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Ilaiyaraaja will be honored with the prestigious Padmapani Award of 11th Ajanta-Ellora International Film Festival

- The award recognises unparalleled contribution of veteran music composer Ilaiyaraaja to Indian cinema.
- The award includes a Padmapani memento, a citation certificate, and 2 lakh rupees as cash prize.
- The previous recipients of the award are lyricist Javed Akhtar, veteran director-writer Sai Paranjpye, actor Om Puri and others.
- The 11th Ajanta-Ellora International Film Festival will be organised from 28 January to 1 February at Mahatma Gandhi Mission, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar.
- The festival is being held with the support of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, and the Department of Cultural Affairs, Government of Maharashtra.
- It is being held with co-presentation by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and the Maharashtra Film, Stage and Cultural Development Corporation, Government of Maharashtra.
- The festival is organized by Marathwada Art, Culture and Film Foundation, Nath Group and MGM Yashwantrao Chavan Centre.
- Ilaiyaraaja is popular for his work in Indian cinema, chiefly in Tamil in addition to Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada and Hindi films. He is nicknamed "Isaignani" (the musical sage).



ADG MV Pathak assumed charge as Coast Guard Commander of the Western Seaboard

- Additional Director General MV Pathak has assumed charge as the Coast Guard Commander of the Western Seaboard.
- ADG Pathak is an officer of the 1989 batch and joined the Indian Coast Guard in July 1989.
- All classes of Coast Guard ships have been commanded by him during his service career.
- Several key shore appointments have been held by him, including Chief of Staff at Coast Guard Headquarters Mumbai.
- He has served as Commander Coast Guard Kerala and Mahe and Principal Director Administration in New Delhi.
- Command responsibilities were also carried out by him in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Northeast India regions.



RPF Inspector Chandana Sinha awarded Ati Vishisht Rail Sewa Puruskar for rescuing trafficked children

- Indian Railways' highest service honour, the Ati Vishisht Rail Sewa Puruskar, has been awarded to Railway Protection Force Inspector Chandana Sinha.
- The award has been conferred in recognition of her sustained efforts to rescue children from trafficking and exploitative labour across Uttar Pradesh's rail network.
- More than 1,500 vulnerable children have been rescued under her leadership during the past three years.
- A systematic approach for identifying traffickers was developed by her through observation of body language, travel patterns and behavioural mismatches.
- An informal network of informers and partnerships with NGOs was built to strengthen rapid-response child rescue operations.
- In June 2024, Operation Nanhe Farishte, the Indian Railways' child rescue initiative, was led by her unit.
- The rescue teams focused on known trafficking routes from Bihar to Punjab and Haryana.
- The award recognised not a single incident but a consistent and quiet method of humanitarian policing.



India's growth forecast for the current fiscal year has been increased by IMF to 7.3 per cent

- India's growth forecast has been revised by 0.7 percentage point.
- As per IMF's World Economic Outlook update, the upward revision shows strong momentum in the fourth quarter of this fiscal year.
- For the 2026–27 financial year, IMF's projection for growth is 6.4%.
- IMF added that India still remains a key driver of growth among emerging market and developing economies.
- IMF projected global growth to be steady at 3.3% in 2026.
- This is supported by easing trade tensions and accommodative financial conditions.
- Increased investment in technology, particularly artificial intelligence, is also supporting global growth.
- India's inflation is expected to return close to target levels after falling sharply in 2025.
- The main factor behind the decline in inflation is lower food prices.
- The IMF cautioned that AI-driven productivity improvements could reduce future investment and could have spillover effects on emerging economies



Sandeep Bakhshi's reappointment as MD & CEO till 2028 has been approved by the ICICI Bank board

- The reappointment has been approved for a further two-year term, beginning October 4, 2026 and ending October 3, 2028.
- The reappointment is subject to approvals from the RBI and shareholders. Bakhshi has led the bank since 2018.
- He took over as MD & CEO in October 2018.
- As per ICICI Bank board, the reappointment is in line with the RBI's Commercial Banks: Governance Directions, 2025.
- ICICI Bank is the country's second-largest private sector lender. It is headquartered in Mumbai with a registered office in Vadodara.



Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has won a seventh term in office

- He secured 71.65 per cent of the total votes. The official election results were released on 17 January 2026.
- The election was held amid a nationwide internet shutdown for several days.
- The musician-turned politician, best known as Bobi Wine, was Museveni's main challenger.
- Wine received 24.72 per cent of the vote. His real name is Kyagulanyi Ssentamu.
- He rejected the officially declared results and accused authorities of conducting an unfair electoral process.
- He alleged that his polling agents were abducted.
- Wine urged citizens to engage in peaceful protests.
- Electoral officials faced criticism during the voting process.
- Biometric voter identification machines failed on polling day, causing delays in the start of voting.
- Delays were especially reported in urban areas, which are considered opposition strongholds.
- Voter turnout was recorded at 52 per cent. This was the lowest turnout since its return in 2006 to multi-party politics.
- Veteran opposition leader Kizza Besigye remains in prison, facing treason charges.
- Uganda has not seen a peaceful transfer of presidential power since independence from British rule.



The Tyler Prize awarded to Toby Kiers for revealing hidden fungal networks

- The Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement has been awarded to American scientist Toby Kiers for her pioneering work on mycorrhizal fungal networks.
- The Tyler Prize is often referred to as the “Nobel for the environment” for recognising outstanding environmental achievements.
- Vast underground fungal webs have been shown to act as nutrient-trading systems between plants and roots, regulating the Earth’s climate.
- These mycorrhizal networks draw down around 13.12 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, helping to reduce global emissions.
- The importance of these networks was brought into focus through a global Underground Atlas launched by Toby Kiers and her colleagues.
- The research revealed that mycorrhizal fungi are one of Earth’s vital circulatory systems rather than merely plant companions.
- The findings provide critical insights that can guide conservation efforts to protect underground biodiversity.
- Toby Kiers is a University Research Chair at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and a leading evolutionary biologist.
- Her work highlights the role of soil ecosystems in long-term climate regulation and carbon storage.



The Indian Coast Guard and the Japan Coast Guard carried out a joint Hazardous and Noxious Substances response drill in Mumbai



- The exercise reaffirmed their strong maritime partnership.
- It also reaffirmed their commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.
- The drill was held onboard the Indian Coast Guard pollution response vessel ICGS Samudra Prahari.
- Japan Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Yoshio Seguchi visited the Indian Coast Guard Regional Headquarters (West) for the engagement.
- Admiral Seguchi held a courtesy meeting with Inspector General Bhisham Sharma, Commander, Coast Guard Region (West).
- During the meeting, both sides stressed the need for closer cooperation and emphasised improving operational interoperability.
- A specialised joint training exercise was the highlight of the visit.

- The exercise involved the Indian Coast Guard Pollution Response Strike Team and the Japan Coast Guard National Strike Team.
- Before the sea drill, detailed planning sessions were held in Mumbai.
- A joint demonstration of HNS response techniques was later carried out and was reviewed onboard ICGS Samudra Prahari.
- Apart from operational training, the Japanese delegation visited Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited.

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EU leaders invited as chief guests for the 77th Republic Day celebrations

- The President of the European Council António Luís Santos da Costa and the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen have been invited as Chief Guests for India's 77th Republic Day celebrations.
- The Republic Day ceremony is scheduled to be held at Kartavyapath on 26 January, marking a significant diplomatic engagement.
- At the invitation of PM Narendra Modi, two EU leaders will pay a three-day state visit to India starting on January 25th.
- During the visit, the 16th India–EU Summit is to be co-chaired by the EU leaders on 27 January.
- Meetings with President Droupadi Murmu have been scheduled as part of the official engagements.
- Restricted and delegation-level talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi are also planned during the visit.
- An India–EU Business Forum is expected to be organised on the sidelines of the India–EU Summit.
- India and the European Union have maintained a strategic partnership since the year 2004, as stated by the Ministry of External Affairs.
- The previous 15th India–EU Summit was conducted virtually on 15 July 2020.
- The participation of EU leaders in Republic Day celebrations is expected to further deepen the India–EU Strategic Partnership and enhance cooperation in priority areas.

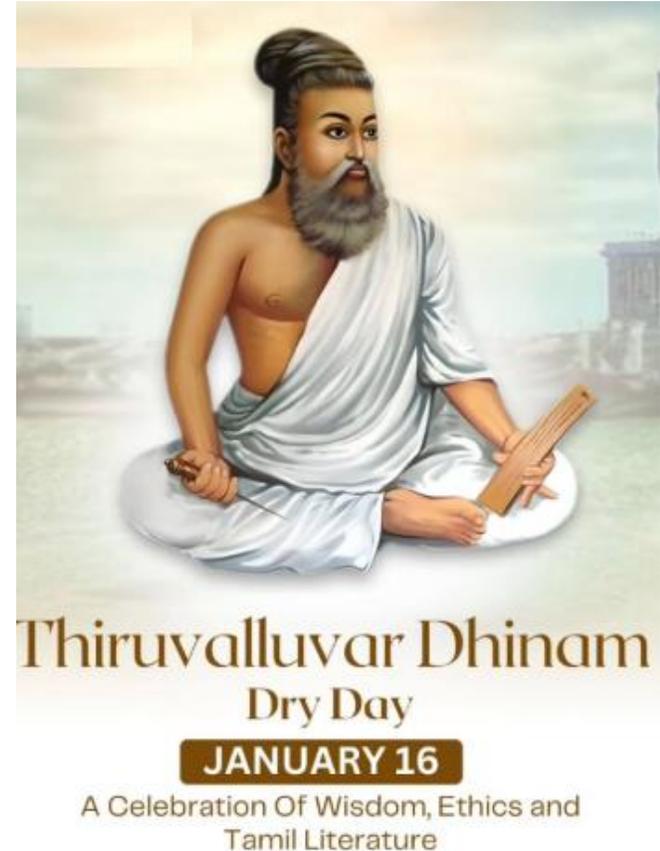


Thiruvalluvar Day 2026: 16 January

- Thiruvalluvar Day was celebrated in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry on 16 January.
- Every year, it is usually celebrated either on the 15th or 16th of January.
- It is observed in honour of the poet Thiruvalluvar, as part of the Pongal celebrations.
- It was first celebrated in 1935 at Chennai Pachaiappan College.
- Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have extended their greetings to the citizens on the occasion of Thiruvalluvar Day.
- The Vice President said that Thiruvalluvar taught that love is the foundation of life, that kindness and compassion should guide our actions, and that caring for all living beings is the greatest virtue.

Thiruvalluvar:

- He was a renowned poet and philosopher.
- He authored Tirukkural, a collection of couplets on ethics, political and economic matters, and love.
- Tirukkural contains 1330 couplets (kurals) that is divided into 133 sections of 10 couplets each.
- A temple memorial Valluvar Kotam was built in Chennai in 1976 in the honour of Thiruvalluvar. It is one of the largest auditoriums in Asia.



The Golden Globe Awards 2026 have been presented in Los Angeles to honour excellence in film and television

- Top awards in film categories were won by Hamnet and One Battle After Another.
- In television categories, Netflix's Adolescence emerged as a major winner.
- This year, the 83rd edition of the Golden Globe Awards was presented that honoured excellence in film and American television productions in 2025.
- Here is the important list of Golden Globe Awards 2026 winners:

Category	Winner
Best Film – Drama	Hamnet
Best Film – Musical/Comedy	One Battle After Another
Best Non-English Film	The Secret Agent
Best Animated Film	KPop Demon Hunters
Best Actress – Drama	Jessie Buckley (Hamnet)
Best Actor - Drama	Wagner Moura (The Secret Agent)
Best Actress – Musical/Comedy	Rose Byrne (pictured) (If I Had Legs I'd Kick You)
Best Actor – Musical/Comedy	Timothée Chalamet (Marty Supreme)
Cinematic and box office achievement	Sinners
Best Director	Paul Thomas Anderson (One Battle After Another)
Best Series – Drama	The Pitt
Best series - Comedy or Musical	The Studio
Best Limited Series	Adolescence
Best Stand-Up Comedy	Ricky Gervais (Mortality)

Mitchell Starc and Laura Wolvaardt awarded ICC Player of the Month for December 2025

- Australia's Mitchell Starc has been named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for December 2025.
- The award has been conferred for his outstanding performance during Australia's home Ashes series victory.
- This recognition marks the first time Mitchell Starc has received the ICC Men's Player of the Month award.
- He ended a two-year wait for an Australian player for this award, with Pat Cummins being the previous winner in December 2023.
- Additionally, South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt has been named the ICC Women's Player of the Month for December 2025.
- The award was given for her key role in South Africa's series victories against Ireland in both T20I and ODI formats.
- Laura Wolvaardt delivered consistent performances across formats, contributing significantly to team success.
- This is the second ICC Player of the Month award won by Laura Wolvaardt.
- She had earlier received the same award in October 2025.
- ICC had introduced the ICC Player of the Month awards in January 2021.
- It recognizes the best performances of both male and female cricketers across all forms of international cricket.



The 78th Army Day celebrated on 15 January with a grand parade in Jaipur

- The event was organised on Mahal Road in Jagatpura to showcase the valour and discipline of the Indian Army.
- Smartly turned-out contingents were seen marching past the saluting dais with professional excellence.
- Advanced military capabilities of the Army were displayed during the parade.
- Indigenous missile systems, advanced tanks, drones and modern combat vehicles were showcased.
- Participation by soldiers from various regiments highlighted the Army's diverse traditions and combat skills.
- The Nepal Army Band also took part, reflecting strong defence cooperation between India and Nepal.
- Cultural performances such as Kalbelia and Gair dances added regional colour to the ceremony.
- The event was attended by the Governor Haribhau Bagde, Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, senior Army officials and a large number of citizens.
- As part of the celebrations, a 'Shaurya Sandhya' was organized at the SMS Stadium, which was also attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.



India to Host Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 in New Delhi

- **India** will host the **Bharat Electricity Summit 2026**, a global conference-cum-exhibition for the power and electricity sector, from March 19 to 22, 2026, at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi.
- The four-day summit will be held under the **theme “Electrifying Growth. Empowering Sustainability. Connecting Globally”**, highlighting India’s leadership in the global energy transition and fostering international cooperation in the electricity sector.
- The summit will feature 50+ conference sessions, 500+ exhibitors, 25,000+ visitors, and 1,000+ delegates with 300 speakers, including a Buyer–Seller Meet to promote global partnerships across the power and clean energy value chain.



President Droupadi Murmu Appoints Praveen Vashista as Vigilance Commissioner

- **President Droupadi Murmu** appointed **Praveen Vashista** as **Vigilance Commissioner** in the **Central Vigilance Commission**, as informed by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
- Praveen Vashista took oath before the Central Vigilance Commissioner, formally assuming charge as Vigilance Commissioner.
- He has over 30 years of experience in law enforcement and internal security and is a 1991-batch IPS officer (Bihar cadre), who served on central deputation in the Ministry of Home Affairs as Joint Secretary, Additional Secretary, and Special Secretary (Internal Security).
- The Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003, provides for the appointment of a Central Vigilance Commissioner and two Vigilance Commissioners. The tenure of the Vigilance Commissioner is of four years or till the incumbent attains the age of 65 years.



MS Dhoni Appointed Goodwill Ambassador for Pune Grand Tour 2026

- **MS Dhoni** has been **appointed Goodwill Ambassador** for the **Pune Grand Tour 2026**, a five-day international road cycling event to be held in Pune from January 19 to 23, 2026.
- The Pune Grand Tour 2026 will be India's first UCI-recognised multi-stage (Category 2.2) Continental Road Cycling Race for men, covering a 437-km route across the Deccan Plateau and Sahyadri Range.
- The event will feature 171 riders from 29 professional teams representing 35 countries, with top international teams like Spain's Burgos Burpellet BH, China's Li Ning Star, and Malaysia's Terengganu Cycling Team participating.



MS Dhoni Appointed Goodwill
Ambassador for Pune Grand Tour
2026

Yemen Appoints Shaya Mohsen Zindani as New Prime Minister

- **Salem bin Breik** resigned from the post of **Prime Minister of Yemen**, leading to a leadership change in the internationally recognised government.
- Shaya Mohsen Zindani, the sitting Foreign Minister, has been appointed as Yemen's new Prime Minister.
- **Newly Appointed Prime Ministers & Presidents**
- Prime Minister of the Czech Republic – Andrej Babis
- President of Ireland – Catherine Connolly
- First Female PM of Japan – Sanae Takaichi (from Liberal Democratic Party)
- Interim PM of Nepal – Sushila Karki (first woman Chief Justice of nation from 2016–2017)



Karnataka Bank Wins 'Best Fintech & DPI Adoption' at IBA Banking Technology Awards

- **Karnataka Bank** won the 'Best Fintech & DPI Adoption' award at the Indian Banks' Association Banking Technology Awards, highlighting its progress in digital transformation and fintech integration.
- The award recognises banks that effectively leverage fintech solutions and India's digital public infrastructure (DPI) to improve service delivery, scalability, security, and customer impact.
- Karnataka Bank also received runner-up for 'Best Tech Talent' and Special Mentions in 'Best Technology Bank', 'Best Digital Financial Inclusion', and 'Best Digital Sales', reflecting a comprehensive approach to digital banking.

Recent Awards

- **Asia Best Employer Brand Award 2026** – Bombay Stock Exchange
- **UN Secretary-General's Award 2025** – Indian Army Officer Major Swathi Shantha Kumar (for her initiative Equal Partners, Lasting Peace)
- **Cavaliere dell'Ordine della Stella d'Italia' Honour** – Goa-Based Industrialist Shrinivas Dempo
- **New South Wales' Scientist of the Year** – Indian-Origin Mathematician Nalini Joshi (First Mathematician to Receive the Honour)
- **2026 IEEE Medal of Honor** – NVIDIA CEO Jensen Huang (for Pioneering Accelerated Computing)
- **Nritya Kalanidhi Award at 19th Music Academy Dance Festival** – Bharatanatyam Exponent Urmila Satyanarayanan



Tunisian Filmmaker Zoubeir Jlassi Wins \$1 Million AI Film Award for 'Lily' at Dubai Summit

- **Tunisian filmmaker Zoubeir Jlassi** won the **world's largest AI Film Award** for his film Lily, receiving a \$1 million prize from Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum at the 1 Billion Followers Summit in Dubai.
- The award saw 3,500 film submissions and involved a jury of 40 experts reviewing over 400 hours of content, with shortlisted films undergoing AI verification via Google Gemini to ensure at least 70% generative AI usage.
- The film Lily tells the story of a lonely archivist confronting guilt and seeking redemption after a hit-and-run, highlighting the award's goal of encouraging AI-driven storytelling that promotes humanitarian values and culturally meaningful content.
- It was the fourth edition of the summit. It was organised in partnership with Google Gemini.



NITI Aayog Releases Export Preparedness Index 2024

- **NITI Aayog released the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2024, the 4th edition of the index, which assesses export readiness across India's States and Union Territories; the first edition was published in August 2020.**
- **The EPI 2024 aligns with India's goals of achieving USD 1 trillion in merchandise exports by 2030 and the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, providing an evidence-based framework for strengthening subnational export ecosystems.**
- **The Index evaluates the strength, resilience, and inclusiveness of export systems at the State and district levels, while identifying structural challenges, growth drivers, and policy opportunities.**
- **The EPI 2024 framework is based on 4 pillars, 13 sub-pillars, and 70 indicators, enabling a granular and policy-relevant assessment of export preparedness.**
- **The four pillars are Export Infrastructure, Business Ecosystem, Policy & Governance, and Export Performance, covering areas such as logistics, finance, MSMEs, human capital, and trade facilitation.**
- **States and UTs are categorised into Large States, Small States, North Eastern States, and UTs, and further classified as Leaders, Challengers, and Aspirers to encourage peer learning.**
- **Top performers in EPI 2024 include Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh among Large States, and Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Nagaland, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, and Goa among Small States, North Eastern States, and UTs.**



Centre Launches 'Paripoorna Mediclaim Ayush Bima' for CGHS Beneficiaries

- The Department of Financial Services launched Paripoorna Mediclaim Ayush Bima for Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) beneficiaries, offering cashless treatment, modern medical procedures, and access to a wide hospital network.
- The policy is exclusively for CGHS beneficiaries, covering up to six family members per policy, and provides indemnity-based in-patient hospitalisation coverage within India.
- Beneficiaries can choose a sum insured of ₹10 lakh or ₹20 lakh, with an optional co-payment structure of 70:30 or 50:50 between the insurer and the subscriber.
- The insurance will be available as a retail product without GST to ensure affordability and can be purchased through New India Assurance Company Limited's offices and online platform.



DFS Launches Composite Salary Account Package for Central Government Employees with Banking and Insurance Benefits

- **The Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, launched a composite ‘Salary Account Package’ for Central Government employees to provide integrated banking and insurance benefits, supporting the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 and Insurance for All by 2047.**
- Banking features include zero-balance salary account, free RTGS/NEFT/UPI, concessional loans for housing, education, vehicles, personal needs, locker fee waivers, and family banking benefits.
- Insurance coverage includes **Personal Accident Insurance up to ₹1.5 crore, Air Accident Insurance up to ₹2 crore, Disability cover up to ₹1.5 crore, Term Life Insurance up to ₹20 lakh**, and comprehensive health insurance with top-up options.
- Digital and card benefits offer enhanced debit/credit card perks, including airport lounge access, reward programs, cashback offers, unlimited transactions, and nil maintenance charges.
- DFS has advised Public Sector Banks to publicize the scheme, organize awareness camps, guide employees, and facilitate migration of existing salary accounts with employees’ consent.



Tripura Gramin Bank Launches India's First Solar-Powered ATM Van to Boost Rural Banking

- Tripura Gramin Bank became the **first Regional Rural Bank in India** to introduce India's **first fully solar-powered mobile ATM van, named "TGB on Wheels."**
- The project was launched with the support of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development. NABARD
- The initiative earned the bank the SKOCH Group Silver Award, recognising excellence in governance, innovation, and public service delivery.
- The initiative was inaugurated on July 21, 2023, by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and currently, three solar-powered ATM vans are operational, supporting basic banking transactions in hard-to-reach locations.

