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Hugh Morris passed away at the age of 62



- Former England cricketer **Hugh Morris** passed away at the age of 62 after battling bowel cancer.
- He was an **opening batter** for England and earned **three Test caps in 1991**.
- Hugh Morris later served as the **Chief Executive of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB)**.
- Former New Zealand cricketer **Doug Bracewell** has retired from international cricket.
- He represented New Zealand in **28 Tests, 21 ODIs, and 20 T20 Internationals**.
- During his international career, **Doug Bracewell took 120 wickets**.

Russia Deploys Nuclear-Capable Oreshnik Missile System in Belarus

- Russia has deployed the **nuclear-capable Oreshnik missile system in Belarus.**
- Russia's **Ministry of Defence confirmed** that the Oreshnik missile system has entered **active service.**
- A **brief ceremony** marked the deployment, though no detailed information was disclosed.
- The Oreshnik is an **intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM).**
- It has a range of **500 to 5,500 km** and can reach speeds of up to **Mach 10.**
- In December, Russian President **Vladimir Putin** announced that the Oreshnik would soon enter **combat duty.**
- The missile reportedly saw **one combat use in November 2024**, striking the Ukrainian city of **Dnipro.**
- The Oreshnik carries a **Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle (MIRV)** and has been deployed in **Belarus**, whose capital is **Minsk.**



Rakesh Aggarwal Gets Additional Charge as NIACHief

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has assigned the additional charge of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Director General to senior IPS officer Rakesh Aggarwal following the premature repatriation of the incumbent DG, Sadanand Vasant Date, to his parent cadre.
- Aggarwal, a 1994-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of Himachal Pradesh cadre, is currently serving as Special Director General of the NIA.
- About National Investigation Agency (NIA) § Establishment:
- Under the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008, which was enacted in the aftermath of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks.
- Objective: To investigate and prosecute offences that threatens India's sovereignty, security, and integrity, friendly relations with foreign States, matters relating to international treaties etc
- Schedule of Offences: The Act includes a schedule of laws under which the NIA can investigate and prosecute offences (given in the box above).
- Headquarters: New Delhi with 2 Zonal offices at Guwahati & Jammu.



Rajasthan Cabinet approves vehicle scrapping policy to phase out polluting vehicles



- Approved by the Cabinet chaired by Bhajan Lal Sharma to scrap unfit, polluting vehicles safely and eco-friendly.
- Eligible vehicles: Govt vehicles >15 years, unregistered/unfit, accident-damaged, auctioned scrap, unusable, or voluntarily donated.
- Owners get Certificate of deposit from authorised centres; scrapping uploaded on Vahan portal.
- Incentive: Up to 50% motor vehicle tax rebate (max ₹1 lakh) on new vehicle purchase.
- Promotes setting up Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facilities (RVSFs) to ensure the process is transparent, digital, and traceable.

Cabinet gives nod to Delhi Jan Vishwas Bill

- The Cabinet approved the Delhi Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, which decriminalises various minor offences and converts them into civil penalties.
- The Bill will make both business and daily life easier by decriminalising minor offences and also reduce the burden on courts. The Bill proposes an automatic 10% increase in fines every three years.
- Various laws brought under the ambit of the Bill included Delhi Industrial Development, Operation and Maintenance Act; Delhi Shops and Establishments Act; the National Capital Territory of Delhi 'Incredible India' Bed and Breakfast Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act; and the Delhi Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation) Act.



Kaamya Karthikeyan batters -30°C winds to be come youngest Indian to ski to South Pole, wins hearts

- Kaamya Karthikeyan, the daughter of an Indian Navy officer, has etched her name in the record books by becoming the youngest Indian and the second-youngest woman in the world to ski to the South Pole.
- The 18-year-old reached the South Pole on December 27 after completing a challenging 115 km trek on foot.
- She is currently pursuing the Explorers Grand Slam, one of the world's toughest adventure challenges, which requires climbers to summit the highest peak on each of the seven continents and ski to both the North and South Poles.
- Karthikeyan has already completed the Seven Summits Challenge, including a successful ascent of Mount Everest from the Nepal side.
- With that feat, she became the youngest Indian and the second-youngest woman globally to conquer the world's highest mountain.



Renowned writer Maitreyi Pushpa conferred with IFFCO Sahitya Samman 2025, Ankita Jain receives Yuva Sahitya Samman

- Maitreyi Pushpa was conferred the IFFCO Sahitya Samman 2025 in recognition of her distinguished contribution to Hindi literature, particularly for works that reflect rural life, women's experiences and social realities.
- The award includes a cash prize of ₹11 lakh, a citation and a memento.
- The honour was presented at a ceremony held in New Delhi's Kamani Auditorium by IFFCO Chairman Dileep Sanghani.
- Ankita Jain received the IFFCO Yuva Sahitya Samman 2025, awarded to a promising young writer whose work demonstrates literary excellence with relevance to rural and agrarian themes.
- She was honoured for her book Oh Re! Kisan
- Instituted by IFFCO in 2011, this award is given annually to a Hindi writer whose works primarily depict rural and agricultural life.



Pralay Missile Successfully Tested in Salvo Mode by DRDO



- India successfully conducted a **salvo launch of two Pralay missiles** in quick succession from the **same launcher**, marking a major milestone in user evaluation trials.
- The test was carried out by **DRDO** at around **10:30 am on December 31, 2025**, from the **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur**, off the coast of **Odisha**.
- Both missiles were launched **back-to-back** and followed the **intended trajectory**, meeting all flight objectives as confirmed by tracking sensors.
- **Telemetry systems onboard a ship** deployed near the impact area confirmed the success of the terminal events.

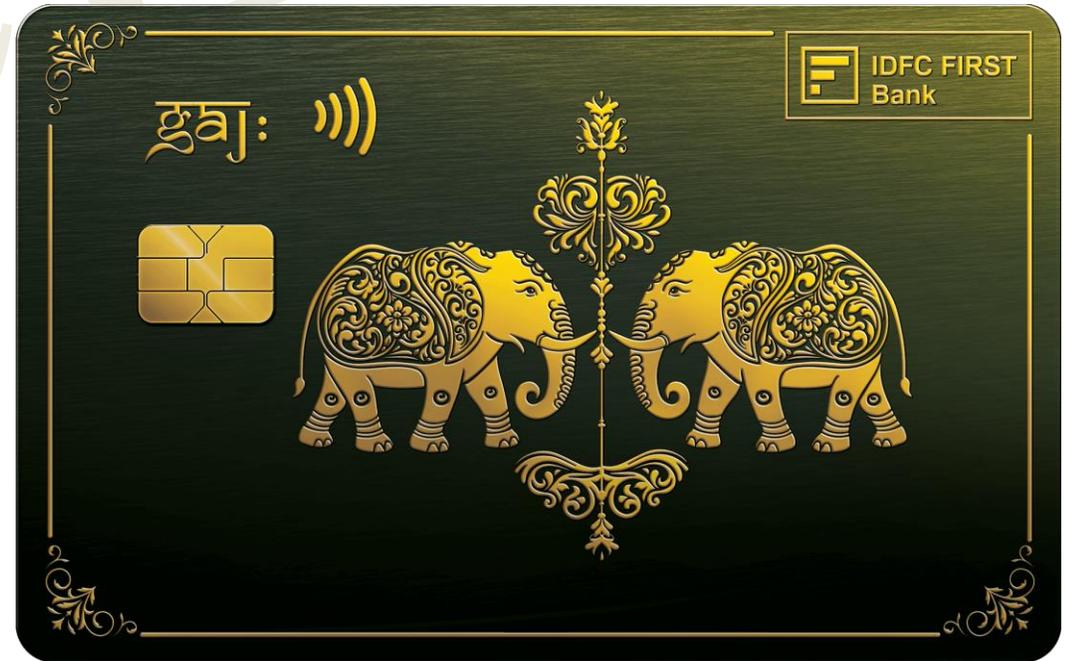
- **Pralay** is an **indigenously developed, canisterised, surface-to-surface Short-Range Ballistic Missile (SRBM)** designed to bridge the gap between **Pinaka rockets and Agni missiles**.
- It has a **range of 150–500 km**, carries **350–700 kg payload** (up to 1,000 kg), and can deliver **HEPF, PCB, and RDPS warheads**.
- The missile follows a **quasi-ballistic, depressed trajectory**, allowing **mid-course and terminal manoeuvres** to evade enemy air-defence systems.
- With **hypersonic speed (Mach 5+)** and **high accuracy (CEP <10 m)**, Pralay can precisely strike hardened targets like bunkers and command centres.
- The **salvo mode test validates saturation strike capability**, launcher reliability, quick reaction time, and indicates **near-readiness for induction** into the Armed Forces.

Gaj: Invitation-only Metal Credit Card

- IDFC First Bank has unveiled the 'Gaj' Metal Credit Card
- Gaj is a premium metal credit card
- Available only on an invitation-only basis
- Exclusively for High-Net-Worth Individuals (HNIs)
- Joining fee: ₹12,500 + GST
- It is the top-tier card in IDFC First Bank's premium metal card series
- Part of the Ashva – Mayura – Gaj trilogy

About IDFC First Bank:

- Established: 2015
- Headquarters: Mumbai
- MD & CEO: V. Vaidyanathan
- Tagline: *Always You First*



Rediff.com India Secures NPCI Approval for TPAP Licence

- **Rediff.com India Limited**, a subsidiary of **Infibeam Avenues Limited**, has received **final approval** from the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** to operate as a **Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP)**.
- After receiving approval, the company began **Closed User Group (CUG) testing** of its digital payments platform, **RediffPay**.
- The testing is being conducted ahead of the **public launch of RediffPay on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**.



India Plans ₹3.84 Lakh Crore Borrowing via Short-Term Treasury Bills in Q4

- The **Government of India** plans to borrow **₹3.84 lakh crore** through **short-term Treasury Bills (T-Bills)** in **Q4** of the current financial year.
- This borrowing will take place over a period of **12 weeks** to meet **short-term funding needs**.
- According to the **Finance Ministry**, **weekly T-Bill auctions** will be conducted in the range of **₹29,000 crore to ₹35,000 crore**.
- The planned **Q4 borrowing** is **₹10,000 crore lower** than the **₹3.94 lakh crore** borrowed in the same quarter of the previous financial year.
- Earlier, the Government had announced a **Q3 Treasury Bill auction calendar** of **₹2.47 lakh crore**, which ended on **31 December 2025**.



About T-Bills:

- **Treasury Bills (T-Bills) are short-term debt instruments issued by the Government of India.**
- They are issued to meet the government's **short-term borrowing needs.**
- T-Bills have a **maturity period of up to one year.**
- In India, T-Bills are issued in **91-day, 182-day, and 364-day** tenors.
- They are issued at a **discount to face value** and redeemed at **par value.**
- The **difference between issue price and face value** represents the investor's return.
- T-Bills **do not carry any interest (zero-coupon securities).**
- T-Bills are issued through **auction by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** on behalf of the Government.

India's First Maritime NBFC, SMFCL Begins Lending

- **Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL)** has formally started its lending operations, marking a historic milestone.
- It is **India's first NBFC** dedicated exclusively to the maritime sector.
- SMFCL approved loans worth **₹4,300 crore** during its **51st Board Meeting**.
- The corporation is targeting a **total loan book of ₹8,000 crore** by the end of the current financial year.
- The Board has approved an **overall borrowing limit of ₹25,000 crore**.
- **₹4,000 crore** has been allocated to a **Greenfield Port Project**, the largest share of funding.
- **Dredging Corporation of India (DCI)** secured **₹150 crore** in loans.
- **Goa Shipyard** received **₹110 crore** for indigenous shipbuilding.
- SMFCL is the **nodal agency** for the **Maritime Development Fund (MDF)** with a total corpus of **₹25,000 crore**.
- Under MDF, the **Maritime Investment Fund (MIF)** has an allocation of **₹20,000 crore** as an Alternative Investment Fund.
- The **Interest Incentivisation Fund (IIF)** has **₹5,000 crore** to reduce borrowing costs for maritime projects.



- SMFCL will play a key role in implementing the **Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Scheme (SBFAS)**, which has an outlay of **₹44,700 crore**.
- **About Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL):**
- It is a **Mini Ratna, Category-I Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)**.
- SMFCL was **registered as an NBFC with the RBI on June 19, 2025**.
- Its former name was **Sagarmala Development Company Limited (SDCL)**.
- The nodal ministry is the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)**.

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