** in **The Godfather** series and **Lt. Col. Kilgore** in **Apocalypse Now**.
- Duvall won the **Academy Award for Best Actor** for **Tender Mercies** for portraying alcoholic country singer **Mac Sledge**.
- Over his career, he received **seven Academy Award nominations** and multiple **Golden Globe Awards**, marking a distinguished acting legacy.
- His **Hollywood career** spanned nearly **six decades**, during which he excelled in both **leading and supporting roles**.
- **Notable performances** include roles in **Network** and **The Apostle**, showcasing his **versatility**.
- He made his **film debut** as **Boo Radley** in **To Kill a Mockingbird**, adapted from the novel of the same name.
- Duvall gained prominence in the **New Hollywood movement** alongside actors like **Al Pacino and Robert De Niro**.
- He appeared in major films such as **MAS*H** and **THX 1138**, expanding his critical reputation.
- Other notable works include **The Natural, Colors**, and the miniseries **Lonesome Dove**.
- In the **1990s**, he starred in films like **Days of Thunder, Falling Down**, and **Deep Impact**.
- He earned another **Oscar nomination** for **A Civil Action**.
- Duvall **directed films** including **Angelo My Love, Assassination Tango**, and **Wild Horses**.
- In later years, he appeared in **The Judge** (earning another Oscar nomination) and **Widows**.

Daily CA One- Liner: February 19

- India's **unemployment rate** increased to **5% in January 2026**, marking a **three-month high**, as per the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** released by the **National Statistics Office**
- Union Health Minister **Jagat Prakash Nadda** will launch **SAHI** and **BODH** at the **India Artificial Intelligence Summit 2026** held at **Bharat Mandapam**
- **India is hosting** the **AI Impact Summit 2026** at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**, marking the first-ever global AI summit held in the **Global South**
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated major infrastructure projects in **Assam** worth over **₹5,450 crore**, aimed at boosting connectivity and strategic preparedness in the Northeast

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- The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, approved the **Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 (FoF 2.0)** with a **₹10,000 crore corpus**
- The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, approved the launch of **PM RAHAT (Road Accident Victim Hospitalization and Assured Treatment)**
- The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, approved a **₹1 lakh crore Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)** to strengthen urban infrastructure
- The **Henley & Partners Henley Passport Index 2026** ranked **199 passports** based on access to **227 destinations** worldwide
- **Smriti Mandhana** was named the **BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025** for her outstanding role in India's historic **Women's World Cup 2025 victory**
- **Paras Dogra**, captain of **Jammu & Kashmir**, created history by completing **10,000 runs in the Ranji Trophy** during the semi-final against **Bengal**
- **India defeated Pakistan** in the **27th Match of Group A** of the **International Cricket Council Men's T20 World Cup 2026** at **R. Premadasa Stadium, Colombo.**
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has proposed **mandatory reporting** of **Over-the-Counter (OTC)** foreign exchange and interest rate derivative contracts by **Authorised Dealer Category-I (AD Cat-I) banks**.
- The **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** has received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to launch **Indian Natural Gas futures**.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** released the **final guidelines** on **External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs)**, aiming to **rationalise fundraising** through the route.
- **India's Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation** rose to a **10-month high of 1.81% (YoY)** in **January 2026**, up from **0.83% in December 2025**.
- The **16th Finance Commission (2025–30)** has increased **grants to Urban Local Governments (ULGs)** by **230%**, allocating **₹3.56 trillion**, up from ₹1.55 trillion under the 15th FC.
- **Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla** represented India at the **oath-taking ceremony** of Bangladesh's newly elected government in **Dhaka** on **February 17, 2026**.
- **Ramalingam Sudhakar** demitted office as **President of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)** after completing a distinguished tenure.
- The **Government of India** plans to integrate **Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools** in school education from **pre-primary to higher secondary levels** starting from the next academic session.
- **Debris bearing the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) logo** and **India's National Emblem** was found on **L. Kunahandhoo island** in the **Maldives** in **December 2025**.
- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has shortlisted **Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL)** and a consortium led by **Larsen & Toubro (L&T) with Bharat Forge** for the **prototype design and development** of the **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)**.

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