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HEADLINES

- ❖ South Central Railway Launches Next-Generation 'Rail Parcel App'
- ❖ 4th Meeting of Joint Defence Cooperation Committee between India and Kenya Concluded
- ❖ Centre Approves Rs 797 Crore Green Hydrogen Jetty At Paradip Port
- ❖ RBI gives approval to SBI MF to acquire up to 9.99% in Bandhan Bank
- ❖ Govt To Launch CBDC-Based Food Subsidy Pilot Under PMGKAY in Puducherry
- ❖ MEITY Sets Up High-Level Committee To Review & Improve The Rules Related To DigiLocker
- ❖ India And Nepal Sign MoU To Promote Bilateral Cooperation
- ❖ Indian Mountaineering Teams from NIM & JIM&WS Successfully Summit Mt. Aconcagua, Argentina
- ❖ ADB commits \$108 million to Aavas Financiers for affordable housing loans
- ❖ National Arogya Fair 2026 to be Held in Shegaon, Maharashtra
- ❖ Maroof Raza, Former Army Officer and Media Personality, Passes Away
- ❖ UIDAI And Google Sign Agreement To Display Authorised Aadhaar Centres On Google Maps
- ❖ World NGO Day 2026
- ❖ International Polar Bear Day 2026

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South Central Railway Launches Next-Generation 'Rail Parcel App'



- South Central Railway (SCR) achieved a significant digital milestone by launching a next-generation 'Rail Parcel App' at Rail Nilayam, Secunderabad.
- This first-of-its-kind digital e-marketplace aims to revolutionise freight logistics by offering seamless end-to-end services, including doorstep pickup and delivery.
- General Manager Sanjay Kumar Srivastava inaugurated the application, emphasising its role in eliminating long queues and bringing the parcel office directly to the customer's fingertips.
- The app offers automated notifications at different stages of parcel movement to ensure transparency.
- The service has been launched on a pilot basis in seven major cities — Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Guntur, Rajahmundry, Visakhapatnam, Bengaluru, and Chennai.
- The initiative reduces physical visits, paperwork, and delays, improving operational efficiency.
- It promotes customer convenience, transparency, and digitisation in railway freight services.

- SCR has also signed a MoU with the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Bangalore to study freight logistics trends and prepare a strategic roadmap for expanding rail-based parcel services.
- This collaboration seeks to identify infrastructure gaps and enhance rail-based logistics to help achieve the national mission of 3,000 million tonnes of cargo loading by 2030.

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4th Meeting of Joint Defence Cooperation Committee between India and Kenya Concluded



- The fourth India-Kenya Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) meeting was held in Nairobi, Kenya from 24–26 February 2026.
- Co-chaired by Shri Amitabh Prasad, Joint Secretary (IC), India, and Major General Fredrick L. Leuria, Assistant Chief of Defence Forces, Kenya.
- The meeting focused on expanding and deepening defence cooperation between the two countries.
- To enhance service-to-service engagements, including structured interactions between their respective Navies, and strengthening maritime security cooperation.
- Both sides agreed to formulate a five-year roadmap to broaden defence collaboration.
- Key areas of cooperation highlighted included customized training programmes, joint military exercises, border management, capacity building in advanced domains such as Electronic Warfare and Cyber Security, and collaboration in military medical services, including training and knowledge exchange.

- The Indian delegation interacted with Chief of Defence Forces General Charles Kahariri and Principal Secretary Defence Dr. Patrick Mariru, discussing ways to enhance overall strategic defence cooperation.
- The Indian delegation also called on Commander of Kenya Navy Maj Gen Paul Otieno at the Mtongwe Naval base.
- They discussed ways to further strengthen Naval cooperation through deeper engagement between the two Navies.
- As part of the visit, the delegation toured the CT Scan Radiology Centre at Mtongwe, gaining insights into ongoing initiatives in military medical infrastructure and healthcare support services, and Kenya Naval Training College at the naval base.
- The Joint Secretary (IC) paid homage at the Joint India-Africa Commemorative Memorial at Mile 27, Taita Taveta County, Kenya, to honour the valour of unknown Indian and African soldiers who fought in World War I.
- The visit reaffirmed the shared respect for the sacrifices of Indian and African soldiers in the East African theatre.
- India attaches great importance to its relationship with Kenya, which is anchored in historical links, shared democratic values and close people-to-people ties.

Centre Approves Rs 797 Crore Green Hydrogen Jetty At Paradip Port



- The Centre approved a dedicated green hydrogen and liquid cargo jetty at Paradip Port, Odisha, at an estimated cost of ₹797.17 crore.
- The project will be implemented by Paradip Port Authority on a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) basis.
- The jetty will handle green hydrogen, ammonia, and other liquid cargo, with a capacity of 4 million tonnes per annum.
- Infrastructure includes a dedicated jetty, storage systems, pipelines, handling equipment, and allied facilities.
- The centre-to-centre distance between extreme end dolphins will be 279 metres, with a dredged depth of 14.3 metres for safe vessel handling.
- Paradip Port Authority will provide 20% of the project cost (₹159.43 crore) as capital support during construction.
- The project is expected to be completed within 24 months.
- The facility will also handle other liquid cargo to ensure optimal utilisation and diversify the port's cargo profile.
- Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal stated that the jetty at Paradip Port will strengthen export logistics and link Odisha's green hydrogen clusters with global markets.

RBI gives approval to SBI MF to acquire up to 9.99% in Bandhan Bank



- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved SBI Mutual Fund to acquire up to 9.99% stake in Bandhan Bank, as disclosed in the bank's stock exchange filing.
- This approval allows SBI MF to become a significant institutional investor while remaining below the regulatory threshold of 10% for shareholding in private sector banks.
- This sanction permits SBI Mutual Fund to become a significant institutional investor in Bandhan Bank under regulatory norms.
- The approval is subject to compliance with key regulatory frameworks including:
 - Banking Regulation Act, 1949,
 - RBI's Directions on Acquisition and Holding of Shares or Voting Rights (2025),
 - Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999,
 - SEBI regulations, among others.

- The acquisition must be completed within one year from the date of the approval letter, failing which the approval will lapse.
- Aggregate holding must never exceed 9.99 % of Bandhan Bank's paid up share capital or voting rights.
- If SBI Mutual Fund's holding falls below 5 % at any time, it must obtain fresh RBI approval to increase it again to 5 % or more.
- The development reflects how RBI regulates institutional shareholding in private sector banks to maintain financial stability and governance standards.

Bandhan Bank:

- Founded: 23 August 2015
- Headquarters: Kolkata, West Bengal
- Founder: Chandra Shekhar Ghosh
- Chairman: Dr. Anup Kumar Sinha
- MD & CEO: Partha Pratim Sengupta

Govt To Launch CBDC-Based Food Subsidy Pilot Under PMGKAY in Puducherry



- The Government of India has launched a CBDC-based Digital Food Currency pilot under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) in Puducherry.
- The pilot was inaugurated on 26 February 2026 by Union Minister Shri Pralhad Joshi.
- He inaugurated the pilot project in presence of Puducherry Lieutenant Governor K. Kailashnathan, Chief Minister N. Rangasamy and Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Nimuben Jayantibhai Bambhaniya.
- The initiative uses Digital Rupee (e₹), which is India's Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- The Digital Rupee is a tokenised form of Indian currency integrated into the existing Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and Public Distribution System (PDS) framework.
- Under the pilot, food subsidy is credited directly to beneficiaries' CBDC wallets in the form of programmable digital tokens.
- These tokens can be redeemed only for entitled foodgrains at authorised Fair Price Shops (FPS) or designated merchant outlets.

- The objective of the initiative is to improve transparency, traceability, efficiency, and accountability in subsidy delivery.
- It also aims to reduce leakages and diversion in the Public Distribution System.
- The project is implemented in coordination with:
 - Government of Puducherry
 - Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
 - Public Financial Management System (PFMS)
 - Canara Bank
- The pilot is likely to be expanded to other regions in a phased manner.

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MEITY Sets Up High-Level Committee To Review & Improve The Rules Related To DigiLocker



- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has constituted a High-Level Committee for the Harmonization of the Regulatory Framework of DigiLocker.
- The committee is headed by Shri Ajay Sawhney, Former Secretary of MeitY, and includes legal experts, technology specialists and industry representatives as members.
- The committee was established to undertake a legislative review of the Digital Locker Rules in alignment with the current technical and legal landscape.
- A future roadmap for Entity Locker, ecosystem expansion and commercialization of the Digital Locker system is to be charted by the panel.
- The initiative was taken to ensure that the DigiLocker framework remains robust, future-ready and responsive to emerging digital requirements.
- The committee's terms of reference include a legislative review of the existing Digital Locker Rules to align them with the current technical and legal landscape.
- It is also tasked with creating a future roadmap for the DigiLocker ecosystem, including areas like:

- o Entity Locker,
- o Ecosystem expansion,
- o Commercialization of the Digital Locker System.

- Its introductory meeting was held on 24 February 2026 at Electronics Niketan, CGO Complex, New Delhi.
- During the meeting, deliberations were carried out on the vision and evolving role of the Digital Locker ecosystem.
- The contribution of DigiLocker towards achieving the goals of Viksit Bharat through Ease of Living and Ease of Doing Business was discussed.

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India And Nepal Sign MoU To Promote Bilateral Cooperation



- India and Nepal signed an MoU to strengthen bilateral cooperation in forests, wildlife, environment, biodiversity conservation, and climate change.
- The agreement was signed in New Delhi by India's Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav and Nepal's Forest and Environment Minister Madhav Prasad Chaulagain.
- The MoU aims to improve cooperation in forest management, protected areas, and wildlife conservation.
- It focuses on restoring transboundary wildlife corridors and protecting key species such as tigers, elephants, rhinoceroses, snow leopards, and Gangetic dolphins.
- The agreement emphasises combating forest and wildlife crime and promoting green infrastructure in sensitive areas.
- It seeks to strengthen the capacity of enforcement agencies through better coordination and support.
- The cooperation includes exchange of technical expertise, best practices, and coordinated activities across shared ecosystems.
- The MoU is significant for promoting environmental diplomacy and sustainable natural resource management, given the two countries' shared biodiversity-rich landscapes.

About Nepal:

- Capital: Kathmandu
- Currency: Nepalese Rupee
- Prime Minister (Interim): Sushila Karki
- President: Ram Chandra Poudel

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Indian Mountaineering Teams from NIM & JIM&WS Successfully Summit Mt. Aconcagua, Argentina



- In a historic achievement, a six-member joint expedition team from the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM) and the Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering & Winter Sports (JIM&WS) successfully summited Mount Aconcagua.
- Mount Aconcagua is the highest peak in South America and the second-highest peak outside Asia.
- The summit was achieved on 22 February 2026 at 14:10 hours.
- The expedition was led by Col Hem Chandra Singh, Principal of both NIM and JIM&WS.
- The team was ceremonially flagged off by Rajnath Singh, India's Raksha Mantri, on 5 February 2026.
- The team reached Argentina on 8 February 2026 to begin the expedition.
- Team first scaled Bonete Peak (5,050m) to prepare for extreme conditions.
- Capt G Santhosh Kumar, Shri Deep Bahadur Sahi, Shri Vinod Gusai, Nb Sub Bhupinder Singh, and Hav Ramesh Kumar.
- Endured fierce winds and temperatures between -20°C to -30°C , showcasing exceptional grit, teamwork, and professionalism.
- The achievement marks a significant milestone in India's high-altitude mountaineering efforts.

ADB commits \$108 million to Aavas Financiers for affordable housing loans



- Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a senior secured debt financing package of up to USD 108 million (about ₹983 crore) with Aavas Financiers Limited.
- The objective is to expand affordable housing loans and MSME lending in underserved states across India.
- The funding will support self-built homes and green-certified houses for lower-middle-income borrowers.
- It aims to promote climate-resilient and energy-efficient housing solutions.
- The financing will also provide business loans to MSMEs, improving access to formal credit in low-penetration regions.
- The package includes USD 8 million concessional debt financing from the Canadian Climate and Nature Fund for the Private Sector in Asia (CANPA), administered by ADB.
- The concessional component is meant to encourage green housing initiatives and sustainable practices in the housing finance sector.
- Up to USD 150,000 in technical assistance will be provided.
- The assistance will help in institutional capacity building, awareness promotion on green housing, and implementation of sustainable housing finance practices.

➤ The initiative aligns with ADB's broader goals of inclusive growth, climate resilience, and sustainable infrastructure development in India.

Asian Development Bank (ADB):

- Established: 1966
- Headquarters: Manila, Philippines
- President: Masato Kanda (11th)
- Members: 68 members (49 from Asia-Pacific, 19 from outside region)
- Objective: Promote social and economic development in Asia-Pacific region.

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National Arogya Fair 2026 to be Held in Shegaon, Maharashtra



- The National Arogya Fair 2026 is being held from 25–28 February 2026 at Shegaon, Buldhana district, Maharashtra.
- It is being organised by the Ministry of Ayush in collaboration with the All India Ayurvedic Congress.
- The event was inaugurated by Droupadi Murmu at Visava Maidan, Sant Gajanan Maharaj Sansthan, Shegaon.
- The programme will also be attended by the Governor of Maharashtra and Union Minister of Ayush Prataprao Jadhav.
- Objective is to expand access to Ayush-based preventive and promotive healthcare and enhance awareness about traditional systems of medicine.
- Visitors will receive free consultations, health check-ups, and free medicines under Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa, and Homoeopathy.
- The fair will feature yoga demonstrations, expert lectures, therapy showcases, and exhibitions by leading Ayush institutions.
- A special session titled “Ayurvedic Farming: Production, Value Addition and Marketing” will be held on 27 February 2026, focusing on medicinal plant cultivation, agroforestry, post-harvest management, and market linkages.
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➤ The initiative aims to promote medicinal crop diversification in the Vidarbha region, strengthen the Ayush supply chain, and support rural livelihood and public health development.

About Maharashtra:

- Capital: Mumbai
- Chief Minister: Devendra Fadnavis
- Governor: Acharya Devvrat
- National Parks: Gugamal National Park, Navegaon National Park, Tadoba National Park, Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Chandoli National Park.
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Karnala Bird Sanctuary, Melghat Wildlife Sanctuary, Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary, Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary.

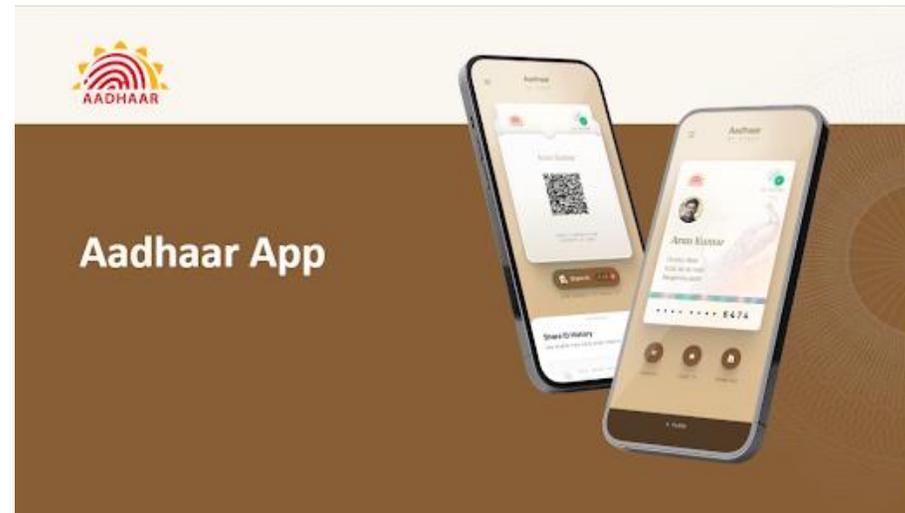
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Maroof Raza, Former Army Officer and Media Personality, Passes Away



- Defence expert, author and commentator Maroof Raza passed away at the age of 67.
- A retired Indian Army officer, he had extensive experience in counter-insurgency operations.
- Raza was a prominent face in media circles.
- He had also served as Times Now's Consulting Editor on matters of strategic affairs.
- Raza was an alumnus and former school captain (Batch of 1975) of the Mayo College in Ajmer, Rajasthan.

UIDAI And Google Sign Agreement To Display Authorised Aadhaar Centres On Google Maps



- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has partnered with Google to display verified and authorised Aadhaar enrolment and update centres directly on Google Maps.
- Under this initiative, more than 60,000 authorised Aadhaar centres across India, including Aadhaar Seva Kendras (ASKs), will be mapped and made easily searchable for citizens.
- The primary objective of the collaboration is to enhance accessibility and convenience for people seeking Aadhaar-related services such as new enrolment, child enrolment, and updates of address or mobile number.
- Google Maps listings will provide details about the types of services available at each centre, along with operating hours and other relevant information.
- The feature will also include accessibility details, such as divyang-friendly infrastructure and parking facilities, wherever available.
- This initiative is expected to reduce misinformation and curb the activities of unauthorised or fraudulent service providers by displaying only verified centres.
- The rollout of the feature is planned in phases and is expected to be implemented in the coming months.

- In the future, UIDAI may integrate Google Business Profile tools to enable real-time updates, public feedback, and the possibility of appointment booking through Google Maps.
- The partnership reflects the government's focus on digital governance and citizen-centric service delivery by leveraging widely used technology platforms.

About UIDAI and Aadhaar

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) was established in 2009 and operates under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- It issues the Aadhaar number, a 12 digit unique identity number linked to biometric and demographic data.
- Aadhaar is widely used for identity verification in banking, welfare schemes, mobile connections, and government services.

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World NGO Day 2026



- World NGO Day is observed annually on 27 February.
- The day recognises and honours the contribution of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations in social, humanitarian, environmental and developmental sectors worldwide.
- The 2026 World NGO Day theme: “Restoring Dignity Through Inclusion.”
- The concept of World NGO Day was initiated in 2010 and it was officially recognised and first observed globally in 2014.
- The purpose of the observance is to highlight the role of NGOs in community development, human rights protection, disaster relief, poverty alleviation and sustainable development.
- It also aims to encourage collaboration among governments, private sector entities and civil society organisations.
- The day promotes awareness about the importance of voluntary action and citizen participation in nation-building and global development.
- Various activities such as seminars, workshops, awareness campaigns and social media outreach programmes are organised to mark the occasion.

International Polar Bear Day 2026



- International Polar Bear Day is observed annually on 27 February.
- The day was established by Polar Bears International to raise awareness about the conservation of polar bears.
- It highlights the threats faced by polar bears due to climate change and melting Arctic sea ice.
- The date coincides with the time when mother polar bears and cubs remain in dens, a crucial stage in their life cycle.
- Polar bears are considered a symbol of climate change impacts, as they depend on sea ice for hunting seals.
- The observance promotes actions such as reducing carbon emissions and supporting wildlife conservation efforts.
- The day is marked by awareness campaigns, educational programmes, and global outreach activities focused on Arctic conservation.