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HEADLINES

- ❖ **Mayank Chakraborty Becomes India's 94th And First Ever Grandmaster From North East Region**
- ❖ **Govt introduces amendment Bill to enforce protection of transgenders**
- ❖ **PM Releases 22nd Instalment of PM-KISAN from Guwahati**
- ❖ **India facilitates export of 25 metric tonnes of Assam's GI-tagged Joha Rice to UK and Italy**
- ❖ **Indian Orchid Festival 2026 was Concluded in Sikkim**
- ❖ **ISRO successfully conducts CE20 cryogenic engine ground test**
- ❖ **Gujarat Launches 'Lake and Air Watch' Initiative to Monitor AQI and Lake Health**
- ❖ **SEBI proposes simplified claim process for heirs of deceased investors**
- ❖ **Axis Max Life Insurance Teams Up with Saarathi Finance**

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Mayank Chakraborty Becomes India's 94th And First Ever Grandmaster From North East Region

- Mayank Chakraborty, a 16-year-old chess player from Assam, created history by becoming the first-ever Chess Grandmaster (GM) from Assam and the entire North-East region of India.
- He achieved his final Grandmaster norm at the 8th GM Tournament Stockholm held at Hotel Stockholm North in Stockholm, Sweden.
- Mayank Chakraborty scored 7 points out of 9 rounds in the tournament to secure the title.
- During the event, he crossed the mandatory 2500 FIDE rating, fulfilling the requirement for the Grandmaster title.
- Before becoming a Grandmaster, he held the International Master (IM) title.
- With this achievement, he became India's 94th Chess Grandmaster.
- International chess is governed by Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE).
- Viswanathan Anand became India's first Chess Grandmaster in 1988.



Govt introduces amendment Bill to enforce protection of transgenders



- The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 12 March 2026 by Virendra Kumar, Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment.
- The Bill proposes amendments to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 to strengthen legal protection and clarify the definition of transgender persons.
- The amendment removes the provision of “self-perceived gender identity” that earlier allowed individuals to self-identify their gender under the 2019 Act.
- The District Magistrate (DM) will issue a certificate of identity as a transgender person based on the recommendation of a medical board headed by a Chief Medical Officer or Deputy Chief Medical Officer.
- The revised definition of transgender person includes socio-cultural identities such as kinner, hijra, aravani, jogta and eunuch, and persons with intersex variations (chromosomal or hormonal differences).
- The Bill clarifies that sexual orientation or self-perceived sexual identity alone will not fall under the definition of transgender person.

- The Bill introduces stricter punishments for forcing individuals to assume a transgender identity through mutilation, emasculation, castration, or surgical/hormonal procedures.
- For adults, such offences will attract rigorous imprisonment from 10 years to life imprisonment with a minimum fine of ₹2 lakh.
- For children, forced conversion to transgender identity will attract life imprisonment and a minimum fine of ₹5 lakh.
- Forcing a person or child to present themselves as transgender for begging, servitude, bonded labour or exploitation will be punishable with rigorous imprisonment up to 10 years (adults) and up to 14 years (children).
- After gender reassignment surgery, medical institutions must inform the District Magistrate, and the person can apply for a certificate of gender change for updating official documents.
- The Bill proposes reconstitution of the National Council for Transgender Persons (NCTP) with representation from North, South, East, West and North-East regions on a rotational basis.
- The provisions will operate alongside criminal laws under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and other laws dealing with bodily harm, abduction and exploitation.
- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched the SMILE Scheme (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) on 12 February 2022 for the rehabilitation and welfare of transgender persons.
- Under the SMILE scheme, the government provides Garima Greh shelter homes, healthcare, education support, skill development and livelihood opportunities for transgender persons to ensure dignity, inclusion and economic empowerment.

PM Releases 22nd Instalment of PM-KISAN from Guwahati



- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) – 22nd instalment was released on 13 March 2026 by Narendra Modi from Guwahati, Assam.
- Under the 22nd instalment, the Government of India transferred over ₹18,640 crore directly to the bank accounts of more than 9.32 crore farmer families through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).
- With this instalment, the total financial assistance provided under PM-KISAN has crossed about ₹4.27 lakh crore since the launch of the scheme.
- In the 22nd instalment, over 2.15 crore women farmers received financial assistance under the scheme.
- The scheme continues to be implemented through India's Digital Public Infrastructure with Aadhaar-based DBT, ensuring transparency and eliminating intermediaries.
- The “Know Your Status (KYS)” feature on the PM-KISAN portal enables farmers to check payment status, eligibility, Aadhaar linking, land seeding, and e-KYC status.
- The government introduced a Face Authentication mobile application that allows farmers to complete e-KYC without OTP or biometric devices.

- The AI-based voice chatbot “Kisan-eMitra” provides 24×7 information and assistance related to PM-KISAN in 11 regional languages.
- A Voluntary Surrender facility has been introduced to allow ineligible or affluent beneficiaries to voluntarily give up PM-KISAN benefits, ensuring support reaches only eligible farmers.

About PM-KISAN scheme:

- It was launched on 24 February 2019 to provide income support to small and marginal farmer families across India.
- Under the scheme, eligible farmers receive ₹6,000 per year in three equal instalments of ₹2,000 each, directly credited to their bank accounts.
- The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- Financial assistance under PM-KISAN is transferred through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanism to ensure transparency and prevent leakages.

India facilitates export of 25 metric tonnes of Assam's GI-tagged Joha Rice to UK and Italy

- India facilitated the export of 25 metric tonnes of GI-tagged Joha rice from Assam to the United Kingdom and Italy, marking a significant step in promoting India's GI agricultural products in global markets.
- The export was facilitated by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the Government of Assam.
- The consignment of 25 metric tonnes of Joha rice was dispatched on 12 March 2026 from Guwahati, Assam.
- The initiative aims to boost exports of GI-tagged agricultural products and enhance income opportunities for farmers in the North-Eastern region of India.
- Earlier, Joha rice was exported in smaller quantities to Vietnam and Middle East countries such as Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and Saudi Arabia.

About Joha rice:

- Joha rice is an indigenous aromatic rice variety of Assam, known for its distinctive fragrance and soft texture.
- Joha rice received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2017 for its unique origin and traditional cultivation in Assam.
- Major varieties of Joha rice include Kola Joha, Keteki Joha, Bokul Joha, and Kunkuni Joha, which are widely cultivated in different regions of Assam.



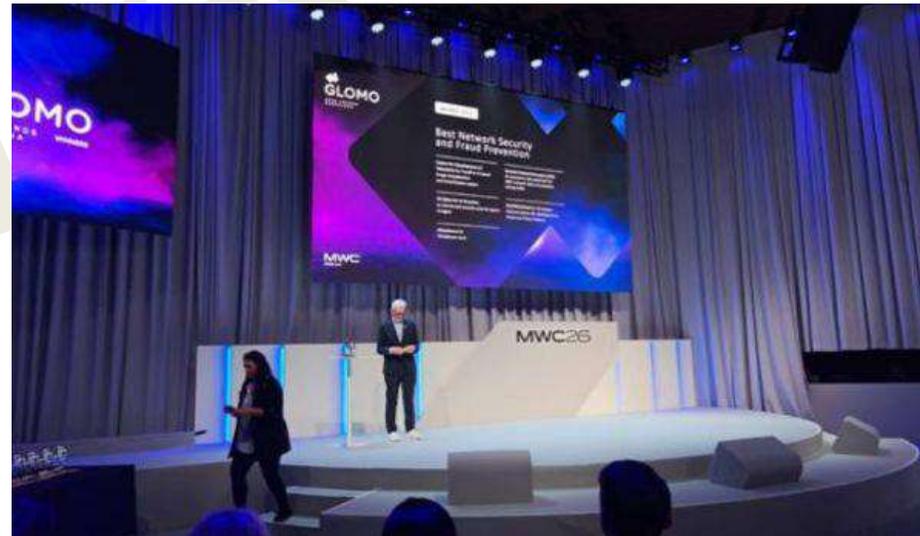
Indian Orchid Festival 2026 was Concluded in Sikkim

- The Indian Orchid Festival 2026 was organised in Pakyong District, Sikkim.
- The festival was organised by the ICAR – National Research Centre for Orchids (ICAR-NRCO) under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.
- It was held as a four-day festival to promote orchid cultivation and floriculture development.
- The theme of the festival was “Orchids for Beauty & Prosperity.”
- The festival aimed to promote orchid cultivation, encourage floriculture entrepreneurship and support sustainable horticulture practices.



C-DOT receives recognition at Mobile World Congress 2026

- The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) received global recognition at the Mobile World Congress 2026 held in Barcelona, Spain.
- C-DOT's AI-based telecom fraud detection solution "Fraud Pro" was selected as a top finalist at the Global Mobile Awards (GLOMO).
- The solution was nominated in the category "Best Network Security and Fraud Prevention."
- Mobile World Congress 2026 was held from 2–5 March 2026 at Fira Barcelona Gran Via, Barcelona.
- The event was organised by the GSM Association (GSMA).
- The theme of Mobile World Congress 2026 was "The IQ Era."
- The global event recorded participation of over 109,000 visitors and around 2,900 exhibitors from across the world.



ISRO successfully conducts CE20 cryogenic engine ground test

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully conducted a ground test of the CE20 Cryogenic Engine on 10 March 2026.
- The test was carried out at the ISRO Propulsion Complex Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu.
- It was a sea-level hot test of the CE20 cryogenic engine, which lasted for 165 seconds.
- During the test, the engine produced about 22 tonnes of thrust, validating its performance.
- The CE20 cryogenic engine powers the upper stage of the LVM3 Launch Vehicle, India's heavy-lift rocket.
- The engine is human-rated for the Gaganyaan Mission, India's first human spaceflight programme.

About ISRO:

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was established on 15 August 1969.
- The headquarters of ISRO is located in Bengaluru.
- ISRO functions under the Department of Space, Government of India.
- V. Narayanan is the Chairman of ISRO.
- Major space launch facilities in India include the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (Sriharikota) and the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station.



Gujarat Launches 'Lake and Air Watch' Initiative to Monitor AQI and Lake Health

- The Gujarat State Government launched the Lake and Air Watch Initiative to monitor and improve environmental conditions in urban areas.
- The initiative is being implemented by the Gujarat Urban Development Mission (GUDM) under the Urban Development and Urban Housing Department of Gujarat.
- The programme aims to monitor air quality and assess the health of urban lakes, addressing environmental challenges caused by rapid urbanisation.
- Under the initiative, Air Quality Monitoring Systems will be installed in 17 Municipal Corporations across Gujarat.
- The system will also provide real-time Air Quality Index (AQI) data in 152 municipal areas to improve environmental monitoring and management.

About Gujarat:

- Capital: Gandhinagar
- Chief Minister: Bhupendra Patel
- Governor: Acharya Devvrat
- National Parks in Gujarat: Gir National Park, Blackbuck National Park (Velavadar), and Marine National Park, Gulf of Kutch.



SEBI proposes simplified claim process for heirs of deceased investors

- SEBI proposed on 13 March 2026 a simplified claim process for legal heirs and nominees to transmit securities of deceased investors.
- The proposal aims to reduce documentation, speed up settlements, and improve investor convenience.
- Demat securities claims up to ₹30,000 will follow Straight-Through Processing (STP) with minimal documentation.
- Physical or SOA securities claims up to ₹10,000 will also follow STP with reduced compliance.
- Higher value claims require additional legal documents such as indemnity bonds, affidavits, or NOCs from other heirs.
- Physical securities must be dematerialised before transfer to heirs.
- If a nominee exists, the claim process is simpler; without nomination, heirs must submit death certificate, ID proof, and legal heir documents.
- Claims should be processed within 21 days after receiving complete documents.
- The changes reduce delays, simplify procedures, and enhance investor protection.

About SEBI:

- SEBI was established in 1988 and received statutory powers under the SEBI Act, 1992.
- Headquarters: Mumbai.
- Chairperson: Tuhin Kanta Pandey



Axis Max Life Insurance Teams Up with Saarathi Finance

- Axis Max Life Insurance has partnered with Saarathi Finance to provide Group Credit Life Secure (GCLS) insurance for MSME borrowers.
- The insurance is linked with loans, protecting entrepreneurs' loan obligations in case of unforeseen events.
- The initiative strengthens financial protection and risk mitigation for MSMEs and supports India's goal of universal insurance coverage by 2047.
- Saarathi Finance provides credit to MSMEs, while Axis Max Life provides insurance expertise.
- The partnership combines lending and insurance, promoting financial inclusion and reducing financial stress on businesses and families.

