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## NATIONAL NEWS

### Right to Passport Is Part of Personal Liberty: Supreme Court



This ruling represents a significant moment for Indian jurisprudence, as it reinforces the principle that fundamental rights remain intact even when an individual is entangled in the legal system. By grounding this decision in **Article 21** (The Right to Life and Personal Liberty), the Supreme Court has set a high bar for executive interference.

Here is a breakdown of the legal implications and the logic used by the Court:

#### 1. Personal Liberty vs. State Authority

The Court's assertion that liberty is not a "gift" is a powerful rebuke to bureaucratic overreach. In the Indian context, the **Passports Act, 1967** often gives authorities broad discretion to refuse travel documents. However, this judgment clarifies that:

- **Article 21 is Paramount:** The right to travel abroad is an integral part of personal liberty.

- Due Process:** A criminal charge is an allegation, not a final determination of a person's character or their right to move.

## 2. The Conflict: Passports Act vs. Judicial Orders

In the case of *Mahesh Agarwal vs. Union of India*, a conflict arose between the administrative side (the Passport Office) and the judicial side (the Trial/High Courts).

- The Passport Office View:** Usually cites Section 6(2)(f) of the Passports Act, which allows refusal if proceedings are pending.
- The Supreme Court View:** If a court has already granted permission for the individual to travel or hold a passport (subject to conditions), the Passport Authority cannot act as a "super-appellate body" and overrule that judicial permission.

## 3. Impact on UAPA and Serious Charges

The fact that the petitioner is facing charges under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)** makes this ruling particularly notable.

- UAPA cases often involve stringent bail conditions and long-drawn trials.
- By allowing passport renewal despite UAPA proceedings, the Court signaled that "gravity of the offense" alone is not a valid reason to strip away constitutional rights if the trial court is satisfied with the security measures (like bonds or travel restrictions).

## Summary of Legal Principles Reaffirmed

Principle	Supreme Court's Stance
Presumption of Innocence	Remains valid even in high-stakes cases like UAPA until conviction.
Executive Discretion	Passport authorities must respect judicial orders allowing travel.
Right to Travel	Defined as a fundamental right that cannot be curtailed arbitrarily.

**Note:** While the right to a passport is reaffirmed, it is not "unconditional." The person must still comply with any specific conditions set by the court overseeing their criminal trial, such as surrendering the passport after a specific trip or notifying the court of their itinerary.

## NATIONAL NEWS

President Murmu Joins Elite Club of Indian Leaders on Submarine Mission



This historic sortie by President Droupadi Murmu on **December 28, 2025**, marks a significant milestone in India's naval history. As the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces,

her embarkation highlights the critical importance of undersea warfare and the success of the "Make in India" initiative in defense.

### The Historic Sortie: Key Details

President Murmu spent over two hours underwater, during which she witnessed operational demonstrations, including simulated combat drills and torpedo firings.

- Location:** Off the western coast, starting from the **Karwar Naval Base** (Project Seabird) in Karnataka.
- Accompanied By:** Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff.
- The Elite Club:** She is only the second President to undertake a submarine sortie, following **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**, who sailed aboard INS Sindhurakshak in 2006.

### About INS Vaghsheer (S26)

INS Vaghsheer is the sixth and final submarine of the **Project-75 (Kalvari-class)**, based on the French Scorpene design but built indigenously.

Feature	Specifications
Endurance	Up to 50 days at sea
Armament	Wire-guided torpedoes and Exocet anti-ship missiles

### Strategic Significance

- Indigenization:** The submarine features high levels of localization, including indigenous air-conditioning plants and communication systems.
- Stealth Capabilities:** Known as one of the quietest submarines globally, it uses advanced acoustic silencing and hydrodynamic optimization to evade enemy radar.
- Operational Versatility:** Designed for anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, and mine-laying.

This event follows the President's other recent military engagements, including flying in a **Sukhoi Su-30MKI** (2023) and a **Rafale** fighter jet (October 2025), showcasing her hands-on leadership across all three wings of the armed forces.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Thailand and Cambodia Agree to Ceasefire Amid Border Clashes

The ceasefire between Thailand and Cambodia, effective from **December 27, 2025**, marks a critical pause in what has been described as the most violent escalation between the two nations in decades.

Feature	Specifications
Builder	Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai
Class	Kalvari-class (Diesel-electric attack submarine)
Namesake	Named after the 'Sandfish', a deadly deep-sea predator
Top Speed	20 knots (Submerged), 11 knots (Surfaced)



The conflict, which intensified in early December, has been characterized by high-altitude airstrikes, heavy artillery exchanges, and significant humanitarian costs.

## 1. The December 2025 Escalation

The truce aims to end nearly three weeks of "all-out" border warfare that shattered a previous peace agreement brokered in late October.

- Casualties:** Reports indicate at least **101 people have been killed** (including both soldiers and civilians) and hundreds more injured.
- Displacement:** Over **500,000 civilians** have been forced to flee their homes on both sides of the border, creating a massive humanitarian crisis.
- Damage to Heritage:** Cambodia has accused Thai forces of damaging ancient Khmer temples, including the UNESCO World Heritage site **Preah Vihear**, which lies at the heart of the territorial dispute.

## 2. Key Terms of the Truce

The agreement, signed by Thai Defense Minister **Natthaphon Narkphanit** and Cambodian Defense Minister **Tea Seiha**, includes several "confidence-building" measures:

- Immediate Halt:** All hostilities involving artillery, rockets, and aircraft ceased at **12:00 PM on December 27**.
- Troop Freeze:** Both militaries agreed to maintain their current positions without further reinforcement or forward movement.
- Prisoner Release:** As a gesture of goodwill, Thailand released **18 Cambodian soldiers** on December 31, who had been in custody since a previous flare-up in July 2025.
- Demining Cooperation:** Both sides have pledged to cooperate on clearing landmines, which recently caused casualties among patrolling soldiers.

## 3. Diplomatic Outlook for 2026

While the guns are silent, the underlying dispute over the 800-km border—rooted in early 20th-century colonial maps—remains unresolved.

Event	Date / Status	Significance
Prisoner Handover	Dec 31, 2025	Completed; coordinated by the Red Cross to build trust.
Joint Boundary Commission (JBC)	Proposed Jan 2026	Cambodia has proposed an urgent meeting in Siem Reap to resume



Event	Date / Status	Significance
		formal demarcation work.
ASEAN Monitoring	Ongoing	An observer team from ASEAN is expected to monitor the ceasefire to prevent local skirmishes from escalating.

**Current Status:** The ceasefire is described as "fragile." Thailand's caretaker government has expressed caution, stating that while they seek peace, they will remain on high alert until a permanent demarcation agreement is reached.

## APPOINTMENTS

Anu Garg to Become Odisha's First Woman Chief Secretary from January 1



On January 1, 2026, Anu Garg officially etched her name into the history of Odisha by becoming the state's **first woman Chief Secretary**. Taking over the reins from Manoj Ahuja, her appointment is a landmark moment for the state's 78-year-old bureaucratic history.

As the 47th Chief Secretary, she now serves as the administrative head of the state and the principal advisor to the Chief Minister, Mohan Charan Majhi.

### Profile of Anu Garg, IAS

A 1991-batch officer of the Odisha cadre, Garg brings over three decades of experience across both state and central governments.

Attribute	Details
IAS Batch	1991 (Odisha Cadre)
Education	B.A. (LSR, Delhi), M.A. (Sociology, Lucknow), MPH (Johns Hopkins, USA)
Previous Role	Development Commissioner & ACS (Water Resources)
Key Achievements	First woman Development Commissioner of Odisha (2023)

### Career Highlights and Expertise

Garg's career has been defined by a mix of grassroots governance and high-level policy making:

- Social Sector Leadership:** She has headed critical departments including **Health & Family Welfare, Women & Child Development, and Labour & ESI**.

- Central Stint:** She served as **Joint Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO)** between 2012 and 2015, and held key roles in the Ministries of Textiles and Health.
- Water Resources Success:** Under her leadership as Additional Chief Secretary, Odisha was recognized as the second-best state in India for water resources management.
- Hands-on Governance:** In early 2023, she made headlines as the first senior official to spend a night in the once Maoist-affected "Swabhiman Anchal" to directly assess developmental needs.

## Strategic Significance

Her elevation is seen as a strategic move by the current administration to:

- Promote Gender Inclusivity:** Shattering the "glass ceiling" in the state's top bureaucratic post.
- Ensure Continuity:** With service until **March 2029**, she provides a stable hand for long-term policy implementation.
- Strengthen State-Centre Ties:** Her extensive experience in the PMO is expected to streamline coordination between Bhubaneswar and New Delhi.

## SPORTS

### Surya Tamiri Wins Single's Title at 87th Senior National Badminton Championships



The 87th Senior National Badminton Championships, which concluded on **December 28, 2025**, in Vijayawada, marked a breakthrough for young Indian talent. While Surya Charishma Tamiri's victory was the highlight of the women's draw, the tournament crowned champions across five major categories.

#### 1. The Women's Singles Final

Local favorite **Surya Charishma Tamiri** (19) delivered a tactical masterclass to defeat 14-year-old **Tanvi Patri**.

- The Comeback:** After losing the first game \$17-21\$, Tamiri shifted her strategy in the second game, using more "tosses" and high clears to move Patri around the court.
- The Turning Point:** A critical service fault called against Patri at 6-5 in the second game gave Tamiri a mental reprieve, after which she won seven consecutive points.
- Final Score:** \$17-21, 21-12, 21-14\$.

#### 2. Full List of Winners

The 2025 championships saw a mix of veteran dominance and fresh faces:

Category	Winner(s)	Runner(s)-up	Score
Men's Singles	Rithvik Sanjeevi S	Bharat Raghav	21-16, 22-20
Women's Singles	Surya Charishma Tamiri	Tanvi Patri	17-21, 21-12, 21-14
Men's Doubles	Hariharan A. & Ruban Kumar R.	Mithileish P.K. & Prejan	21-17, 21-12
Women's Doubles	Shikha Gautam & Ashwini Bhat K.	Priya Devi K. & Shruti Mishra	21-14, 21-18
Mixed Doubles	Sathwik Reddy K. & Radhika Sharma	Ashith Surya & Amrutha P.	21-9, 21-15

her a "girl from my state" (Andhra Pradesh) and cheering for her victory.

## BANKING/ECONOMY

**RBI Conducts ₹50,000 Crore Open Market Operation to Boost Liquidity**



The liquidity deficit that emerged toward the end of 2025 was a significant challenge for the Indian banking system, primarily driven by seasonal and structural factors. The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) injection of ₹50,000 crore on December 29, 2025, was just the first step in a broader stabilization plan.

### 1. The Causes of the Deficit

The systemic liquidity deficit, which peaked around ₹62,302 crore in late December, was triggered by several converging events:

- Advance Tax Outflows:** Corporations made substantial advance tax and Goods and Services Tax (GST) payments, moving money from bank vaults into the government's account.

### 3. Key Tournament Highlights

- The Giant Killer:** En route to the final, Tamiri defeated top seed **Unnati Hooda** in the quarterfinals and world No. 45 **Rakshita Sree** in the semifinals.
- Youngest Finalist:** Tanvi Patri (14) became the youngest player to ever reach a Senior National final, surpassing records held by legends like P.V. Sindhu.
- Sindhu's Praise:** Two-time Olympic medalist P.V. Sindhu took to social media during the final to praise Tamiri's composure, calling

- Festive Cash Demand:** High currency withdrawals during the December festive season (Christmas and New Year) naturally reduced the cash available within the banking system.
- Forex Interventions:** Throughout 2025, the RBI intervened in the currency market to defend the Rupee—which briefly touched **₹90 against the US Dollar**—by selling dollars and sucking Rupee liquidity out of the system.

Tool	Date	Amount	Details
USD/INR Buy/Sell Swap	Jan 13, 2026	\$10 Billion	A 3-year swap to further boost Rupee liquidity.

### 3. Impact on the Market

The infusion had an immediate calming effect on the debt markets:

- Interest Rate Stability:** It helped anchor the **Weighted Average Call Rate (WACR)**, which had started drifting above the repo rate (5.25%), signaling stress.
- Bond Yields:** Government bond yields eased as the RBI's commitment to buying bonds increased demand, making it cheaper for the government and corporates to borrow.
- Transmission of Rate Cuts:** This liquidity was crucial to ensure that the cumulative **1.25% repo rate cuts** made by the RBI earlier in 2025 were actually passed on to consumers in the form of lower home and business loan rates.

### STATE NEWS

The new office bearers of the Tamil News Readers Association met with the Honourable Chief Minister.

This meeting between Chief Minister **M.K. Stalin** and the newly elected office bearers of the **Tamil Nadu News Readers Association** (and associated bodies like the Chennai Press Club) marks a significant step in formalizing the

## 2. The RBI's Multi-Pronged Response

To prevent interest rates from spiking, the RBI, under Governor **Sanjay Malhotra**, announced a comprehensive package to inject **durable liquidity** (money that stays in the system for longer periods).

Tool	Date	Amount	Details
OMO Purchase (Tranche 1)	Dec 29, 2025	₹50,000 crore	RBI purchased 6 different G-Secs (maturing 2029–2053).
OMO Purchase (Tranche 2)	Jan 05, 2026	₹50,000 crore	Focus on 7 securities with varying maturities.
OMO Purchase (Tranche 3 & 4)	Jan 12 & 22	₹1,00,000 crore	Final tranches to reach a total of ₹2 lakh crore.

relationship between the state government and the media fraternity following a long-delayed electoral process.



The context of this meeting is rooted in the restoration of democratic leadership within the **Chennai Press Club**, which had not seen elections for nearly 52 years until the intervention of the Madras High Court.

### Key Context and Meeting Highlights

The delegation of news readers and journalists met with the Chief Minister to discuss welfare measures and the professional challenges faced by the media industry in Tamil Nadu.

- The Electoral Shift:** The meeting follows the December 2024 elections conducted under the supervision of **Justice V. Bharathidasan**. This was a landmark event that aimed to end decades of administrative stagnation within the Chennai Press Club.
- Welfare Demands:** The association discussed several key proposals with the CM, including:

- Housing for Journalists:** Expansion of the state's housing schemes for media professionals.
- Pension Schemes:** Revisions to the pension and welfare fund for retiring news anchors and field journalists.
- Health Insurance:** Streamlining the process for journalists to access the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme.
- Professional Protection:** The delegation thanked the government for its support during the election process and sought continued protection for journalists against harassment and threats in the line of duty.

### The Administrative Context

The "Tamil News Readers Association" often works in tandem with the broader **Chennai Press Club (CPC)**. Here is a quick look at the recent administrative changes:

Body / Figure	Role / Impact
Justice V. Bharathidasan	Appointed by the Court to oversee the 2024-2025 transition.
Chennai Press Club	Underwent its first official election in over five decades in late 2024.
M.K. Stalin	Reaffirmed the state's "Social Justice" commitment to media freedom.

## Looking Ahead to 2026

Since your query mentions the "new" office bearers, this meeting acts as an introductory formal session for the **2025-2027 tenure**. The state government is expected to announce a specialized "Media Welfare Board" update in the upcoming 2026 budget session as a result of these consultations.

D) Maharashtra

2. C

Gujarat has been reinstated as one of India's official tiger ranges after more than three decades. The decision was made following the photographic confirmation of a tiger in the Ratanmahal Sanctuary in Dahod district, marking a significant milestone in the state's wildlife history. Gujarat will now be included in the All-India Tiger Estimation (AITE) 2026.

**Q.3. Which two new airlines have recently been granted NOCs by the Ministry of Civil Aviation?**

A) FlyBig & Akasa

B) Al Hind Air & FlyExpress

C) AirAsia & Vistara

D) TruJet & Star Air

3. C

The Civil Aviation Ministry has granted No Objection Certificates to Al Hind Air and FlyExpress, allowing them to enter India's domestic aviation market. Al Hind Air and FlyExpress have received NOCs from the Civil Aviation Ministry, clearing regulatory hurdles for their launch next year. In 2026, Uttar Pradesh-based airline Shankh Air, which already has a NOC, is also expected to begin operations.

**Q.4. The recent reforms announced by the Government of India are related to the modernization of which organization?**

A) ESIC

B) EPFO

C) LIC

## Detailed Analysis of Recent Current Affairs: Multiple Choice Format

**Q.1. Who will chair the fifth National Chief Secretaries Conference?**

A) Amit Shah

B) Rajnath Singh

C) Narendra Modi

D) Nirmala Sitharaman

1. C

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the 5th National Conference of Chief Secretaries in New Delhi. Its objective is to strengthen the center-state partnership through regular and structured dialogue. Its main focus is on long-term national development and cooperative federalism.

**Q.2. Which state was recently declared a tiger-bearing state again after 33 years?**

A) Rajasthan

B) Madhya Pradesh

C) Gujarat

D) NPS Trust

4. B

The Government of India has announced several major reforms to modernize the Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) and expand social security coverage across the country. Union Minister of Labor and Employment, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, announced these initiatives at the inauguration of the newly constructed EPFO Provident Fund Building in Vatva, Gujarat. These reforms aim to make EPFO services more accessible, technology-driven, and accessible to citizens, and to ensure financial security for working people.

Q.5. In which state was the world's largest open-air theater festival, "Dhanu Yatra," recently held?

- A) West Bengal
- B) Odisha
- C) Chhattisgarh
- D) Jharkhand

5. B

Dhanu Yatra, the world's largest open-air theater, was inaugurated in Bargarh, Odisha. This 11-day cultural festival transforms the entire city into the mythical city of Mathura. Celebrated as a wonderful confluence of devotion, tradition, and theatrical art, Dhanu Yatra draws thousands of spectators from across the country, including Odisha.

Q.6. India's first national arms database was recently launched to address what?

- A) Cyber Fraud

B) Terrorism & Organized Crime

C) Tax Evasion

D) Money Laundering

6. B

India has taken a major step toward strengthening its internal security infrastructure. The central government has launched the country's first national weapons database, "Lost, Looted, and Recovered Weapons," aimed at helping prevent terrorism, organized crime, and insurgency. This initiative will not only help better track and monitor illegally acquired government weapons, but will also ensure better coordination and faster information sharing among law enforcement agencies.

Q.7. Who recently received ₹366.78 crore under the PLI-Auto scheme?

- A) Tata Motors
- B) Mahindra Electric
- C) Ola Electric
- D) Ashok Leyland

7. C

Ola Electric Mobility Limited has received an approval order from the Ministry of Heavy Industries for an incentive amount of ₹366.78 crore under the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Automobiles and Auto Components (PLI-Auto). This approval is linked to the claims submitted by the company for the financial year 2024-25.

Q.8. Who recently received the PM National Child Award for cricketing achievements?

A) Musheer Khan

B) Alpine SG Pipers

B) Vaibhav Suryavanshi

C) Ganges Grandmasters

C) Yash Dhull

D) American Gambits

D) Arjun Tendulkar

10. B

8. B

Rising cricketer and 14-year-old promising youngster Vaibhav Suryavanshi was presented with the Prime Minister's National Child Award by President Draupadi Murmu for his outstanding achievements in domestic and Under-19 cricket. The award is India's highest civilian honour for children aged 5 to 18, given for outstanding work in the fields of sports, arts, science, social service, environment and courage.

Q.9. What has the NATGRID recently been linked to to strengthen internal security?

A) Aadhaar

A) ₹5 lakh

B) NPR

B) ₹7.5 lakh

C) Census

C) ₹10 lakh

D) UIDAI

D) ₹15 lakh

9. B

11. C

The central government has linked the National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) with the National Population Register (NPR), enabling authorised security and law-enforcement agencies to access family-wise demographic data of around 119 crore people through a secure digital platform.

SEBI's revised framework significantly simplifies and standardizes the issuance of duplicate securities. The simplified documentation limit has been increased to ₹10 lakh, a uniform affidavit-cum-indemnity has been introduced, high-value documentation requirements have been streamlined, and notarization requirements have been removed for low-value cases—all effective immediately.

Q.10. Which team recently won the Global Chess League 2025 Season 3?

Q.11. What is the threshold for simplified procedures for duplicate securities recently increased by SEBI?

A) Triveni Continental Kings

A) Paytm Insurance

B) Sahaj Insurance Services Pvt. Ltd.

C) 1 lakh

C) Policybazaar

D) 1.25 lakh

D) SBI Life

14. C

12. B

Life Insurance Corporation of India has partnered with Sahaj Insurance Services. This collaboration aims to make LIC's life insurance products accessible to rural and semi-urban India. Sahaj's digital network will help people understand and enroll in policies. This initiative will promote insurance awareness and financial inclusion across the country. More people will now have access to the necessary life insurance protection.

**Q13. Which insurance company was recently fined ₹1 crore by IRDAI?**

A) HDFC Ergo

India's petrol pump network has reached a significant milestone. The total number of petrol pumps in the country has now surpassed 100,000, nearly doubling in the last ten years. This growth comes at a time when vehicle ownership is rapidly increasing. State-owned oil companies are focusing on maintaining their market share and expanding fuel access to rural areas and national highways.

B) ICICI Lombard

**Q15. Who recently became the first woman Chief Secretary of Odisha?**

C) Reliance General Insurance

A) Sujata Saunik

D) Bajaj Allianz

B) Anu Garg

13. C

C) Alka Tiwari

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has imposed a fine of ₹1 crore on Reliance General Insurance Company for violating certain regulations, including corporate governance guidelines, as well as rules related to outsourcing of work and payment of commissions.

D) Smita Sabharwal

**Q14. India's petrol pump network recently surpassed which milestone?**

A) 75,000

15. B

Anu Garg, a 1991-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, has become the first woman Chief Secretary of Odisha. Her appointment follows the retirement of Manoj Ahuja. Previously, she served as Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary in the Planning and Convergence Department and also held additional charge of the Water Resources Department.

B) 90,000

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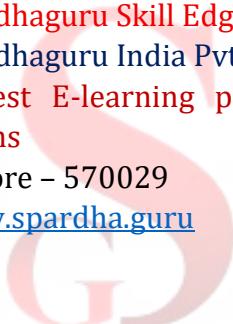
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