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11 – 17 January 2026 – National Road Safety Week

- **National Road Safety Week 2026** is being observed from **January 11 to 17 across India** to raise awareness about road safety and reduce accidents.
- The campaign focuses on promoting safe driving practices, adherence to traffic rules, and use of helmets and seatbelts among motorists and pedestrians.
- The year 2026 marks the 37th observance of National Road Safety Week in India.



ISRO's PSLV-C62 Mission Fails to Place 16 Satellites into Orbit

- **ISRO's PSLV-C62 mission**, the first launch of the year, failed to place its **16 satellites into the intended orbit due to a technical problem in the rocket's third stage.**
- The rocket was launched successfully from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, with the first two stages performing normally.
- The **mission carried EOS-N1 (Earth observation satellite)** along with 15 other payloads, including satellites from Brazil, Nepal, and the UK, as well as Anvesha, a surveillance satellite developed by DRDO.
- This is the second consecutive PSLV mission affected by third-stage issues, despite PSLV's previous successes in missions like Chandrayaan-1, Mars Orbiter Mission, Aditya-L1, and Astrosat.



India Launches Theme, Logo and Website for BRICS 2026 Presidency

- **India** assumed the **BRICS Presidency (18th) for 2026** on 1 January 2026, taking over from Brazil, marking its fourth term as the BRICS chair.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar launched the official BRICS 2026 website, theme, and logo in New Delhi to kick-start India's chairship.
- India's BRICS presidency will follow a "humanity-first" and people-centric approach, focusing on inclusive growth and global welfare.
- The theme "**Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability**" and the lotus-'Namaste' based logo symbolise unity, prosperity, respect, and mark 20 years of BRICS as a key platform for emerging economies.

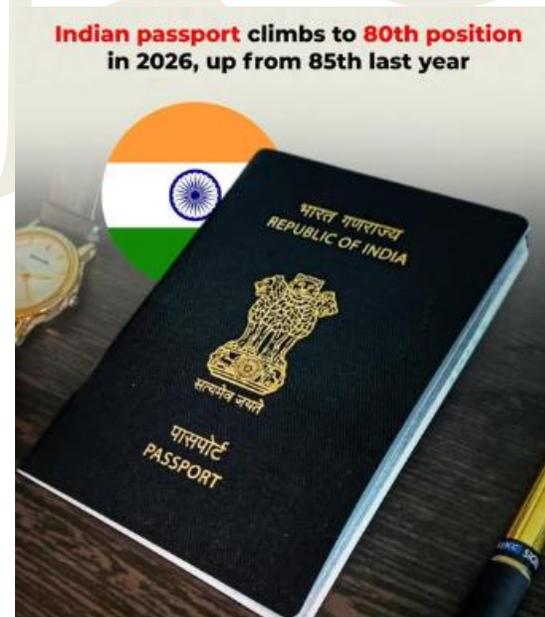
About BRICS:

- Formation- 16 June 2009
- Founded at- Yekaterinburg, Russia (1st BRIC summit)
- Membership- Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, South Africa, United Arab Emirates



The Indian passport's ranking improved in the Henley Passport Index 2026

- An improvement of five positions has been recorded by India in the Henley Passport Index 2026.
- The Indian passport has been ranked 80th, allowing visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 55 destinations.
- The ranking reflects a recovery from the 85th position recorded in 2025.
- The Henley Passport Index has evaluated 199 passports across 227 global destinations.
- The index is based on exclusive data provided by the International Air Transport Association.
- Asian countries have dominated the top rankings, with Singapore securing the first position.
- Japan and South Korea have jointly ranked second, offering visa-free access to 188 destinations.
- Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain and Luxembourg have shared the third rank globally.
- The United States has returned to the top 10 after dropping to 12th position last year.
- Afghanistan has remained at the bottom of the list, ranked 101st with access to only 24 destinations.



ICAR and NDDDB Sign MoU to Strengthen Research, Innovation, and Capacity Building in India's Dairy Sector

- The **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** signed an **MoU** with the **National Dairy Development Board (NDDDB)** to strengthen collaboration in multidisciplinary research, innovation, and capacity building across the dairy sector.
- The MoU aims to combine ICAR's scientific expertise with NDDDB's field-level experience to address emerging grassroots challenges in dairy development.
- The partnership will focus on climate resilience, productivity enhancement, value chain development, knowledge sharing, technology validation, and joint training programmes for researchers, professionals, and farmers.

About Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR):

- Established- 16 July 1929
- Headquarters- New Delhi
- Director General- Dr Mangi Lal Jat



Kerala Announces Science Literature Awards 2024 for Excellence in Malayalam Science

Writing

- **Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE) announced the Science Literature Awards 2024, recognising excellence in science writing in Malayalam across four categories.**
- Each award carries ₹50,000, a plaque, and a certificate, celebrating contributions in Popular Science, In-depth Science, Children's Literature, and Science Journalism.
- **Winners include Biju Dharmapalan (Popular Science), Gopakumar Cholayil (In-depth Science), and Pradeep Orkkatteri (Children's Literature) for their outstanding books published in 2024.**
- The Science Journalism award was presented to Ashwin S. for his series on artificial intelligence in Malayala Manorama, highlighting the role of media in popularising scientific knowledge.

9th International Spice Conference scheduled to be hosted in Kochi

- The 9th edition of the International Spice Conference (ISC 2026) is set to be hosted in Kochi from February 23 to 26, 2026.
- The conference is being organised by the All India Spices Exporters Forum (AISEF).
- The four-day event will be held under the theme “Spice 360 – Getting Future Ready.”
- Policymakers, industry leaders, researchers and innovators from across the world will participate in the deliberations.
- The conference will be inaugurated by former G20 Sherpa and former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant and deliver keynote address on “Transforming Agro-Industry: Innovation, Inclusion & Global Leadership.”
- Martin Sonntag, CEO of Oterra, will attend as the Guest of Honour and speak on “Shaping the Next Decade of Food & Nutrition: Collaboration, Trust, and Responsibility.”
- Kerala’s historical role in the global spice trade adds special significance to hosting the conference.
- Discussions will focus on trade risks, climate challenges, innovation and resilient supply chains.
- Crops and Markets sessions will provide detailed insights into spices such as turmeric, pepper, chilli and cumin.
- The conference aims to support future-ready strategies for the global spice industry amid changing trade dynamics.



International[®]
Spice Conference
Ingredients Flavours & Seasonings

The 16th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus Expert Working Group Meeting (EWG) on Counter-Terrorism started in New Delhi on 14 January

- The meeting is being co-chaired by India and Malaysia.
- Participants include delegations from 11 ASEAN members and 7 dialogue partners.
- The meeting serves as platform to discuss ongoing and planned activities under the three-year work plan to strengthen India's multilateral cooperation on Counter-Terrorism.
- During the meeting, delegates will share best practices in counter-terrorism operations.
- ASEAN members are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand and Timor Leste.
- Dialogue partner countries are Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, China, USA and Russia.



Andhra Pradesh Cabinet Approves Dagadarthi Greenfield Airport in Nellore District

- The **Andhra Pradesh Cabinet** approved the **Dagadarthi Greenfield Airport** project in **Nellore district**, marking a major boost to regional aviation infrastructure.
- With this approval, Dagadarthi will become the 8th airport in Andhra Pradesh, strengthening air connectivity in the state.
- The airport is strategically located near major National Highway corridors and close to Krishnapatnam Port and Ramayapatnam Port, enabling strong multimodal transport integration.
- The project will be developed in phases over 1,332.80 acres of land and has already received in-principle approval from the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

About Andhra Pradesh:

- **Capital** – Amaravati
- **Chief Minister** – N Chandrababu Naidu
- **Deputy CM** – Pawan Kalyan
- **Governor** – Abdul Nazeer



India and Germany made eight key announcements and signed 19 MoUs

- The announcements include a joint declaration of intent to strengthen bilateral defence industrial cooperation.
- The establishment of a Chief Executive Officers' Forum to improve trade and investment has also been announced.
- During German Chancellor's visit to India, two countries focused on enhancing cooperation in sectors such as defence, Trade, skill, green energy and people-to-people ties.
- Visa-free transit has been announced for Indian passport holders through Germany.
- A new framework for the recruitment of Indian healthcare professionals has also been announced.
- As per the announcement, Germany will also provide funding of 1.24 billion euros under the Green and Sustainable Development Partnership.
- This will support renewable energy, green hydrogen and climate-resilient urban infrastructure.
- India and Germany completed 25 years of strategic partnership last year.
- They are celebrating 75 years of diplomatic relations this year.

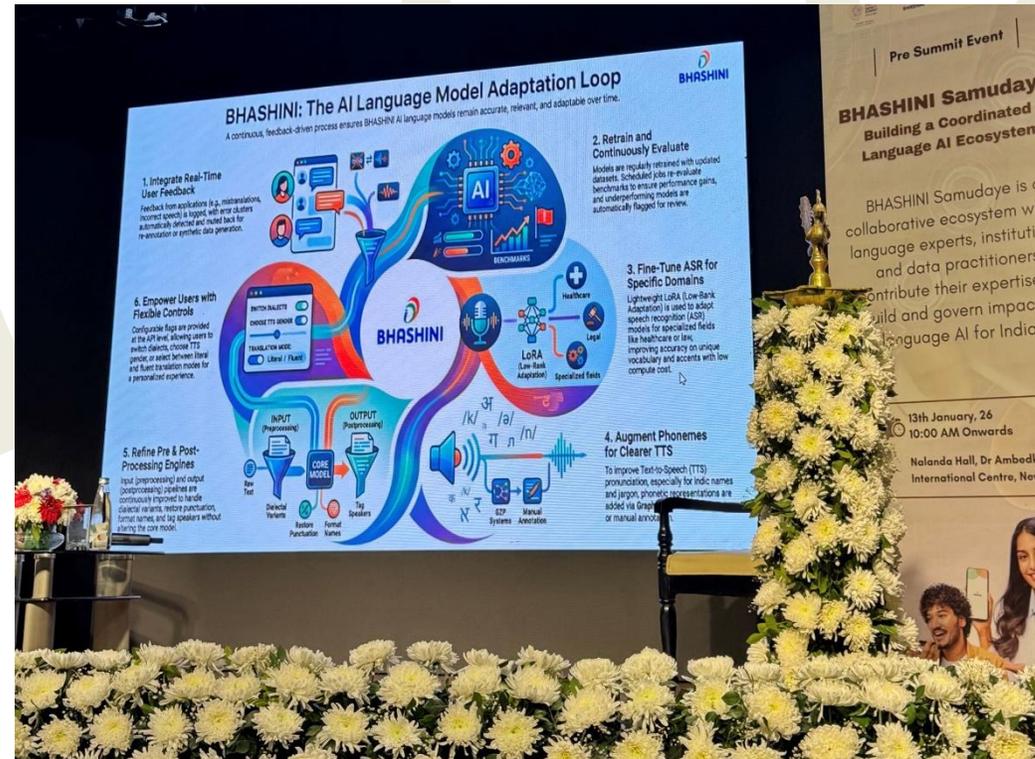
India Germany Relations:

- India and Germany have strategic partnership since May 2000.
- In September 2006, bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement was signed between India and Germany. It provides the framework for bilateral defence ties.
- Germany was India's 12th largest trading partner in 2023-24. It was India's 7th largest trading partner in 2020-21.



A workshop on BHASHINI Samudaye: Strengthening India's Language AI Ecosystem was organised in New Delhi

- The workshop was organised by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- The focus of the workshop was on consolidating India's language AI ecosystem.
- During the workshop, there were discussions on expanding BHASHINI as a national platform.
- This should be done to support multilingual governance, education and public service delivery.
- The discussion also focused on ensuring that language does not become a barrier to digital access.
- During the discussions, there was emphasis on responsible data practices, quality standards, and long-term collaboration to ensure inclusivity.



28th CSPOC Conference Begins in New Delhi

- The 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) has commenced in New Delhi, with participation from over 60 Commonwealth countries and semi-autonomous Parliaments in a three-day event.
- The Conference aims to promote parliamentary democracy, strengthen legislative institutions, and encourage knowledge-sharing among different democratic systems, with Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla serving as the Chairperson.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Conference at Samvidhan Sadan, which will feature sessions on AI in Parliament, social media impact, best practices, public engagement, security, and MPs' well-being, before the CSPOC Chair is handed over to UK House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle.



Union Minister Chirag Paswan Inaugurates Indusfood 2026 in Greater Noida

- **Union Minister Chirag Paswan** of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries **inaugurated the 9th edition of Indusfood 2026 at the India Expo Centre and Mart, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.**
- The event was organised by the Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Indusfood 2026 is Asia's premier global food and beverage sourcing trade show, aimed at promoting Indian agri-exports, entrepreneurship, and international trade partnerships.



GAIL Joins PNGRB's National PNG Drive 2.0 to Promote PNG and CNG Across India

- **GAIL (India) Limited** has partnered with PNGRB for the National PNG Drive 2.0 initiative, joining the nationwide **#NonStopZindagi** campaign to promote Piped Natural Gas (PNG) and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) adoption across India.
- National PNG Drive 2.0 runs from 1 January to 31 March 2026, supporting India's goal to increase the share of natural gas in the energy mix to 15% by 2030.
- The campaign aims to raise awareness, generate demand, and strengthen the City Gas Distribution (CGD) ecosystem, supported by the Unified Tariff framework under the principle of "One Nation, One Grid, One Tariff".



Indian Army Inducts Solar-Powered MAPSS Drone for Long-Endurance Border Surveillance

- **Indian Army** signs ₹168 crore contract for MAPSS, a solar-powered surveillance drone system, marking the first induction of a solar-powered unmanned aerial platform for long-endurance border monitoring.
- MAPSS (Medium Altitude Persistent Surveillance System), developed by Bengaluru-based NewSpace Research & Technologies, uses solar energy instead of conventional fuel or batteries, allowing continuous airborne operations for extended periods.
- The system is designed for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions across diverse terrains, providing quieter electric propulsion, reduced thermal signature, and support for tracking, observation, communications, and target identification.



Bamanwas Kankar Becomes Rajasthan's First Fully Organic Certified Gram Panchayat

- **Bamanwas Kankar gram panchayat in Rajasthan** has become the State's first fully organic certified village body, located in the newly formed Kotputli–Behror district.
- The shift towards organic farming began after villagers collectively addressed declining soil fertility, falling groundwater levels, rising input costs, and health issues linked to chemical-based agriculture, focusing on long-term sustainability.
- The panchayat has adopted chemical-free farming and ecological livestock practices, including crop rotation, mulching, biological pest control, vermicompost use, and environmentally responsible animal husbandry.



Anup Kumar Saha has been appointed as whole-time director of Kotak Mahindra Bank

- His appointment is subject to regulatory approvals.
- Saha will oversee the bank's consumer banking vertical.
- Saha is an industry veteran with prior experience at ICICI Bank.
- He served for over eight years at Bajaj Finance as managing director.
- At Kotak, he will manage consumer banking, marketing, and data analytics functions.
- Ashok Vaswani, Kotak's MD and CEO, highlighted Saha's expertise in retail finance and data-driven growth



The Republic Day parade 2026 will be celebrated for the first time with a battle array display and the theme of 150 years of Vande Mataram



- The Republic Day celebrations 2026 at Kartavya Path will be centred on the 150th anniversary of the national song Vande Mataram, as announced by the Defence Ministry.
- The Republic Day Parade will be organised on 26 January and will be attended by the President of the European Council António Costa and the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen as Chief Guests.
- A phased battle array display by the Indian Army will be showcased for the first time during the parade, highlighting India's military preparedness.
- The overarching theme “150 Years of Vande Mataram” will be reflected across tableaux, visuals, music, decorations and cultural performances.

- A series of paintings created in 1923 by artist Tejendra Kumar Mitra, illustrating the verses of Vande Mataram, will be displayed along Kartavya Path.
- Pan-India band performances on the Vande Mataram theme will be organised from 19 to 26 January by the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and other CAPFs across India.
- The Indian Army will showcase the phased battle array format for the first time, which will include a mounted column of the 61 Cavalry and seven marching contingents.
- The mechanised column will feature platforms such as T-90 and Arjun tanks, BMP-II infantry combat vehicles, ATAGS and Dhanush artillery systems, and BrahMos, Akash and MRSAM missile systems.
- A total of 30 tableaux from States, Union Territories and ministries will roll down Kartavya Path, showcasing themes of freedom, self-reliance, culture and national development.
- The celebrations will be followed by Bharat Parv at the Red Fort from 26 to 31 January, showcasing regional cuisine, handicrafts and cultural performances.

Aaryan Varshney became India's 92nd Chess Grandmaster on 15 January

- Aaryan Varshney has been crowned as India's 92nd chess Grandmaster after achieving the prestigious title in Armenia.
- The Grandmaster title was secured by winning the Andranik Margaryan Memorial tournament with a round to spare.
- The final and decisive GM norm was achieved after a draw against FM Tyhran Ambartsumian in the eighth round.
- At the age of 21, Aaryan Varshney has joined India's elite list of chess Grandmasters.
- He became the eighth Grandmaster from Delhi, adding to the capital's strong chess legacy.
- A Grandmaster norm reflects a high-level tournament performance.
- It must meet the strict standards set by FIDE (World Chess Federation).
- To become a Grandmaster, a player needs three GM norms.
- They must also achieve a FIDE rating of at least 2500.



81 New Ayushman Arogya Mandirs inaugurated by Delhi Government

- On 14 January, 81 new Ayushman Arogya Mandirs inaugurated by the Delhi government as part of the fifth phase of expansion.
- The expansion has been planned to strengthen neighbourhood-level primary healthcare across the national capital.
- A major boost to accessible and preventive healthcare services is expected through the inauguration.
- With the addition of these centres, the total number of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs will rise to 319 in Delhi.
- The initiative is aligned with Delhi's long-term roadmap to establish more than 1,100 such centres.
- These centres are being developed to provide free doctor consultations, medicines and diagnostic services.
- Screening for diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and services related to maternal and child healthcare will be offered.
- Mental health support, lifestyle counselling, yoga and nutrition guidance will form part of preventive care services.
- "Along with the expansion of healthcare facilities, Delhi is strengthening coverage under both the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) and the Ayushman Bharat-Vaya Vandana Yojana (AB-VVY).
- As of January 13, 2026, a total of 6,91,530 health cards (combining PM-JAY and VVY) have been issued in Delhi, including 2,65,895 VVY cards."

