

## Weekly One Liners 17th to 23rd March, 2025

### What is Raisina Dialogue 2025?

The **Raisina Dialogue** is India's premier conference on **geopolitics and geo-economics**, dedicated to addressing some of the most pressing global challenges. Hosted annually in **New Delhi**, this dialogue brings together world leaders, policymakers, industry experts, and scholars to engage in discussions shaping the international order.

The **10th edition of the Raisina Dialogue** is set to take place from **March 17 to March 19, 2025**. This milestone event will once again serve as a critical platform for fostering dialogue and cooperation among nations, highlighting India's pivotal role in global affairs.

#### Inauguration and Keynote Address

Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the dialogue on **March 17, 2025**. The **Prime Minister of New Zealand, The Right Honourable Christopher Luxon**, will be the **Chief Guest** and will deliver the **keynote address**. His presence underscores the strengthening of bilateral ties between India and New Zealand and the broader commitment to international dialogue on pressing global issues.

Global Participation: 125 Countries Unite

The Raisina Dialogue 2025 will witness an impressive gathering of participants from around **125 countries**, including:

- **Ministers and Diplomats**
- **Former Heads of State and Government Leaders**
- **Military Commanders**
- **Business and Industry Leaders**
- **Technology Pioneers**
- **Academicians and Researchers**
- **Journalists and Strategic Affairs Experts**
- **Representatives from Think Tanks and Civil Society**
- **Youth Delegates from Across the World**

With such a diverse and dynamic mix of attendees, the dialogue will be instrumental in shaping conversations around contemporary geopolitical challenges and economic transitions.

Theme for 2025: "Kālachakra – People, Peace and Planet"

The central theme for Raisina Dialogue 2025 is "**Kālachakra – People, Peace and Planet.**" This theme encapsulates the essence of global interconnectedness, emphasizing the need for sustainable solutions, inclusive development, and strategic foresight in policymaking.

#### Key Thematic Pillars

The discussions will be structured around **six thematic pillars**, each addressing critical issues that shape international relations and global governance:

##### 1. Politics Interrupted: Shifting Sands and Rising Tides

This theme will delve into the evolving **geopolitical landscape**, focusing on the disruptions in global power dynamics, the rise of multipolarity, and the impact of shifting alliances on world politics.

##### 2. Resolving the Green Trilemma: Who, Where, & How

Addressing the urgent need for **climate action**, this pillar will focus on the trade-offs between economic growth, environmental sustainability, and energy security. Experts will discuss innovative solutions for achieving carbon neutrality and fostering green investments.

##### 3. Digital Planet: Agents, Agencies, and Absences

With the world increasingly reliant on **digital technologies**, discussions under this pillar will explore the role of **artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital governance, and data privacy** in shaping the global digital economy.

##### 4. Militant Mercantilism: Trade, Supply Chains & the Exchange Rate Addiction

This segment will analyze the challenges posed by **protectionist policies, disrupted supply chains, and fluctuating exchange rates**, shedding light on how nations can navigate the complexities of global trade and economic resilience.

##### 5. The Tiger's Tale: Rewriting Development with a New Plan

Focusing on emerging economies, this theme will explore **new development models**, strategies for economic growth, and the role of international institutions in fostering equitable progress.

##### 6. Investing in Peace: Drivers, Institutions, & Leadership

Amid rising geopolitical tensions, this pillar will examine the mechanisms required for **conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and global security cooperation**. Discussions will also highlight the role of **multilateral organizations** in maintaining peace and stability.

Scale of Participation and Global Outreach

Over **3,500 participants** from around **125 countries** will join the Raisina Dialogue **in person**, making it one of the largest diplomatic gatherings in India. Additionally, millions of viewers across the world will be able to engage with the event through **digital platforms**, ensuring widespread reach and impact.



**Significance of the Raisina Dialogue 2025**

**1. Strengthening India's Role in Global Affairs**

As a key global player, India's leadership in hosting the Raisina Dialogue reflects its commitment to shaping **international policy discourse** and fostering diplomatic engagement.

**2. Driving Strategic and Economic Partnerships**

The presence of policymakers and business leaders provides an excellent opportunity for fostering **bilateral and multilateral partnerships**, particularly in areas like trade, defense, climate action, and digital governance.

**3. A Platform for Young Leaders and Think Tanks**

The event also serves as a knowledge-sharing platform for **academics, researchers, and young leaders**, fostering innovation and thought leadership in global governance.

**India – New Zealand Announce Launch of FTA Negotiations**

India and New Zealand have officially **launched negotiations for a "comprehensive and mutually beneficial" Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**, marking a significant step in their bilateral relations. This will be India's second FTA in the Oceania region, after the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), signed in April 2022. The FTA aims to enhance supply chain integration, expand market access, and foster economic resilience and prosperity for both nations.

**Key Highlights**

**Official Announcement**

- The FTA negotiations were announced during a meeting between Indian Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and New Zealand Trade Minister Todd McClay on March 16, 2025, in New Delhi.

**Strategic Timing**

- The announcement came ahead of the bilateral meeting between Indian PM Narendra Modi and New Zealand PM Christopher Luxon, who arrived in India for his first official visit.

**Current Trade Scenario**

- Bilateral trade crossed \$1 billion between April 2024 and January 2025.
- India's exports to New Zealand in 2023-24 were \$538 million, while imports stood at \$335 million, with a \$203 million trade surplus in India's favor.
- In 2024-25 (up to December 31), exports grew by 21.49% to \$496 million, while imports surged by 78.72% to \$463 million, narrowing the trade gap to \$33 million.

**Key Imports & Exports**

- India imports from New Zealand: Wool, iron & steel, fruits & nuts, aluminum.
- India exports to New Zealand: Pharmaceuticals, machinery, textiles, pearls, precious stones, and metals.

**Indian Business Presence in New Zealand**

- IT giants like HCL, Infosys, and Tech Mahindra have established operations.
- Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, and New India Assurance also operate in the country.

**Objective of FTA**

- Achieve balanced trade outcomes.
- Strengthen supply chain integration.
- Expand market access for businesses and consumers.
- Foster economic resilience and prosperity.

**Hockey India Awards 2024: Check Complete List of Winners**

The **Hockey India Annual Awards 2024** was a grand event that recognized and honoured the finest talents in Indian hockey. Held in **New Delhi**, the prestigious awards ceremony was a momentous occasion as it coincided with the **centenary of Indian hockey** and the **golden jubilee of India's 1975 Men's Hockey World Cup victory**.

The event was marked by the celebration of outstanding performances from Indian players, acknowledging their dedication and contribution to the sport. The top honors at the event were claimed by **Harmanpreet Singh** and **Savita Punia**, both of whom were awarded the **Balbir Singh Sr Award for Player of the Year** in the men's and women's categories, respectively.

**Complete List of Hockey India Awards 2024 Winners**

- Hockey India Baljit Singh Award for Goalkeeper of the Year: **Savita Punia**
- Hockey India Pargat Singh Award for Defender of the Year: **Amit Rohidas**
- Hockey India Ajit Pal Singh Award for Midfielder of the Year: **Hardik Singh**
- Hockey India Dhanraj Pillay Award for Forward of the Year: **Abhishek**
- Hockey India Asunta Lakra Award for Upcoming Player of the Year (Women – Under 21): **Deepika**
- Hockey India Jugraj Singh Award for Upcoming Player of the Year (Men – Under 21): **Araijeet Singh Hundal**
- Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr Award for Player of The Year (Women): **Savita Punia**
- Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr Award for Player of The Year (Men): **Harmanpreet Singh**
- Hockey India Major Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award: **1975 World Cup Winning Team**

**Honoring the Legacy: The 1975 World Cup Winning Team**

This year's Hockey India Awards held special significance as it marked the **50th anniversary of India's historic 1975 Men's Hockey World Cup win**. In a heartfelt tribute, the members of the victorious squad were conferred the **Major Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award**.

The event saw the presence of legendary players from the 1975 team, including **Leslie Fernandez, Onkar Singh, Ashok Diwan, BP Govinda, Kaliah PE, Brigadier HJS Chimni, VJ Phillips, Ashok Kumar, Aslam Sher Khan, and Brigadier Harcharan Singh**. Their contribution to Indian hockey remains unparalleled, and the award was a fitting tribute to their glorious victory.

**India-New Zealand Bilateral Relations: Key Outcomes of PM Christopher Luxon's Visit**

**Prime Minister of New Zealand, Rt Hon Christopher Luxon**, visited India from March 16-20, 2025, at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This was his first official visit to India in his current capacity. During his visit, he engaged in bilateral talks with PM Modi, participated in the 10th edition of the Raisina Dialogue as the Chief Guest, and met with President Droupadi Murmu. **The visit aimed to strengthen bilateral ties across multiple sectors, including trade, investment, defence, education, and multilateral cooperation.** Both leaders reiterated their commitment to enhancing people-to-people ties, maritime security, climate action, and regional stability in the Indo-Pacific.

**Key Highlights of the Visit**

**Diplomatic and Strategic Engagements**

- PM Luxon received a warm and traditional welcome in New Delhi.
- He laid a wreath at Raj Ghat in honor of Mahatma Gandhi.
- PM Modi and PM Luxon held bilateral talks, reaffirming shared democratic values and strengthening cooperation in trade, security, education, and technology.
- PM Luxon was the Chief Guest at the 10th Raisina Dialogue, delivering the Inaugural Keynote Address.
- Both leaders emphasized strengthening multilateral cooperation and ensuring a stable Indo-Pacific region.

**Economic & Trade Cooperation**

- Both sides welcomed sustained trade and investment flows and encouraged business collaborations.
- The launch of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations was announced to enhance economic ties.
- Discussions initiated on digital payments cooperation within the FTA framework.
- The Authorized Economic Operators Mutual Recognition Arrangement (AEO-MRA) was signed to facilitate trade.
- New cooperation on horticulture and forestry was established through MOUs and Letters of Intent.
- Tourism and aviation ties were strengthened, with an update to the Air Services Agreement and plans for direct flight operations.

**Defence and Security Cooperation**

- Defence cooperation was expanded with the signing of the India-New Zealand MoU on Defence Cooperation.
- Increased participation in military exercises, officer exchanges, and naval port calls.

- New Zealand welcomed India's participation in the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).
- Both sides agreed on regular dialogue for maritime safety and security.
- New Zealand expressed interest in joining India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).
- Cooperation on the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in Gujarat was discussed.

**Science, Technology & Disaster Management**

- Strengthened partnerships in research, technology, and innovation.
- Focus on low-emission climate-resilient economies and India's leadership in the International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- New Zealand joined the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).
- Progress towards a Memorandum of Cooperation on earthquake mitigation.

**Education, Mobility & Cultural Exchange**

- Expansion of education partnerships and opportunities for Indian students in New Zealand.
- Discussions on mobility arrangements for professionals and skilled workers.
- Signing of a refreshed Education Cooperation Arrangement.
- Signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation on Sports, marking 100 years of sporting ties.
- Promotion of traditional medicine and increased cooperation in yoga, music, dance, and festivals.

**Regional & Multilateral Cooperation**

- Both sides emphasized an open, inclusive, and stable Indo-Pacific region.
- New Zealand endorsed India's bid for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- Joint commitment to counterterrorism and disrupting terrorist financing networks.
- Support for a two-state solution for Israel-Palestine peace and a negotiated settlement for the Ukraine war.

**Himachal Pradesh Budget 2025-26: A Focus on Tourism, Rural Development, and Green Energy**

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister **Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu** presented the **annual budget for FY 2025-26**, amounting to **Rs 58,514 crore**. The budget emphasizes **tourism, rural development, and green energy**, while also addressing financial challenges such as a **reduction in the Revenue Deficit Grant** and the **withdrawal of GST compensation**.

**Financial Challenges and Debt Liability**

While presenting his **third budget**, CM Sukhu highlighted the financial difficulties faced by the state. The **Revenue Deficit Grant (RDG)** has been reduced significantly from **Rs 10,949 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 3,257 crore in 2025-26**. Himachal Pradesh has already incurred a **loss of Rs 9,478 crore** till 2023-24 due to the **cessation of GST compensation** by the central government.

The state's **debt liability has risen to Rs 1,04,729 crore**, with **Rs 29,046 crore** borrowed under the present government. Of this, **70% was spent on repaying previous loans and interest**, while only **Rs 8,093 crore** was allocated to developmental projects.

**Boosting Tourism: Religious and Eco-Tourism Focus**

Tourism has been given a major push in the budget. The government aims to promote **religious tourism and eco-tourism**, as well as explore **lesser-known tourist destinations**. Additionally, **tea estates will be developed into eco-tourism hubs** to attract visitors.

- **Eco-Tourism Expansion:** Seven eco-tourism sites were allocated in 2024, and **78 new eco-tourism sites** will be allocated in the next phase.
- **Revenue Generation:** The government anticipates revenue of **Rs 200 crore over the next five years** through eco-tourism initiatives.

**Green Energy and Environmental Conservation**

CM Sukhu stressed that **Himachal Pradesh's forest cover acts as the "lungs of North India"** by providing vital ecological services, including **soil conservation, water purification, clean air, and climate stability**. The estimated value of these services is **Rs 90,000 crore annually**. The government is presenting its case before the **16th Finance Commission** to seek financial support for its environmental contributions.

Additionally, the government plans to **purchase 500 electric buses** in 2025-26 to reduce carbon emissions. The **Shimla Ropeway Project** will also be launched in the next fiscal year to promote **sustainable urban transport**.

**Support for Farmers and Agriculture**

The government has introduced multiple schemes to benefit farmers and agriculturalists:

- **Increase in Milk MSP:**
  1. **Cow milk:** From **Rs 45 to Rs 51 per litre**
  2. **Buffalo milk:** From **Rs 55 to Rs 61 per litre**
- **Natural Farming:** A target of bringing **one lakh farmers** under **natural farming** has been set for 2025-26. So far, **1.58 lakh farmers** have adopted this practice.
- **MSP for Raw Turmeric:** Farmers growing **kachi haldi (raw turmeric)** naturally will receive an **MSP of Rs 90 per kg**.
- **Spice Park in Hamirpur:** The state will set up a **Spice Park** in Hamirpur to boost spice farming and processing.

**Employment and Wage Hike**

The budget also brings good news for workers engaged in the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)**.

- **Daily wage increased by Rs 20**, from **Rs 300 to Rs 320 per day**.
- Several **new schemes for employment generation** will be introduced, focusing on **rural development and infrastructure**.

**Social Welfare Initiatives**

CM Sukhu announced several schemes benefiting **pensioners, women, disabled individuals, and children:**

- **Pension Arrears for Senior Citizens:**
  1. Pensioners aged **70-75 years** will receive their **arrears in May 2025**.
  2. The previous **BJP government left liabilities of Rs 10,000 crore** related to government employee arrears.
- **New Directorates for Education:** Separate **Directorates for Schools and Colleges** will be established to streamline **educational governance and policy-making**.

**Combating Drug Abuse and Organized Crime**

To address the rising concern of **drug abuse** and **organized crime** in the state, the government has announced the following measures:

- **Special Task Force (STF)** to be formed for tackling drug-related issues.
- Introduction of the **Himachal Pradesh Prevention of Continuing Unlawful Activity and Control of Organized Crime Act, 2025**, aimed at preventing illegal activities and organized crime.

**Telangana Government Unveils ₹3.04 Lakh Crore Budget for 2025-26: Focus on Welfare and Development**

The Telangana Government has presented its most ambitious budget to date, crossing the **₹3 lakh crore** mark for the first time since the state's formation. The budget, which amounts to **₹3.04 lakh crore**, reflects the government's commitment to **welfare programs, economic growth, and infrastructure development**.

Deputy Chief Minister **Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka**, who also holds the Finance portfolio, presented the budget in the state assembly, emphasizing inclusivity and equitable resource distribution. The financial plan outlines significant allocations for **agriculture, education, backward classes, and flagship welfare schemes**, all while balancing fiscal challenges.

**Budget Breakdown: Revenue and Capital Expenditure**

The Telangana Budget 2025-26 includes:

- **Revenue Expenditure:** ₹2.26 lakh crore
- **Capital Expenditure:** ₹36,504 crore
- **Total Budget Outlay:** ₹3.04 lakh crore (5% higher than last year's ₹2.91 lakh crore)
- **Surplus:** ₹2,738 crore
- **Fiscal Deficit:** ₹54,009 crore
- **Primary Deficit:** ₹34,640 crore

The budget reflects the **state's continued dependence on borrowings**, with an estimated **₹70,000 crore in loans**, including ₹64,539 crore from open market borrowings.

Major Allocations: Welfare and Development at the Forefront  
The government has made **massive allocations for various sectors**, particularly for welfare programs targeted at backward classes (BCs), scheduled castes (SCs), and scheduled tribes (STs).

**Key Sector-Wise Allocations:**

- **Agriculture:** ₹24,439 crore
- **Panchayat Raj (Rural Development):** ₹31,605 crore
- **Education:** ₹23,108 crore
- **BC Welfare:** ₹11,405 crore
- **SC Welfare:** ₹40,232 crore
- **ST Welfare:** ₹17,169 crore

**Total allocations for SC, ST, and BC welfare amount to nearly ₹69,000 crore**, underscoring the government's commitment to social justice and inclusivity.

**Focus on Six Guarantees: ₹56,084 Crore Allocated**

A key focus of the budget is the implementation of the **Congress-led government's Six Guarantees**, aimed at social welfare and economic empowerment.

- **Rythu Bharosa (Farmer Support):** ₹18,000 crore
- **Cheyutha (Livelihood and Skill Development):** ₹14,861 crore
- **Indiramma Housing (Affordable Housing):** ₹12,571 crore
- **Mahalakshmi Scheme (Free Bus Travel for Women):** ₹4,305 crore
- **Rajiv Yuva Vikasam (Youth Development):** ₹6,000 crore
- **Scholarships/Stipends for Students:** ₹4,452 crore

Additionally, a **₹11,500 crore subsidy** has been allocated to **reduce power costs** and support **farmers and industries**.

**Revenue Receipts and Debt Burden**

The Telangana Government expects **revenue receipts of ₹2.29 lakh crore**, sourced from:

- **State Taxes and Duties:** ₹1.45 lakh crore
- **State's Share in Central Taxes:** ₹29,899 crore
- **Grants-in-Aid and Contributions:** ₹22,782 crore
- **Other Non-Tax Receipts:** ₹4,292 crore

However, the state's **debt burden remains a major concern**, with **₹19,370 crore earmarked for debt servicing**. Interestingly, debt repayment in the current year has already exceeded ₹22,000 crore—much higher than the budgeted ₹17,729 crore.

Energy Sector: Yadadri Thermal Power Plant and Electricity Ambulance Service

The **Energy Department** has been allotted **₹21,221 crore**, with a significant focus on:

- **Completing the Yadadri Thermal Power Plant**
- **Launching an Electricity Ambulance Service** to provide **faster and more efficient power services**

This investment is expected to **enhance energy security and improve power supply reliability across Telangana**.

**Economic Growth: Telangana's Strong Performance Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)**

- Telangana's **GSDP at constant prices:** ₹16.12 lakh crore
- Growth rate: **10.1% (higher than previous year's 9.9%)**

**Per Capita Income**

- **Telangana:** ₹3.79 lakh (growth rate: 9.6%)
- **National Average:** ₹2.05 lakh (growth rate: 8.8%)
- **Telangana's per capita income is 1.8 times higher than the national average**, indicating **strong economic progress**.

**Sector-Wise Contribution to GDP**

- **Services Sector:** 66.3%
- **Agriculture & Allied Sectors:** 17.3%
- **Industrial Sector:** 16.4%

Deputy CM Vikramarka emphasized that the government's policies are designed to reflect the aspirations of the people, ensuring empowerment for **farmers, entrepreneurs, students, women, and marginalized communities**.

**Ramnath Goenka Awards for Excellence in Journalism 2025**

The **Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards** were presented by **President Droupadi Murmu** to honor **outstanding contributions to Indian journalism**. The awards recognize journalists who uphold the **values of truth, integrity, and fearless reporting**. In her speech, President Murmu highlighted the importance of journalism in sustaining democracy and acknowledged Ramnath Goenka's legacy in defending press freedom, particularly during the Emergency. She emphasized the need for ground reporting, research-based journalism, and the role of human values in combating challenges posed by AI and misinformation.

**Key Highlights of President Murmu's Speech**

**Tribute to Ramnath Goenka**

- Acknowledged his contributions to press freedom.
- Recalled his stand against censorship during the Emergency.
- Highlighted his association with Mahatma Gandhi and his contributions to social causes.

**Importance of Ground Reporting & Research**

- Urged newsrooms to invest in investigative journalism.
- Mentioned Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam's vision for newsroom research wings.
- Stressed that news gathering is the soul of journalism.

**Challenges in Media Funding**

- Addressed the conflict between profitability and responsible journalism.
- Suggested keeping readers at the center of journalism.

**Impact of Artificial Intelligence & Deepfakes**

- Warned about AI-generated misinformation.
- Stressed human empathy as the core strength of journalism.
- Encouraged critical thinking among the youth to detect biased news.

**Recognition of Regional Language Journalism**

- Appreciated regional language reporting for capturing grassroots realities.

**Final Thoughts**

- Journalism rooted in human values will never go extinct.
- The Ramnath Goenka Awards strengthen democracy by rewarding impactful journalism.

**Summary Table of Award Winners**

Category	Winner & Publication
Hindi (Print/Digital)	Mridulika Jha (Aaj Tak) – Reported on the Dunki route migration crisis.
Regional Languages (Print/Digital)	Jisha Elizabeth (Madhyamam) – Exposed human trafficking of Indian youth to Myanmar.
Environment, Science & Tech	Sibu Kumar Tripathi (India Today) – Covered the Joshimath sinking crisis.
Uncovering India Invisible	Satyasundar Barik (The Hindu) – Reports on migration and missing daughters in Odisha.
Business & Economic Journalism	Twesh Mishra (Economic Times) – Investigated subsidy fraud in India’s EV manufacturing sector.
Politics & Government	Maitri Porecha (The Hindu) – Covered Balasore train tragedy and its aftermath.
Sports Journalism	Shahab Ali & Amarnath Kashyap (Hindustan) – Exposed poor conditions in gold medallist Asha Kiran Barla’s village.
Investigative Reporting	Nihal AP Koshie, Mahender Singh Manral & Mihir Vasavda (Indian Express) – Exposed sexual harassment in India’s wrestling federation.
Feature Writing	Shubhajit Roy (Indian Express) – Ground reports from Israel-Palestine conflict zones.
Foreign Correspondent (India)	Nilesh Christopher (Rest of World) – Covered the impact of AI and manufacturing shifts in India.

Category	Winner & Publication
Civic Journalism	Jeet Mashru & Somita Pal (Hindustan Times) – Investigated BMC hospital shortages, leading to a policy change.
Photo Journalism	P. Ravikumar (New Indian Express) – Captured oil spill devastation in Chennai.
Books (Non-Fiction)	A.R. Venkatachalapathy (Penguin) – Wrote about V.O. Chidambaram Pillai’s fight against British rule.
Hindi (Broadcast/Digital)	Siddhant Mohan (Lallantop) – Investigated the real Kerala story, countering film narratives.
Regional Languages (Broadcast)	Mandar Gonjari (ABP Majha) – Exposed an undertrial running a synthetic drug racket from Pune hospital.
Environment, Science & Tech (Broadcast/Digital)	Joel Michael & Rohini Krishnamurthy (Down To Earth) – Covered Ludhiana’s industrial gas leak deaths.
Uncovering India Invisible (Broadcast/Digital)	Vishnukant Tiwari & Athar Rather (The Quint) – Investigated witch-hunting violence in Jharkhand.
Politics & Government (Broadcast)	Ashutosh Mishra (India Today TV) – Ground reports on ethnic violence in Manipur.
Sports Journalism (Broadcast/Digital)	Tejas Vaidya & Enakshi Rajvanshi (BBC Hindi) – Covered disabled women cricketers in Gujarat.
Investigative Reporting (Broadcast)	Anurag Dwary (NDTV) – Exposed medical college scams in Madhya Pradesh.

**National Affairs**

- The **Fit India Carnival**, a three-day event held from **March 16-18, 2025**, at **Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi**, was inaugurated by **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya**, Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports. The event aimed to promote **fitness, mental well-being, and healthy lifestyle choices**. It featured stars like **Ayushmann Khurrana, Sangram Singh, Mickey Mehta, Shanky Singh, and Rohtash Chaudhary**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Union Minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw** visited the **Hyperloop testing facility** at **IIT Madras**, announcing that the 410-meter Hyperloop tube would soon become the world’s longest high-speed tube. The **Indian Railways Ministry** is supporting the project, with **Integral Coach Factory (ICF) Chennai** handling the electronic technology. Vaishnaw also attended **Open House 2025** at IIT Madras, discussing India’s advancements in **semiconductors, AI, and data science**, and reaffirming the government’s commitment to technological leadership under **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Dr. Jitendra Singh**, Union Minister of Science and Technology, laid the foundation stone for the **North East Centre for Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR)** permanent campus at **Mawdiangdiang, Shillong**, on **March 13, 2025**. Established in **2014** under the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**, NECTAR focuses on **technology-driven socio-economic development** in the Northeast. The Minister highlighted NECTAR's work in **saffron cultivation, drone technology, and STEM education**, aiming to make the region India's next saffron hub. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** launched a **mobile app** for the **Prime Minister's Internship Scheme (PMIS)** in **New Delhi**. The app aims to streamline **registration**, provide **real-time updates**, and offer an **intuitive interface** for candidates. This initiative supports the government's commitment to **employment, skilling, and creating opportunities for the youth**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Indore** is launching **India's first green waste processing plant** under the **PPP model** as part of the **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban**. The plant will convert green waste into **wooden pellets**, providing an eco-friendly alternative to **coal** and promoting **sustainability**. It aims to generate revenue for **Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC)** and contribute to a **circular economy and innovative waste management**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The Indian government is advancing its nuclear energy efforts with two major projects: the **Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant** in Maharashtra and the **Gorakhpur Nuclear Power Project** in Haryana. The **Jaitapur plant** will contribute 10% to India's **100 GW nuclear energy target** by 2047, while **Gorakhpur** is the first nuclear facility in **North India**. Addressing concerns over **environmental impact, safety, and nuclear liability**, **Dr. Jitendra Singh** emphasized the commitment to **sustainable energy** and private sector involvement in nuclear energy expansion. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)** has launched '**Samarth**', an **incubation program** to foster **innovation in telecom and IT**. It supports **startups in Telecom Software, Cybersecurity, 5G/6G, AI, IoT, and Quantum Technologies**, with **STPI as the implementation partner**. Running in **hybrid mode**, the program will have **two cohorts per year**, each with **18 startups**, offering **funding, mentorship, and infrastructure support**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Purple Fest 2025**, held at **Rashtrapati Bhavan** and organized by **DePwD, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**, saw **23,500 attendees** promoting **inclusivity, accessibility, and empowerment for Divyangjan**. The event featured **literary discussions, sports, corporate collaborations, and cultural performances**, fostering an **inclusive society**. ([Click here to read article](#))

## States in the News

- On **March 18, 2025**, the **Delhi government** will sign an **MoU** with the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** to implement the **Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM)**. The scheme will establish **1,139 Urban Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (U-AAMs)** in Delhi, upgrading **553 mohalla clinics** and setting up **413 new U-AAMs** to strengthen **primary healthcare services** and address future **pandemics**. This follows a **legal battle** and political changes in Delhi. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** inaugurated the **Lachit Barphukan Police Academy** in **Dergaon, Assam**, on **March 15, 2025**. Named after the legendary Ahom general **Lachit Barphukan**, the academy aims to strengthen **policing** in the **Northeast** and become a premier training institution. The event was attended by **Assam CM Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma** and **Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis** inaugurated the **state's first temple** dedicated to **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj** in **Bhiwandi, Thane**, on his birth anniversary. The temple honors Shivaji Maharaj's **heroism, valour, and enduring legacy**, providing a sacred space for devotees to pay tribute to his contributions to **India's history**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Chhattisgarh government**, led by **CM Vishnu Deo Sai**, plans to introduce a stricter **anti-conversion law** to prevent illegal religious conversions. The new law aims to stop conversions through **coercion, inducements, or faith healing** gatherings. While the opposition claims conversions are rising, **Home Minister Vijay Sharma** assured strict action against illegal conversions, and concerns were raised about NGOs allegedly using **foreign funds** for conversion activities. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Delhi Police** has launched '**Shishtachar**' squads across all districts to enhance **women's safety** in public spaces. These anti-eve-teasing squads focus on **harassment prevention** through active **patrolling, surprise checks, and public outreach**. Each squad consists of an **Inspector, Sub-Inspector, 4 female officers, 5 male officers, and a technical personnel for surveillance support**. Supervised by the **ACP of the Crime Against Women (CAW) cell**, the initiative aims to create a **secure environment** for women. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Government of Andhra Pradesh** will sign an **MoU** with the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** to integrate **Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital technologies, and data-driven governance** in sectors like **healthcare, education, agriculture, and employment**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, approved the establishment of the **Namrup-IV Brownfield Ammonia-Urea Complex** in **Assam**. The ₹10,601.40 crore project, with an annual capacity of **12.7 LMT**, will be developed under a **Joint Venture** and is expected to boost **domestic urea production**, improve fertilizer availability in **Eastern India**, and create employment. The plant will be commissioned in **48 months**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Delhi Health Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh** launched **six mobile dental clinics** on **World Oral Health Day** to provide **free oral healthcare**. The initiative, a collaboration between the **Delhi government** and **Maulana Azad Institute of Dental Sciences (MAIDS)**, targets underserved areas like **slums**. The clinics are equipped with **modern dental chairs, X-ray machines, and sterilization units**, offering **fluoride treatments and dental care** to residents. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Andhra Pradesh CM **N. Chandrababu Naidu** announced a **58-foot statue** of **Potti Sriramulu** in **Amaravati** to honor his **sacrifice for Andhra Pradesh's formation in 1953**. Along with a **memorial**, his **native house in Padamatipalli** will be converted into a **museum**, and a **modern health center and high school** will be established in his village. The project will be completed before his next **birth anniversary**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- A **UK Skills and Chartered Bodies Mission** delegation is visiting **Odisha** to explore **partnerships in vocational education and skill development**. Discussions focused on **industry-led skilling, UK-style apprenticeships, and training in advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, digital skills, and sustainable infrastructure**. **Minister Sampad Chandra Swain** and **British Deputy High Commissioner Andrew Fleming** emphasized collaboration to build a **globally competitive workforce**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Meghalaya CM Conrad K. Sangma** inaugurated the state's **first scientific coal mining block, "Saryngkham-A"**, at **Byndihati, East Jaintia Hills**, marking a shift from **rat-hole mining**, which was **banned by the NGT in 2014** due to **safety and environmental concerns**. This initiative promotes **safe and sustainable coal mining** in the **coal-rich Jaintia Hills region**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Donald Trump's** social media platform, **Truth Social**, is set to begin trading on the **NASDAQ** pending a shareholder vote on its merger with **Digital World Acquisition Corp. (DWAC)**, a **SPAC**. This move could reshape the financial structure of **Trump Media & Technology Group (TMTG)**, which owns **Truth Social**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Stuart Young** is set to be sworn in as the new **Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago** at a formal ceremony at the **President's House in St. Ann's**. He will succeed **Dr. Keith Rowley**, who has officially stepped down from his position. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has launched the **Frontier Seed (Pacific)** program to boost local businesses, strengthen capital markets, and promote **sustainable economic growth** in the Pacific region. ADB has committed **\$200,000** in technical assistance to **SeaPAC Pte Ltd** (prawn production) and **Kahuto Pacific** (aerial mapping). Backed by international partners like the **ORCA Trust Fund, Nordic Development Fund, and FCDO**, the program aims to attract investors, create jobs, and enhance economic resilience with an initial commitment of **\$4 million**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- In 2025, **US President Donald Trump** is considering a **travel ban** on citizens from 43 countries, categorized into **Red, Orange, and Yellow** lists. **Red List** countries (11 nations, including Afghanistan, Iran, and Venezuela) face **complete visa suspension**, while **Orange List** countries (10 nations, including Russia, Pakistan, and Haiti) will have **severely restricted visas**. **Yellow List** countries (22 nations, including Angola, Cambodia, and Zimbabwe) have **60 days** to address US concerns. This move expands on the travel restrictions from Trump's first term, which were later revoked by **Joe Biden** in 2021. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Kirsty Coventry**, a legendary swimmer from **Zimbabwe**, made history by becoming the **first female and first African president** of the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)**. Her election marks a significant milestone for the IOC, ushering in a new era of **progress, diversity, and inclusivity** in global sports leadership. ([Click here to read article](#))
- In 2024, **global funding for women-led tech startups** fell to **\$29.6 billion**, an **11% decline from 2023** and **21% from 2022**, due to **macroeconomic challenges**. Despite the downturn, **India ranked second globally in all-time funding for women-led tech startups**, after the **United States**, as per **Tracxn**. Women-led startups accounted for **11.7% of total global funding**, with **45 funding rounds exceeding \$100 million**. Key sectors like **Enterprise Applications, Life Sciences, and FinTech** continued to attract significant investment. ([Click here to read article](#))

### International Affairs

- In a historic breakthrough, **Armenia** and **Azerbaijan** agreed on the text of a **peace treaty** on **March 13, 2025**, ending nearly four decades of conflict over the **Nagorno-Karabakh** region. While this marks a significant step toward **stability** in the **South Caucasus**, **Azerbaijan** demands changes in **Armenia's constitution** before signing the treaty, creating uncertainty about the timeline for its official signing. ([Click here to read article](#))

**Agreements/MoUs Signed**

- UIDAI has partnered with Sarvam AI, a Bengaluru-based Generative AI company, to enhance Aadhaar services starting March 18, 2025. The collaboration introduces AI-powered voice interactions, real-time fraud detection, and multilingual support to improve accessibility, security, and efficiency. The GenAI stack will operate within UIDAI's secure infrastructure, ensuring data privacy. This agreement, lasting one year with a possible extension, underscores UIDAI's focus on technological advancements and user-centric innovations. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has partnered with DigiLocker to simplify access to investors' securities holdings and reduce unclaimed assets in the market. This initiative allows investors to store and retrieve demat holdings, mutual fund statements, and Consolidated Account Statements (CAS) through DigiLocker. SEBI also introduced a nomination facility for appointing legal heirs, ensuring smooth asset transition and improving investor protection and financial transparency. ([Click here to read article](#))

**Books and Authors**

- To celebrate the Golden Jubilee of India's first Hockey World Cup victory in 1975, the book 'March of Glory' was launched on March 18, 2025 at Shivaji Stadium, New Delhi. Co-authored by K. Arumugam and Errol D'Cruz, the book chronicles India's journey to World Cup glory in Kuala Lumpur on March 15, 1975. ([Click here to read article](#))
- V.I. Mathan, former director of Christian Medical College (CMC) Vellore, launched the book "To the Seventh Generation: The Journey of CMC Vellore" in Chennai. The first copy was presented to Dr. Vikram Mathew, the current director, and the second to Dr. V.V. Bashi. The book details CMC Vellore's history, including insights from its founder, Ida Scudder. ([Click here to read article](#))



**Banking/Economy/Business News**

- Adar Poonawalla, CEO of Serum Institute of India, sold his stake in Magma General Insurance to Patanjali Ayurved and DS Group for ₹4,500 crore, giving them a 98% stake. This strategic acquisition strengthens Magma Insurance's position, leveraging Patanjali's rural reach and DS Group's financial expertise. The company offers over 70 insurance products, with a gross written premium (GWP) of ₹3,295 crore in 2024, projected to rise to ₹3,650-3,700 crore in 2025. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's foreign exchange reserves surged by \$15.267 billion to reach \$653.966 billion during the week ending March 7, 2025, marking the sharpest rise in over two years. This increase was driven by a \$10 billion forex swap by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on February 28, 2025. The previous week's reserves were \$638.698 billion, and the all-time high remains \$704.885 billion (September 2024). ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's wholesale inflation rose to 2.38% in February 2024, slightly up from 2.31% in January. The increase was driven by higher prices in manufactured food products, textiles, and non-food articles, though a decline in the Food Index provided some relief. ([Click here to read article](#))
- State Bank of India (SBI) is setting up a specialized unit to manage project financing for emerging industries like AI, e-commerce, and fintech. This initiative aims to diversify SBI's project finance operations beyond traditional sectors. The project is expected to be completed within a year, with plans to recruit specialized professionals and appoint an external consultant. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Morgan Stanley projects India's GDP will reach \$5.7 trillion by fiscal 2028, making it the third-largest economy, surpassing Germany and Japan. India, currently the fifth-largest economy, is expected to overtake Japan by 2026. India's share in global GDP will rise from 3.5% in 2023 to 4.5% by 2029, driven by strong policies, improved infrastructure, and a growing consumer market. In a bullish scenario, GDP could reach \$10.3 trillion by 2035. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The Indian government has formed the Inter-Ministerial-Industry Committee on Fintech (IMICF) to address regulatory concerns and create a long-term strategy for the financial technology (fintech) sector. Chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Financial Services (DFS), the committee will evaluate fintech's impact on the banking and financial services industry (BFSI), identify growth obstacles, and study global best practices in governance and regulation. ([Click here to read article](#))

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Bank of Mauritius (BOM) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enable cross-border transactions using the Indian Rupee (INR) and Mauritian Rupee (MUR). This agreement aims to reduce costs and improve efficiency for exporters and importers by settling transactions in their domestic currencies, strengthening economic and financial ties between India and Mauritius. ([Click here to read article](#))
- City Union Bank (CUB) has partnered with Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) as its exclusive banking partner. The collaboration offers customised financial solutions, exclusive offers, and enhanced digital banking services to SRH fans, players, and staff, strengthening CUB's presence in the sports sector. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Fitch Ratings has affirmed the Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) of Union Bank of India and Punjab National Bank (PNB) at 'BBB-' with a stable outlook. The Viability Rating (VR) has been upgraded to 'bb-' from 'b+', reflecting improved financial performance and asset quality. The ratings reflect strong government support and a favorable operating environment. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's net FDI dropped significantly to \$1.4 billion during April 2024–January 2025, down from \$11.5 billion a year earlier. This decline was due to increased repatriation by investors and higher outward FDI by Indian firms. However, gross FDI grew by 12.4% YoY, reaching \$67.7 billion, as per the RBI's March 2025 bulletin. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reported a rise in its net short position in the forward book, reaching \$77.5 billion by January 2025, up from \$67.9 billion in December 2024. This increase reflects the forex market interventions amid rupee depreciation and global trade uncertainties. The data was released in RBI's March 2025 monthly bulletin. ([Click here to read article](#))
- SEBI has reduced the minimum investment for Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) instruments on the Social Stock Exchange (SSE) from ₹10,000 to ₹1,000. This decision aims to boost retail participation and increase funding for non-profit organizations (NPOs), especially in sectors like education and healthcare. The change, effective immediately, modifies SEBI's directive from September 19, 2022, to strengthen social impact investment in India. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The Union Cabinet approved a ₹1,500 crore incentive scheme for banks to promote UPI transactions below ₹2,000 in FY 2024-25. Banks will receive a 0.15% incentive on transactions by small merchants, with part of the payout based on maintaining reliable UPI infrastructure. The initiative aims to boost digital payments adoption, especially among small businesses, without imposing merchant fees. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM) with an allocation of ₹3,400 crore (plus ₹1,000 crore) for the 15th Finance Commission cycle (2021-26). The mission focuses on boosting milk production, genetic improvement, and farmer incomes, while preserving indigenous bovine breeds through scientific interventions. ([Click here to read article](#))
- BPCL has inaugurated a 3.2 MW AC floating solar power plant at the Kochi Refinery, marking a major step toward sustainable energy. Chief Secretary Sarada Muraleedharan inaugurated the project on March 22, 2025. Built on an 8-acre rainwater harvesting pond, the plant is part of BPCL's efforts to integrate renewable energy, with an investment of ₹28.93 crore. ([Click here to read article](#))

### Appointments/Resignations

- Dr. Shivkumar Kalyanaraman has been appointed as the new CEO of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), succeeding Professor Abhay Karandikar. Dr. Kalyanaraman will lead ANRF in its mission to promote research and development (R&D) initiatives across India. The handover was conducted by DST Secretary Professor Abhay Karandikar. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Intel Corporation appointed Lip-Bu Tan as its new CEO, effective March 18, 2025, marking a leadership transition from Interim Co-CEOs David Zinsner and Michelle (MJ) Johnston Holthaus. Tan will also rejoin Intel's board of directors after stepping down in August 2024. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited (TAFE) has appointed Dr. Lakshmi Venu as its Vice Chairman. With extensive experience in farm mechanisation and the auto component sectors, her appointment reflects TAFE's commitment to enhancing leadership and expanding its global presence. Dr. Lakshmi has played a key role in the Indian automotive and farm equipment industries. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Ayushmann Khurrana has been named the 'Fit India Icon' by Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya during the Fit India Movement inauguration in New Delhi. The 40-year-old Bollywood actor joins Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative to inspire citizens to focus on their health and well-being. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Jasprit Bumrah has signed with Skechers, a global Comfort Technology Company, to promote its cricket footwear and feature in marketing campaigns. Known as a top fast bowler, Bumrah joins other players like Ishan Kishan and Yastika Bhatia as part of Skechers' growing association with cricket. This move strengthens Skechers' presence in the sport, also serving as the official kit sponsor of Mumbai Indians. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Bajaj Auto** reappointed **Rajiv Bajaj** as **MD and CEO** for another five-year term, starting **April 1, 2025**. The company also invested **₹1,500 crore** into its subsidiary, **Bajaj Auto Credit Ltd (BACL)**, to support its growth and improve **regulatory compliance, capital adequacy, and financial stability** for the financial year **2025-26**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Former Indian cricket captain **Krishnamachari Srikkanth** has been appointed as the **Goodwill Ambassador** of **VISION 2020 India**, an initiative focused on eliminating **avoidable blindness** in the country. The program aims to raise awareness, offer medical assistance, and ensure accessible eye care services for preventable **visual impairment**. The announcement was made at **Sankara Nethralaya** in Chennai. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Indranil Bhattacharyya** has been appointed as **Executive Director (ED)** of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, effective **March 19, 2025**. He will oversee the **Department of Economic and Policy Research (DEPR)**, responsible for shaping **monetary policies** and conducting **economic research**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Fino Payments Bank (FPB)** has re-appointed **Deena Mehta** as an **Independent Director** for a second term from **March 19, 2025, to March 18, 2028**. A seasoned finance professional, Mehta has played a key role in **Indian capital markets** reforms, including the **BOLT trading system** at **BSE** and the establishment of **Central Depository Services (CDSL)**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** released the results of the **sixth round of India's Remittances Survey (2023-24)**, highlighting a shift in migration trends. More **skilled professionals** are migrating, resulting in increased **remittances from advanced economies**, now surpassing inflows from **Gulf nations**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** has approved **Tata Sons'** acquisition of an additional **10% stake** in **Tata Play**, its digital content distribution arm, from **Baytree Investments (Mauritius)**. This acquisition supports Tata Sons' strategy to expand its presence in India's **digital entertainment and content distribution** market. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **NIIT University (NU)** has appointed **Amitabh Kant**, former **NITI Aayog CEO** and **India's G20 Sherpa**, as its new **Chancellor (Chairperson)**, effective **March 10, 2025**. Succeeding **K Kasturirangan**, his leadership will focus on **economic transformation, policy-making, and technology-driven innovation**, reinforcing NU's commitment to **industry-aligned education and skilling**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Anuj Kumar Singh**, a **2009-batch IRSEE officer**, has been appointed as **Joint Secretary (Director level)** in **UPSC, Delhi** under the **Central Staffing Scheme** for **five years** or until further orders. Recommended by the **Ministry of Railways**, his **technical and administrative expertise** is expected to enhance **UPSC's operational efficiency and strategic framework**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Goibibo** has appointed **Rishabh Pant** as its **brand ambassador**, launching a campaign featuring **Sunil Gavaskar** that playfully twists his iconic **"Stupid, Stupid, Stupid"** phrase. The **youth-centric campaign** blends **cricket nostalgia** with **travel deals**, aiming to attract **travel enthusiasts** by making **trip planning fun and hassle-free**. Pant's **energy** and Gavaskar's **legacy** enhance its **mass appeal**. ([Click here to read article](#))

### Defence News

- **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** signed a **₹2,906 crore** contract with the **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** for the procurement of the **Low-Level Transportable Radar (LLTR) Ashwini**. Developed by **DRDO's LRDE**, this **solid-state technology** radar can track **drones, helicopters, and fighter jets**. The deal supports **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**, boosting **indigenous defence production**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **23rd edition of VARUNA**, a **bilateral naval exercise** between **India and France**, will be held from **March 19-22, 2025**. Established in 2001, the exercise focuses on enhancing **naval interoperability and operational synergy**. This year's drill features **aircraft carriers Vikrant and Charles de Gaulle**, along with **fighter aircraft, destroyers, frigates, and a Scorpene-class submarine**. The exercise aims to strengthen **air defence, anti-submarine warfare, and surface combat** capabilities. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **India and Australia** have agreed to strengthen **defence cooperation and interoperability** across **maritime, land, and air** domains. This was discussed during the **9th India-Australia Defence Policy Talks** in **New Delhi** on **March 17, 2025**. Key areas include enhancing **maritime domain awareness, information sharing, and science & technology collaboration**, with a focus on the upcoming **2+2 Ministerial Dialogue** in Australia. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Günter Blöschl**, a renowned **hydrologist**, has been awarded the **2025 Stockholm Water Prize** for his pioneering research in **flood hydrology**. His work in understanding **flood risks and water resource management** under **climate change** has significantly improved **global flood prediction models**, aiding communities in preparing for **extreme weather events**. ([Click here to read article](#))

### Awards and Recognitions

- **Chiranjeevi**, the veteran **Telugu cinema** superstar, was honoured with the **Lifetime Achievement Award** for his contributions to **Indian cinema, cultural influence, and public service**. The award was presented by **Bridge India** at the **House of Commons**, UK Parliament, recognising his impact on the film industry and philanthropic efforts. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Renowned sculptor **Ram Sutar**, known for designing the **Statue of Unity**, has been honored with the **Maharashtra Bhushan** award. The decision was announced by **Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis** on **March 12, 2025**. At **100 years old**, Sutar continues to contribute to India's artistic heritage, including sculpting a statue of **Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar** for **Chaityabhoomi**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Vijay Sankar**, Honorary Consul General of Denmark for Southern India and Chairman of **The Sanmar Group**, has been awarded the **Knight's Cross of the Order of Dannebrog** by the **King of Denmark**. This honor recognizes his contributions to **Indo-Danish relations**. The award was presented by **Rasmus Abildgaard Kristensen**, Ambassador of Denmark in India, on **March 18, 2025** in **Chennai**. The event also celebrated the **Sankar family's five-decade-long association** with Denmark's consular services. ([Click here to read article](#))

### Summits and Conferences News

- India participated in the **353rd ILO Governing Body Meeting** in **Geneva** (March 10-20, 2025), led by **Ms. Sumita Dawra**, Secretary of the **Ministry of Labour and Employment**. India highlighted its achievements in **social protection, living wages, and fair migration**, with initiatives like **EPFO, ESIC, and e-Shram Portal**. India supported ILO's **Global Coalition for Social Justice**, the **Second World Summit for Social Development**, and ILO's **Fair Migration Agenda**. The country also emphasized its **Factories Act, 1948** and **Occupational Safety Code, 2020** for worker safety. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **WAVEX 2025**, launched by the **Union Ministry of Information & Broadcasting** and **IAMAI**, aims to empower **startups** in the **media and entertainment sector**. Held at the **Jio World Convention Centre**, Mumbai, from May 1-4, it offers **funding, networking, and exposure** opportunities. Startups can pitch to **venture capitalists** and **celebrity investors**, with a focus on **gaming, animation, XR, metaverse, generative AI, and next-gen content platforms**. ([Click here to read article](#))

### Ranks and Reports

- India ranked **24th** out of **33 countries** in the **2024 Free Speech Index** by The Future of Free Speech, with a score of **62.6**. Despite **public perception** in India suggesting improvement in free speech, the report highlights a **decline** since 2021 and a gap between perception and actual protections. The findings reflect broader **global trends of democratic backsliding**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Finland** has been ranked the **world's happiest country** for the eighth consecutive year, according to the latest global happiness rankings by the **Wellbeing Research Centre, Gallup**, and the **UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network**. The **United States** dropped to its lowest-ever rank at **24th place**. The rankings are based on factors like **social trust, economic stability, and life expectancy**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's **happiness ranking** has improved steadily, reaching **118th** in the **World Happiness Report 2025**, up from **126th** in 2023 and **139th** in 2020. Key factors include **economic growth, better corruption perception (rank improved from 71 in 2022 to 56 in 2024), and rising personal freedom (ranked 23rd in 2024, highest in five years)**. India's **GDP per capita rank** also improved to **93rd** in 2024. However, it still lags behind **Pakistan (109th)** and **Nepal (92nd)** due to **lower social support and economic inequality**. ([Click here to read article](#))

### Sports News

- India had a remarkable showing at the **Special Olympics World Winter Games 2025** in **Turin, Italy**, securing **33 medals: 8 gold, 18 silver, and 7 bronze**. **Snowshoeing** was a strong area, with 10 medals, including **silver** for Vasu Tiwari, Shalini Chauhan, and Tanya, and a **bronze** for Jahangir. In **Alpine Skiing**, India won 10 medals, including **silver** for Radha Devi, Nirmala Devi, and Abhishek Kumar in various categories. ([Click here to read article](#))



- **India Masters** won the inaugural **International Masters League (IML) 2025**, defeating **West Indies Masters** by **six wickets** in a thrilling final at the **SVNS International Stadium**. Led by **Sachin Tendulkar**, India Masters triumphed in front of nearly **50,000 fans**. The match, featuring **Brian Lara** and a star-studded lineup, celebrated cricket's golden era. India Masters also earned a **₹1 crore** prize for their victory. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Hockey Jharkhand** won their first-ever **15th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship 2025** title, defeating **defending champions Hockey Haryana** in a thrilling final at **Tau Devi Lal Complex, Panchkula**. The match ended in a **1-1 draw**, and **Hockey Jharkhand** triumphed in the **penalty shootout**, making history in Indian women's hockey. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Kabaddi World Cup 2025** begins in **England**, marking the first time the tournament is hosted outside Asia. **India's men's team** will face **Italy** in **Wolverhampton**. The event spans **seven days**, with **60+ matches** across venues like **Birmingham, Coventry, Walsall, and Wolverhampton**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Archana Jadhav**, an Indian long-distance runner, has been **banned for four years** by World Athletics' **Athletes Integrity Unit (AIU)** after testing positive for **Oxandrolone**, a banned substance. The ban, effective from **January 7, 2025**, followed her failure to contest the doping charges. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Lando Norris** won the **2025 Australian Grand Prix** for **McLaren** in a dramatic race marked by **changing weather, multiple crashes**, and a **late-race downpour**. Despite briefly losing the lead to **Max Verstappen**, Norris regained control for his first victory of the season. The race featured **strategic pit stops** and **several retirements**, making it a thrilling start to the Formula 1 season. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **BCCI** has announced a **cash reward of INR 58 crore** for **Team India** after their victory in the **ICC Champions Trophy 2025**. This reward honors the contributions of players, coaching staff, support personnel, and the **Men's Selection Committee**. Under **Captain Rohit Sharma**, India dominated the tournament, defeating **Bangladesh, Pakistan, New Zealand, and Australia**, before winning the final against **New Zealand**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Khelo India Para Games 2025** will be held from **March 20 to 27, 2025** in **New Delhi**. **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya**, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, launched the official anthem at **Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium**. The **mascot 'Ujjwala'**, inspired by the house sparrow, symbolizes **resilience** and **determination**. The **Games logo**, featuring Delhi landmarks, was unveiled by **Devendra Jhajharia** and **Sminu Jindal**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Japan** secured its spot in the **2026 FIFA World Cup** as the first team to qualify after the host nations. A **2-0 win** over **Bahrain** at **Saitama Stadium** on **March 20, 2025** confirmed their place. **Daichi Kamada** and **Takefusa Kubo** scored in the second half, marking Japan's **eighth consecutive World Cup appearance**. ([Click here to read article](#))

### Schemes and Committees News

- **Telangana CM A. Revanth Reddy** launched the '**Rajiv Yuva Vikasam**' Scheme, aimed at promoting self-employment and economic development. With a budget of **₹6,000 crore**, the scheme provides financial assistance to unemployed youth from **SC, ST, BC, and Minority communities**. Its goals include **creating self-employment opportunities**, reducing **unemployment**, and promoting **entrepreneurship** among marginalized groups. ([Click here to read article](#))

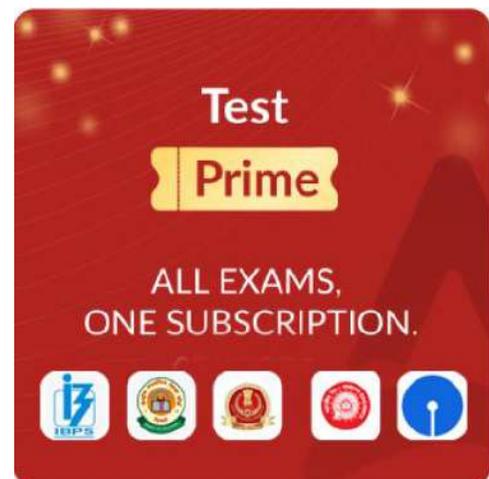
### Science and Technology News

- India has become a global space leader, generating **USD 143 million** in foreign exchange by launching **393 foreign satellites** from **34 countries** between **2015 and 2024**. The **ISRO** used **PSLV, LVM3, and SSLV** vehicles for these launches. This success strengthens India's position in the **global space economy** and sets the stage for future missions like **Gaganyaan** and the **Bharatiya Antariksha Station** by **2035**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's **Chandrayaan-5 mission** was approved on **March 13, 2025**, and announced by **ISRO Chairman V Narayanan**. In collaboration with **Japan (JAXA)**, the mission aims for an advanced study of the **Moon's surface**. Unlike **Chandrayaan-3**, it will deploy a **250 kg rover**, ten times heavier than the '**Pragyan**' rover. The mission will focus on **mineralogical and geological analysis** of the Moon. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **ISRO** launched the **Shri S Ramakrishnan Centre of Excellence in Fluid and Thermal Science Research** at **IIT Madras**, inaugurated by **ISRO Chairman V Narayanan**. The facility will focus on **thermal challenges** in space applications, including **heat dissipation in satellites and launch vehicles**, and develop **cooling solutions**. This initiative aims to enhance **India's self-reliance** in space technologies and strengthen research for **future deep-space missions**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- A **human coronavirus HKU1** case was reported in **Kolkata**, raising concerns. Medical experts clarified that **HKU1**, identified in **2005**, causes **mild respiratory illnesses** and does not pose a pandemic threat like **Covid-19**. The patient is stable, and the virus spreads through **respiratory droplets** and **surface contact**. Vulnerable individuals, including the **elderly, children, pregnant women**, and those with weakened immune systems, should take precautions. ([Click here to read article](#))

- ISRO, in collaboration with **Semiconductor Laboratory (SCL)**, developed two **32-bit microprocessors** for space applications: **Vikram 3201** and **Kalpana 3201**. **Vikram 3201** is India's first indigenous microprocessor qualified for space missions, supporting **floating-point arithmetic** and compatible with previous models. **Kalpana 3201**, a **SPARC V8 RISC** processor, is efficient for high-speed processing and compatible with open-source software. Both processors support India's **self-reliance** in **high-performance computing** for **space missions**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Tata Communications** launched **Vayu**, an **AI-powered cloud solution** offering **cost-effective, flexible, and intelligent enterprise cloud services**. Vayu integrates **IaaS, PaaS, AI capabilities, security, cloud connectivity, and professional services**. It provides **15-25% cost savings**, eliminates **data egress charges**, and reduces **multi-cloud complexities**, positioning itself as a next-gen cloud fabric to optimize performance and **cost efficiency**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Researchers have achieved a **scientific breakthrough** by transforming **light into a supersolid**, a **new phase of matter** combining **superfluid and solid properties**. Published in **Nature (March 5)**, the study by **CNR-INO, CNR-Nanotec, and the University of Pavia** reveals that this **light-based supersolid** retains a **coherent quantum droplet structure** while enabling **friction-free flow**. This discovery has major implications for **quantum computing, materials science, and energy storage**, advancing our understanding of **light-matter interactions** and future **photonic applications**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Ordnance Factory Day** is celebrated on **March 18** to mark the establishment of India's first **Ordnance Factory** in **1801** near Kolkata. The day emphasizes the **research, development, and production** capabilities of Indian Ordnance Factories, crucial to India's **defence sector**. The oldest factory in **Cossipore, Kolkata**, started operations on **March 18, 1802**. In **2021**, the **Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)** was restructured into **seven Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs)** for greater **efficiency and self-reliance** in defence manufacturing. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **International Day of Happiness** is celebrated on **March 20** to promote happiness as a fundamental human goal. Recognized by the **United Nations (UN)**, the day emphasizes **well-being, sustainable development**, and the need for **inclusive, equitable economic growth**. It encourages governments, organizations, and individuals to prioritize happiness in policies and daily life. The UN declared this day in **2012** to promote **poverty eradication** and overall well-being. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **French Language Day** will be celebrated by the **United Nations (UN)** on **March 20, 2025**, highlighting **multilingualism, cultural diversity, and education**. The theme for 2025, chosen by the **International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF)**, is **"I educate myself, therefore I act,"** focusing on education's role in **sustainable development and global peace**. The UN Language Days, introduced in **2010**, aim to promote the six official languages of the UN: **Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Nowruz**, the ancient **Persian New Year** festival, will be celebrated on **March 20 or 21**, coinciding with the **vernal equinox**. Recognized by **UNESCO** as part of the **Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**, it celebrates **renewal, unity, and the triumph of light over darkness**, bringing together communities across **Iran, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans**. ([Click here to read article](#))

### Important Days News

- **National Vaccination Day**, observed on **March 16** annually, celebrates India's commitment to **immunisation** and public health. It marks the historic moment in **1995** when the first dose of the **oral polio vaccine** was given under the **Pulse Polio Immunisation Programme**. The day highlights the progress in eliminating vaccine-preventable diseases and the importance of **universal vaccination coverage**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **World Sparrow Day**, celebrated on **March 20th**, raises awareness about the declining population of **house sparrows** and promotes conservation efforts. Initiated in **2010** by the **Nature Forever Society**, the event has gained global recognition, with over **50 countries** participating. The once-common sparrows, known for their cheerful chirps, have become rare due to significant population decline. ([Click here to read article](#))



- The **14th World Down Syndrome Day Conference** will be hosted by **Down Syndrome International** at the **United Nations** headquarters in **New York** on **21 March 2025**. Additional events will take place from **20-22 March 2025** at the **United Nations** in **Geneva** to observe **World Down Syndrome Day**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **International Day of Forests** is celebrated on **March 21, 2025**, with the theme **"Forests and Food"**. This day highlights forests' vital role in **food security, nutrition, and livelihoods**. Forests provide resources like **fruits, seeds, roots, and wild meat** for **indigenous and rural communities**, emphasizing their connection to global **food supply and sustainability**. The UN established this day to raise awareness about **forest conservation**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **World Day for Glaciers** is observed on **March 21**, as declared by the **United Nations** under resolution **A/RES/77/158**. This initiative, alongside the **International Year of Glaciers' Preservation 2025**, aims to raise awareness about the **critical role of glaciers** and the urgent need for their **conservation** amid **climate change** threats. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **2025** marks the **60th anniversary** of the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)**, adopted by the **UN General Assembly** in **1965**. The **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**, observed on **March 21** annually, celebrates progress in combating racial discrimination while recognizing ongoing challenges. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **World Poetry Day 2025** is celebrated on **March 21** to emphasize poetry's significance as a universal medium of expression. Established by **UNESCO** in **1999**, the day promotes **poetry reading, writing, publishing, and education**, recognizing its role in **cultural preservation** and fostering **peace**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **World Water Day 2025**, observed on **March 22**, focuses on **"Glacier Preservation"**, highlighting glaciers' role in **water security, climate regulation, and sustaining life**. The **United Nations** urges global efforts to **protect glaciers** to combat **climate change and water scarcity**, emphasizing their **critical importance** for the planet's future. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **World Meteorological Day 2025**, observed on **March 23**, marks the **75th anniversary** of the **WMO** with the theme **"Closing the Early Warning Gap Together."** It highlights the **importance of early warning systems** in **mitigating climate change impacts and extreme weather events**, reinforcing global efforts for **disaster preparedness and resilience**. ([Click here to read article](#))

## Obituaries News

- **Arvind Singh Mewar**, chairman of the **HRH Group of Hotels** and descendant of **Maharana Pratap**, passed away at **81** on **March 16, 2025**, in **Udaipur** after a prolonged illness. He was known for preserving **Rajput heritage** and promoting tourism in **Udaipur**. His family includes wife **Vijayraj Kumari**, son **Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar**, and daughters **Bhargavi Kumari Mewar** and **Padmaja Kumari Parmar**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Bindu Ghosh**, a beloved **Tamil film comedian**, passed away at **76** on **March 16, 2025**, in **Chennai** after a prolonged illness. Known for her **exceptional comic timing** and vibrant presence, her death has left a deep void in the hearts of fans and colleagues in the **Tamil cinema industry**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Ramakanta Rath**, renowned **Odia poet** and former **IAS officer**, passed away at **90**. Born in **Puri** on **December 30, 1934**, Rath was known for works like **Saptama Ritu, Sri Radha, and Sandigha Mrigaya**, which redefined **Odia poetry** with deep philosophical reflections. He received prestigious awards, including **Padma Bhushan, Saraswati Samman, and Atibadi Jagannath Das Award**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Veteran **BJP leader** and former **Union Minister Dr. Debendra Pradhan** passed away at **84** in **New Delhi** after a brief illness. He is survived by his **wife and two sons**, with his last moments spent at the residence of his son, **Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Dr. Senkalong (Senka) Yaden**, a distinguished **Naga scientist** and academician, passed away at **89** in **Tyler, Texas**, on **March 14, 2025**. Known as the **"Man of Science of the USA,"** he made significant contributions to **science and education**. Despite living abroad, he remained connected to his **Naga roots**. In honor of his achievements, **Ao Senden** declared **March 17, 2025**, a day of mourning. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **American boxing legend George Foreman** passed away on **March 21, 2025**, at age **76**. A **two-time heavyweight champion, Olympian, and successful businessman**, Foreman was celebrated for his **remarkable comeback** in boxing. His family announced his demise, remembering him as a **humanitarian and sporting icon**. ([Click here to read article](#))

## Miscellaneous News

- The **'Watan Ko Jano'** programme, funded by the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, aims to promote **national integration** by exposing children under **18** from government-run homes to the **culture, history, and technological advancements** of other parts of India. The initiative has successfully fostered unity among **India's youth** and contributed to a more **inclusive and harmonious society**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **East Coast Railway (ECoR)** has become the **first railway zone** in India to achieve **250 million tons (MT)** of **originating freight** in **FY 2024-25**, reaching the milestone on **March 21, 2024, 11 days ahead of schedule**. This marks the **second consecutive year** of surpassing 250 MT, reinforcing ECoR's position as **India's highest freight-loading railway zone** and a key contributor to **logistics and economic growth**. ([Click here to read article](#))

**Static Takeaways**

Sr. No	Static Name	Static Details
<b>Business/Sports/Space Organizations</b>		
1	<b>TATA</b>	<b>CEO</b> - N. Chadrasekaran
2	<b>Golbibo</b>	<b>CEO</b> - Ashish Kashyap
3	<b>Bajaj Auto</b>	<b>CEO</b> - Rajiv Bajaj
4	<b>Serum Institute of India</b>	<b>CEO</b> - Adar Poonawalla
5	<b>ISRO</b>	<b>Chairman</b> - S Somnath
6	<b>Intel Corporation</b>	<b>CEO</b> - Lip BuTan
7	<b>NVIDIA</b>	<b>CEO</b> - Jensen Huang
8	<b>BCCI</b>	<b>President</b> - Roger Binny <b>Secretary</b> - Devjit Saikia
<b>Banking Organizations</b>		
9	<b>RBI</b>	<b>Governor</b> - Sanjay Malhotra <b>Head Office</b> - Mumbai
10	<b>SEBI</b>	<b>Chairman</b> - Tuhin Kanta Pandey <b>Head Office</b> - Mumbai
11	<b>Fino Payments Bank</b>	<b>MD/CEO</b> - Rishi Gupta
12	<b>City Union Bank</b>	<b>MD/CEO</b> - Dr. N. Kamakodi
<b>Countries of the World</b>		
13	<b>USA</b>	<b>President</b> - Donald trump <b>Capital</b> - Washington D.C. <b>Currency</b> - US Dollar
14	<b>Zimbabwe</b>	<b>President</b> - Emmerson Mnangagwa <b>Capital</b> - Harare <b>Currency</b> - US Dollar
15	<b>Japan</b>	<b>President</b> - Shigeru Ishiba <b>Capital</b> - Tokyo <b>Currency</b> - Yen Japanese
16	<b>France</b>	<b>President</b> - Emmanuel Macron <b>Capital</b> - Paris <b>Currency</b> - Euro
17	<b>Armenia</b>	<b>President</b> - Vahagn Garniki Khachaturyan <b>Capital</b> - Yerevan <b>Currency</b> - Armenian Dram
18	<b>Azerbaijan</b>	<b>President</b> - Ilham Aliyev <b>Capital</b> - Baku <b>Currency</b> - Azerbaijani Manat
19	<b>Australia</b>	<b>PM</b> - Anthony Albanese <b>Capital</b> - Canberra <b>Currency</b> - Australian Dollar
20	<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>PM</b> - Christopher Luxon <b>Capital</b> - Wellington <b>Currency</b> - New Zealand Dollar

Sr. No	Static Name	Static Details
<b>Indian States</b>		
21	<b>Assam</b>	<b>Governor</b> - Lakshman Prasad Acharya <b>CM</b> - Hemanta Biswa Sarma <b>Capital</b> - Dispur <b>Rivers</b> - Brahmaputra, Barak, Dhansiri, Lohit
22	<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>	<b>Governor</b> - Syed Abdul Nazeer <b>CM</b> - Chandrababu Naidu <b>Capital</b> - Amravati <b>Rivers</b> - Godavari, Krishna, Penna, Tungabhadra
23	<b>Odisha</b>	<b>Governor</b> - Hari Babu Kambhupati <b>CM</b> - Mohan Charan Majhi <b>Capital</b> - bhubneshwar <b>Rivers</b> - Mahanadi, Baitarni, Brahmani, Vamasdhara
24	<b>Chattisgarh</b>	<b>Governor</b> - Ramen Deka <b>CM</b> - Vishnu Deo Sai <b>Capital</b> - Raipur <b>Rivers</b> - Mahanadi, Shivnath, Arpa, Sabari, Hasdo
25	<b>Meghalaya</b>	<b>Governor</b> - C. H. Vijayashankar <b>CM</b> - Konrad Sangma <b>Capital</b> - Shillong <b>Rivers</b> - Umngot, Someshwari, Digaru
26	<b>Telangana</b>	<b>Governor</b> - Jishnu Dev Varma <b>CM</b> - Revanth Reddy <b>Capital</b> - Hyderabad <b>Rivers</b> - Godavari, Krishna, Bhima
27	<b>Maharashtra</b>	<b>Governor</b> - C. P. Radhakrishnan <b>CM</b> - Devendra Fadnavis <b>Capital</b> - Mumbai <b>Rivers</b> - Godavari, Krishna, Waingana

