

Weekly One Liners 15th to 21st of December 2025

Arton Capital Passport Index 2025: UAE Retains Top Spot, India Ranks 67th

In December 2025, the Canada-based global financial advisory firm Arton Capital released the 2025 Passport Index, which evaluates the strength of passports worldwide based on global mobility.

According to the latest index, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) once again emerged as the world's strongest passport, maintaining the 1st position for the 7th consecutive year. The UAE achieved an impressive Mobility Score (MS) of 179, offering its citizens visa-free access to 126 destinations, visa-on-arrival access in 45 countries, and ETA (Electronic Travel Authorization) access to 8 countries.

Top Performers in Passport Index 2025

- **1st Rank:** United Arab Emirates (UAE) – Mobility Score 179
- **2nd Rank (Joint):** Singapore and Spain – Mobility Score 175
- **3rd Rank (Shared by 18 countries):** Including Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland, Austria, Malaysia, among others – Mobility Score 174

European nations continued to dominate the upper ranks, reaffirming Europe's strong global travel influence.

India's Position in the 2025 Passport Index

- **Global Rank:** 67th
- **Mobility Score:** 74
- **Visa-free Access:** 74 countries
- **Global Coverage:** Approximately 37% of the world

India's ranking highlights moderate global mobility compared to top-performing nations.

Bottom-Ranked Countries

The lowest positions in the Global Passport Power Index 2025 were occupied by conflict-affected and politically unstable nations:

- **94th:** Afghanistan – MS 38
- **93rd:** Syria – MS 39
- **92nd:** Iraq – MS 40
- **91st (Joint):** Pakistan and Somalia – MS 41

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Key Highlights of Passport Index 2025

- **Biggest Gainer:** Singapore, which jumped from 30th position to 2nd place, marking the most significant improvement.
- **Malaysia's Rise:** Improved from 41st to 17th in the Individual Passport Power Rank and reached 3rd position in the Global Passport Rank.
- **Individual Passport Power Ranking (Top 3):**
 1. UAE
 2. Singapore
 3. Spain
- **Welcoming Countries Ranking:**
 - **1st:** Vietnam, Samoa, Tuvalu, Bolivia
 - **2nd:** Ethiopia
 - **3rd:** Dominica, Palau, Madagascar

About the Passport Index

The Passport Index, launched by Arton Capital in 2014, is one of the world's most widely referenced tools for assessing passport strength.

Coverage

- Includes passports of 193 United Nations member states
- Covers 6 selected territories

Ranking Systems

The index uses three major ranking frameworks:

1. Global Passport Power Rank
2. Individual Passport Power Rank
3. Welcoming Countries Rank

These systems collectively assess mobility, openness, unity, and freedom.

Mobility & Global Trends

- The **World Openness Score (WOS)**—a real-time indicator of global mobility—declined by 1.3%, falling to 22,177 in 2025, compared to 22,459 in 2024, indicating slightly tighter global travel conditions.

About Arton Capital

- **President:** Armand Arton
- **Headquarters:** Montreal, Canada
- **Established:** 2006

World Inequality Report 2026: Top 10% Indians Earn 58% of National Income

In December 2025, the World Inequality Lab (WIL) released the 3rd edition of the World Inequality Report (WIR 2026), offering a detailed assessment of income, wealth, gender, and climate-related inequalities across the world. The findings reveal that economic inequality remains extremely high, both globally and within India.

Key India-Specific Findings

The report highlights **sharp income and wealth concentration in India**:

- The **top 10% of India's population** earn **58% of the total national income**, while the **bottom 50%** receive only **15%**, underscoring severe income imbalance.
- In terms of wealth:
 - The **top 10% own nearly 65% of total wealth**
 - The **top 1% alone control about 40% of national wealth**
- **Average per capita income** in India stands at around **6,200 euros (PPP)**, while **average wealth** is estimated at **28,000 euros**.

Gender Inequality in India

- Women account for just **18% of total labour income**
- Female workforce participation remains **well below global averages**
 - Global benchmark: **34% income share** and **51% employment participation**

Exam Highlights (Quick Facts)

- **Report:** World Inequality Report 2026
- **Released by:** World Inequality Lab (WIL)
- **Edition:** 3rd
- **Database Used:** WID.world
- **India Snapshot:**
 - Top 10% earn **58% of income**
 - Bottom 50% earn **15%**
 - Top 1% hold **40% of wealth**
 - Women earn **18% of labour income**

Global Wealth Inequality Snapshot

- The **top 10% globally** earn more than the **bottom 90% combined**
- They hold nearly **75% of global wealth**
- The **bottom 50%** own just **2% of global wealth**
- About **0.001% of the global population (~60,000 people)** possess **three times the wealth of the entire bottom half of humanity**

Climate Inequality Findings

The report draws a strong link between **wealth and climate responsibility**:

- **Poorest 50% of the world:**
 - Generate **3% of emissions** from private capital
 - Account for **10% of consumption-based emissions**
- **Richest 10%:**
 - Responsible for **77% of private capital emissions**
 - Generate **47% of consumption-based emissions**
- The **top 1% alone produce 41% of private capital emissions**, nearly **double that of the bottom 90% combined**

Despite contributing the least, **low-income countries face the greatest risks** from climate disasters such as **floods, droughts, and heatwaves**, while wealthy nations and individuals have better adaptive capacity.

Gender Inequality at the Global Level

- Globally, women receive **just over 25% of total labour income**
- Regional breakdown:
 - **Middle East & North Africa:** 16%
 - **South & Southeast Asia:** 20%
 - **Sub-Saharan Africa:** 28%
 - **East Asia:** 34%
 - **Europe, North America, Oceania, Russia & Central Asia:** 40%
- When both **paid and unpaid work** are considered:
 - Women earn **32% of men's hourly earnings**
 - This rises to **61%** when unpaid work is excluded

Regional Inequality Across the World

- **High-income regions** (North America, Europe, Oceania) earn far more than **Sub-Saharan Africa, South & Southeast Asia, and Latin America**
- An average individual in **North America & Oceania** earns **13 times more** than someone in **Sub-Saharan Africa**
- Regions with **highest inequality**:
 - **USA**
 - **Latin America**
 - **Southern Africa**
 - **Middle East & North Africa**

Redistribution, Taxation & Public Spending

- **Progressive taxation and welfare transfers** reduce income inequality by nearly **30%** in **Europe and North America**
- Education spending inequality remains stark:
 - **Sub-Saharan Africa:** ~220 euros per child
 - **Europe & North America:** 7,430–9,020 euros per child

Global Financial System Inequality

The report notes that the **global financial system structurally favours rich countries**:

- Countries issuing **reserve currencies** can:
 - Borrow at lower costs
 - Lend at higher interest rates
 - Attract global savings
- Wealthy nations earn more from investments while paying less to borrow, placing **developing countries at a disadvantage**

About World Inequality Report (WIR)

- **Produced by:** World Inequality Lab
- **First Published:** 2018
- **Publication Cycle:** Every ~4 years
- **WIR 2026 Contributors:** Over **200 researchers worldwide**
- **Focus Areas:** Income, wealth, gender, climate impact, taxation, politics, and access to opportunities

About World Inequality Lab (WIL)

- Scientific Co-Director: Facundo Alvaredo
- Headquarters: Paris, France
- Established: 2016

20th Session of UNESCO ICH Committee Held in New Delhi for the First Time

The **20th Session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)** was held from **8 to 13 December 2025** at the **Red Fort, New Delhi**. This landmark event marked the **first time India hosted** the prestigious global cultural forum.

The session was particularly significant as it coincided with **20 years of India's ratification of the 2003 UNESCO Convention**, which India adopted in **2005**.

Inaugural Ceremony & Key Dignitaries

The inaugural event witnessed the presence of several high-profile dignitaries, including:

- **Khaled El-Enany**, Director-General, UNESCO
- **Dr. S. Jaishankar**, Union Minister, Ministry of External Affairs
- **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, Union Minister, Ministry of Culture & Tourism
- **Rekha Gupta**, Chief Minister of Delhi

Exam-Oriented Key Facts

- **Event:** UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of ICH
- **Edition:** 20th
- **Venue:** Red Fort, New Delhi (Delhi)
- **Dates:** 8–13 December 2025
- **Organisers:** Ministry of Culture, Government of India & Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA)
- **Chair:** Vishal V. Sharma, Ambassador & Permanent Delegate of India to UNESCO
- **Global Additions:** 67 new ICH elements from 77 countries
- **Indian Inclusion:** Deepavali added to UNESCO's Representative List
- **Next Presidency (2026):** China

About the UNESCO ICH Committee

The **2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage** was adopted on **17 October 2003** at UNESCO's **32nd General Conference in Paris**.

Objective

The Convention aims to safeguard **living cultural traditions**, including:

- Oral traditions
- Performing arts
- Social practices, rituals, and festivals
- Traditional knowledge and craftsmanship

These traditions face threats from **globalisation, rapid social change, and resource constraints**.

Committee Composition

The Committee consists of **24 elected States Parties**, including **India, China, France, Germany, UAE, Spain, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and others**.

Highlights of the 20th Session

Venue Significance

- The **Red Fort**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site (inscribed in 2007)**, served as the venue
- Built by **Emperor Shah Jahan (1638–1648)**
- Managed by the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**

Participation

- Delegates from **over 150 countries**
- Cultural experts and observers
- Focus on safeguarding policies, international cooperation, and community-led preservation

Expansion of UNESCO's Intangible Heritage Lists

During the session, UNESCO expanded its living heritage lists with **67 new elements**:

- **11 elements** on the **List of ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding**
- **53 elements** on the **Representative List of the ICH of Humanity**
- **1 programme** on the **Register of Good Safeguarding Practices**
- **2 elements** upgraded to the Representative List

With these additions, **849 cultural practices from 157 countries** are now part of UNESCO's ICH lists.

First-Time Inscriptions (2025)

Countries receiving their **first-ever ICH inscriptions** include:

Barbados, Chad, Comoros, El Salvador, Gabon, Libya, and São Tomé & Príncipe.

Deepavali Added to UNESCO's ICH List

One of the major highlights was the inclusion of **Deepavali (Diwali)** in UNESCO's **Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.

About Deepavali

- Celebrated during **October–November** on **Amavasya** of the Hindu month **Kartika**
- Symbolises the **victory of light over darkness and good over evil**
- Associated with:
 - **Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya**
 - **Lord Krishna's victory over Narakasura**

New Inscriptions from Asia-Pacific Region (2025)

Urgent Safeguarding List

- Art of crafting and playing **Kobyz** – **Uzbekistan**
- **Borendo/Bhorindo** folk musical tradition – **Pakistan**
- **Dong Ho folk woodblock printing** – **Vietnam**
- **Asin Tibuok** artisanal sea salt practice – **Philippines**

Representative List

Includes cultural elements such as:

- **Ayeneh-Kari mirrorwork** – Iran
- **Pantun** – Indonesia, Malaysia & Brunei
- **Traditional saree weaving of Tangali** – Bangladesh
- **Washi paper craftsmanship & float festivals** – Japan
- **Deepavali** – India

Good Safeguarding Practices

- **Hezhen Yimakan storytelling programme** – China

Chairmanship Handover

At the conclusion of the session, **India formally handed over the chairmanship** of the UNESCO ICH Committee to **China**, which will **host and preside over the 2026 session**.

India's Presence on UNESCO ICH List

As of **December 2025**, **15 Indian elements** are inscribed on UNESCO's ICH Representative List, including:

- **Performing Arts:** Kutiyattam, Chhau
- **Sacred Traditions:** Vedic chanting, Buddhist chanting (Ladakh)
- **Community Practices:** Ramlila, Ramman, Sankirtana
- **Traditional Crafts:** Thatheras' metalcraft, Kalbelia dance
- **Large Gatherings:** Kumbh Mela
- **Living Traditions:** Yoga, Durga Puja, Garba
- **Shared Heritage:** Novruz

About UNESCO

- **Director-General:** Khaled El-Enany
- **Headquarters:** Paris, France
- **Established:** 1945

RBI Releases 10th Edition of Handbook of Statistics on Indian States (2024–25)

In **December 2025**, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** released the **10th edition of the "Handbook of Statistics on Indian States 2024–25"**. The publication serves as a **comprehensive and comparable statistical reference** for **Indian States and Union Territories (UTs)**, supporting policy analysis, research, and competitive exam preparation.

Key Exam-Oriented Highlights

- **What?** Release of *Handbook of Statistics on Indian States 2024–25*
- **Released by:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- **Edition:** 10th
- **First Published:** 2016
- **New Additions:** 11 new state-wise tables and a new External Sector section
- **Data Coverage Period:** 1951 to 2024–25
- **Purpose:** Provide a consolidated, uniform, and comparable database across States and UTs

Background of the Handbook

The **Handbook of Statistics on Indian States** was **first published in 2016** to compile long-term socio-economic data for Indian states in a **single, standardised format**.

Preparation & Data Sources

- Prepared by the **Regional Economy Monitoring Division (REMD)**
- Department: **Department of Economic and Policy Research (DEPR), RBI**
- Data Sources include:
 - State Government submissions
 - RBI surveys
 - Reputed third-party agencies

This multi-source approach ensures **accuracy, reliability, and consistency**.

Scope of the 10th Edition

The **10th Handbook** provides extensive coverage across key sectors:

- **Socio-demographics and health**
- **State Domestic Product (SDP)**
- **Agriculture and environment**
- **Prices and wages**
- **Industry and infrastructure**
- **Banking and fiscal indicators**
- **Social security and pensions**
- **Tourism and exports**

The handbook follows a **"one indicator–one table"** format, enabling **easy comparison, trend analysis, and assessment of regional disparities**.

Key Enhancements in the 2024–25 Edition

Updated Data Series

- Older data series with outdated base years (such as **2004–05 for SDP**) have been **phased out**
- Replaced with updated **2011–12 base year series**, improving relevance and statistical accuracy

New External Sector Section

- Introduced to provide **state-level insights into exports and external engagement**



11 Newly Introduced State-Wise Tables

The 10th edition includes the following **new statistical tables**:

1. **State-wise Domestic Tourist Visits**
2. **Net State Value Added (Current Prices)**
3. **Net State Value Added (Constant Prices)**
4. **State-wise Status of Groundwater Extraction**
5. **State-wise Revenue Expenditure**
6. **State-wise Capital Receipts**
7. **Market Borrowings of State Governments**
8. **Gender-wise Subscribers of National Pension System (NPS) – All Citizens**
9. **Gender-wise Enrolments under Atal Pension Yojana (APY)**
10. **State-wise Exports**
11. **State-wise Foreign Tourist Visits**

Why This Handbook Is Important

- Enables **long-term economic and social trend analysis**
- Helps identify **structural changes and regional inequalities**
- Supports **policy formulation and academic research**
- Highly useful for **UPSC, SSC, Banking, State PSCs, and Economics-related exams**

About Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

- Governor: Sanjay Malhotra
- Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Established: 1 April 1935

National Affairs

- The **11th India International Science Festival (IISF 2025)** was held from **6–9 December 2025** at Panchkula, Haryana, organised by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences** and coordinated by **IITM, Pune**, and was inaugurated by **Dr. Jitendra Singh**, with a focus on self-reliance under the theme *Vigyan Se Samruddhi*, during which **Matsya 6000**, India's first human-occupied deep-sea submersible, was showcased.
- In **December 2025**, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal flagged off **India's first indigenous hydrogen-powered fuel cell vessel (Pilot-01)** at Namo Ghat, Varanasi, supporting **Maritime India Vision 2030** and **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047** for clean inland water transport.
- The **Ministry of Education** organised **Bhartiya Bhasha Utsav 2025** on **11 December 2025** at National Bal Bhawan, New Delhi, to mark the birth anniversary of **Mahakavi Subramania Bharati**, celebrating India's linguistic and tribal diversity under the theme *Many Languages, One Emotion*.
- On **12 December 2025**, the **Union Cabinet chaired by PM Narendra Modi** approved the **Census of India 2027**, the country's **16th census and first fully digital census**, to be conducted at a cost of **₹11,718.24 crore**, with houselisting in **2026** and population enumeration in **2027**, including self-enumeration through mobile applications.

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** approved the **CoalSETU window** to enable auction-based coal linkages for industrial use and exports, allowing up to **50% export** of allocated coal while prohibiting resale and excluding coking coal.
- The **CCEA** also approved the **Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Copra for the 2026 season**, fixing prices at **₹12,500 per quintal for ball copra** and **₹12,027 per quintal for milling copra**, with procurement to be carried out by **NAFED** and **NCCF**.
- In **December 2025**, the Government of India unveiled **DHRUV64**, the country's **first indigenous 1.0 GHz 64-bit dual-core microprocessor**, developed by **C-DAC** under the **DIR-V programme**, strengthening India's self-reliant semiconductor ecosystem.
- The **University of Patanjali, Haridwar**, became **India's first Yoga and Ayurveda-focused Cluster Centre** under the **Gyan Bharatam Mission**, aimed at preserving ancient Indian knowledge through research, digitisation, and institutional mentoring.
- **Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella** visited India from **10–12 December 2025**, met **PM Narendra Modi**, announced a **USD 17.5 billion AI investment**, and signed an **MoU with the Ministry of Labour and Employment** to integrate global employers with the **National Career Service platform**.
- In **December 2025**, the **AFMS**, in collaboration with **AIIMS** and the **Ministry of Health**, launched **India's first AI-driven community screening programme for Diabetic Retinopathy** at **Army Hospital (R&R), New Delhi**.
- The **NHAI** launched **India's first wildlife-safe road** on a section of **NH-45 in Madhya Pradesh**, aimed at reducing animal-vehicle collisions while maintaining ecological balance.
- On **16 December 2025**, **President Droupadi Murmu** inaugurated the **Param Vir Dirgha** at **Rashtrapati Bhavan** on **Vijay Diwas**, in the presence of defence leadership.
- The **Indian Air Force** commenced the **3rd edition of Exercise Avialndra 2025** with the **Russian Federation Aerospace Force**, scheduled from **15–22 December 2025** in **New Delhi**, to enhance bilateral defence cooperation.
- On **17 December 2025**, **TRAI** directed **IRDAI-regulated entities** to adopt **1600-series phone numbers** for service and transactional calls by **15 February 2026** to curb fraud.
- The **DPIIT** launched a new digital module on the **National Single Window System** enabling Indian companies to generate **online sponsorship letters** for foreign professionals under the **e-B-4 Visa** regime.
- **Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty** became the **first woman President of the Press Club of India**, marking a milestone in media leadership.

- A **commemorative stamp honouring Emperor Perumbidugu Mutharaiyar** was released to promote awareness of India's early medieval regional history.
- **Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve** in **Madhya Pradesh** was designated as the state's **third cheetah habitat**, supporting India's cheetah reintroduction programme.
- The **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill 2025** was introduced to replace **UGC, AICTE, and NCTE** with a single higher-education regulator in line with **NEP 2020**.
- **VB-GRAMG 2025** was announced as a new rural employment model guaranteeing **125 days of work**, focusing on skill-based livelihoods and climate-resilient infrastructure.
- India and Bangladesh jointly celebrated the **54th Vijay Diwas**, marking **Pakistan's surrender in 1971** and the birth of **Bangladesh**.
- **Raj Kumar Goyal** was appointed as the **Chief Information Commissioner**, strengthening transparency under the **RTI Act, 2005**.
- The Government announced plans to establish **Antarctic Research Station Maitri-II by 2032**, reinforcing India's polar research presence.
- **Miyana Railway Station** won the **National Energy Conservation Award 2025** for adopting sustainable and energy-efficient practices.
- **PM Narendra Modi** became the **first world leader to receive Ethiopia's highest civilian honour**, during which **India and Ethiopia signed three MoUs** to strengthen bilateral cooperation.
- The **Param Vir Dirgha Gallery** at **Rashtrapati Bhavan** was inaugurated to honour the valour of India's armed forces.
- **Ponduru Khadi of Andhra Pradesh** received the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**, protecting traditional weaving practices.
- The **NPS withdrawal limit for non-government subscribers** was increased to **80%**, enhancing post-retirement financial flexibility.
- **Air India** won the **Best Domestic Airline Award 2025**, reflecting improved performance after **Tata Group's** acquisition.
- India ranks **7th globally in coffee production**, with plantations spread across **Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu**, exporting nearly **70% of production**.
- The **2nd WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine** was held in **New Delhi**, highlighting India's leadership in **Ayush systems**.
- **Amazon Pay** introduced **biometric-based UPI payments** using fingerprint and facial authentication to enhance transaction security.
- India and Argentina signed the **ICAR-INTA Work Plan (2025-27)** to strengthen cooperation in agricultural research and climate-resilient farming.
- Registrations opened for **Pariksha Pe Charcha 2026**, an initiative led by **PM Narendra Modi** to reduce exam stress among students.
- India's labour market showed strong growth in **November 2025**, with unemployment hitting a new low as per **NSO data**.
- The government announced the launch of **Bharat Taxi** in **January 2026**, aiming to provide affordable and transparent cab services.
- India and Saudi Arabia signed a **visa waiver agreement for official and diplomatic passport holders**, strengthening bilateral relations.
- **PM Releases Ashwagandha Postal Stamp**: Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** released a **commemorative postal stamp** on **Ashwagandha** at the **Second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine** in **New Delhi**.

States in the News

- In **December 2025**, **Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL)** signed a **₹1,685.27 crore long-term loan agreement with NABARD** to strengthen Odisha's power transmission infrastructure and ensure reliable electricity supply, marking **NABARD's first project financing to a State PSU in Odisha**.
- In **December 2025**, **Maharashtra** became the **first Indian state to launch MahaCrimeOS AI**, an artificial intelligence-based platform unveiled at the **Microsoft AI Tour in Mumbai**, aimed at strengthening cybercrime investigations, improving victim support, speeding up justice delivery, and enhancing digital safety.
- During the same event, **Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella** launched an **AI-powered crime analysis tool for Maharashtra Police**, enabling data-driven policing, improved investigation efficiency, and enhanced public safety across the state.
- Scientists raised concerns over **ecological threats to Narpuh Wildlife Sanctuary in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills** due to limestone mining and cement industries, noting that the **2014-declared sanctuary**, home to species like the **Hoolock Gibbon and Clouded Leopard**, receives over **6,000 mm of annual rainfall** supporting dense evergreen forests.
- The **"Rustam-e-Jammu & Kashmir" Wrestling Championship 2025**, an international **Indian-style Kushti** event, is set to be held in **Jammu & Kashmir**, aiming to revive traditional wrestling, attract international wrestlers, and promote **sports tourism** in the region.
- **Goa Liberation Day Celebrated**: India marks 64th anniversary of Goa's freedom from 450 years of Portuguese rule through **Operation Vijay**, the nation's first tri-service military operation completed in 36-40 hours in **December 1961**.

- **Parliament Passes VB-G RAM G Bill:** Both Houses approve Viksit Bharat Rozgar Guarantee Bill replacing MGNREGA, guaranteeing 125 days employment per rural household with 60:40 Centre-State cost sharing amid strong opposition protests.
- **SHANTI Bill Grants AERB Statutory Status:** Parliament passes legislation giving Atomic Energy Regulatory Board independent statutory authority, strengthening India's nuclear safety framework and aligning with global standards.
- **First Forest University Announced:** Government approves establishment of India's first dedicated Forest University in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, focusing on forestry, wildlife conservation and environmental studies.
- **SEBI Reforms Bond Market:** Securities regulator permits zero-coupon bonds in smaller denominations to boost retail investor participation and deepen India's fixed income market ecosystem.
- **Jharkhand Pioneers Gig Workers' Welfare:** State becomes first in India to pass comprehensive legislation providing social security, insurance and grievance redressal for ride-hailing, food delivery and digital platform workers.
- **Odisha Hosts AI Impact Conference:** State organizes two-day Regional AI Impact Conference on December 19-20 bringing together policymakers, startups and researchers to discuss artificial intelligence applications in governance, healthcare and education.
- **PM Inaugurates Guwahati Airport Terminal:** PM Modi inaugurated the new terminal at Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport, Guwahati, boosting aviation infrastructure in Northeast India.
- **Jammu & Kashmir Launches First Gen Z Post Office:** Jammu & Kashmir inaugurated its first Gen Z Post Office at AIIMS Vijaypur on 17 December 2025, making it the first AIIMS in India with a youth- and technology-focused postal facility.

- The **Haryana State Assembly** unanimously passed a resolution to commemorate the **350th martyrdom year of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji**, honoring his **supreme sacrifice, religious freedom, and human dignity**, during the **winter session in Chandigarh**.

International Affairs

- In **December 2025**, the **World Bank** approved nearly **USD 600 million** for clean air programmes in **Uttar Pradesh and Haryana** under the **Regional Air Quality Management Program**, aiming to improve air quality for about **270 million people** across the Indo-Gangetic Plains and Himalayan foothills.
- Under the **Uttar Pradesh Clean Air Management Program**, **USD 299.66 million** financing was approved with a **10-year maturity**, adopting an **airshed approach** and introducing **15,000 electric three-wheelers and 500 electric buses** in cities including Lucknow, Kanpur, Varanasi, and Gorakhpur.
- The **Haryana Clean Air Project for Sustainable Development** involves a total cost of **₹3,646 crore**, including **USD 300 million from the World Bank**, and will deploy **500 electric buses**, support e-three-wheelers, and set up **200 EV charging stations**, coordinated by **ARJUN SPV** chaired by **Rajesh Khullar**.
- **Antonio Tajani**, Italy's **Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister**, visited India from **10–12 December 2025** for the second time in the year to strengthen the **India–Italy Strategic Partnership** and expand bilateral cooperation.
- In **December 2025**, **Andrej Babiš**, leader of the **ANO party**, was sworn in as the **Prime Minister of the Czech Republic** by **President Petr Pavel**, returning to office after winning the **October 2025 parliamentary elections** and succeeding **Petr Fiala**.
- During the same month, **Russian President Vladimir Putin** signed into law the **India–Russia Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Support (RELOS) Agreement**, formalising deeper military cooperation following parliamentary ratification.
- On **14 December 2025**, **José Antonio Kast** of Chile's Republican Party was elected the **38th President of Chile**, winning about **58% of the vote**, and is set to assume office on **11 March 2026**, succeeding **Gabriel Boric**.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** visited **Jordan** from **15–16 December 2025** as the first leg of his three-nation tour, coinciding with the **75th anniversary of India–Jordan diplomatic relations**, and held high-level talks with **King Abdullah II** in Amman.
- PM Modi then undertook his **first-ever bilateral visit to Ethiopia** from **16–17 December 2025**, where he met **Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed** in Addis Ababa and reviewed the full spectrum of bilateral relations rooted in long-standing civilisational ties.



- **UNESCO** added several endangered traditional arts and crafts to its **Urgent Safeguarding List**, while the **UN Environment Assembly** adopted **India's global wildfire management resolution**, focusing on prevention, preparedness, and international cooperation.
- The **2025 Passport Index** highlighted Asian and European dominance in global mobility rankings, with **India showing improvement** compared to previous years, while the **Asia Power Index 2025** ranked **India 3rd**, designating it as a **Major Power** after the US and China.
- During PM Modi's Jordan visit, **India and Jordan signed multiple MoUs** covering **water management, education, defence, and culture**, further strengthening strategic cooperation.
- **Italy** became the **first country to receive UNESCO recognition for its national cuisine** as Intangible Cultural Heritage, underscoring the global importance of culinary traditions.
- The election of **José Antonio Kast** as **Chile's President** marked a notable political shift in the country, reflecting changing domestic and regional dynamics with potential global implications.
- **India-Oman Sign CEPA**: Both nations formalize Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement to strengthen bilateral trade, boost non-oil commerce, enhance market access and support MSME participation in Gulf region cooperation.
- **Brazil Transfers BRICS Presidency to India**: South American nation officially hands over rotating leadership, positioning India to host major summits in 2026 focusing on Global South priorities and multilateral institution reforms.
- **India & Netherlands JTIC**: India and the Netherlands signed an **MoU** to establish a **Joint Trade and Investment Committee (JTIC)** to promote **bilateral trade, investments**, and address **regulatory barriers**, with **annual meetings** alternating between the countries.
- The **United States** and **Jordan** launched **Operation Hawkeye Strike** in **Syria** after an **ISIS attack in Palmyra** killed **two US soldiers** and injured others, carrying out **overnight airstrikes** on **70+ ISIS targets** using **precision-guided weapons**.
- In **December 2025**, the **Department of Posts (India Post)** entered a **three-year MoU** with the **Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)** to promote **financial inclusion** and expand access to **Mutual Fund investments** across the country.
- The **Indian Army** signed an **MoU with Raghu Vamsi Par East Automation Pvt. Ltd.** in **December 2025** to accelerate the development and induction of **indigenous drone technologies** for land systems, coordinated through the **515 Army Base Workshop, Secunderabad**.
- In **December 2025**, **India and Argentina** formalised a **2025–27 bilateral Work Plan** between **ICAR** and **INTA** to strengthen cooperation in **agricultural research, technology exchange, and capacity building**, with the agreement exchanged in **New Delhi**.
- During **December 2025**, **India and Saudi Arabia** signed a **Visa Waiver Agreement in Riyadh** to facilitate official travel and strengthen bilateral engagement under the **Strategic Partnership Council**, signed by **Dr. Suhel Ajaz Khan** and **Abdulmajeed bin Rashed Alsmari**.
- **Singapore Changi Airport** was named the **World's Best Airport 2025** by the **Skytrax World Airport Awards**, recognised for its world-class passenger experience, infrastructure, and iconic **Jewel Changi** attraction.

Books and Authors

- On December 14, 2025, former Indian Cricketer **Shikhar Dhawan** unveiled his autobiography titled **"The One: Cricket, My Life and More"**, published by **HarperCollins India**, at an event in New Delhi, Delhi.

Banking/Economy/Business News

- On **11 December 2025**, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued final directions on the **maintenance of Cash Credit, Current and Overdraft accounts**, relaxing norms while retaining a principle-based framework, to be effective from **1 April 2026**, covering entities such as **commercial banks, SFBs, payment banks, RRBs, LABs and co-operative banks**.
- Under the new rules, **Cash Credit accounts face no restrictions**, while **current and overdraft accounts** can be freely maintained for borrowers with exposure below **₹10 crore**, and above this threshold only if the bank holds at least **10% exposure**, with the remittance window of **two working days** retained.
- India's banking sector achieved its **lowest Gross NPA level in 20 years**, with **GNPAs declining to 2.31% by March 2025** and **Net NPAs falling to 0.52%**, supported by strong macroeconomic fundamentals and improved provisioning.
- Capital buffers strengthened significantly, with **CRAR rising to 17.36%** and **CET-1 to 14.81%**, while domestic credit and deposits nearly **tripled between 2015 and 2025**, reflecting sustained banking sector resilience.

Agreements/MoUs Signed

- In **December 2025**, the **Ministry of MSME** signed an **MoU with Amazon Seller Services** at **Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi**, to enhance digital and market access for artisans registered under the **PM Vishwakarma Scheme**.
- On **11 December 2025**, **India and Liberia** signed an **MoU on pharmacopoeia cooperation** in **Monrovia**, aimed at aligning medicine quality standards, with the agreement signed by **Manoj Bihari Verma** and **Dr. Louise M. Kpoto**.

- Public Sector Banks reduced GNPA's from **9.11% in 2021 to 2.58% in 2025**, while Scheduled Commercial Banks lowered theirs to **2.22%**, alongside record profitability driven by reforms like **PCA, SARFAESI, DRT expansion and proposed ECL framework**.
- In **December 2025**, the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** approved **USD 240 million** for **Chennai Metro Phase 2**, covering **118.9 km across three corridors**, to promote clean and reliable urban mobility in Tamil Nadu.
- ADB also approved **USD 108 million** for strengthening **public healthcare in Mizoram** and **USD 100 million** to enhance **MSME finance for women borrowers**, advancing healthcare access and financial inclusion.
- Separately, **ADB sanctioned USD 846 million** to modernise **ITIs and NSTIs** across India, aiming to boost **skills and employability** under a national flagship programme.
- On **15 December 2025**, **RBI approved HDFC Bank** to acquire up to **9.5% stake in IndusInd Bank**, subject to compliance with acquisition norms, strengthening strategic investments in the banking sector.
- On the same day, **NCDEX received SEBI's in-principle approval** to launch a **mutual fund transaction platform**, enabling investors to buy and sell MF units after regulatory compliance.
- In **December 2025**, **NLC India Renewables Limited** signed a **joint venture agreement with PTC India** to develop renewable energy projects, reinforcing India's green energy transition.
- The **NSO released the PLFS Monthly Bulletin for November 2025**, showing the **unemployment rate declined to 4.7%**, the lowest since April 2025, based on a survey of over **3.7 lakh persons** nationwide.
- State Bank of India** signed a **€150 million Line of Credit with KfW Germany** to finance climate-friendly energy projects, supporting renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure.
- In **December 2025**, **SEBI approved IPOs of seven companies**, expected to raise over **₹6,000 crore**, reflecting strong capital market activity.
- On **16 December 2025**, **IDFC First Bank** launched the **Global Savings Account for NRIs**, allowing deposits in **USD and EUR**, enhancing international banking flexibility.
- At its **212th board meeting**, **SEBI approved regulatory reforms** to reduce brokerage caps in cash and derivatives markets, lower transaction costs, and enhance cost transparency.
- Google Pay**, in partnership with **Axis Bank**, launched the **UPI-powered Google Pay Flex Axis Bank Credit Card**, built on the **RuPay network**, integrating credit with everyday UPI payments.
- In **December 2025**, **RBI authorised Paytm Payments Services Ltd** to operate as a **Payment Aggregator** for offline and cross-border transactions, expanding digital payment infrastructure.
- On **17 December 2025**, **Airtel Payments Bank** partnered with **NPCI Bharat BillPay** to enable **EV wallet recharges via Bharat Connect**, integrated into the Airtel Thanks app.
- Ravi Ranjan** assumed charge as **Managing Director of SBI**, focusing on credit growth and digital banking transformation.
- India and ADB signed loan agreements worth USD 2.2 billion** to support infrastructure, healthcare, and urban development projects across the country.
- Suresh Goyal** was appointed **Director General of NCAER**, strengthening leadership in economic research and policy advisory.
- JP Morgan Chase** announced plans to establish **Asia's largest Global Capability Centre in India**, boosting employment and India's role as a global financial services hub.
- In **2025**, **Nvidia became the world's most valuable company**, overtaking Apple and Microsoft, driven by rapid growth in artificial intelligence technologies.
- The **Global Investment Risk and Resilience Index 2025** highlighted strong resilience among developed economies, while fragile nations featured in the high-risk category.
- Deepinder Goyal Tops Hurun Rich List**: Zomato founder ranks first among self-made entrepreneurs in 2025 rankings based on net worth and enterprise value, highlighting India's thriving digital and food-tech sector growth.
- Shashwat Sharma Named Airtel India CEO**: Leading telecom operator appoints new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer to oversee operations, digital services expansion and 5G network rollout across the country.
- RBI Overhauls Deposit Insurance**: The **RBI Central Board** approved a **risk-based deposit insurance framework**, linking **insurance costs to bank risk**. The reform enhances **financial stability, risk management, accountability, and depositor confidence**.
- ADB Commits \$4.26B to India**: Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved 16 **sovereign projects** in 2025 worth **\$4.26 billion**, focusing on **human capital, renewable energy, urban development, and essential services**, including **PM-SETU Skilling Programme** and **PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana**.
- Kotak Mahindra Bank Penalty**: **RBI fined ₹61.95 lakh** for regulatory violations, including misuse of **BSBD accounts, Business Correspondents**, and incorrect **CIC data**. Emphasis on **compliance and customer protection**.

- **New Logo for RRBs:** Finance Ministry introduced a common logo for Regional Rural Banks after "One State One RRB" reform, promoting financial inclusion, trust, and modernisation. Blue symbolizes stability, green growth.
- **Forex Reserves Rise:** India's forex reserves increased by \$1.68 billion to \$688.94 billion, driven by gold holdings and foreign currency assets. Strong FDI inflows of \$50.36 billion indicate investor confidence.

Appointments/Resignations

- On **14 December 2025**, senior journalist **Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty** from Assam was elected as the **first woman President of the Press Club of India** in elections held in **New Delhi**, with **Afzal Imam** as Secretary General and other office bearers elected unopposed.
- On **15 December 2025**, former IAS officer **Raj Kumar Goyal** was sworn in as the **13th Chief Information Commissioner** for a three-year term by **President Droupadi Murmu** at **Rashtrapati Bhavan**, succeeding **Heeralal Samariya**, and subsequently administered oath to eight new Information Commissioners, completing CIC's full bench for the first time since 2016.
- In **December 2025**, the **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet** approved the appointment of **Ravi Ranjan** as **Managing Director of State Bank of India**, succeeding **Vinay M. Tonse**, whose tenure ended on **30 November 2025**, strengthening leadership at India's largest public sector bank.
- In a historic milestone, **23-year-old Sai Jadhav** from **Kolhapur, Maharashtra**, became the **first woman officer to pass out from the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun**, in **December 2025**, breaking a **93-year-old tradition** of male-only graduates.
- On **15 December 2025**, **NCAER** appointed **Suresh Goyal**, former MD & CEO of **National Highway Infra Trust**, as its **11th Director General**, effective **5 January 2026**, succeeding **Poonam Gupta**, who joined RBI as Deputy Governor.

- In **December 2025**, the **Ministry of Coal** appointed **B. Sairam** as the new **Chairman-cum-Managing Director of Coal India Limited**, with tenure lasting until **31 March 2028**, succeeding interim CMD **Sanoj Kumar Jha**.
- The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet** also approved the re-appointment of **Ashwini Kumar Tewari** as **Managing Director of SBI** for a second two-year term from **27 January 2026 to 31 December 2027**, completing the full MD team at SBI.

Defence News

- **Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi**, Chief of Naval Staff of the **Indian Navy**, visited **Brazil** from **9–12 December 2025** to strengthen maritime cooperation, capacity-building and professional exchanges, during which he held high-level meetings with leaders including **Celso Amorim** and **Defence Minister Jose Mucio Monteiro**, visited the **Itaguai Naval Complex** and **NAM Atlantico**, and attended the passing-out parade of midshipmen at the **Brazilian Naval Academy**.
- On **16 December 2025**, the **Indian Navy** commissioned 'DSC A20', India's first indigenously designed and constructed **Diving Support Craft**, at **Naval Base Kochi** under the **Southern Naval Command**, in a ceremony presided over by **Vice Admiral Sameer Saxena**.
- The **2nd edition of Exercise DESERT CYCLONE-II**, a joint military exercise between the **Indian Army and UAE Land Forces**, commenced on **18 December 2025** at **Abu Dhabi** and will run till **30 December 2025**, focusing on **urban warfare, UN-mandated sub-conventional operations, peacekeeping and counter-terrorism**.
- The **Indian Navy** announced the commissioning of **INAS 335 Ospreys Squadron in Goa**, which will operate maritime surveillance aircraft to strengthen coastal and sea surveillance and enhance overall naval preparedness.
- **India, Brazil and France** signed a **tripartite MoU on Scorpene-class submarines**, aimed at strengthening naval cooperation, defence diplomacy and enhancing **indigenous submarine maintenance capabilities**.
- The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet** approved **B. Sairam** as **Chairman-cum-Managing Director of Coal India Limited**, the world's largest coal producer, to focus on production targets and national energy security.
- The **Indian Army** inducted heavy tanks into the **Kashmir Valley**, marking a major logistics and operational milestone that enhances **high-altitude combat readiness and border security**.
- **Exercise Desert Cyclone-II Commences:** India and UAE launch joint military exercise focusing on desert warfare tactics, counter-terrorism operations and enhanced interoperability under bilateral Gulf security framework.



Awards and Recognitions

- In **December 2025**, **TIME** magazine named the “**Architects of Artificial Intelligence**” as its **Person of the Year 2025**, honouring AI leaders including **Jensen Huang, Sam Altman, Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, Lisa Su, Demis Hassabis, Dario Amodei and Fei-Fei Li** for driving AI’s mainstream adoption and global impact.
- On **14 December 2025**, Vice President **C. P. Radhakrishnan** released a **commemorative postage stamp** in New Delhi to honour **Emperor Perumbidugu Mutharaiyar II (Suvaran Maran)**, in the presence of senior Union Ministers and parliamentary leaders.
- In **December 2025**, India added **Siliserh Lake (Rajasthan)** and **Kopra Jalashay (Chhattisgarh)** to the **Ramsar List**, becoming the country’s **95th and 96th Ramsar Sites**, giving Chhattisgarh its **first-ever Ramsar wetland**.
- In **December 2025**, **Ponduru Khadi** from **Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh**, received the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**, recognising its traditional handspun and handwoven cotton heritage.
- On **15 December 2025**, **C-DOT** became the **first Indian organisation** to receive the **IEEE Standards Association Corporate Award 2025**, joining an elite global group of only five awardees.
- In **December 2025**, **Forbes** reported that **Elon Musk** became the **first person in history to cross a net worth of USD 600 billion**, driven by growth in AI, space and electric vehicle sectors.
- On **17 December 2025**, **Hurun India** and **IDFC FIRST Private Banking** released the **Top 200 Self-Made Entrepreneurs of the Millennia 2025**, with **Deepinder Goyal** topping the list, followed by **Radhakishan Damani** and **IndiGo founders Rahul Bhatia and Rakesh Gangwal**.
- In **December 2025**, **CRPF officer Dinesh Khatak** from Haryana was awarded the **Union Home Minister’s Efficiency Medal** for exemplary service and contribution to national security.
- In **December 2025**, **NTPC NETRA** and **CSIR scientists** received **innovation awards** for applied research supporting the energy and industrial sectors and promoting indigenous R&D.
- The Indian film “**Homebound**” was shortlisted for the **Oscar 2026 Best International Feature Film**, enhancing India’s presence on the global cinema stage.
- The **FIFA Best Football Awards 2025** celebrated top performers in men’s and women’s football, recognising excellence and global achievements in the sport.
- Nnena Kalu Wins Turner Prize**: Scottish artist **Nnena Kalu**, the first artist with a **learning disability**, wins the **Turner Prize** for her **abstract drawings and hanging sculptures**, marking a milestone for **inclusion** in art.

- PGIMER Chandigarh Tops HTA**: **PGIMER** recognized as **India’s Best Health Technology Assessment Institute** for the second year, excelling in **evidence-based policy, cost-effective healthcare**, and support for **Ayushman Bharat–PMJAY**.

Summits and Conferences News

- In **December 2025**, Union Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal** virtually inaugurated the **3rd Session of the Council of the International Organisation for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA)** in **Mumbai**, reaffirming India’s commitment to global maritime cooperation and navigation safety standards.
- During **National Handicrafts Week (8–14 December 2025)**, the **Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)** under the **Ministry of Textiles** launched the nationwide **Chaupal Program** in **New Delhi** to empower artisans, with **Neelam Shami Rao**, Secretary of the Ministry of Textiles, attending as Chief Guest.
- The **7th session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7)** was held from **8–12 December 2025** at **UNEP headquarters in Nairobi**, themed “**Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet**”, and attended by over **6,000 delegates from 186 countries**.
- UNEA-7**, chaired by **Dr. Abdullah bin Ali Al-Amri of Oman**, saw India represented by **MoS Kirti Vardhan Singh**, while **Supriya Sahu**, Additional Chief Secretary of **Tamil Nadu**, received the **UNEP Champions of the Earth Award 2025**, alongside awardees **Imazon (Brazil)** and **Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change**.

Ranks and Reports

- In **December 2025**, **Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI)** released the ‘**Global AI Vibrancy Tool (GVT) 2025**’, under its Artificial Intelligence (AI) Index project. According to the report, **India** ranked **3rd** in the **2024 Global Vibrancy Index** with a score of **21.59**, marking a significant improvement from its 7th position in 2023.
- The **United States of America (USA)** topped the rankings with a score of **78.6**, while **China** placed second with **36.95**.
- Exam Hints:**
- What?** Release of Global AI Vibrancy Tool 2025
- Released by:** Stanford HAI
- Top 3:** USA (78.6), China (36.95), India (21.59)
- 7 pillars:** R&D, Talent, Economy & Investment, Policy & Governance, Infrastructure, Responsible AI, and Public Opinion.
- About Global AI Vibrancy Tool (GVT):**
- Overview:** It is a data-driven benchmarking and visualization tool developed by Stanford University’s HAI. It is designed to measure and compare how vibrant or active national AI ecosystems are across multiple dimensions.

- The 2025 GVT updates data on AI activity across countries, up to **2024**.
- **Measured Pillars:** The seven pillars include Research and Development (R&D), Talent & Education, Economy & Investment, Policy & Governance, Infrastructure, Responsible AI practices, and Public Opinion & Adoption.
- It has replaced the earlier eight-pillar structure by merging the former Education and Diversity pillars into the Talent pillar.
- **Indicators Change:** The number of indicators used for rankings has been reduced from 42 to 23 key indicators.
- **Ranked countries:** The tool continues to rank 36 countries and indicator-level data has been expanded to cover up to 67 countries for selected measures in the AI Metrics Over Time section.
- **Highlights of GVT 2025:**
- **Other top 10 countries:** South Korea secured the 4th position with a score of 17.24, while the United Kingdom (UK) ranked 5th with 16.64.
- Singapore (6th rank) (16.43), Spain (7th rank) (16.37), United Arab Emirates (UAE) (eighth rank) (16.06), Japan (ninth) (16.04), and Canada (tenth) (15.56).
- **Performance Across Key Pillars:** The USA holds the 1st position across all categories, including Research and Development (R&D), Responsible AI, Economy, Talent, Policy & Governance, Public Opinion, and Infrastructure, while China consistently ranks 2nd in each of these areas.
- **India-Specific:** The growth in Talent & Workforce pillar is driven by the expansion of AI-skilled professionals and increasing AI activity in its software and tech industry. The scientific publications, patents, and global collaborations in AI have increased, scaling the R&D pillar.
- **Top 5 countries in 2024 Global Vibrancy Index :**

Rank	Country	Score
1	United States of America (USA)	78.60
2	China	36.95
3	India	21.59
4	South Korea	17.24
5	United Kingdom (UK)	16.64



About Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI):

- Executive Director (ED) – Russell Wald
- Headquarters – California, United States of America (USA)
- Establishment – 2019

Sports News

- In **December 2025**, **Commonwealth Sport** approved **India to host the 1st Commonwealth Kho Kho Championship** from **9–14 March 2026**, with participation from **24 nations** and **16 men's and 16 women's teams**, marking another global milestone after **Ahmedabad being named host of the 2030 Commonwealth Games**.
- The **inaugural Commonwealth Kho Kho Championship** will be the next major international event for the sport after the **first Kho Kho World Cup held in New Delhi in January 2025**, further strengthening India's leadership in indigenous sports.
- The **2025 Squash World Cup**, organised by the **World Squash Federation and SRFI**, was held from **9–14 December 2025 in Chennai**, where **India's mixed team won its first-ever title**, defeating **Hong Kong 3–0** in the final.
- With this victory, **India became the first Asian nation and the fourth overall** after **Australia, England, and Egypt** to win the **WSF Squash World Cup**, marking a historic achievement in Indian squash.
- **MRF Tyres** won the **FIA European Rally Championship 2025**, delivering a landmark global motorsport victory for India against leading international competitors.
- Indian cricketer **Shafali Verma** was named **ICC Women's Player of the Month for November 2025** for her outstanding batting performances, while **Simon Harmer** won the **ICC Men's Player of the Month** for match-winning bowling spells.
- The **IPL Auction 2026** created history with multiple players crossing the **₹20 crore mark**, highlighting the league's growing global value, while officials clarified that **Cameron Green's final salary stood at ₹18 crore** after contractual adjustments.
- **Jharkhand Claims Maiden Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy:** State cricket team wins India's premier domestic T20 tournament for the first time with dominant all-round performance in final, showcasing rising strength in BCCI competitions.

Schemes and Committees News

- In December 2025, **Pushkar Singh Dhami**, Chief Minister (CM) of Uttarakhand, launched "**Meri Yojana**" Portal, an online platform designed to provide citizens with comprehensive information on welfare schemes offer by the Central and State Governments, in Dehradun, Uttarakhand. **About Meri Yojana Portal:**

- **Aim:** The initiative aims to increase awareness of welfare schemes, ensure benefits reach eligible beneficiaries, make scheme information easy to understand, reduce dependency on intermediaries, and strengthen transparency, accountability, and delivery effectiveness.
- **Features:** The portal includes a comprehensive database of welfare schemes which includes scheme details, eligibility criteria, application process, and required documents.
- **Handbook:** He also launched **three editions** of the Meri Yojana handbook such as the General Edition, the State Government edition, and the Central Government edition.

Science and Technology News

- In **December 2025**, **Bannerghatta Biological Park, Bengaluru**, received **eight black-capped capuchin monkeys (Sapajus apella)**—four males and four females—under an **international animal exchange programme**, with the animals arriving at **Kempegowda International Airport on 14 December 2025** and transferred to the park the same day.
- On **17 December 2025**, the **Indian Navy commissioned INAS 335 (Ospreys)**, its **second MH-60R Seahawk multi-mission helicopter squadron**, at **INS Hansa, Goa**, in a ceremony presided over by **Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi**, significantly enhancing naval aviation capabilities along the western seaboard.
- In **2025**, **India ranked 3rd globally in the Global AI Index**, reflecting strong performance in **AI research, talent, infrastructure, and innovation**, behind the **United States and China**.
- **AIIMS Delhi** conducted **India's first advanced brain stent clinical trial**, marking a major step in indigenous neurovascular research and reducing dependence on imported medical devices.
- **Google** launched **Project Suncatcher**, an initiative aimed at developing **solar-powered data centres in space** to lower carbon emissions from data operations.
- A **Bank of America report** ranked **India first globally in AI app active users**, surpassing the **US and China**, driven by high smartphone penetration and rapid digital adoption.
- **Indian Team Wins NASA Space Apps Challenge:** National team secures global top honor at international competition using NASA's open data to create innovative solutions for space exploration, climate monitoring and data analysis challenges.
- **Michaela Benthaus in Space:** German engineer Michaela Benthaus will be the **first wheelchair user to go to space on Blue Origin NS-37**, promoting **accessibility in aerospace**.
- **ISRO LVM3-M6 Launch:** **ISRO** will launch **LVM3-M6** on **Dec 24** to deploy **BlueBird-6 satellite**, boosting **India's commercial space role**.

- **RESPOND Basket 2025:** **ISRO** invites **research proposals** from **universities** to align with **space missions**, focusing on **launch vehicles, satellites, propulsion, space science, and advanced materials**.

Important Days News

- The **United Nations' International Day of Neutrality** is observed on **12 December** each year to promote neutrality as a tool for peace, diplomacy, and global security, following the adoption of **UNGA Resolution A/RES/71/275 in 2017**, with the first observance held in **2017**.
- The **International Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day** is also observed on **12 December** to advocate for accessible and affordable healthcare for all, with the **2025 theme** being **"Unaffordable health costs? We're sick of it!"**.
- **National Energy Conservation Day** is celebrated in India on **14 December** to promote energy efficiency and sustainable practices, led by the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency under the Ministry of Power**.
- **Vijay Diwas** is observed on **16 December** in **India and Bangladesh** to commemorate India's victory in the **1971 Indo-Pak War** and the surrender of Pakistani forces in Dhaka, with **2025 marking the 54th anniversary**.
- The **International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers** is observed globally on **17 December**, with **2025 marking the 22nd observance**, highlighting the need for safety, dignity, and human rights of sex workers.
- The **United Nations' International Migrants Day** is marked on **18 December** to recognise migrants' contributions and protect their rights, with the **2025 theme "My Great Story: Cultures and Development"**, and **2025 marking the 25th observance**.
- The **UN Arabic Language Day**, observed on **18 December**, commemorates Arabic's adoption as an official UN language in **1973**, with **2025 marking the 52nd anniversary** under the theme **"Innovative Pathways for Arabic: Policies and Practices for a More Inclusive Linguistic Future"**.
- In India, **Minorities Rights Day** is observed on **18 December** to mark the **1992 UN Declaration on Minority Rights**, emphasising constitutional protections under **Articles 29 and 30**, alongside the global observance of **International Migrants Day 2025** highlighting migrant rights and contributions.
- **Goa Liberation Day Observed Nationwide:** India commemorates December 19 as 64th anniversary of Operation Vijay's successful conclusion, honoring armed forces' 36-hour tri-service campaign that ended Portuguese colonial rule in 1961.
- **International Human Solidarity Day 2025:** Observed on **20 December**, it emphasizes **global unity, cooperation, poverty alleviation, health equality, social justice**, and achieving **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

Obituaries News

- In **December 2025**, senior **Indian National Congress** leader and former **Union Home Minister Shivraj Vishwanath Patil Chakurkar** passed away at the age of **90** in **Latur, Maharashtra**, having been born on **12 October 1935** in **Chakur**, present-day Maharashtra.
- On **14 December 2025**, veteran **INC** leader **Shamanur Shivashankarappa**, the country's **oldest serving MLA**, passed away at **94** in **Bengaluru, Karnataka**, after a long public life rooted in **Davanagere**.
- On **15 December 2025**, **Ram Vilas Das Vedanti**, former **Member of Parliament** and a prominent figure of the **Ram Janmabhoomi movement**, passed away at **67** in **Rewa, Madhya Pradesh**.
- On **14 December 2025**, veteran journalist and **Padma Shri** awardee **Prafulla Govinda Baruah**, **Chairman Emeritus** and **Editor of The Assam Tribune**, passed away at **93** in **Guwahati**, having received the **Padma Shri** in **2018** for his contributions to literature and education.
- On **17 December 2025**, **Pulitzer Prize-winning** journalist **Peter Arnett**, renowned for frontline reporting during the **Vietnam and Gulf Wars**, passed away at **91** in **California, USA**, after winning the **Pulitzer** in **1966** for international reporting.

- Renowned sculptor **Ram Sutar**, designer of the **Statue of Unity** and a **Padma Bhushan** awardee, passed away at the age of **100**, leaving behind a lasting legacy in modern Indian public sculpture.
- **Pulitzer Prize Winner Peter Arnett Dies**: Legendary war correspondent and Vietnam War reporter passes away at age 91, remembered for fearless frontline journalism covering major global conflicts including Gulf War.
- **Sreenivasan Passes Away**: Veteran **Malayalam actor, writer, and director Sreenivasan** passed away at the age of **69**. Known as the **voice of the common man**, he was celebrated for his **sharp humour, social commentary, and meaningful cinema**.

Miscellaneous News

- **Capuchin Monkeys Arrive at Bannerghatta**: South African capuchin monkeys imported to Karnataka's Bannerghatta Biological Park near Bengaluru following international wildlife protocols to enhance genetic diversity and conservation efforts.

Static Takeaways

Entity / Topic	Details
Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)	Minister of State (IC): Dr. Jitendra Singh • Constituency: Udhampur, Jammu & Kashmir
Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL)	CMD: Madhu S. Nair • HQ: Kochi, Kerala • Established: 1972
Arton Capital	President: Armand Arton • HQ: Montreal, Canada • Established: 2006
Liberia	President: Joseph Nyuma Boakai • Capital: Monrovia • Currency: Liberian Dollar (LRD)
Reserve Bank of India (RBI)	Governor: Sanjay Malhotra • HQ: Mumbai, Maharashtra • Established: 1 April 1935
Uttar Pradesh (UP)	CM: Yogi Adityanath • Governor: Anandiben Mafatbhai Patel • Capital: Lucknow • WLS: Ranipur WLS, Chandraprabha WLS
United Nations (UN)	Secretary-General: António Guterres • HQ: New York, USA • Established: 1945
World Health Organization (WHO)	DG: Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus • HQ: Geneva, Switzerland • Established: 1948
World Inequality Lab (WIL)	Scientific Co-Director: Facundo Alvaredo • HQ: Paris, France • Established: 2016

Entity / Topic	Details
Italy	Prime Minister: Giorgia Meloni • Capital: Rome • Currency: Euro (EUR)
International Organisation for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA)	Established: 1957 (NGO) • Became IGO in Aug 2024 after ratification by 34 states • Secretary-General: Francis Zachariae (Denmark) • HQ: St Germain-en-Laye, France
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	Executive Director: Inger Andersen • HQ: Nairobi, Kenya • Established: 1972
Asian Development Bank (ADB)	President: Masato Kanda (Japan) • HQ: Manila, Philippines • Member Nations: 69 (50 from Asia-Pacific) • Established: 1966
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands	Adopted: 1971 (Ramsar, Iran) • In force: 1975 • India acceded: 1 Feb 1982 • SG: Dr Musonda Mumba • HQ: Gland, Switzerland
Czech Republic	President: Petr Pavel • Capital: Prague • Currency: Czech Koruna (CZK)
Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)	Established: 1 March 2002 under Energy Conservation Act, 2001 • DG: Dr Srikant Nagulpalli • HQ: New Delhi
UNESCO	Director-General: Khaled El-Enany • HQ: Paris, France • Established: 1945
Russia	President: Vladimir Putin • PM: Mikhail Mishustin • Capital: Moscow • Currency: Russian Ruble (RUB)
Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI)	Executive Director: Russell Wald • HQ: California, USA • Established: 2019
Andhra Pradesh (AP)	CM: Nara Chandrababu Naidu • Governor: Syed Abdul Nazeer • Capital: Amaravati • WLS: Sri Lankamalleswara WLS, Krishna WLS
Chile	President: Gabriel Boric • Capital: Santiago • Currency: Chilean Peso (CLP)
Central Information Commission (CIC)	Statutory body under RTI Act, 2005 • Apex authority for RTI appeals & complaints • Jurisdiction: All Central Public Authorities • HQ: New Delhi • Established: 2005
Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)	DG: Magesh Ethirajan • HQ: Pune, Maharashtra • Established: 1988
Brazil	President: Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva • Capital: Brasília • Currency: Brazilian Real (BRL)

Entity / Topic	Details
Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)	Autonomous under DARE, MoA&FW • DG: Dr Mangi Lal Jat • HQ: New Delhi • Established: 1929
State Bank of India (SBI)	Chairman: Challa Sreenivasulu Setty • HQ: Mumbai • Established: 1 July 1955 • Tagline: Pure Banking, Nothing Else
Indian Military Academy (IMA)	Commandant: Lt Gen Nagendra Singh • HQ: Dehradun, Uttarakhand • Established: 1932
Titagarh Rail Systems Limited (TRSL)	MD & CEO: Umesh Chowdhary • HQ: Kolkata, West Bengal • Established: 1997
Microsoft	CEO: Satya Nadella • HQ: Washington, USA • Established: 1975
Jordan	PM: Jafar Hassan • Capital: Amman • Currency: Jordanian Dinar (JOD)
Indian Air Force (IAF)	Chief of Air Staff: Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh • HQ: New Delhi • Established: 1950
Ethiopia	PM: Abiy Ahmed Ali • Capital: Addis Ababa • Currency: Ethiopian Birr (ETB)
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	President: Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan • Capital: Abu Dhabi • Currency: UAE Dirham (AED)
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Part of UN system • DG: Amy Pope (USA) • HQ: Geneva, Switzerland • Established: 1951
Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)	Chairman: Tuhin Kanta Pandey • HQ: Mumbai • Non-statutory: 1988 • Statutory: 1992
Hurun India	Founder & Chief Researcher: Anas Rahman Junaid • HQ: Mumbai • Established: 2012
Indian Navy (IN)	CNS: Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi • HQ: New Delhi • Motto: "Sam No Varunah" • Established: 1950