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UK PM Keir Starmer Honoured with 'Living Bridge' Award for Strengthening India-UK Relations

- UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer was honoured with the 'Living Bridge' award.
- He was recognised for strengthening India-UK relations and securing the Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
- Seema Malhotra, Minister for the Indo-Pacific, accepted the award on his behalf.
- The ceremony took place at the House of Lords in London.
- The Living Bridge Awards are hosted annually by the India Business Group (IBG).
- They celebrate individuals and organisations that bring India and the UK closer.
- This year's winners included India's GMR Group and businessman G P Hinduja.
- Other recipients were KPMG UK chair Bina Mehta and the University of Southampton.
- It targets USD 120 billion in trade by 2030. The agreement is awaiting UK parliamentary ratification.



India–France Special Task Force on Civil Nuclear Energy Holds 2nd Session in New Delhi

- The 2nd session of the India–France Special Task Force on Civil Nuclear Energy was held in New Delhi.
- Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and France’s Secretary-General Anne-Marie Descôtes co-chaired the meeting.
- A review of progress made over the past year was conducted.
- Both sides agreed to maintain close coordination in key areas of civil nuclear cooperation.
- Cooperation on Small and Advanced Modular Reactors was highlighted.
- Strengthening ties in innovation, technology, defence, and space was a major focus.
- Discussions were held on expanding counter-terrorism cooperation.
- Views were exchanged on global and regional issues, including the Russia–Ukraine conflict and the situation in West Asia.



Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Launches Viksit Bharat Buildathon 2025 in New Delhi

- Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched Viksit Bharat Buildathon 2025 on 23 September in New Delhi.
- The initiative aims to nurture creativity, problem-solving, and self-reliance among students.
- It is being organised by the Department of School Education and Literacy with NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission.
- The Buildathon will be held on 13 October 2025.
- Student registrations were open from 22 September to 6 October 2025.
- Nearly 12 crore students from six lakh schools are expected to participate.
- The Minister highlighted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has prioritised innovation over the past eleven years.
- The government has launched the Atal Innovation Mission to promote innovation among school students.
- More than 10,000 Atal Tinkering Labs are currently operational in India.



Gram Panchayats Win National e-Governance Awards 2025

- Gram Panchayats received the National Awards for e-Governance 2025 on 22 September in Visakhapatnam.
- The awards were presented under a new category for grassroots-level digital service delivery.
- Dr. Jitendra Singh conferred the awards during the 28th National Conference on e-Governance.
- Gold Award: Rohini Gram Panchayat, Dhule (Maharashtra) – Sarpanch: Dr. Anandrao Pawara.
- Silver Award: West Majlishpur Gram Panchayat, West Tripura (Tripura) – Sarpanch: Smt. Anita Deb Das.
- Jury Awards: Palsana Gram Panchayat, Surat (Gujarat) – Shri Pravinbhai Parshottambhai Ahir, and Suakati Gram Panchayat, Kendujhar (Odisha) – Smt. Kautuka Naik.
- Each award includes a trophy, certificate, and financial support (₹10 lakh for Gold, ₹5 lakh for Silver) to be reinvested in citizen-centric initiatives.
- Rohini, West Majlishpur, Palsana, and Suakati Gram Panchayats showcased digital innovations like paperless e-office, digital monitoring of vital records, online tax/UPI payments, grievance redressal, and 24/7 real-time service tracking.
- These initiatives enhanced grassroots governance, benefiting thousands of citizens and ensuring inclusive, women-led service delivery.



India and Morocco Sign MoU to Strengthen Defence Cooperation

- A bilateral meeting was held between Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh and Morocco's Defence Minister Abdeltif Loudiyi in Rabat on 22 September 2025.
- A Memorandum of Understanding on defence cooperation was signed during the meeting.
- Collaboration was planned in defence industry, joint exercises, training, and capacity building.
- A roadmap was agreed upon covering counter-terrorism, maritime security, cyber defence and peacekeeping operations.
- Military medicine, expert exchanges, and co-development opportunities were also included.
- To give impetus to these initiatives, the Defence Minister announced the opening of a new Defence Wing at the Indian Embassy in Rabat.
- Appreciating the maturity of India's defence industry and its cutting-edge capabilities, including drone and anti-drone technologies, the Moroccan side was assured that Indian companies are well placed to meet the requirements of the Moroccan Defence Forces.



Harold 'Dickie' Bird, umpiring great, passed away at 92

- On 22 September, Harold Dennis "Dickie" Bird, retired international cricket umpire, passed away at the age of 92.
- He officiated in three World Cup finals during his illustrious umpiring career.
- His first Test match was umpired in 1973.
- Over the next 23 years, he stood in 66 Test matches.
- A total of 76 One-Day Internationals in men's and women's cricket were also officiated by him.
- Yorkshire described him as the most famous and popular umpire in cricket's history.
- Leicestershire recalled him as an iconic figure known for fairness, humour, and love of the game



Rare Red-necked Phalarope spotted for the first time at Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary in Tirupur

- For the first time, the rare Red-necked Phalarope was seen at Nanjarayan bird sanctuary in Tirupur city, Tamil Nadu.
- Birdwatchers said it is uncommon for this species to stop in an inland water body.
- The sighting was confirmed by Ravindran Kamatchi, president of the Nature Society of Tirupur.
- This is the 192nd bird species documented in the sanctuary's water area.
- The Nature Society had earlier recorded the Eurasian Wryneck in November.
- In February 2024, the Pied Avocet was also spotted there.
- The Red-necked Phalarope breeds in the Arctic region. It migrates mainly to Southeast Asian countries during winter.
- The bird feeds on small planktonic invertebrates. It floats on the water supported by thick belly feathers.
- It catches food by spinning rapidly in circles on the water surface.



UPI Settlement Rules to Change from November 3

- Authorised transactions and dispute settlements (refunds/reversals) will be processed separately for smoother operations.
- Will run in **10 daily settlement cycles** between 9 AM and 9 PM, with 2-hour windows.
- Refunds/reversals will be processed in **two dedicated cycles** — midnight to 4 PM, and 4 PM to midnight.
- RTGS cut-off timings, reconciliation reports, GST reports, and other settlement procedures remain unaffected.
- Normal payments continue as usual, but refunds will now be predictable; NPCI expects reduced bottlenecks, faster updates, and less congestion for banks.

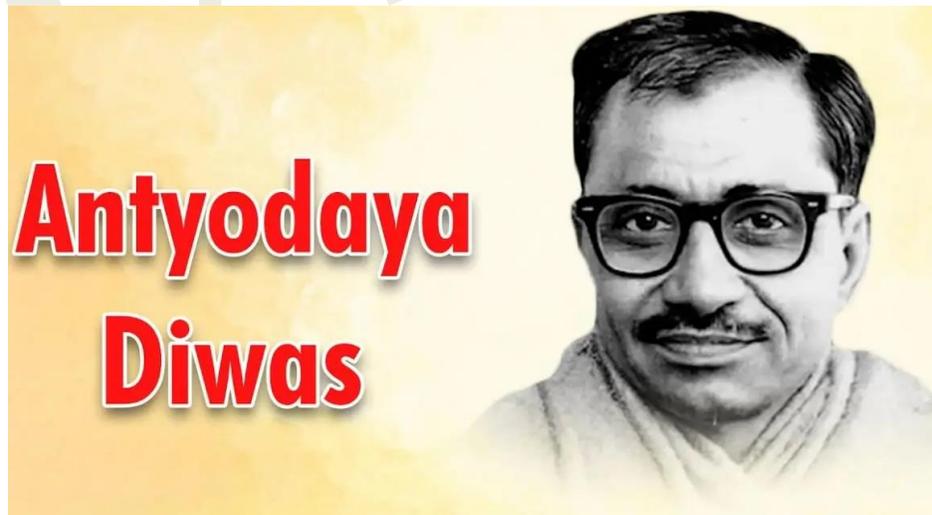


CAG Report 2022-23 on State Finances

- **According to the CAG report on State Finances 2022-23, 16 out of 28 States were in revenue surplus, with Uttar Pradesh topping the chart at ₹37,263 crore, followed by Gujarat (₹19,865 crore) and Odisha (₹19,456 crore).**
- The fiscal responsibility path prescribed by the XV Finance Commission required States to have zero-revenue deficit or achieve revenue surplus during 2022-23; revenue receipts of surplus States exceeded their revenue expenditure.
- The 12 revenue-deficit States included Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal, with a combined deficit of ₹2,22,648 crore.
- The Finance Commission grants for bridging revenue deficits in 2022-23 amounted to ₹86,201 crore, covering 39% of the aggregate revenue deficit, with the largest shares going to West Bengal, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh.
- **The total Finance Commission grants for 2022-23 were ₹1,72,849 crore, with revenue deficit grants accounting for 50%, Panchayati Raj Institution grants 26%, urban local bodies 11%, SDRF 10%, and SDMF 1%, providing a comprehensive overview of State finances and trends over a 10-year period**

Antyodaya Diwas 2025 – Honouring Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's Vision

- *Antyodaya Diwas* is observed on 25 September 2025 to mark the 109th birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya.
- Meaning of Antyodaya – “Rise of the last person,” focusing on the upliftment of the poorest and most marginalized.
- Declared as Antyodaya Diwas in 2014 by the Government of India.
- Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya (1916–1968), thinker, philosopher, RSS pracharak, and co-founder of Bharatiya Jana Sangh.
- Reminds that development is incomplete without reaching the weakest, promoting compassion, fairness, and people-centric governance.
- Antyodaya Anna Yojana (2000): Ensures food security for BPL families. Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY, 2014): Provides livelihood opportunities for rural and urban poor.
- Organizes rural women into SHGs, encourages savings, micro-business, and independence. DAY-NULM: Offers skill training, small loans, and employment support to urban poor.
- Antyodaya Diwas inspires youth and citizens to adopt values of equity, social justice, and inclusive growth, ensuring no one is left behind.



Vandana Gupta Takes Charge as Controller General of Communication Accounts

- **Ms Vandana Gupta**, a 1990 batch IP&TAFS officer, has **assumed charge as the Controller General of Communication Accounts in New Delhi.**
- She has held significant roles in Maharashtra, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat Circles, and at the DoT Headquarters as well as the Department of Posts.
- On central deputation, she served in key positions including Principal Director at GASAB (CAG), Joint Secretary in MoWCD, JS in NCW, and Controller of Finance at GGSIPU.

Recent Appointments

- **Chairman of Coal India Ltd** – Sairam (replace P. M. Prasad)
- **Chairman of Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)** – Sudhanshu Vats,
- **Secretary of Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan** – Amit Khare
- **Chairman of National Stock Exchange** – Injeti Srinivas



Praveen Kumar and Praveer Ranjan Appointed as New DGs of ITBP and CISF

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved the appointment of **Praveen Kumar**, a 1993 batch IPS officer (West Bengal cadre), as the new **Director General of ITBP, succeeding Rahul Rasgotra**, who retires on September 30, 2025.
- Praveen Kumar, currently Special Director in the Intelligence Bureau, will serve as ITBP chief until his superannuation on September 30, 2030, bringing expertise in intelligence, border management, and counter-insurgency.
- **Praveer Ranjan**, a 1993 batch IPS officer (AGMUT cadre), has been appointed as **Director General of CISF, replacing Rajwinder Singh Bhatti**, who retires on September 30, 2025.
- Ranjan, with experience in industrial security and public safety, will serve as CISF chief until his superannuation on July 31, 2029, strengthening CISF's role in protecting critical infrastructure nationwide.

Recent Appointments in Defence Sector

- **Deputy National Security Advisor (NSA)** – Anish Dayal Singh
- **Delhi Police Commissioner** -Satish Golcha (replace Shashi Bhushan Kumar Singh)
- **Commandant of the Indian Naval Academy (INA), Ezhimala** – Vice Admiral Manish (replace Vice Admiral C.R. Praveen Nair)
- **Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA)** – Raj Kumar Arora
- **47th Vice Chief of the Naval Staff** – Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan

