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Gujarat Government Announces Financial Assistance under Namolaxmi Scheme

- The Government of Gujarat has announced Indian Rupees 1,250 crore financial assistance under the Namolaxmi Scheme for the 2025–26 academic year.
- The initiative will benefit more than 12 lakh girl students studying in Classes 9 to 12.
- The scheme aims to prevent school dropouts, improve nutrition and health, and promote secondary and higher secondary education among girls.
- Launched under the guidance of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, the scheme ensures that financial constraints do not interrupt education after primary schooling.
- It links education support with health, nutrition, and long-term empowerment of girl students.
- Under the scheme, each eligible girl receives Indian Rupees 50,000 over four years from Class 9 to Class 12.
- For Classes 9 and 10, students receive Indian Rupees 20,000, including monthly assistance and a lump sum after clearing the Class 10 board examination.
- For Classes 11 and 12, the assistance amounts to Indian Rupees 30,000, provided through monthly instalments and a completion-based payout after Class 12.
- The scheme applies to girls enrolled in schools recognised by the Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board or the Central Board of Secondary Education.



- Students must have completed Classes 1 to 8 in government or aided schools, under the Right to Education Act, or Class 8 in a private school.
- The annual family income should not exceed Indian Rupees 6 lakh.
- Girls already receiving other scholarships are also eligible, as this scheme provides additional financial support.

About Gujarat:

- **Chief Minister:** Bhupendra Patel
- **Governor:** Acharya Devvrat

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All India Football Federation Appoints Amelia Valverde as Head Coach of India Women's Senior Football Team



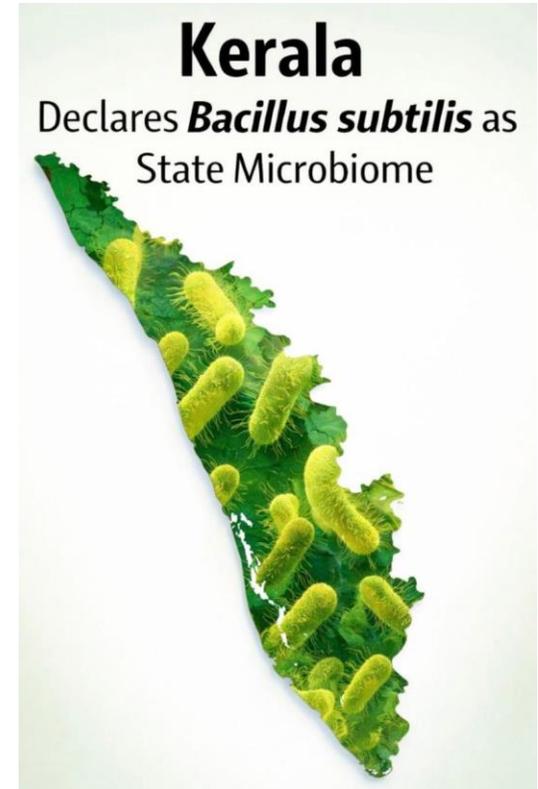
- The All-India Football Federation (AIFF) has officially appointed Amelia Valverde as the Head Coach of the Indian Senior Women's National Football Team.
- Amelia Valverde joined the Indian training camp in Antalya, Turkey, where the Blue Tigresses are preparing for the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026, scheduled in March 2026.
- She is the longest-serving head coach in the history of the Costa Rican Women's National Team, leading Las Ticas from 2015 to 2023.
- Under her guidance, Costa Rica qualified for the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2015 and 2023, which are the only two World Cup appearances by the nation.
- Amelia Valverde secured several international podium finishes, including Gold at the 2017 Central American Games, Silver at the 2018 Central American and Caribbean (CAC) Games, and Bronze at the 2019 Pan American Games.
- She was honoured as the CONCACAF Female Coach of the Year 2016 for her outstanding coaching achievements.

Kerala Officially Adopts *Bacillus subtilis* as Its State Microbe

- Kerala has officially declared *Bacillus subtilis* as its State Microbe, becoming the first Indian state to accord such recognition to a microorganism.
- The declaration was made by Pinarayi Vijayan at a public function in Thiruvananthapuram.
- With this move, Kerala has created a national precedent, formally acknowledging the importance of microorganisms in governance and development.
- The decision symbolises a shift from conventional symbols like animals and birds to scientific and knowledge-based identifiers, aligning with the state's long-standing emphasis on education and research.
- *Bacillus subtilis* is a beneficial probiotic bacterium commonly found in soil, fermented foods, and the human gut.
- It is widely studied for its role in improving gut health, boosting immunity, enhancing soil fertility, and controlling plant diseases.
- Due to its resilience and ability to form spores, it is extensively used in pharmaceuticals, food processing, and sustainable agriculture.
- Its recognition reflects Kerala's intent to highlight microbes as silent contributors to human well-being and ecological balance.

About Kerala:

- **Chief Minister:** Pinarayi Vijayan
- **Governor:** Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar



Nat Sciver-Brunt Creates History with First Century in WPL

- Nat Sciver-Brunt became the first batter to score a century in Women's Premier League history during WPL 2026.
- She achieved the feat while playing for Mumbai Indians against Royal Challengers Bengaluru at Kotambi Stadium, Vadodara.
- The historic knock came in Match 16 of WPL 2026, where she scored an unbeaten 100 off 57 balls.
- She came in to bat early after Mumbai Indians lost their first wicket at just 16 runs and anchored the innings with composure.
- Her innings included 16 fours and one six, blending consistency with controlled aggression.
- The knock marked the first-ever three-digit individual score in WPL history after several near-misses in previous seasons.
- Prior to this match, no batter had scored a century in the Women's Premier League.
- The previous highest individual scores were 99 not out by Georgi Voll and 99 by Sophie Devine.
- Despite more than ten players crossing the 90-run mark in earlier seasons, the century had remained elusive.
- Sciver-Brunt's innings finally ended the long wait and set a new benchmark for future editions of the Women's Premier League.



Veteran Indian sports administrator Randhir Singh Resigns Early as Olympic Council of Asia President

- Veteran sports administrator and five-time Olympic shooter Randhir Singh stepped down early from his position as President of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) citing health reasons.
- Following his resignation, Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani, President of the Qatar Olympic Committee, was elected as the new OCA President.
- The election took place during the OCA General Assembly in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- In September 2024, Randhir Singh became the first Indian to be elected President of the OCA for a four-year term ending in 2028, at the 44th OCA General Assembly in New Delhi.
- Prior to this, he had been serving as the Acting President of the OCA since 2021, after Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah of Kuwait was banned for 15 years over ethics violations.
- In Indian sports administration, Randhir Singh served as Secretary General of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) from 1987 to 2012, making him one of the longest-serving officials.
- At the international level, he was a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) from 2001 to 2014 and later continued as an Honorary IOC Member.



NSD to Host 25th Bharat Rang Mahotsav 2026 Across 40 Locations

- The National School of Drama (NSD) will host the 25th Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM) 2026 from 27 January to 20 February 2026.
- The festival will be held across 40 locations in India and will feature theatre productions from all seven continents, making it the most extensive edition so far.
- BRM 2026 will showcase 277 Indian productions, of which 136 are selected or invited, along with 12 international productions.
- Performances will be presented in 228 Indian and foreign languages and dialects, reflecting exceptional linguistic diversity.
- The selected plays come from 817 national and 34 international applications, highlighting the festival's wide participation.
- The festival expands into remote and border regions such as Ladakh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, and Haryana, promoting theatre in underserved areas.
- For the first time, Bharat Rang Mahotsav will feature theatre productions by transgender communities, sex workers, senior citizens, and other underrepresented groups, promoting inclusivity.
- The festival will also include themed festivals, seminars, workshops, Theatre Bazaar, book launches, and collaborations with national and international cultural institutions, reflecting its democratic and inclusive spirit.



Kochi to Host Global Seaweed Expo and Summit on January 29-30.



- Kochi is set to welcome one of the world's largest gatherings of the seaweed industry as it hosts the 7th India International Seaweed Expo and Summit on January 29 and 30, 2026.
- The event will spotlight emerging opportunities in the marine algae sector and reinforce India's growing engagement with sustainable blue economy initiatives.
- Delegates from countries such as the US, Russia, Australia, France, Maldives, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Tanzania will participate in the discussions.
- The delegates will focus on the economic, nutritional, and environmental potential of seaweed, highlighting it as a sunrise sector for India.
- The event is being jointly organised by the ICAR–Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, the Indian Chamber of Commerce and the CSIR–Central Salt and Marine Chemicals Research Institute.

Reserve Bank of India Notifies Foreign Exchange Management Regulations 2026, Replacing 2015 Rules Effective 1 October, 2026

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued the Foreign Exchange Management (Export and Import of Goods and Services) Regulations, 2026, which will replace the 2015 regulations and come into force from 1 October 2026.
- Under the new rules, exporters of goods must file an Export Declaration Form (EDF) at the time of shipment, while service exporters must submit the EDF within 30 days from the end of the invoicing month, with provisions for consolidated or delayed filing through Authorised Dealers.
- Export proceeds are required to be realised and brought back to India within 15 months, which has been extended to 18 months for exports invoiced in INR.
- Authorised Dealer (AD) banks have been granted the authority to approve extensions for realisation of export proceeds in genuine cases.
- Authorised Dealer (AD) banks must establish robust internal policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), maintain transparency in charges, ensure proper delegation of authority, set up grievance redressal systems, and publish procedures on their official websites.
- The regulations allow simplified closure of EDPMS and IDPMS records for export or import transactions up to ₹10 lakh, based on self-declaration by exporters or importers.
- The RBI clarified that these regulations have been issued under the powers granted by the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999.



Bharti AXA Life Launches “Swabhimaan Retirement” Deferred Annuity Plan to Ensure Lifelong Guaranteed Income

- Bharti AXA Life Insurance launched a deferred annuity plan called “Swabhimaan Retirement.”
- It is a non-linked, non-participating individual annuity plan that provides guaranteed lifelong income.
- The plan offers annuity payouts on a monthly, quarterly, half-yearly, or annual basis, including a joint-life option for the spouse.
- Premium Payment Term (PPT) options are 2, 3, and 5 years, with deferment periods up to 7 years under certain annuity choices.
- Policyholders can opt for partial withdrawal of surrender value after completing premium payments, as per policy conditions.
- An Atmanirbhar option is included, allowing fund withdrawal in case of emergencies.
- Bharti AXA Life Insurance, founded in 2006, is a joint venture between Bharti Enterprises (74%) and AXA Group, France (26%).
- The plan helps customers lock in current annuity rates early and ensures income security for life for the policyholder or surviving spouse.

BHARTI AXA LIFE

SWABHIMAAN

R E T I R E M E N T P L A N

A Non-Linked, Non-Participating Individual Deferred Annuity Plan

Republic Day Parade 2026 Awards Honour Outstanding Tableaux and Marching Units



- The results of the Republic Day Parade 2026 awards have been officially announced, highlighting the best marching contingents and most impactful tableaux displayed on Kartavya Path.
- In the States and Union Territories category, Maharashtra secured first place for its tableau titled “Ganeshotsav: A Symbol of Aatmanirbharta”, highlighting cultural self-reliance.
- Jammu and Kashmir followed in second place with “Handicrafts and Folk Dances of J&K”, showcasing regional heritage.
- Kerala ranked third for “Water Metro & 100% Digital Literacy”, linking technology with inclusive growth. These tableaux were judged on theme relevance, visual impact and storytelling.

- The selections reflected how states creatively aligned local identity with national priorities like Aatmanirbhar Bharat and cultural preservation.
- Among the three Armed Forces, the Indian Navy was adjudged the Best Marching Contingent, praised for discipline and synchronization.
- In the category of Central Armed Police Forces and auxiliary forces, the Delhi Police won the top honour. Separate panels of judges evaluated marching units from the Services and CAPFs to ensure fairness.
- The Ministry of Culture won the award for Best Tableau among Central Ministries for “Vande Mataram – The Soul Cry of a Nation”.

Popular Choice Awards: Public Voting Result

- The Popular Choice awards, based on voting through the **MyGov portal**, reflected public preference.
- The **Assam Regiment** was voted Best Marching Contingent among the Services, while the CRPF topped the CAPFs category.
- In tableaux, **Gujarat** ranked first with “Mantra of Swadeshi – Self-Reliance – Freedom”.
- **Uttar Pradesh** came second for “Culture of Bundelkhand”, and Rajasthan third for “Bikaner Gold Art (Usta Art)”.
- The Department of School Education and Literacy won among ministries for its NEP 2020 tableau.

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India Ranks 8th Among 11 Countries in AI Investment, WEF Report Reveals



- India ranks 8th out of 11 countries in historical accumulated investments in the AI ecosystem between 2010 and 2024, measured as a share of 2024 GDP.
- According to the World Economic Forum (WEF) white paper “Rethinking AI Sovereignty”, India’s AI investments amounted to 1.2–1.8% of its 2024 GDP.
- India’s investment level is lower than countries such as the US (3.4–5.1%), Singapore (3.1–4.6%), South Korea (2.2–3.3%), and China (1.7–2.6%).
- Countries ranking above India include the UAE, Japan, Canada, and the UK, while those below India include Europe (excluding the UK) and Brazil.
- Globally, a major share of AI investments has been concentrated in hardware manufacturing.