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Nationwide 'Self-Reliance in Pulses Mission' Launched from Madhya Pradesh



- The Self-Reliance in Pulses Mission was inaugurated at the Food Legumes Research Centre (FLRP) in Amlaha to strengthen India's domestic pulses production and achieve self-sufficiency.
- Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan presided over the launch of the programme as the Chief Guest.
- The mission aims to eliminate India's reliance on imported pulses and position the country as a global exporter by boosting production levels, productivity, processing infrastructure, and value addition.
- A major focus is on developing an integrated value chain covering all stages from quality seed supply to market access, along with seed sector reforms and cluster-based development.
- To enhance processing capabilities, the government plans to set up around 1,000 pulse processing mills across different regions of the country under the cluster model.
- Financial assistance will be extended in the form of subsidies up to ₹25 lakh per unit, along with additional incentives for cluster-based pulse production, with significant benefits for farmers in Madhya Pradesh.

- The mission includes reforms in seed distribution, ensuring timely release and availability of quality seeds at the state level.
- Farmers will be provided with improved seed kits and financial support of ₹10,000 per hectare to encourage the adoption of advanced and efficient production practices.
- Overall, the initiative is crucial for reducing imports, increasing farmers' income, strengthening the pulses sector, and ensuring long-term nutritional security for the country.

About Madhya Pradesh:

- **Capital:** Bhopal
- **Governor:** Mangubhai Chaganbhai Patel
- **Chief Minister:** Mohan Yadav
- **National Park:** Pench (Priyadarshini) National Park, Bandhavgarh National Park, Kanha National Park, Panna National Park, Sanjay National Park, Satpura National Park, Madhav National Park, Van Vihar National Park, Mandla Plant Fossils National Park

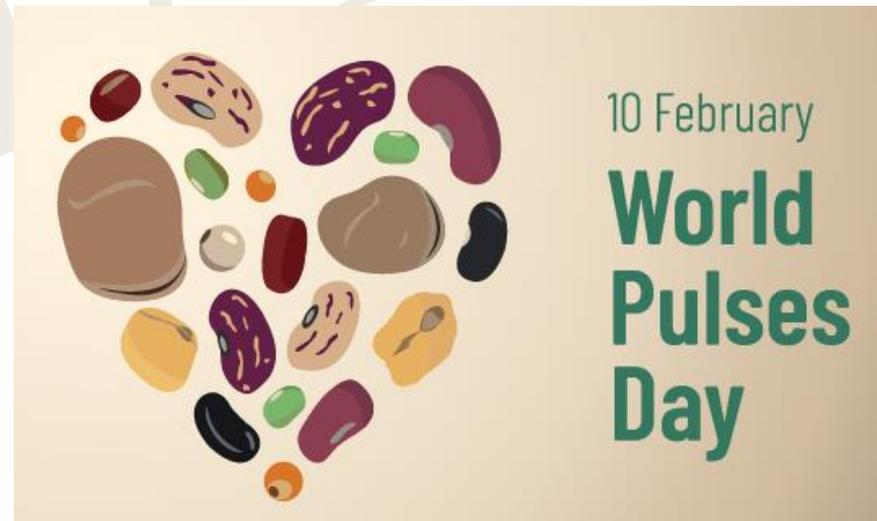
V.O. Chidambaranar Port in Thoothukudi Becomes First Indian Port to Install Advanced 'Anti-Drone System'

- V. O. Chidambaranar (VOC) Port at Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu has become the first port in the country to begin the installation of a state-of-the-art Anti-Drone System to safeguard its vital infrastructure.
- This move marks a significant advancement in enhancing India's maritime and coastal security framework.
- The project is designed to strengthen airspace monitoring around the port, comply with evolving coastal defence standards, and improve the port's readiness to handle emergency situations.
- The project agreement was formally signed between Ganesan, Chief Mechanical Engineer of the VOC Port Authority (VOCPA), and Anurag Agarwal representing Central Electronics Limited (CEL).
- The installation and commissioning of the system are planned to be completed within a period of three months.
- The system involves deployment of a comprehensive, integrated Radio Frequency (RF) and radar-based drone detection and jamming system, specifically designed for complex port environments.
- The advanced Anti-Drone System offers full 360-degree surveillance with omnidirectional coverage and has an operational range of up to 5 kilometres.



World Pulses Day 2026

- World Pulses Day is observed annually on 10 February to highlight the importance of pulses worldwide.
- The theme for World Pulses Day 2026 is “Pulses of the World: From Modesty to Excellence.”
- It highlights how humble crops like lentils, peas, beans, and chickpeas have evolved into globally recognized nutrient-rich foods.
- The observance began in 2019, following its official declaration by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2018.
- The day draws inspiration from the International Year of Pulses 2016, which emphasized the crucial role of pulses in ensuring food security, improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agricultural development.
- World Pulses Day was established to promote the long-term value of pulses beyond a single year of awareness.
- The day aims to encourage healthy diets, support sustainable food systems, strengthen farmer livelihoods, reduce hunger and malnutrition, and improve soil fertility and biodiversity.



Indian Infrastructure Finance Company Limited Appoints Rohit Rishi as New Managing Director

- Indian Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL) has named Rohit Rishi as its new Managing Director for a term of three years.
- Prior to this appointment, he was serving as Executive Director at Bank of Maharashtra from 1 November 2023 to 3 February 2026.
- Rohit Rishi takes over the role from P. R. Jaishankar, who stepped down in May 2026 after completing a five-year tenure.
- Indian Infrastructure Finance Company Limited, set up in 2006, is a wholly-owned Government of India NBFC-IFC, registered with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) since September 2013, providing long-term finance to infrastructure projects.
- The company aims to provide long-term financial assistance to viable infrastructure projects across India.



Indian shooter Meghana Sajjanar scripted a remarkable sporting moment by winning a bronze medal at the Asian Championships 2026

- In an inspiring story from Indian sport, Meghana Sajjanar, eight months pregnant, delivered a medal-winning performance at the Asian Shooting Championships 2026.
- 32-year-old shooter Meghana Sajjanar clinched bronze in the women's 10m air rifle event, achieving her maiden individual Asian Championship medal.
- At the Asian Shooting Championships, Meghana Sajjanar delivered a composed performance under intense pressure.
- She missed the silver by a narrow margin after firing just one shot outside the 10-ring in the final.
- Along with her individual bronze, she also contributed to India's gold medal in the women's team event, making the championship doubly memorable.
- The medal marked her first individual Asian-level podium finish, adding historic value to her personal and professional journey.



According to the Global Innovation Index 2025, China became the world's largest R&D spender in 2024



- According to the Global Innovation Index 2025, global R&D expenditure in 2024 was \$2.87 trillion.
- China overtook the United States to become the world's largest R&D spender.
- Global R&D spending has nearly tripled since 2000, highlighting the growing role of innovation-driven growth.
- Asia now accounts for around 45% of total global R&D spending, indicating a shift away from traditional Western dominance.
- Emerging economies are increasingly investing in science, technology, and innovation
- China spent \$785.9 billion on R&D in 2024, ranking first globally.
- China's R&D spending increased nearly 20 times since 2000, gaining over 23 percentage points in global share.
- China's rise reflects strong focus on advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, semiconductors, and strategic technologies.
- The United States ranked second, spending \$781.8 billion on R&D in 2024.

- Japan ranked **third** in R&D spending but experienced a decline in its global share.
- European countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom, and France remain major R&D investors but saw falling global shares.
- Emerging economies including India, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand increased their R&D presence.
- India ranked seventh globally, with \$75.7 billion spent on R&D in 2024.
- India's R&D spending increased more than threefold from \$20.8 billion in 2000.
- India's growth reflects greater emphasis on innovation, startups, higher education, and strategic technologies.
- The top R&D spending countries in 2024–25 were China, the United States, Japan, Germany, Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, India, France, Türkiye, and Brazil.

India won the U-19 Men's World Cup 2026



- India dominated the ICC Under-19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2026 final with a near-perfect all-round performance against England.
- The victory marked India's 6th Under-19 World Cup title, further strengthening its legacy in youth cricket.
- India vs England U-19 final drew global attention due to a record-breaking batting display by India.
- India posted 411/9 in 50 overs, the highest-ever team total in an Under-19 World Cup final.
- The total surpassed all previous records in U-19 World Cup final history.
- England struggled in the chase despite brief resistance and lost wickets at regular intervals.
- England were bowled out for 311 runs, falling well short of the target.
- Vaibhav Sooryavanshi played a historic knock of 175 runs off 80 balls. He became the highest individual run-scorer in an Under-19 World Cup final.
- Caleb Falconer scored a century for England, but his effort went in vain.

- From the Indian side, R. Ambrish was impressive with the ball, taking 3 wickets.
- India's bowling attack maintained constant pressure throughout England's innings.
- The match highlighted India's unmatched depth, talent pipeline, and dominance at the U-19 level.
- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced a ₹7.5 crore cash reward for the India U-19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2026 champions.
- The announcement came a day after India registered a dominant 100-run victory over England in the final at Harare, reinforcing India's unmatched depth in age-group cricket.
- The ₹7.5 crore award announced by BCCI will be distributed among the players, support and technical staff, and the junior selection committee.
- The move recognises not only on-field excellence but also the backend effort involved in talent identification, coaching, and preparation.
- Such rewards aim to motivate young cricketers and strengthen India's grassroots cricket ecosystem.

National Statistics Office Launches Beta Version of Model Context Protocol Server for eSankhyiki Portal



- The National Statistics Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has launched the beta version of the Model Context Protocol (MCP) server for the eSankhyiki portal.
- This initiative marks an important step towards making India's official statistical data more accessible, interoperable, and compatible with AI-based tools and applications.
- The initiative aims to enable citizens, researchers, businesses and policymakers to integrate official data seamlessly into modern analytical tools.
- Model Context Protocol is a technology that allows users to connect directly with datasets through their own AI tools and applications.
- Instead of downloading large data files, users can query datasets in real time, automate reports using current statistics and access multiple datasets through a single connection.

- This reduces friction in data access and allows users to focus more on analysis and decision-making.
- The beta version of the MCP server currently includes seven major statistical products: Periodic Labour Force Survey, Consumer Price Index, Annual Survey of Industries, Index of Industrial Production, National Account Statistics, Wholesale Price Index and Environmental Statistics.
- MoSPI plans to expand the MCP Server with additional datasets in the coming months.
- The MCP Server allows users to access verified information and insights in real-time, enabling faster work, informed business decisions, and immediate access for policymakers.
- The initiative aligns with the objectives of Working Group 6 on Democratising AI, headed by Dr. Saurab Garg, Secretary of MoSPI.
- The eSankhyiki portal, launched in June 2024, serves as India's national platform for official statistics, providing a centralised gateway to socioeconomic and macroeconomic data.

HDFC Life Forms Strategic Partnership with Muthoot FinCorp, Flagship of Muthoot Pappachan Group

- HDFC Life has formed a strategic alliance with Muthoot FinCorp Limited, the flagship entity of the Muthoot Pappachan Group.
- Through this tie-up, Muthoot FinCorp's customers will gain access to HDFC Life's group and individual life insurance products, including protection and long-term savings plans.
- The insurance solutions will be offered through Muthoot FinCorp Ltd.'s extensive network of 3,750+ branches across India, as well as through its digital platform.
- The partnership supports the vision of "Insurance for All by 2047" and will help deepen financial inclusion.



International Day of the Arabian Leopard is observed annually on February 10

- The United Nations' International Day of the Arabian Leopard is observed every year on 10 February.
- The day aims to raise global awareness about the conservation of the Arabian leopard, one of the world's rarest and most endangered leopard subspecies.
- 10th February 2026 marked the **3rd** observance of the International Day of the Arabian Leopard.
- The first-ever UN International Day of the Arabian Leopard was observed on 10th February 2024.
- The day emphasizes protection of habitats, preventing poaching and illegal trade, promoting research and conservation programs, and engaging local communities.

