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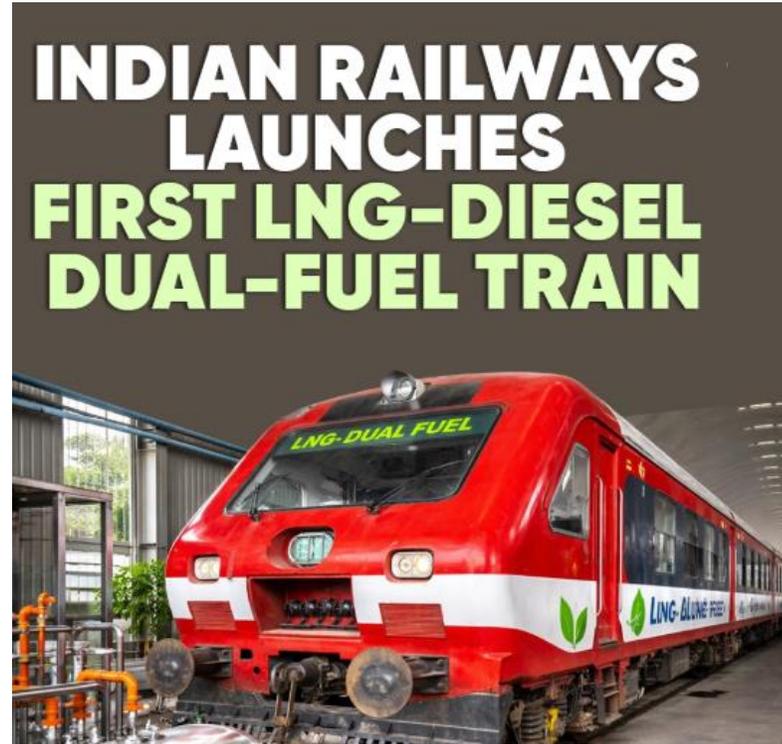
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## Indian Railways Launches First LNG–Diesel Dual-Fuel DEMU Train in Ahmedabad



- Indian Railways has achieved an important milestone by launching the country's first LNG–Diesel dual-fuel DEMU train.
- The train has been operationalised at Sabarmati in Ahmedabad, marking a big move towards sustainable and environment-friendly rail operations.
- This initiative supports Indian Railways' goal of reducing pollution, cutting fuel costs, and adopting cleaner energy solutions.

### LNG–Diesel Dual-Fuel DEMU Train:

- A DEMU (Diesel Electric Multiple Unit) train is commonly used for short- distance passenger services. In this new model, the DEMU train has been upgraded to run on a dual-fuel system, using both Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and diesel.

- The train has 1,400 horsepower (HP) driving power cars that have been converted to use LNG along with diesel. LNG replaces around 40% of conventional diesel, making the train more fuel-efficient and cleaner.
- Before starting regular passenger service, the dual-fuel DEMU train successfully completed over 2,000 kilometres of field trial

### **Environmental Benefits of the Dual-Fuel System**

- One of the biggest advantages of the LNG–diesel system is its positive impact on the environment.

### **Key Environmental Benefits**

- Significant reduction in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions Lower nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) emissions
- Improved air quality along railway routes
- Reduced noise and smoke pollution
- This launch reflects Indian Railways' long-term commitment to green transportation and net-zero goals.

## **Andhra Pradesh to Set Up Exclusive Women Industrial Park to Boost Women Entrepreneurs**

- Andhra Pradesh has taken a strong and positive step to support women entrepreneurs by planning an exclusive industrial park only for women
- This new industrial park will cover 30 acres and will mainly focus on women-led industries, startups, and small businesses.
- The aim is to give women a safe, supportive, and well-equipped space to start and grow their businesses
- This initiative shows the state government's commitment to promoting women entrepreneurship and creating more employment opportunities.
- To make this project successful, the Andhra Pradesh government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the FICCI
- Ladies Organisation (FICCI-FLO). FICCI-FLO is the women's wing of FICCI and works to support and empower women entrepreneurs across India.
- The initiative strongly supports Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's vision of "One Family, One Entrepreneur." This vision aims to encourage at least one entrepreneur in every family.
- This exclusive women industrial park is also part of a bigger plan to develop 175 MSME parks across Andhra Pradesh. These parks aim to boost small businesses and local industries throughout the state.

### **About Andhra Pradesh:**

- Chief Minister: N. Chandrababu Naidu
- Governor: S. Abdul Nazeer
- Capital: Amaravati

## **Divakar Jayant Assumes Charge as Director General of Naval Armament**

- Shri Divakar Jayant, a distinguished officer of the Indian Naval Armament Service (INAS), officially assumed charge as Director General of Naval Armament (DGONA) at Naval Headquarters, Ministry of Defence, on February 2, 2026
- This transition marks a significant leadership change in India's naval armament sector, as Jayant succeeds Shri P Upadhyay, who superannuated on January 31, 2026.
- Shri Divakar Jayant brings an exceptional 33-year career spanning multiple critical roles within India's naval establishments.
- Belonging to the 1991 batch of the Indian Naval Armament Service, he joined the Naval Armament Organisation of the Indian Navy on December 28, 1992, beginning a distinguished career dedicated to advancing India's naval capabilities and readiness.



## **Walmart Becomes World's First Retail Company to Reach USD 1 Trillion Market Value**

- In January 2026, **Walmart Inc.**, an American multinational retail corporation, became the **first retail company** globally to achieve a market capitalisation of **USD 1 trillion**, following a strong rally in its share price over the past year.

### **Key Highlights:**

- **Stock Performance:** Walmart's shares rose by nearly 26% over the last 12 months and about 468% over the past decade, outperforming the S&P 500, which gained around 264% during the same period.
- **Nasdaq-100:** In December 2025, Walmart was added to the tech-focused Nasdaq-100 Index, which features the world's most valuable non-financial companies.
- **AI Adoption:** Walmart invested billions of dollars in Artificial Intelligence(AI)-enabled supply chains to improve inventory planning, fresh produce delivery, and delivery speed, enabling the company to exceed same-store sales estimates for 15 consecutive quarters.
- **Peer Group:** Other companies with market capitalisation exceeding USD 1 trillion include Nvidia, Alphabet, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Meta, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, Tesla, and Broadcom.

### **About Walmart:**

- **Walmart CEO:** Doug McMillon
- **Walmart Headquarters:** Bentonville, Arkansas, United States



# Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Announces Breakthrough of 2nd Mountain Tunnel of MAHSR Project

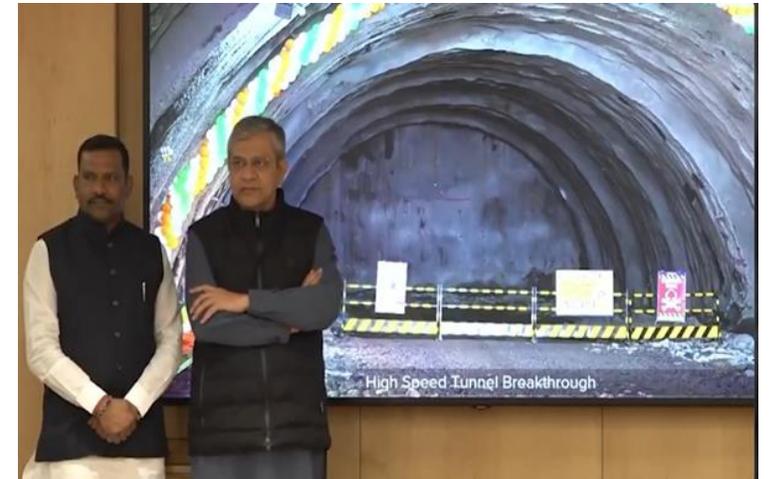
- On February 3, 2026, Union Minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw**, Ministry of Railways (MoR), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), announced the completion of tunneling work of the **2nd Mountain Tunnel (MT-6)** for the Mumbai (Maharashtra) -Ahmedabad (Gujarat) High Speed-Rail (**MAHSR**) project in Palghar, Maharashtra.

## About MT-6 Excavation Completion:

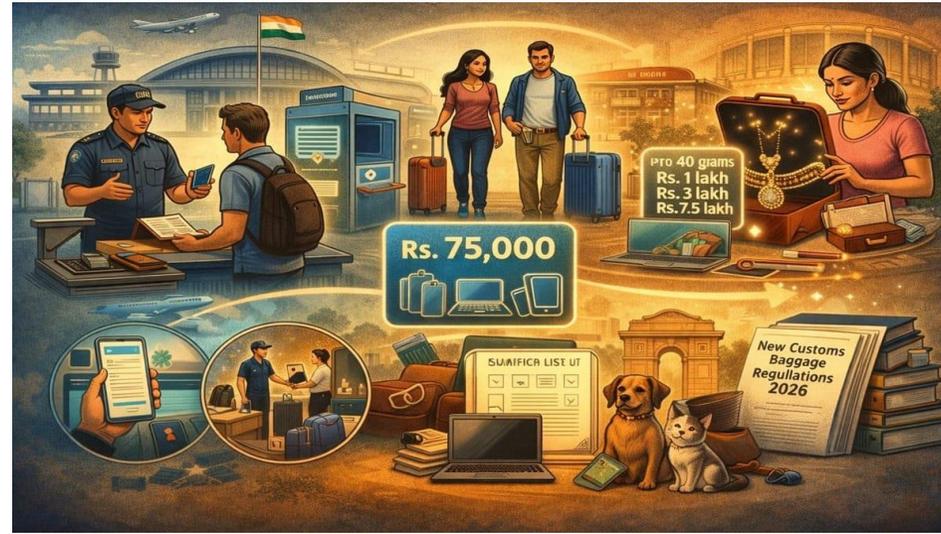
- MT-6 is 454 metre (m) long and 14.4 m wide, built to carry both up and down tracks for the high-speed rail line. MT-6 was excavated from both ends met in the middle, forming a continuous tunnel.
- **Significance:** This marks the second tunnel breakthrough, following the MT-5 near Saphale, Maharashtra.
- **Construction Method:** MT-6 was excavated using the New Austrian Tunnelling Method (**NATM**), a drill-and-controlled blast approach suited for complex geology.
- **Timeline:** The Gujarat section of the MAHSR corridor is expected to commence commercial operations in 2027, with the train reaching Thane by 2028 and achieving full connectivity to Mumbai by 2029.

## About Maharashtra:

- Chief Minister (CM) – Devendra Fadnavis
- Governor – Acharya Devvrat
- Capital – Mumbai
- Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) – Malvan WLS, Aner Dam WLS



# Government Notifies Baggage Rules 2026, New Customs Regulations and Master Circular



- The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has notified the **Baggage Rules, 2026**, along with **Customs Baggage (Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2026** and a **Master Circular** to simplify international passenger clearance.
- The new rules aim to **enhance passenger facilitation**, introduce **electronic and advanced declarations**, improve **transparency**, and align customs procedures with **rising travel volumes and modern travel needs**.

## Key Highlights :

- The **general duty-free allowance** has been increased as follows: **₹75,000** for residents, **Indian-origin tourists**, and **foreigners with valid non-tourist visas**, **₹25,000** for **foreign tourists**, and **₹2,500** for **crew members**.
- **Passengers arriving through land borders** are **not entitled** to any **general duty-free allowance** under the new rules.
- **Transfer of residence benefits** have been **simplified** with **value limits** of **₹1.5 lakh** (up to 12 months abroad), **₹3 lakh** (1–2 years), and **₹7.5 lakh** (above 2 years).

- **Jewellery allowance** has been **modernised** by **removing value caps** and allowing **duty-free jewellery** based on **weight**: up to **40 grams** for **female passengers** and **20 grams** for **others**. The rules **consolidate earlier provisions**, allow **one**
- **duty-free laptop** (for passengers above 18 years) and **pets**, and replace **35 old circulars**, making **India** a more **tourism-friendly destination**.
- New provisions for **temporary import/re-import** include issuance of **temporary baggage import or export certificates** to avoid **unnecessary detention of goods**.
- The **revised framework** focuses on **higher duty-free limits**, **reduced detention**, **digital and simplified processes**, and **uniform implementation** across **Customs formations** to enhance **passenger convenience** and strengthen **India's global tourism position**

#### **About CBIC:**

- The **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**, formerly known as the **Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC)**, is constituted under the **Central Boards of Revenue Act, 1963**.
- **CBIC** is the **apex body** under the **Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance**, responsible for **administering indirect taxes** in India.
- Established : 26 January 1944
- Headquarter : New Delhi, India
- Chairperson : Vivek Chaturvedi

## India Emerges as a Major Engine of Global Urban Growth in 2025 UN REPORT



- A **United Nations report (2025)** states that **around 45% of the global population lives in urban areas**, a sharp rise from **20% in 1950**.
- **India has emerged as one of the biggest drivers of global urban growth**, placing it at the centre of worldwide urbanisation trends.
- India currently has **five megacities**, each with a population of **more than 10 million**.
- **New Delhi**, with a population of **over 30 million**, is among the **four largest cities in the world**, alongside **Jakarta, Dhaka and Tokyo**.
- Major Indian cities such as **Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai and Kolkata** continue to attract **migration, jobs and investment**.

- The 2025 UN report introduced the **“Degree of Urbanization”** method, which classifies cities based on **population size and density**, not just administrative boundaries.
- Under this method, **densely populated urban areas outside official city limits** are also counted as cities.
- Due to this revised methodology, **population estimates of many Indian and Asian cities have increased**, offering a **more accurate picture of urban living patterns**.
- **Asia dominates global urbanisation**, hosting **9 of the world’s 10 largest cities** and nearly **60% of all megacities**.
- **India plays a central role in Asia’s urban growth**, supported by its **young population, internal migration and expanding service and manufacturing sectors**.
- While megacities receive attention, the report highlights that **most urban growth is occurring in small and medium-sized cities**.
- Nearly **96% of cities globally have populations below 1 million**.
- In India, **smaller cities are growing faster than large metros** due to **improved road connectivity, digital infrastructure and emerging local industries**.

## **Shri Hari Shankar Verma Assumes Charge as Member (Operations & Business Development) of Railway Board**

- Shri Hari Shankar Verma, a 1987 batch Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) officer, has assumed charge as **Member (Operations and Business Development), Railway Board, and Ex-officio Secretary to the Government of India.**
- Prior to this appointment, he served as **Director General, Safety, Railway Board**, where he played a key role in **strengthening railway safety standards.**
- Shri Verma has received the **Hon'ble Rail Minister Award** twice along with multiple **General Manager (GM) level awards** for his **outstanding contributions.**

### **About Ministry of Railways :**

- Cabinet Minister : Ashwini Vaishnaw
- Minister of State : V. Somanna, Ravneet Singh Bittu
- Chairman & CEO, Railway Board : Satish Kumar



## **Japan Achieves World-First Recovery of Rare Earth Minerals from Deep-Sea Sediments**

- **Japan** announced it had successfully recovered rare earth minerals from deep-sea sediments, marking a world-first achievement.
- The recovery was conducted by the deep-sea drilling vessel **Chikyu**, which retrieved sediments from a depth of nearly **6,000 metres** near **Minamitorishima Island**.
- The initiative aims to **reduce Japan's dependence on China** for rare earth elements and other **critical minerals**.
- The move is part of **Japan's broader strategy** to build **resilient and secure supply chains** for critical minerals.
- **Rare earths**, comprising **17 metals** difficult to extract from the Earth's crust, are used in **electric vehicles, hard drives, wind turbines, and missiles**.

### **About Japan:**

- **Capital:** Tokyo
- **Currency:** Japanese Yen (JPY)

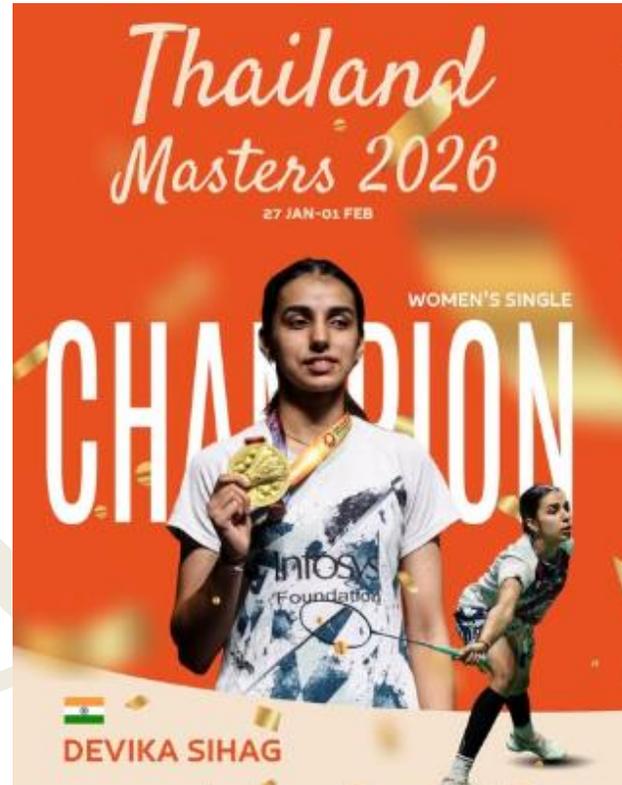


# **The Election Commission of India's (ECI) 3-day conference, "International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM) 2026"**

- The Election Commission of India's (ECI) 3-day conference, "International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM) 2026", concluded at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi
- The conference was organised by the India International Institute of Democracy & Election Management (IIIDEM).
- Theme – **"Democracy for an Inclusive, Peaceful, Resilient & Sustainable World"**
- It was concluded with adoption of – 'Delhi Declaration 2026'
- Election Management Bodies (EMBs) resolved to work together on 5 pillars of declaration relating to:
  - Purity of Electoral Rolls
  - Conduct of Elections
  - Research and Publications
  - Use of Technology
  - Training and Capacity Building



## Thailand Masters 2026



- Indian Shuttler Devika Sihag from Haryana won her maiden Badminton World Federation (BWF) Super 300 title after Malaysia's Goh Jin Wei retired midway through the women's singles final of the Thailand Masters 2026 held in Bangkok, Thailand.
- In the Men's Singles category, Mohammad Zaki Ubaidillah (Indonesia) clinched the title
- With this victory, she became only the third Indian woman to win a BWF Super 300 title, following two-time Olympic medallist P.V. Sindhu and Olympic bronze medallist Saina Nehwal.
- She won her 1st BWF International Title at the Malaysia International in August 2025.

## **Spain Becomes First European Country to Ban Social Media for Children Under 16**

- Spain has announced a **nationwide ban on social media access for children below 16 years of age**, becoming the **first country in Europe** to take such a step and the **second globally after Australia**.
- The decision was announced by Spanish Prime Minister **Pedro Sánchez** during his address at the World Government Summit in Dubai.
- The ban is expected to come into force **within a week**. The move is important as it reflects growing global concern over **child safety, mental health, and digital regulation** in the age of social media.

### **About Spain:**

- **Capital:** Madrid
- **Prime Minister:** Pedro Sánchez
- **Currency:** Euro

