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Union Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya Releases Book Titled “Mahatma: A Great Communicator”

- Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya released the book “Mahatma: A Great Communicator” on 3 March 2026.
- The book is based on the life and communication strategies of Mahatma Gandhi, highlighting his ability to influence masses through simple, ethical and value-based communication.
- The author of the book is Dhiraj Kakadia, who serves as Additional Director General of Akashvani.
- The book was released at Gandhi Darshan, located at Rajghat.
- The publication has been released in three languages: Hindi, English and Gujarati — to ensure wider reach among readers.
- The book emphasizes Mahatma Gandhi’s use of speeches, writings, symbols, public movements and personal conduct as powerful communication tools during India’s freedom struggle.
- It underlines how Gandhi effectively connected with diverse sections of society through clarity, moral conviction, simplicity and non-violence.
- The release aims to inspire youth and citizens to adopt Gandhian values in public life and communication.
- The event highlights the continuing relevance of Gandhian philosophy in modern governance, leadership and public discourse.



**Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya
Releases 'Mahatma: A Great Communicator'
written by Akashvani News ADG Dr Dhiraj Kakadia**

India–Canada Joint Leaders’ Statement During Prime Minister Mark Carney’s Official Visit to India



- India and Canada issued a Joint Leaders’ Statement during the official visit of Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada, to India from 27 February to 2 March 2026 at the invitation of Narendra Modi.
- This was Mark Carney’s first official visit to India after assuming office, and the first by a Canadian Prime Minister since 2018.
- Leaders reaffirmed the importance of the India-Canada bilateral relationship, based on shared democratic values, strong people-to-people ties, respect for sovereignty and rule of law.
- Both sides emphasized that deeper cooperation between the two vibrant democracies contributes to mutual prosperity and helps address global challenges including climate change, rapid technological transformation, public health, economic resilience and sustainable development.
- The Leaders agreed to adopt “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – One Earth, One Family, One Future” as the overarching guiding framework for the renewed strategic partnership.

- They noted progress towards implementing the New Roadmap for India–Canada Relations agreed earlier at G7 and G20 summits, reflecting enhanced ministerial-level and institutional dialogues.
- Leaders highlighted expanding commercial links, including launch of negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), signaling growth in trade and investment cooperation.
- Both agreed to deepen cooperation across sectors such as energy (including clean energy), innovation, technology, digital ecosystems, resilient supply chains, talent mobility and people-centric development.
- Emphasis was placed on strengthening cooperation in education and talent through initiatives like academic collaboration, research partnerships, and joint training programmes.
- Cultural cooperation and people-to-people exchanges were highlighted as key pillars to enrich bilateral ties.
- The statement also covered enhanced engagement in security and defence cooperation, collaboration in multilateral and Indo-Pacific forums, and shared commitment to a rules-based international order.

India To Host Bharat Steel 2026 Summit In New Delhi From 16th Of April

- Ministry of Steel, Government of India is organising “Bharat Steel 2026”, an international steel summit and exhibition to be held in New Delhi from 16–17 April 2026 at Bharat Mandapam.
- Bharat Steel 2026 is a flagship international conference-cum-exhibition aimed at shaping the future of the steel sector in India and globally, bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, technology innovators, investors and international stakeholders.
- The summit will serve as a policy-business dialogue platform focusing on next-generation steel ecosystems, innovation, sustainability, competitiveness and global partnerships in steel production and technology adoption.
- High-level participation is expected from the Prime Minister of India, Union Ministers (including from Steel, Commerce and Mining), Chief Ministers of states, senior officials, top leadership of domestic and international steel companies, technology providers and financial institutions.
- The event aims to showcase India’s steel vision, policy direction and investment potential, reinforcing India’s position as a leading global steel producer and expanding trade and technology linkages in the sector.
- Sessions will include discussions on innovation in steelmaking, low-emission technologies, sustainable production, digital transformation, supply chain resilience, raw material security, sectoral growth strategies and global collaboration.
- The summit also provides opportunities for international cooperation, technology exchange, investment promotion and networking among global industry stakeholders.
- Bharat Steel 2026 aligns with India’s broader goal of transforming its steel sector into a modern, competitive and sustainable industry, supporting economic growth, infrastructure development and employment.

MoS Raksha Khadse Announces Special Edition Of ASMITA Women's Sports League

- The Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced a nationwide ASMITA League to be held on 8 March 2026 to mark International Women's Day.
- The initiative was announced by Raksha Khadse, Union Minister of State for Sports.
- ASMITA stands for Achieving Sports Milestone by Inspiring Women Through Action and aims to promote women's participation in sports nationwide.
- The league will be conducted simultaneously at about 250 locations across India, focusing on athletics events (100m, 200m, 400m) for age groups Under-13, 13–18, and 18+.
- The programme is a joint endeavour of ASMITA, Khelo India, SAI (Sports Authority of India) & MY Bharat, involving State and District Sports Associations.
- It seeks to encourage girls from villages and small towns to take up sports as a career, aligning with broader national goals of sport development.
- Over 2600 ASMITA leagues across 34 sports disciplines have been conducted so far in 550+ districts and 700+ cities, with more than 3 lakh women participants.
- Each venue will have technical officials, volunteers, competition managers, and capacity-building activities to support athletes and officials.
- The initiative also links to India's long-term sport goals such as preparing talent ahead of major international events like the Commonwealth Games 2030 and the 2036 Olympic Games bid.



Vice-President Releases 16 Publications Celebrating Tamil Scholars, Heritage and Culture



- The Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced a nationwide ASMITA League to be held on 8 March 2026 to mark International Women's Day.
- Vice-President of India C. P. Radhakrishnan released 16 publications at Uparashtrapati Bhavan on 02 March 2026.
- The books were published by the Publications Division, under the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.
- Total publications released – 16; out of these, 13 books are in Tamil language.
- The publications focus on Tamil scholars, temple architecture, classical literature, agriculture traditions, spirituality and cultural heritage.
- Important temples covered include Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple and Brihadisvara Temple, highlighting Dravidian architectural excellence.
- Classical Tamil literary works such as Manimegalai are part of the thematic coverage, emphasizing ancient Tamil literary tradition.

- A special multilingual publication on Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was released in English, Hindi and Tamil to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram.
- The Vice-President emphasized that Tamil is one of the world's oldest classical languages and represents India's civilizational continuity and unity in diversity.
- Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Minister of State L. Murugan were present during the event.
- The event underlined the Government's commitment towards preservation and promotion of Indian languages and regional literature.
- The initiative promotes cultural integration by making regional heritage accessible in multiple languages.

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Union Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya Chairs 239th Meeting Of CBT & EPF In New Delhi



- The 239th meeting of the Central Board of Trustees (CBT), Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) was chaired by Mansukh Mandaviya in New Delhi.
- CBT recommended an annual interest rate of 8.25% on EPF deposits for the financial year 2025-26, subject to Government notification; this ensures stable and competitive returns for subscribers.
- A one-time Amnesty Scheme for Exempted Establishments was approved to bring income tax-recognized trusts into compliance under the Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952; damages, interest and penalties may be waived if statutory benefits were already provided.
- New simplified SOP on EPF exemption was approved to consolidate existing SOPs and the Exemption Manual into a unified digital framework to reduce compliance burden, promote transparency and enable faster processing of exemption cases.
- New EPF, EPS and EDLI Schemes (2026) were approved to align with the Code on Social Security, 2020, providing a legally robust foundation for social security benefits.

- A pilot project for auto-initiation of claim settlement in inoperative EPF accounts with unclaimed balances up to ₹1,000 was approved; approx. 1.33 lakh accounts worth ₹5.68 crore will be settled directly into Aadhaar-seeded bank accounts.
- EPFO's Annual Report for 2024-25 was approved for tabling in Parliament; during FY 2024-25, EPFO recorded contributions of Rs 3,35,628.81 crore, added 1.22 crore new members and served over 81 lakh pensioners.
- EPFO implemented digital reforms including pan-India rollout of Centralised Pension Payment System (CPPS) and Facial Authentication Technology (FAT) for life certificates.
- Employees' Pension Scheme (1995) was amended to allow withdrawal benefits after even one month of contribution and EDLI benefits were enhanced up to ₹7 lakh for continuous employment.
- The Board approved IBPS as the agency for conducting direct recruitment and promotion examinations for EPFO to ensure transparent and timely recruitment.
- Board approved SOPs for structured decision-making on corporate actions, Equity ETF investments and Liquid Mutual Fund investments to strengthen fund management governance and optimise returns within prudent risk parameters.
- India negotiated a Double Contributions Convention (DCC) with the United Kingdom under the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) to reduce social security costs for workers and employers.

President Droupadi Murmu launches four women welfare schemes of Delhi Government

- The President of India, Droupadi Murmu, formally inaugurated four women-centric welfare schemes of the Delhi Government at an event held at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium on 2 March 2026 to promote women-led development.
- The programme emphasised strengthening women's independence, dignity, safety, financial security and access to opportunities; the President stated that empowered women can change the direction of society and the nation.
- A total benefit of about ₹129 crore will be directly transferred to beneficiaries' bank accounts through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

Four Major Women-Centric Schemes Launched in Delhi:

- **Delhi Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana:** Provides phased financial assistance in the name of a girl child from birth, ensuring cumulative savings of over ₹1 lakh by age 21 to support education/vocational training; eligibility based on income and Delhi residency criteria.
- **Saheli Pink Smart Card (National Common Mobility Card for Women):** Initiative was launched to provide free travel for women on Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) buses; the card can be used for paid travel on Metro and Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS), improving safe, affordable urban mobility.
- About 50 centres across Delhi will facilitate issuance of the Pink Smart Cards; each card will be linked to Aadhaar and mobile number to verify age, gender and residency.



- **Meri Poonji, Mera Adhikar Initiative:** DBT of over ₹100 crore was transferred to 40,642 girls under the Delhi Ladli scheme as part of expanded support for girl children.
- **Free LPG Cylinder Scheme:** Provides financial assistance equivalent to two LPG cylinders annually to eligible ration card-holding families during major festivals, reducing household cooking fuel expenses.
- The initiatives are expected to improve women's access to education, employment and healthcare by reducing financial and mobility barriers.
- The launch event was attended by key leaders including Rekha Gupta, Vinai Kumar Saxena, and other dignitaries.

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India's GST collections rise 8.1% YoY to Rs 1.83 lakh crore in February



- In February 2026, India's Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections rose by 8.1% year-on-year (YoY) to ₹1.83 lakh crore, reflecting sustained economic activity and stronger tax compliance.
- The increase in GST revenue indicates resilient domestic consumption, improved formalization of the economy, and contribution from both goods and services sectors.
- For the financial year 2025-26 (till 28 February), the total gross GST revenue stood at ₹20.27 lakh crore, recording an 8.3% YoY growth, showing overall positive growth through the year.
- During February, total GST refunds amounted to ₹22,595 crore, up 10.2% YoY; after adjusting for refunds, net GST revenue for the month was around ₹1.61 lakh crore.
- Gross Domestic GST revenue (domestic transactions) was about ₹1.36 lakh crore, indicating growth in internal economic activity.

- GST revenue from imports showed a stronger rise at around ₹47,837 crore, up 17.2% YoY, underlining robust import-linked tax receipts.
- Net cess revenue (after cess) declined sharply to about ₹5,063 crore from ₹13,481 crore in February 2025, affected by GST rate rationalization and cess withdrawals on several items.
- GST data showed mixed trends across states: several industrialized states recorded positive post-settlement State GST growth, while some smaller and resource-dependent states showed declines in SGST revenues.
- Maharashtra emerged as the highest contributor to India's GST collections in February with significant pre-settlement revenue, followed by Karnataka and Gujarat.
- Analysts note that the February GST figures, despite recent GST rate cuts and rationalization under GST 2.0, reflect continued consumption demand and economic resilience.
- The GST revenue performance is a key indicator of economic growth trends, tax compliance levels, and consumer demand patterns in India's indirect tax framework.

PM Modi Launches Projects Worth Over Rs 2,700 Cr in Puducherry



- On 1 March 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and dedicated to the nation multiple development projects in Puducherry worth over ₹2,700 crore.
- He also laid the foundation stone for several new projects aimed at enhancing infrastructure, socio-economic growth, and the quality of life in the region.
- The projects span key sectors including infrastructure, urban services, industrial development, education, healthcare, water supply, sanitation, power, and sustainable growth.
- Infrastructure and urban development initiatives include rollout of e-Buses under the PM e-Bus Seva Initiative, an Integrated Command and Control Centre under the Smart City Mission, and urban roads and drainage network projects.
- Key public utility projects were inaugurated including sewerage and improved water supply systems to ensure better sanitation and access to clean water.
- In the education sector, the Composite Engineering Block – Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Block and Ganga Hostel at the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Karaikal were inaugurated; expanded academic and hostel facilities at Pondicherry University were launched.

- In healthcare, the modernisation of the Regional Cancer Centre at Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) was inaugurated.
- A major 750-acre Karasur-Sedarapet Industrial Estate was dedicated to the nation, planned to house a Pharma Park, Textile Park, IT Park, a research and development centre of Indian Institute of Technology Madras, and advanced healthcare facilities linked to JIPMER, boosting industrial growth and employment.
- The PM also laid the foundation stone for drinking water projects and 41 rural roads under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana to strengthen rural connectivity.
- Projects under the MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes), Heritage Town development, sanitation works under urban schemes, and power sector projects under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme were also inaugurated/laid.
- The Centre approved inclusion of the Union Territory under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) scheme — originally for states — to support capital asset creation, boosting infrastructure and public utilities in Puducherry.
- PM Modi highlighted his government’s vision of “BEST Puducherry” (Business, Education, Spirituality, Tourism) and stated these projects will transform lives, enhance ease of living, and boost economic growth in the region.

Mumbai Launches 'Saksham Skill Survey', Ambitious Drive To Study Skills Of Youth



- India's first AI-powered skill census, named the Saksham Skill Census, was launched on 2 March 2026 at RD National College, Bandra West, Mumbai Suburban.
- The initiative aims to map skills and livelihoods in the H-West Ward to facilitate better employment planning and workforce development.
- The program is district-led and aims to build a livelihood intelligence framework — a comprehensive data set on skills relevant to jobs and economic opportunities in the region.
- The launch event was attended by key dignitaries including Shri Ashish Shelar, Minister of Information Technology, and Shri Saurabh Katiyar, IAS, District Collector of Mumbai Suburban.
- The census uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) and GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping to divide Mumbai Suburban into hyperlocal territories for precise skill data collection.

- Enumerators will conduct door-to-door surveys using an AI-supported tool called 'Arc' to collect individual skill profiles; residents can also complete a virtual self-survey online.
- Institutions and employers will also be surveyed to provide a 360° view of the skill ecosystem, linking supply (skills) with demand (job opportunities).
- The initiative's objective is to enhance employment opportunities and improve livelihoods for youth, making H-West Ward a model that could potentially be replicated across India.
- An official website, sakshamskillsurvey.org, was launched as the digital platform for stakeholders and participants in the census project.
- The skill census represents a novel approach to workforce mapping, potentially informing future policy, education, and skill development programs.

Varanasi creates Guinness Record, plants 2.5 lakh saplings in one hour



- On 1 March 2026, Varanasi set a new Guinness World Record by planting 2, 51,446 saplings in one hour at the Sujabad-Domari area along the Ganges Riverfront.
- This achievement surpassed the previous record of 1, 53,981 saplings held by China.
- The record-breaking drive was organised by the Varanasi Municipal Corporation and involved active participation from more than 20,000 volunteers, including civic officials, students and community members under the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana framework.
- Guinness World Records adjudicators authenticated the achievement using drone footage and a digital counting system, and the official certificate was presented to civic authorities on site.
- The plantation used the Miyawaki method — a technique for creating dense urban forests with native species that accelerates growth and enhances biodiversity — and is part of the plan to develop Kashi’s first urban forest (“mini-Kashi”) along the riverbank.

- The plantation site was divided into multiple sectors named after prominent ghats of Varanasi, such as Dashashwamedh, Manikarnika, Kedar, Lalita and Sheetla, with each sector receiving more than 4,000 saplings.
- The initiative aims to improve air quality, restore ecological balance, act as an “oxygen bank”, strengthen riverbank protection, and increase urban green cover for environmental sustainability.
- Officials plan to integrate the plantation area with recreational and public amenities including walking tracks, meditation zones, a flower park, a herbal park, children’s play areas and fitness spaces to enhance community usage.

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K.P. Unnikrishnan, former Union Minister and senior Congress leader, passes away



- K. P. Unnikrishnan, senior Indian politician and former Union Minister from Kerala, passed away on 3 March 2026 in Kozhikode at the age of 90.
- He was born on 20 September 1936 in a family from the Malabar Coast (present-day Kerala/Tamil Nadu region).
- Unnikrishnan was educated at Madras Christian College, Chennai, and also completed a law degree before entering politics.
- Early in his career, he worked as a journalist and special correspondent, contributing to publications such as Mathrubhumi before moving into full-time politics.
- Initially associated with the Socialist Party and Praja Socialist Party, he later joined the Indian National Congress in the 1960s.
- He became a member of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) by 1962, marking his formal entry into national politics.
- Unnikrishnan was elected MP from the Vadakara (formerly Cannanore/Kannur) Lok Sabha constituency for six consecutive terms in 1971, 1977, 1980, 1984, 1989 and 1991, a rare electoral feat.

- His only parliamentary defeat came in 1996, after which he retired from active electoral politics.
- He served as Union Minister for Telecommunications, Shipping and Surface Transport in the V. P. Singh government (1989-90) and played a key role during the Gulf War evacuations of Indians.
- Unnikrishnan also led Congress (Secular) in Parliament from 1981 to 1984 and was a member of the Public Accounts Committee (1980-82).
- After retiring from politics, he spent his later years between New Delhi and his ancestral home in Panniyankara, Kozhikode district, focusing on reading and writing.

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World Wildlife Day (WWD) 2026

- World Wildlife Day is observed every year on 3 March to celebrate the world's wild animals and plants and raise awareness about their conservation.
- The day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 December 2013, marking the adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) signed on 3 March 1973.
- Objective is to highlight the importance of protecting wild fauna and flora, the ecological balance, biodiversity conservation, and the sustainable use of natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations.
- Theme for World Wildlife Day 2026: “Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods”.
- The 2026 theme focuses on the role of medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) in human health, cultural heritage, traditional medicine systems, and livelihoods of local communities, and stresses the need to conserve and sustainably use these plant resources.
- Medicinal and aromatic plants are integral to traditional health systems (e.g., Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani), and many species are under threat due to overharvesting, habitat loss and climate change.
- The day is celebrated internationally with events, campaigns and programmes by governments, UN bodies, NGOs and conservation groups to promote wildlife protection actions, support sustainable practices and enhance public awareness.

