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The first meeting of the Payments Regulatory Board chaired by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra

- ✓ On 5 January, the first meeting of the Payments Regulatory Board was held in Mumbai under the chairmanship of RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra.
- ✓ The meeting was convened following the constitution of the Payments Regulatory Board under the amended Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, which came into effect on May 9, 2025.
- ✓ The Payments Regulatory Board replaced the erstwhile Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems (BPSS).
- ✓ The BPSS had earlier functioned as a committee of the Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India.
- ✓ The functions of the Department of Payment and Settlement Systems were reviewed during the meeting.
- ✓ Current focus areas related to domestic as well as global payment systems were discussed by the Board.
- ✓ The draft Payments Vision 2028 was presented before the members for consideration.
- ✓ Strategic guidance was provided by the members to ensure the sustained development of India's payment ecosystem.



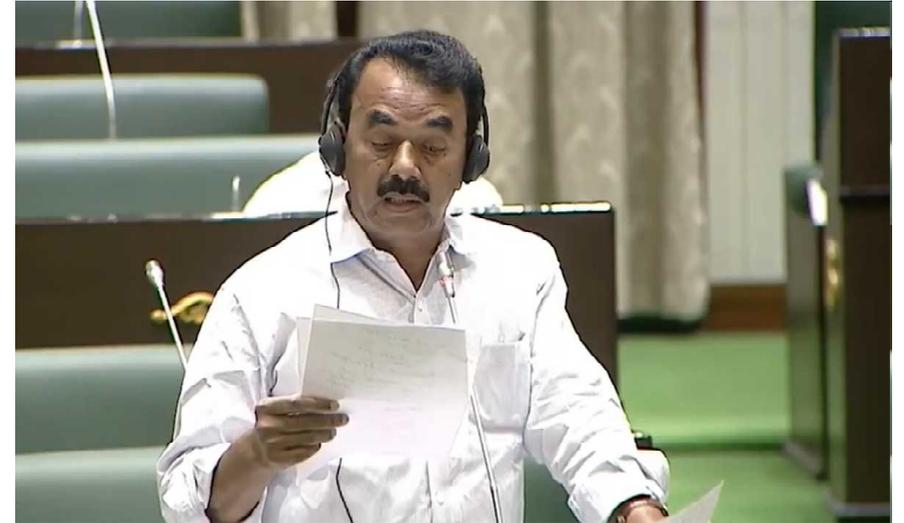
German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's First Official Visit to India

- ✓ German Chancellor **Friedrich Merz** will make his first official visit to India on **12–13 January**.
- ✓ The visit is being undertaken at the **invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.
- ✓ This will be **Chancellor Merz's first official visit** to India.
- ✓ During the visit, he will travel to **Ahmedabad and Bengaluru**.
- ✓ **Prime Minister Modi will receive Chancellor Merz on 12 January in Ahmedabad**.
- ✓ The two leaders will review the progress of the **India-Germany strategic partnership**, which completed **25 years** last year.
- ✓ Discussions will focus on cooperation in **trade, investment, technology, education, skilling, and mobility**.
- ✓ The visit aims to strengthen collaboration in **defence, security, science, innovation, green development, and people-to-people ties**, reaffirming a forward-looking partnership.



Telangana GST (Amendment) Bill, 2026 Passed by State Assembly

- ✓ On **5 January**, the Telangana State Assembly passed the **Telangana GST (Amendment) Bill, 2026** amid disruptions.
- ✓ The Bill was introduced on behalf of **Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy** by **Excise and Prohibition Minister J. Krishna Rao**.
- ✓ The amendment was described by the government as a “**technical updation**” mandated by the Centre.
- ✓ Concerns were raised over **revenue losses to the state due to ethanol blending in petrol**.
- ✓ **MIM legislators staged a walkout** in protest against the Bill.
- ✓ Allegations were made that the **GST framework is pushing smaller states into financial stress**.
- ✓ **BJP members defended GST reforms**, stating that tax rationalisation has benefited the middle class.
- ✓ Despite strong opposition and uproar, the **Telangana GST (Amendment) Bill, 2026** was passed by the Assembly.



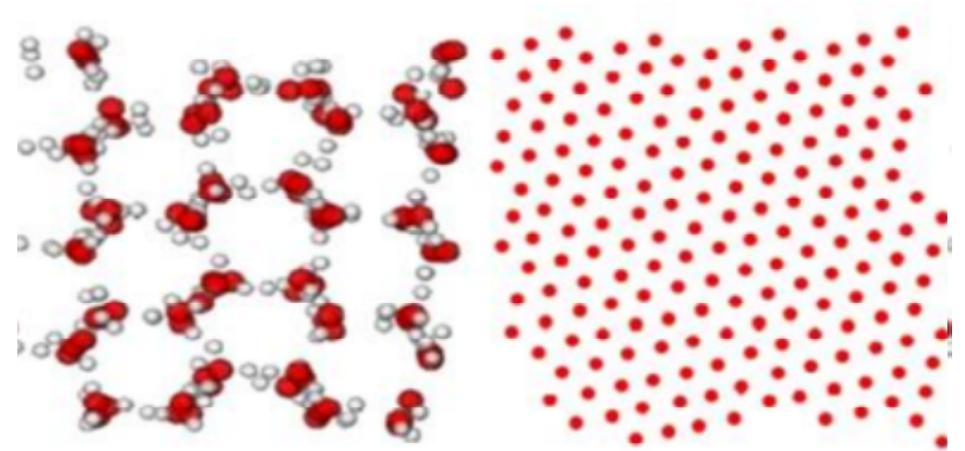
Former world billiards champion Manoj Kothari has passed away

- ✓ On 5 January, the former world billiards champion Manoj Kothari passed away at the age of 67.
- ✓ His death occurred following a massive cardiac arrest at a hospital in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ Manoj Kothari won the World Billiards Championship title in 1990.
- ✓ He secured the State Billiards Championship title on 16 occasions during his career.
- ✓ In 2005, he was conferred with the prestigious Dhyan Chand Award.
- ✓ The Dhyan Chand Award is India's highest honour for lifetime achievement in sports.
- ✓ In 2025, he was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Billiards and Snooker Federation of India.



Indian Scientists Develop First Supercomputer Simulation Explaining the Mpemba Effect

- ✓ First supercomputer-powered simulation to capture Mpemba effect has been developed by Indian Scientists.
- ✓ A major scientific breakthrough has been achieved by Indian scientists.
- ✓ They developed the first supercomputer-powered simulation to explain why hot water can sometimes freeze faster than cold water.
- ✓ This unusual behavior is called the Mpemba effect and has remained unexplained for a long time.
- ✓ The study was led by researchers from the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research.
- ✓ The researchers created the first computer simulation that models ice formation showing Mpemba effect.
- ✓ The simulation also shows that similar effects can occur in substances other than water.
- ✓ These effects appear during transitions from liquid to solid states.
- ✓ The findings of the research have been published in the journal of Communications Physics.



India Energy Week 2026 to Be Held in Goa

- ✓ **India Energy Week 2026** will be held in **Goa** from **January 27** to **January 30**.
- ✓ The event will bring together **global ministers, CEOs, policymakers, financial institutions, academia, and technology leaders**.
- ✓ Key discussions will focus on **energy security, investment, and decarbonisation**.
- ✓ India Energy Week is held under the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas**.
- ✓ The event is jointly hosted by the **Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry (FIPI)** and **dmg events**.
- ✓ **India Energy Week 2026** will be the **first major global energy gathering of the year**.
- ✓ Participants from **more than 120 countries** are expected to attend.
- ✓ The event will provide a platform for cooperation on building **resilient, affordable, and sustainable energy systems**.
- ✓ As per the **International Energy Agency's World Energy Outlook 2025**, India will account for **over 23% of global incremental energy demand by 2050**, the highest for any country.



Union Minister Jitendra Singh Inaugurates Global-Scale Facilities at CSIR-NPL

- ✓ On the **80th Foundation Day of CSIR–National Physical Laboratory (NPL)**, Union Minister **Jitendra Singh** inaugurated two global-scale facilities.
- ✓ He inaugurated the **world’s second National Environmental Standard Laboratory** at CSIR–NPL.
- ✓ The **world’s fifth National Primary Standard Facility for Solar Cell Calibration** was also inaugurated.
- ✓ The launch of the National Environmental Standard Laboratory marks a **major step in India’s environmental governance**.
- ✓ The environmental laboratory will **improve the accuracy of air pollution monitoring**.
- ✓ It will strengthen initiatives such as the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**.
- ✓ The solar cell calibration facility was developed **in collaboration with Germany’s PTB**.



- ✓ The facility uses **advanced laser-based calibration technology**, reducing dependence on **foreign certification bodies**.
- ✓ On the occasion, **14 phytochemical Bharatiya Nirdeshak Dravya standards**, along with **two gas standards and one silica fume standard**, were launched, developed jointly by **CSIR-CIMAP and CSIR-NPL**.

The National Textiles Ministers' Conference 2026 will start on January 8 in Guwahati, Assam

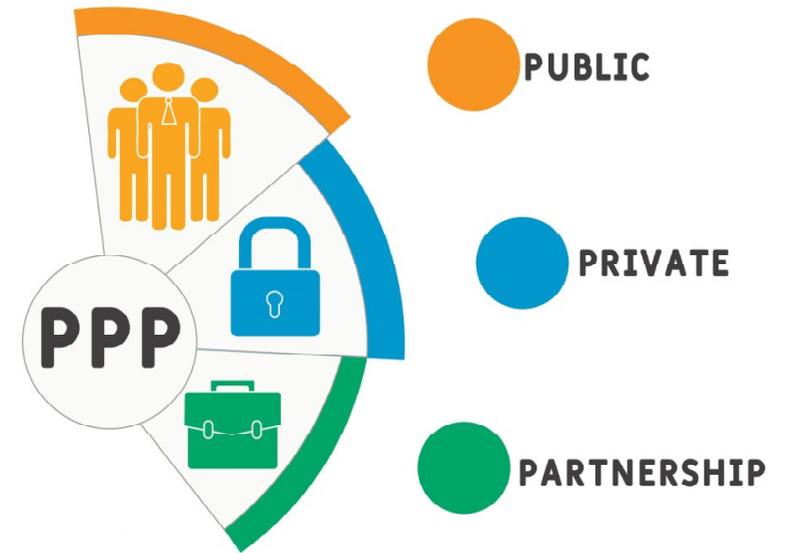
- ✓ The conference will run for two days and will be attended by Textile ministers from States and senior officials from Union Territories.
- ✓ The conference is being organised by Ministry of Textiles in partnership with Government of Assam.
- ✓ The theme of the conference is “India’s Textiles: Weaving Growth, Heritage & Innovation”.
- ✓ The aim of the conference is to deliberate on areas like policy reforms, infrastructure development, sustainability, exports and technological advancement.
- ✓ India seeks to become a global textile manufacturing hub by 2030.



- ✓ The inaugural session will also feature the launch of an exhibition and pavilion showing India's textile capabilities, innovation and rich heritage.
- ✓ A special conclave on the North-East will take place on January 8. It will focus on strengthening the regional textile sector.

Centre Creates Rs. 17 Lakh Crore Three-Year PPP Project Pipeline

- ✓ The Centre has created a **three-year Public Private Partnership (PPP) project pipeline**.
- ✓ The pipeline has been prepared by the **Department of Economic Affairs (DEA)**.
- ✓ It is part of the implementation of the announcement made in the **Union Budget 2025-26**.
- ✓ The pipeline includes **852 PPP projects**.
- ✓ These projects are spread across **Central infrastructure ministries, States, and Union Territories**.
- ✓ The **total project cost exceeds Rs. 17 lakh crore**.
- ✓ The pipeline provides **early visibility of upcoming PPP projects**.
- ✓ It helps **investors, developers, and other stakeholders** plan investments and make informed decisions.



Indian Railways has become the world's largest electrified rail system

- ✓ Almost the entire 70,000 route-kilometre broad-gauge network is now powered by electricity.
- ✓ By November 2025, more than 99% of the network was electrified.
- ✓ The pace of electrification has increased by a large amount over time.
- ✓ Between 2004 and 2014, it was about 1.5 kilometres per day.
- ✓ In the last six years, it increased to more than 15 kilometres per day.
- ✓ Indian Railways has expanded its use of renewable energy.
- ✓ Solar power capacity increased to nearly 900 megawatts by November 2025.
- ✓ In 2014, solar power capacity was under 4 megawatts.
- ✓ This indicates a significant growth in renewable energy adoption.

