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### HEADLINES

- ❖ 'Chanakya of Bengal politics' Mukul Roy dies at 71
- ❖ India, Japan joint exercise 'Dharma Guardian' to be held from Feb 24-Mar 9
- ❖ Lutyens statue to be replaced by Rajagopalachari's at Rashtrapati Bhavan
- ❖ North Korea's Kim Jong Un reelected as chief of ruling Workers' Party
- ❖ Uday Kotak selected for special jury award by EY India
- ❖ Microsoft Appoints Indian Origin Asha Sharma As Gaming CEO
- ❖ Assam CM inaugurates operations at new integrated terminal of Guwahati Airport
- ❖ Argentine Tennis Player Tomas Martin Etcheverry Wins ATP 500 Rio Open
- ❖ 'Banwat Ekta Sthal' Inaugurated Near LoC In Poonch District
- ❖ Nagaland To Host First 'North East Festival Of Rice: Grains Of Heritage'
- ❖ Madhya Pradesh CM Inaugurates First-Ever National Divyangjan Cricket Sports Festival 2026 in Bhopal

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## 'Chanakya of Bengal politics' Mukul Roy dies at 71



- Senior politician and former Union railway minister Mukul Roy, once considered West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's closest aide and a key strategist of the All India Trinamool Congress (TMC), passed away. He was 71.
- Roy's political career spanned over four decades and included stints in the Congress, the TMC and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).
- He began his political journey with the Youth Congress before joining Banerjee when she broke away from the Congress to form the TMC in 1998.
- As a founding member, Roy quickly emerged as one of the party's key organisational architects and later served as its general secretary.
- He was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 2006 and became the TMC's leader in the Upper House in 2009, earning a reputation as the party's chief troubleshooter in New Delhi.
- During the UPA-II government, when the TMC was part of the ruling coalition, Roy served first as Minister of State for Shipping and later as Union railway minister in 2012.

- He often described as the “Chanakya” of West Bengal politics, Roy was widely known for his backroom organisational skills.
- Following the TMC’s landmark victory in the 2011 Assembly elections that ended 34 years of Left Front rule, he played a crucial role in consolidating the party’s dominance across several districts by strengthening its organisational base.
- Roy was elected as a BJP MLA from Krishnanagar Uttar in the 2021 Assembly elections but returned to the TMC within months, triggering legal and political wrangling.
- A court later disqualified him as an MLA under the anti-defection law.

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## India, Japan joint exercise 'Dharma Guardian' to be held from Feb 24-Mar 9



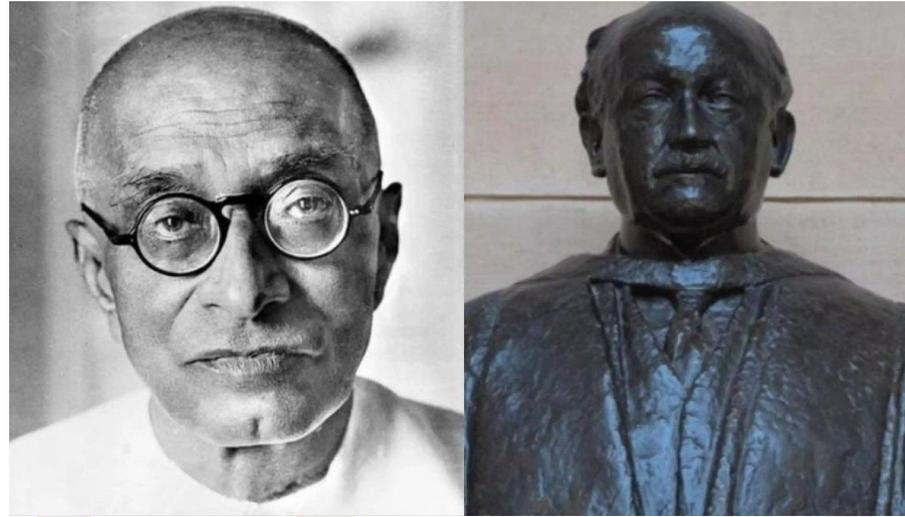
- The 7th edition of Joint Military Exercise Dharma Guardian 2026 between India and Japan will be conducted at Chaubattia, Uttarakhand, from 24 February to 9 March 2026.
- The exercise aims to enhance interoperability between the two forces while undertaking joint urban warfare and counter-terrorism operations.
- Key activities of the Exercise include establishing a Temporary Operating Base, developing an ISR grid, mobile check posts, cordon and search operations, heliborne missions and house intervention drills.
- "Dharma Guardian 2026 reaffirms the growing India-Japan defence partnership and shared commitment to regional security.
- The Exercise provides both armies with an opportunity to share best practices, learn from each other's operational experience in urban warfare and counter- terrorism and build trust between the two forces.

- The 7th edition follows the successful conclusion of the 6th edition of Exercise Dharma Guardian, which was held at the East Fuji Training Area in Japan from February 24 to March 9, 2025.
- That exercise marked a significant milestone as it was conducted on an enhanced scale with participation of troops at the company-strength level.
- India and Japan have been steadily deepening their defence and strategic ties, with regular joint exercises forming a key pillar of the special strategic and global partnership between the two nations aimed at maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

### **Japan:**

- Capital: Tokyo
- Currency: Japanese yen
- Prime Minister: Sanae Takaichi

## Lutyens statue to be replaced by Rajagopalachari's at Rashtrapati Bhavan



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the statue of British architect Edwin Lutyens in Rashtrapati Bhavan will be replaced by a statue of C Rajagopalachari, the first governor-general of independent India.
- Rajagopalachari was a lawyer and a freedom fighter who became the only Indian to serve as Governor-General of India, a post abolished in 1950.
- A close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, he edited the 'Young India' journal during Gandhi's imprisonment and took part in the non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements.
- In June 1948, he succeeded Louis Mountbatten as Governor-General of India.
- After the office was abolished in 1950, he joined the government of former PM Jawaharlal Nehru and later served as Home Minister of India.
- Rajagopalachari resigned from the Congress Party in 1957 and went on to found the Swatantra Party, placing himself in opposition to Congress policies.

- PM Modi said that during the ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’, he spoke about the ‘Panch-Pran’ from the Red Fort, which includes freedom from the mentality of slavery.
- In this regard, he said that the 'Rajaji Utsav' will be celebrated on February 23, during which the statue of C Rajagopalachari will be unveiled in the central courtyard of Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- "He was among those who saw power not as a position but as a service. His conduct, self-restraint, and independent thinking in public life inspire us even today," PM Modi said.
- Apart from that, an exhibition on Rajagopalachari will also be held during the Rajaji Utsav from February 24 to March 1.

### **Edward Lutyens:**

- Lutyens was a prominent British architect known for designing imperial-era buildings in New Delhi.
- In 1912, he was chosen to plan and design the new capital of British India at Delhi.
- Along with Herbert Baker, he designed several landmark structures, including Rashtrapati Bhavan, North Block, South Block, India Gate, Hyderabad House, Baroda House, Patiala House and Connaught Place.
- In recognition of his work, a central area of the capital is known as Lutyens’ Delhi.

## North Korea's Kim Jong Un reelected as chief of ruling Workers' Party



- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was reelected to the top post of the ruling Workers' Party, with delegates crediting him for bolstering the country's nuclear arsenal and strengthening its regional standing.
- Kim is expected to outline his key political and military goals for the next five years.
- He will double down on accelerating a military nuclear program already equipped with missiles capable of threatening Asian US allies and the American mainland.
- An aggressive expansion of his nuclear arsenal and closer ties with Russia forged through joint war efforts in Ukraine, which have deepened his standoffs with Washington and Seoul.
- Kim will likely use the meeting to unveil new military goals, including strengthening conventional forces and integrating them with nuclear capabilities, while reemphasizing a campaign for economic "self-reliance" through mass mobilization, following gradual post-pandemic gains fueled by rebounding trade with China and arms exports to Russia.

- Under party rules, the congress, which Kim has held every five years since 2016, elects the general secretary to serve as the party's top representative and leader.
- Kim, 42, has held the party's top post throughout his rule, though the title changed from first secretary to chairman at the congress in 2016 and then to general secretary at the congress in 2021.

### **North Korea:**

- Capital: Pyongyang
- Capital: North Korean won (KPW)

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## Uday Kotak selected for special jury award by EY India



- EY India announced nine finalists for its 27th Entrepreneur of the Year (EOY) Award, which will be announced in Mumbai on 25 February 2026.
- The list of finalists includes Abhishek Lodha, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Lodha Developers; Deepinder Goyal, Founder, Eternal Limited; Ajay Bhardwaj, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Anthem Biosciences; Gopal Vittal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Bharti Airtel Ltd, among others.
- Uday Kotak, Founder of Kotak Mahindra Bank, has been selected for a special jury award for his transformative contributions to the Indian banking and finance industry.
- Past winners of the EY Entrepreneur of the Year India Awards include Mukesh Ambani, Reliance Industries (2000); Ratan Tata, Tata Group (2003); Anand Mahindra, Mahindra Group (2009); Kumar Mangalam Birla, Aditya Birla Group (2005); Sunil Bharti Mittal, Bharti Airtel (2004); Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Biocon (2020); and Vellayan Subbiah, Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company (2024).

## **Microsoft Appoints Indian Origin Asha Sharma As Gaming CEO**

- Technology giant Microsoft has named Indian-origin Asha Sharma as Executive Vice President and CEO of Microsoft Gaming, joining a long and growing list of Indian-descent leaders at the helm of global companies.
- Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella said that Sharma has helped build and scale services that reach billions of people and support thriving consumer and developer ecosystems over the last two years in her role at Microsoft.
- And previously as Chief Operating Officer at Instacart and a Vice President at Meta.
- She brings “deep experience building and growing platforms, aligning business models to long-term value, and operating at global scale, which will be critical in leading our gaming business into its next era of growth.”
- Sharma will be succeeding Phil Spencer and will be reporting to Nadella.
- Sharma holds a Bachelor of Science in Business from the University of Minnesota’s Carlson School of Management.
- She joins a growing list of Indian-origin executives at the helm of global companies, including Nadella, Alphabet and Google CEO Sundar Pichai, Adobe chief Shantanu Narayen and Palo Alto Networks CEO Nikesh Arora.



## Assam CM inaugurates operations at new integrated terminal of Guwahati Airport



- Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma formally launched commercial operations at the new integrated terminal of Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport (LGBIA), marking a major expansion of aviation infrastructure in the Northeast.
- While the terminal was inaugurated earlier by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 20, 2025, The event marked the operational rollout of passenger services from the new facility.
- The event featured the issuance of a ceremonial boarding pass to the first departing passenger and the arrival of an Akasa Air flight from Mumbai at the new terminal.
- Traditional lamp-lighting rituals and cultural performances were also organised at the arrivals forecourt.
- With the commencement of operations, the airport's annual passenger handling capacity has increased to 13.1 million, reinforcing Guwahati's position as the principal aviation gateway to India's Northeast and enhancing connectivity to mainland India and Southeast Asia.

- The airport currently connects 21 domestic destinations and three international cities, Bangkok, Paro and Singapore and handles over 130 aircraft movements daily.
- Prior to the launch, phased system validation exercises were conducted covering check-in, baggage handling, security, aircraft turnaround, airline coordination and emergency protocols.
- Digi Yatra-enabled processing, integrated wayfinding systems and centralised communication platforms are now operational.
- Designed by architect Nuru Karim, the terminal reflects Assam's cultural identity, drawing inspiration from the kopou phool (foxtail orchid) and incorporating over 140 metric tonnes of bamboo. Architectural elements also reference traditional bamboo craftsmanship of the Northeast.
- The expanded terminal is expected to facilitate new routes, higher flight frequencies and international network growth, while boosting tourism and economic activity in the region.

## **Argentine Tennis Player Tomas Martin Etcheverry Wins ATP 500 Rio Open**

- Argentine tennis player Tomas Martin Etcheverry has won his maiden ATP Tour title, claiming the ATP 500 Rio Open with a 3-6, 7-6(3), 6-4 victory over Chile's Alejandro Tabilo at the final in Brazil.
- 26-year-old rose to the challenge to secure the biggest title of his career. It is his first ATP crown after finishing runner-up in three previous finals.
- Etcheverry also recorded his 100th tour-level match win during the tournament.
- He defeated Tabilo in Buenos Aires last week and repeated the win in Rio, extending his head-to-head lead to 2-0.
- With the win, Etcheverry has jumped 18 places to World No. 33 and will return to the Top 40 for the first time since last February.
- Earlier, in men's doubles, Brazil's Joao Fonseca and Felipe Melo defeated Constantin Frantzen of Germany and Belgium's Robin Haase 4-6, 6-3, 10-8.
- It was Fonseca's first home title and Melo's second straight trophy.

### **Argentina:**

- Capital: Buenos Aires
- Currency: Argentine peso



## **'Banwat Ekta Sthal' Inaugurated Near LoC In Poonch District**



- In a proud and historic moment for the border district of Poonch, Lt Gen Prateek Sharma, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Northern Command, formally inaugurated the Banwat Ekta Sthal at Bandi Chechian village along the Line of Control in Poonch sector.
- The highlight of the ceremony was the unfurling of a towering 105-ft-high Indian National Flag – the tallest tricolour installed in Poonch district – located barely two kilometres from the Line of Control (LoC).
- The grand flag, symbolising national pride and sovereignty, is visible from several areas across the border.
- The Banwat Ekta Sthal project, completed in a record time of 45 days after the foundation stone was laid on December 13, 2025, reflects the Indian Army's continued commitment to nation-building and community development in border regions.
- Developed as a landmark blending patriotism with public utility, the site features a Children's Park, an Ekta Mandap to promote peace and mental well-being, and a dedicated space symbolising unity and collective harmony against the scenic backdrop of the Pir Panjal ranges.

- Coinciding with the inauguration, the Army also organised a medical and blood donation camp. Educational kits were distributed among children, winter relief blankets were provided to the needy, and hygiene kits were handed over to women.
- The Banwat Ekta Sthal will serve as a beacon of unity and patriotism for future generations.
- The landmark is also expected to enhance tourism potential in Bandi Chechiyan and adjoining areas, creating employment opportunities, encouraging small businesses, and contributing to sustainable livelihoods.
- With this initiative, the Indian Army aims not only to safeguard the nation's frontiers but also to integrate border communities more closely with the national mainstream while fostering economic growth in remote regions.

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## **Nagaland To Host First 'North East Festival Of Rice: Grains Of Heritage'**



- Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) Nagaland Chapter has announced the first-ever “North East Festival of Rice: Grains of Heritage” to be held from February 26–27, 2026, at Agri Expo, in Chümoukedima Dimapur.
- The festival will bring together communities from Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, and Sikkim to celebrate rice as the heart of indigenous culture and sustainable living.
- The festival aims to promote cultural pride, sustainable agriculture, and community collaboration while celebrating and honoring the grain that sustains life in Northeast India.
- The festival will feature curated rice exhibitions showcasing heirloom and indigenous varieties, traditional farming tools, and seed preservation practices from across the region.
- Visitors will be able to explore how rice cultivation shapes agricultural heritage and biodiversity.
- A vibrant craft section will highlight bamboo work, handloom textiles, and artisanal products inspired by agrarian life.

- Student participation will be a key highlight, with immersive farm-to-table experiences, a rice-themed painting competition, cultural performances, and a two-day seminar addressing critical issues related to rice.
- The festival marketplace will host farmers and entrepreneurs offering organic produce, rice-based products, and handmade goods.
- A dedicated food arena will serve diverse rice dishes, ranging from steamed and sticky varieties to traditional beverages, reflecting the rich culinary traditions of the region.
- Supported by the Department of Agriculture, Government of Nagaland, ICAR NEH Region (Nagaland Centre, Medziphema and Umiam, Meghalaya), and NEZCC, Ministry of Culture, Dimapur.

### **Nagaland:**

- Capital: Kohima
- Chief Minister: Neiphiu Rio
- Governor: Ajay Kumar Bhalla

# Madhya Pradesh CM Inaugurates First-Ever National Divyangjan Cricket Sports Festival 2026 in Bhopal

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav inaugurated the “National Divyangjan Cricket Sports Festival-2026” in Bhopal.
- Based on the theme “Not Out @ 100,” this event is the first of its kind in the world.
- Where 350 Divyang players from 25 states will play cricket continuously for 100 hours, creating a new record.
- The Chief Minister himself stepped onto the pitch to bat and flagged off the first match of the tournament between the Ortho teams of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.
- Madhya Pradesh is emerging as a global hub for Divyang sports.
- Referring to the term “Divyang” given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it signifies indomitable willpower and inner strength.
- The festival is dedicated to the birth centenary of the late social reformer Kushabhau Thakre and will continue day and night till February 26.
- Governor of Madhya Pradesh: Mangubhai Chhaganbhai Patel.

