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Second Global Buddhist Summit 2026 to Be Held in New Delhi



- The International Buddhist Confederation, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, will organise the second edition of the Global Buddhist Summit on January 24 and 25, 2026.
- The event will take place at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi and is expected to serve as a major international forum for dialogue on Buddhist perspectives addressing contemporary global challenges.

Theme and Contemporary Relevance:

- The 2nd Global Buddhist Summit will be organised under the theme **“Collective Wisdom, United Voice, and Mutual Coexistence”**.
- At a time marked by rapid social, political, and environmental transformations, the summit aims to highlight the relevance of Buddha Dhamma in responding to conflict, alienation, and uncertainty.
- The principles of compassion, harmony, and wisdom will be examined as guiding values for peaceful coexistence and shared prosperity.

High-Level Participation and Inauguration:

- The summit is likely to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the Chief Guest, as was the case during the first edition.
- Around 200 delegates, including Supreme Patriarchs, heads of national Buddhist Sanghas, eminent monks, scholars, and senior dignitaries from across the world, are expected to participate. The overall audience is projected to exceed 800 participants.
- The 2nd Global Buddhist Summit will facilitate discussions among state leaders, Sangha members, Dhamma practitioners, and scholars on Buddhist responses to modern challenges.
- Deliberations will explore how the values of Buddha Dhamma can inspire ethical leadership, social harmony, and sustainable living amid technological change, consumerism, and environmental degradation.

The summit aims to reaffirm Buddhism's enduring relevance in shaping a more compassionate and balanced global order.

Odisha-Meghalaya MoU to Boost Early Childhood Care and Development

- Odisha and Meghalaya have taken a collaborative step to improve outcomes for young children by signing a new agreement on early childhood development.
- The MoU is a significant step towards strengthening Early Childhood Care, Education and Development (ECCED) through inter-state collaboration.
- It encompasses nutrition, health, early learning, responsive caregiving, community engagement, and institutional capacity building.
- Meghalaya will contribute its innovative social sector delivery models designed for tribal and geographically challenging regions.



UAE & World Economic Forum agree to host annual meetings of GFCs in Dubai, boosting their strategic knowledge partnership



- The UAE and the World Economic Forum have agreed to host the annual meetings of the Global Future Councils in Dubai for the next five years, marking a new phase in their strategic knowledge partnership.
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- The agreement was formalised through a memorandum of understanding signed during the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, attended by global leaders, policymakers and experts.
- The move underscores a shared commitment to strengthening international cooperation, addressing socio-economic challenges and supporting governments in building more resilient development models.

- The Global Future Councils are a cornerstone of cooperation between the UAE Government and the World Economic Forum, with insights from their deliberations later feeding into the official agenda of the WEF Annual Meeting in Davos.
- The partnership builds on a 17-year legacy in which around 900 councils have convened more than 12,000 experts and officials from around the world to address critical global issues.
- Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Gergawi, UAE Minister of Cabinet Affairs, said the partnership reflects the country's vision of "forging effective global partnerships rooted in action and positive impact," adding that the councils provide an advanced model for transforming global challenges into development opportunities and reinforcing the UAE's role as a hub for shaping future solutions.
- Over the years, the UAE Government and the World Economic Forum have built a long-term strategic partnership focused on cooperation, integration and shaping future-oriented global strategies.
- The partnership supports national and international objectives by leveraging innovation, technology, AI and Fourth Industrial Revolution solutions across key sectors.

Odisha Imposes Complete Ban on Gutkha, Pan Masala, and Tobacco Products

- The Odisha State Health Department has announced a strict ban on gutkha, pan masala, and all products containing tobacco or nicotine.
- This new notification aims to prevent misuse of these products and ensure public health safety.
- The ban applies to both packaged and unpackaged items, including products sold separately but meant to be mixed together.
- The Health and Family Welfare Department has issued a notification prohibiting the manufacture, processing, packaging, storage, transportation, distribution, and sale of gutkha, pan masala, and any tobacco or nicotine products.
- Odisha had banned the sale of tobacco products in 2013. However, the updated notification removes ambiguities and ensures strict enforcement across the state.
- Health Secretary Aswathy S stated that the ban follows the Supreme Court's direction for full compliance with the nationwide prohibition on gutkha and pan masala.



Telangana Explores UAE Partnership for Bharat Future City



**UAE to partner with
Telangana to develop Bharat
Future City as a top global
hub; talks held at Davos. 🇮🇳🇦🇪**

- **Telangana and the UAE agreed to explore cooperation for Bharat Future City during the World Economic Forum 2026.**
- **Bharat Future City is planned as India's first net-zero greenfield smart city, designed to be a global urban and economic centre with a focus on sustainability, smart infrastructure, and innovation.**
- **The UAE-Telangana discussions were held between Abdulla bin Touq Al Marri, UAE Minister of Economy and Tourism, and A Revanth Reddy, Telangana CM, highlighting strategic investment and partnership opportunities.**
- **The project is a key pillar of Telangana Rising 2047, aiming to transform Telangana into a \$3 trillion economy by 2047 through infrastructure-led and innovation-driven development.**
- **Several global and Indian companies are already associated, including Marubeni, Sembcorp, and Reliance Group's Vantara, showcasing strong investor confidence.**

- A **joint task force** was proposed for faster implementation, along with a **UAE-Telangana food cluster collaboration** to support **rural and agriculture-based economic growth**.
- Telangana also engaged with **other international partners**, including **Saudi Expertise** for skills training at Young India Skills University and the **Israel Innovation Authority** for projects in **agriculture, AI, climate tech, and startups**.
- The initiative reflects Telangana's strategy for **global engagement, urban transformation, and inclusive economic growth**.

About Telangana:

- Capital: **Hyderabad**
- Governor: **Jishnu Dev Varma**
- Chief Minister: **Anumula Revanth Reddy**
- National Parks: **Kasu Brahmananda Reddy National Park, Mrugavani National Park, Mahavir Harina Vanasthali National Park**
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: **Kawal Wildlife Sanctuary, Pocharam Wildlife Sanctuary, Manjira Wildlife Sanctuary**

Gujarat has taken a major step in the private space sector with a new satellite manufacturing plant at Khoraj in Sanand

- The foundation stone for India's first integrated private satellite manufacturing facility was laid at Khoraj in Sanand, Gujarat.
- The project belongs to Azista Space. It involves an Electro-Optical Payload Factory.
- The facility is named the "Palmnaro" plant. The plant will focus on indigenous satellite manufacturing.
- The initiative strengthens private participation in space technology.
- Gujarat's Science and Technology Minister Arjun Modhwadia attended the ceremony.



MSDE signs MoU with WEF to collaborate on strengthening India's skills and Technical Education

- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the World Economic Forum to collaborate on strengthening India's skills and Technical and Vocational Education and Training ecosystem.
- It will collaborate with the World Economic Forum to launch and implement a Skills Accelerator in the country.
- It added that this initiative will significantly benefit the nation by bridging critical skill gaps and enhancing the global employability of the country's youth.
- This MOU will ensure that India's talent pool is aligned with emerging domains such as artificial intelligence, green energy, robotics, and advanced manufacturing.



National Girl Child Day: 24 January

- National Girl Child Day is celebrated annually on 24 January.
- This day promotes awareness of girls' rights, empowerment, and equal opportunities in India.
- This day is dedicated to highlighting the rights, education, health, nutrition, and overall welfare of girls.
- National Girl Child Day was started by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2008.
- As of January 2026, a total of 2,153 child marriages have been prevented.
- 60,262 Child Marriage Prohibition Officers have been appointed across the country.
- For 2024-2025, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of girls at the secondary level has reached 80.2%, as per Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) report.
- 97.5 per cent of schools nationwide are equipped with girls' toilet facilities.
- Sex Ratio at Birth has risen from around 918 in 2014-15 to 930 in 2023-24 at the national level.



Lucknow declared Uttar Pradesh's first Zero Fresh Waste Dump City

- Lucknow has been declared Uttar Pradesh's first city to achieve zero fresh waste dumping under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban.
- This milestone has been achieved with the commissioning of the Shivari Solid Waste Management Plant.
- One hundred percent scientific processing of municipal solid waste is now being carried out in the city.
- The Lucknow Municipal Corporation has adopted a scientific and sustainable waste management strategy.
- The newly inaugurated Shivari plant has a processing capacity of 700 metric tonnes per day.
- With three operational plants, over 2,100 metric tonnes of daily waste is now processed scientifically.
- Waste is segregated into organic and inorganic fractions for composting, biogas generation, recycling and RDF production.
- Around 12.86 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste have already been scientifically processed.
- More than 25 acres of land has been reclaimed and developed into a complete waste processing ecosystem.
- The city's model reflects circular economy principles and is being viewed as an example for other urban bodies.



**Lucknow becomes UP's
1st zero net waste city' with
new Shivri Waste Plant**

Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary declared Eco-Sensitive Zone by MoEFCC

- Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary has been declared an Eco-Sensitive Zone by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- The sanctuary is located in the Aravalli mountain range in the Rajsamand District of Rajasthan.
- The declaration aims to conserve biodiversity and protect fragile ecosystems.
- Support to indigenous communities living around the sanctuary has also been emphasised.
- An area extending from zero to one kilometre around the sanctuary has been covered under the zone.
- The region is home to species such as leopard, striped hyena, Indian pangolin and chinkara.
- Several bird species, including the painted francolin, are found in the area.
- Eco-friendly activities such as organic farming and agroforestry will be promoted.
- Skill development programmes will be encouraged to ensure sustainable livelihoods.



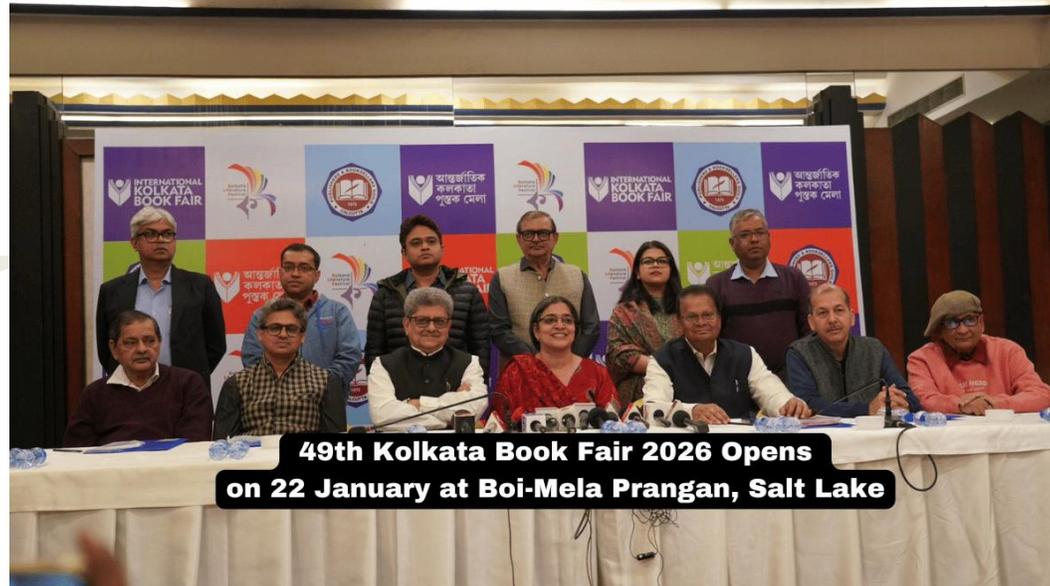
Amelia Valverde has been appointed as coach of senior Indian Women's Football Team

- The All-India Football Federation has named Amelia Valverde as head coach of the senior Indian women's football team.
- Valverde is from Costa Rica. She has already joined the Indian team's training camp in Antalya, Türkiye.
- The Indian women's team is preparing for the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026. The competition is scheduled for March 2026.
- Valverde will work alongside the existing coaching staff to strengthen the Indian Senior Women's Football Team.
- The current staff includes Crispin Chettri, Priya PV and Mario Aguiar.



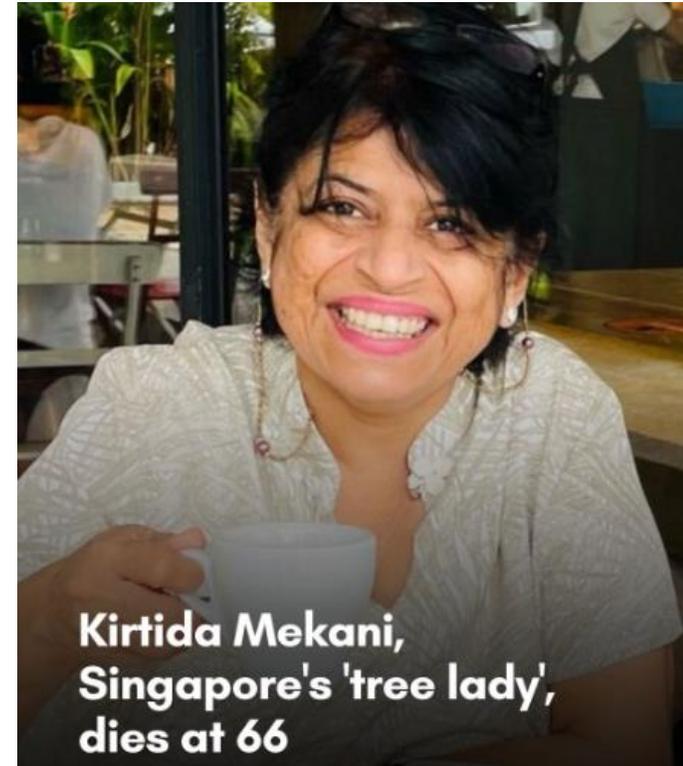
49th International Kolkata Book Fair Begins at Salt Lake

- The 49th International Kolkata Book Fair commenced at the Boi – Mela ground at Salt Lake in Kolkata.
- The book fair, which is being organised by the Publishers and Book Sellers Guild, attracts tens of thousands of book lovers every year.
- Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee inaugurated the event.
- This year, the focal theme country is **Argentina**.
- **China** participated in the fair after a gap of 15 years.
- **The United States of America** and **Bangladesh** have not participated this year.
- **Great Britain, Germany, France, Australia** and many countries of **Latin America** have participated in the book fair.
- In the inaugural function, a lifetime achievement award was given to a former official of **Akashvani, Swapnomoy Chakraborty**.



Karnataka-Born Environmentalist Kirtida Mekani Dies at 66 in Singapore

- Kirtida Mekani, an India-born environmental leader who made Singapore her home, passed away at the age of 66.
- Widely known as the “**Tree Lady**,” she spent more than three decades working quietly but powerfully for nature conservation, community well-being and cultural growth. Her work touched schools, gardens, art spaces and green landscapes across Singapore.
- In 1993, Kirtida became the first executive director of the **Singapore Environment Council**. During her time there, she helped create more than 50 programmes focused on **environmental protection and education**.
- One of her greatest achievements was the Plant-A-Tree Programme, started in 2007 with the National Parks Board.
- Over the years, the programme has led to the planting of more than 76,000 trees, introduced many native species and involved thousands of volunteers. It remains a major people-led green movement in Singapore.
- Her lifelong dedication earned her Singapore’s President’s Award for the Environment in 2015. In 2024, she was inducted into the Singapore Women’s Hall of Fame as a Champion of the Environment, honouring her lasting impact on society.



**Kirtida Mekani,
Singapore's 'tree lady',
dies at 66**