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### HEADLINES

- ❖ Kerala Launches 'Sthree Suraksha' Scheme for Over 10 Lakh Beneficiaries
- ❖ Ministry of Home Affairs MHA Issues New Guidelines on Singing of Vande Mataram
- ❖ Oil India Limited Wins FIPI Award 2025
- ❖ India Signs Social Security Agreement with United Kingdom to Facilitate Cross-Border Workforce
- ❖ Ministry of Cooperation Launched 'White Revolution 2.0' to Boost Women's Role in Dairy Sector
- ❖ EximPe Receives RBI Approval for PA-CB Licence
- ❖ Uday Kotak Appointed Chairman of GIFT City
- ❖ Ministry of Women and Child Development organised a National Conference on Safety of Women at Workplace (SHe-Box) on 14 February 2026

## Kerala Launches 'Sthree Suraksha' Scheme for Over 10 Lakh Beneficiaries

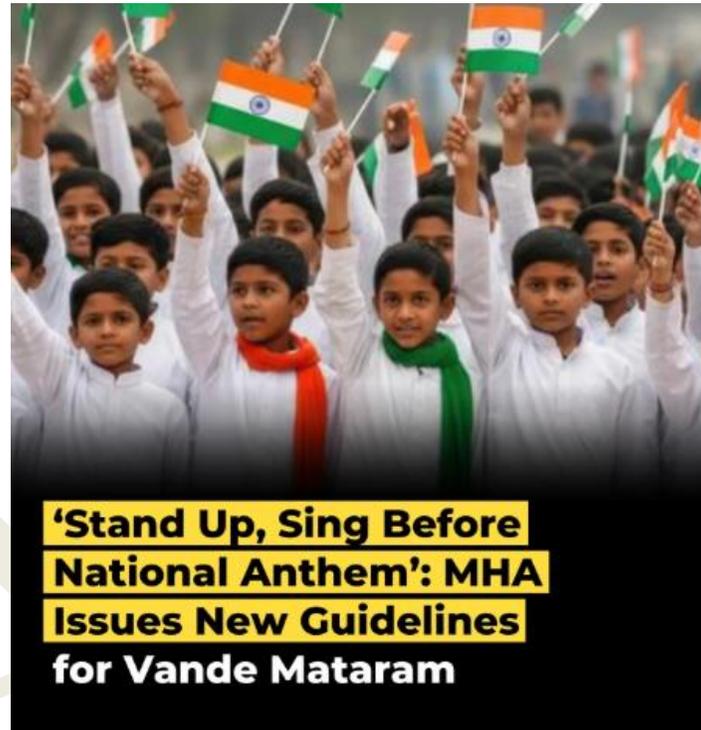


- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan launched the Sthree Suraksha Scheme at Malayinkeezhu in Thiruvananthapuram.
- The scheme provides a monthly pension of ₹1,000 to economically backward women and transwomen.
- It targets unemployed and financially vulnerable women aged between 35 and 60 years.
- Beneficiaries must not be receiving any other social welfare pension to qualify.
- In the first phase, 10,18,042 verified beneficiaries received the pension amount.
- The assistance is transferred directly to bank accounts through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system.
- Applications undergo detailed scrutiny to ensure transparency and proper beneficiary selection.
- The initiative aims to reduce financial dependency that often restricts women's autonomy.
- The scheme promotes economic independence and dignity for women and transwomen.
- It is positioned as a major step toward building a women-friendly and gender-just Kerala.
- The programme aligns with Kerala's gender budgeting framework, where departments allocate dedicated funds for women-centric projects.

- The scheme forms part of the broader welfare agenda of the Left Democratic Front government.
- The pension amount was credited to beneficiaries within hours of the official launch.
- Additional eligible applicants will be included after verification of their applications.
- The scheme reflects Kerala's welfare-oriented development model focused on social security and inclusive growth.

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# Ministry of Home Affairs MHA Issues New Guidelines on Singing of Vande Mataram



- The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued the first formal protocol for the National Song, Vande Mataram.
- When both the National Song and the National Anthem are played together at official events, Vande Mataram must be sung first, followed by Jana Gana Mana.
- All six stanzas of Vande Mataram are now mandatory at official functions.
- The complete rendition of the six stanzas lasts approximately 3 minutes and 10 seconds.
- Audiences must stand in attention when the official version is sung or played as a mark of respect.
- Standing is not compulsory when the song is played as part of a documentary or newsreel to avoid disruption.
- The directive stresses uniformity, dignity, decorum, and encourages mass singing as a respectful tribute to the motherland.

- The song should be sung or played during National Flag unfurling ceremonies.
- It is recommended for cultural and ceremonial functions, excluding parades.
- It should be performed during the arrival of the President at public functions. It is also specified for significant gatherings attended by Ministers.
- Authorities are instructed to ensure proper public sound systems and distribute printed lyrics for coordinated participation.
- Schools are directed to begin activities with the playing of Vande Mataram.
- Educational institutions are encouraged to promote respect for the National Song, National Anthem, and National Flag among students.
- Vande Mataram was composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in the 1870s and included in his novel Anandamath.
- It served as a powerful slogan during India's freedom movement.
- In 1950, the Constituent Assembly adopted Vande Mataram as the National Song and Jana Gana Mana as the National Anthem.
- Although usually only the first two stanzas are sung, the new guidelines require all six stanzas when performed officially with the National Anthem.

## Oil India Limited Wins FIPI Award 2025



- Oil India Limited received the Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry (FIPI) Award 2025 for ‘Oil & Gas Production Company of the Year’ (more than 1 million Tonnes of Oil Equivalent).
- The award recognises the company’s strong performance and contribution to India’s energy security.
- The honour was presented by the Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry during India Energy Week held in Goa.
- The ceremony was attended by Hardeep Singh Puri and Dr Neeraj Mittal, Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- Dr Ranjit Rath, Chairman and Managing Director of Oil India Limited, received the award on behalf of the company.
- Oil India Limited is a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- The company has a strong operational presence in Northeast India and is expanding to other regions.
- The recognition highlights OIL’s role in boosting domestic production and strengthening energy infrastructure.
- The award reinforces the company’s contribution to India’s self-reliance and sustainable energy goals.

# India Signs Social Security Agreement with United Kingdom to Facilitate Cross-Border Workforce

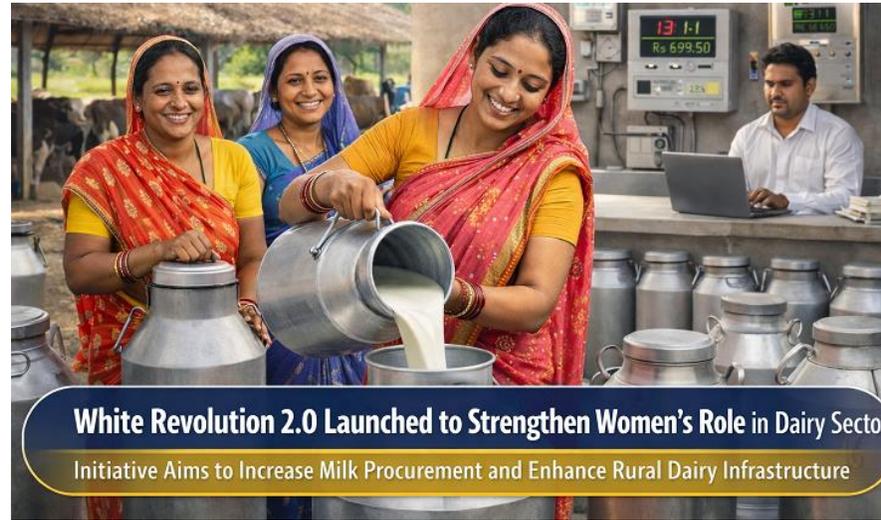


- India has entered into a bilateral Social Security Agreement (SSA) with the United Kingdom to address social security contributions for employees working across both countries.
- The agreement eliminates the issue of double social security payments and supports easier movement of Indian professionals employed in the UK.
- As per the arrangement, employees sent on short-term assignments of up to 36 months will be exempt from making social security contributions in both nations simultaneously, easing financial pressure on both workers and employers.
- Nearly 75,000 Indian professionals—particularly those in IT, engineering, finance, and consultancy—are projected to gain from this pact.
- Indian firms operating in the UK will benefit from reduced costs when deputing staff for temporary assignments.

- To avail exemption from dual contributions, employees must secure a Certificate of Coverage (CoC) from the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, which functions under the Ministry of Labour & Employment, or through the Ministry of External Affairs. Similarly, UK employees must follow corresponding procedures through their national authorities.
- Overall, the SSA enhances India–UK collaboration in labour mobility and ensures better social security protection for professionals working between the two countries.

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# Ministry of Cooperation Launched 'White Revolution 2.0' to Boost Women's Role in Dairy Sector



- In February 2026, Amit Shah, Union Minister under the Ministry of Cooperation, informed the Lok Sabha through a written reply that the Ministry has launched a new cooperative-based initiative titled 'White Revolution 2.0'.
- The programme is designed to broaden the cooperative network in the dairy sector, generate employment opportunities, and enhance women's empowerment, particularly in rural regions.
- The Ministry has fixed a goal of increasing milk procurement by dairy cooperatives by 50% within the next five years.
- According to projections, milk procurement is expected to reach 1007 kg per day by the financial year 2028–29.
- To accomplish this objective, a two-pronged approach will be followed: widening the reach of dairy cooperatives and reinforcing the presence of existing cooperatives in the organised sector.
- The initiative also plans to establish and strengthen around 1.20 lakh new and existing Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCS), Multipurpose Dairy Cooperative Societies (M-DCS), and Multipurpose Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (M-PACS).

## EximPe Receives RBI Approval for PA-CB Licence



- In February 2026, EximPe, a Singapore-headquartered cross-border payments fintech, received final authorisation from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as a Payment Aggregator–Cross Border (PA-CB).
- The approval enables international merchants to accept payments from Indian customers through Unified Payments Interface (UPI), cards, wallets, and net banking platforms.
- Notably, the company secured this approval without previously holding a domestic Payment Aggregator (PA) licence.
- With the PA-CB authorisation, EximPe is now allowed to operate under the cross-border framework for both import and export transactions.
- Prior to receiving the licence, EximPe functioned as a technology service provider to banking partners and facilitated over USD 500 million in bank-led cross-border trade payments across major Asian corridors.
- The company has set a target to achieve USD 1 billion in annualised UPI payment volumes within the next 24 months, driven by increasing merchant adoption across Asia.
- EximPe was founded by Arjun Zacharia and operates offices in Bengaluru (Karnataka) and Mumbai (Maharashtra).

## Uday Kotak Appointed Chairman of GIFT City



- The Gujarat government has appointed Uday Kotak as Chairman of Gujarat International Finance Tec-City Company Ltd, the state-promoted entity that develops and manages GIFT City.
- He replaces **Hasmukh Adhia**, who previously served as the non-executive chairman.
- The appointment order was issued by the Urban Development and Urban Housing Department of the Gujarat government.
- GIFT City, located in Gandhinagar, is India's first operational smart city and International Financial Services Centre (IFSC).
- It is designed to serve as a global financial and technology hub with advanced infrastructure and a business-friendly ecosystem.
- The city houses banking units, capital market intermediaries, insurance entities and fintech firms operating under a unified regulatory framework.

## Uday Kotak's Banking Legacy

- Kotak is the founder and director of Kotak Mahindra Bank.
- The institution began operations in 1985 as a non-banking finance company and was converted into a bank in 2003.
- Under his leadership, it evolved into one of India's leading private sector banks with diversified operations across commercial banking, asset management, life insurance and capital markets.

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## **Ministry of Women and Child Development organised a National Conference on Safety of Women at Workplace (SHe-Box) on 14 February 2026**

- The conference was held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi in presence of the Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Annpurna Devi, and the Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Savitri Thakur.
- The Conference is an effort to reaffirm commitment of the Government to make sure creation of a safe, dignified and harassment-free workplaces for all women across different sectors.
- It is also an effort to strengthen implementation of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.
- SHe-Box portal was launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development on 29th August, 2024.
- It was launched as a secure, user-friendly, multilingual single-window platform.
- It allows online complaint filing, automatic forwarding to the concerned Internal or Local Committee.
- Union Minister Annpurna Devi also administered a National Workplace Safety Pledge. She also delivered keynote address.
- Around 1,500 participants from over 100 Organizations including Government and Private sectors came together during the conference.