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NATIONAL NEWS

Andhra Pradesh Leads India's Investment Race in FY26



That is an impressive milestone for Andhra Pradesh. Based on a recent Bank of Baroda report (FY26), the state has indeed emerged as the primary engine for industrial growth in India, outperforming traditional powerhouses like Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Here is a deeper look into the data and the factors driving this surge.

Investment Landscape (FY26)

Andhra Pradesh has captured more than a quarter of the national interest, signaling a shift in industrial momentum toward the southern and eastern corridors.

State	Share of Proposed Investment (%)
Andhra Pradesh	25.3%
Odisha	13.1%

State	Share of Proposed Investment (%)
Maharashtra	12.8%
Telangana	9.5%
Gujarat	7.1%

Key Drivers of Growth

The surge is not accidental; it is the result of specific policy shifts and massive "big-ticket" projects:

- **Policy Reforms:** The state government's focus on **"speed, scale, and certainty"** has been a major draw. Policies like the **LIFT Policy** (leasing land for tech hubs at just 99 paise per acre) have made the state highly competitive.
- **Infrastructure Push:** Significant investments are flowing into **ports, industrial corridors, and logistics**. Projects like the Bhogapuram International Airport aero city are expected to house the world's largest aircraft maintenance facility.
- **Sector Dominance:**
 - **Energy:** The largest slice of the pie, with cumulative investments of nearly **₹5.34 lakh crore**, heavily focused on renewables (solar, wind, and green hydrogen).
 - **Data Centers:** High-profile projects like **Google's \$15 billion AI data center** cluster in Visakhapatnam and a **₹98,000**

crore data center by a Reliance joint venture.

- **Metals & Manufacturing:** These sectors continue to be strong, supporting secondary industries like housing and automobiles.

National Context

Nationwide, investment announcements reached **₹26.6 lakh crore** in the first nine months of FY26—an **11.5% increase** year-on-year. This indicates a general "pick-up" in investor sentiment across India, bolstered by **GST 2.0**, lower corporate income tax rates, and a strong government push for capital expenditure (capex).

Note: Over **51%** of India's total proposed capital investment is now concentrated in just three states: Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Maharashtra.

1. Which state has emerged as India's leading investment destination in the current financial year (FY26)?

A) Maharashtra

B) Odisha

C) Andhra Pradesh

D) Gujarat

2. What percentage of India's total proposed capital investments did Andhra Pradesh capture in FY26 so far?

A) 12.8%

B) 13.1%

C) 20.5%

D) 25.3%

3. According to the report, which two states follow Andhra Pradesh in terms of proposed investment share?

A) Gujarat and Tamil Nadu

B) Odisha and Maharashtra

C) Karnataka and Telangana

D) Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh

4. Which of the following factors is credited for Andhra Pradesh's rise as a top investment destination?

A) Strong government policies

B) Focus on infrastructure

C) Faster approval processes

D) All of the above

The sighting of the **Eastern Imperial Eagle** (*Aquila heliaca*) at the **Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR)** is a remarkable event for Indian ornithology. Documented by wildlife photographer **Murali Moorthy** in late December 2025, this record reinforces the Nilgiris as a vital corridor for rare international avian travelers.

The Sighting: Key Highlights

This observation is more than just a rare bird sighting; it provides deep insights into the health of the local ecosystem.

- Ecological Significance:** One of the most striking images captured by Murali Moorthy showed the Eastern Imperial Eagle alongside an **endangered Egyptian Vulture**. This co-occurrence of two high-profile raptors suggests a high availability of prey and a stable, healthy environment within the reserve.
- A Regular Visitor:** While rare, data from platforms like eBird show that this species has been recorded in Mudumalai periodically between 2020 and 2025, suggesting it may be a more consistent wintering site than previously thought.
- The MTR Habitat:** Experts from the **Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)** note that Mudumalai's mosaic of open grasslands and forest edges provides the perfect "forest-steppe" environment that these eagles prefer for hunting.

Profile: The Eastern Imperial Eagle

Feature	Details
Scientific Name	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>

NATIONAL NEWS

Rare Eastern Imperial Eagle Spotted at Mudumalai Tiger Reserve



Feature	Details
Conservation Status	Vulnerable (IUCN Red List); Schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act
Breeding Range	Central and Western Asia, Southern Europe, and Siberia
Winter Migration	Southward to Africa, the Middle East, and the Indian Subcontinent
Physical Stats	Wingspan up to 2.14 meters; Weight approx 3.6 kg

A) Summer 2024

B) Monsoon 2025

C) Winter 2025–26

D) Spring 2026

2. Which photographer is credited with recording the pair of Eastern Imperial Eagles at Mudumalai?

A) Salim Ali

B) Murali Moorthy

C) Rajesh Bedi

D) Rathika Ramasamy

3. According to the report, which other endangered bird species was photographed alongside the Eastern Imperial Eagle?

A) White-rumped Vulture

B) Indian Spotted Eagle

C) Egyptian Vulture

D) Red-headed Vulture

4. Where does the Eastern Imperial Eagle primarily breed before migrating south?

A) Southern Africa and Australia

B) Central and Western Asia

C) Northern Europe and Greenland

D) South America and Antarctica

Conservation Concerns

Despite the encouraging news, wildlife experts and conservationists have raised a few red flags:

- Anthropogenic Pressure:** There is a growing call to regulate the number of tourists in the reserve, as heavy footfall can disturb sensitive migratory species.
- Global Threats:** The species faces habitat loss and electrocution from power lines across its 8,000-km migration path.
- Local Balance:** The presence of these top predators is essential for controlling rodent populations, acting as a natural pest control for the surrounding landscape.

MCQs: Eastern Imperial Eagle Sighting

1. During which season was the Eastern Imperial Eagle spotted at the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve?

5. What does the sighting of these raptors signify regarding the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve?

- A) It is becoming a primary breeding ground for raptors.
- B) It serves as an important winter refuge for long-distance migratory birds.
- C) The reserve is experiencing a decline in native bird populations.
- D) It is the only location in India where these eagles can be found.

This move follows a cooling of border tensions in 2025 and is seen as a strategic step toward stabilizing supply chains in sectors like electronics, renewable energy, and automobiles.

Key Details of the e-B-4 Visa

This visa is designed to be highly specific and digital-first to ensure transparency while speeding up the entry of essential professionals.

Feature	Details
Official Name	e-Production Investment Business Visa (e-B-4)
Processing Time	Approximately 45-50 days
Stay Duration	Up to 6 months (Non-extendable)
Application Mode	100% Online (No embassy visit or agents required)
Mandatory Step	Indian companies must register on the NSWS Portal to generate a unique sponsorship letter.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India Introduces New e-Business Visa for Chinese Nationals



The introduction of the **e-Production Investment Business Visa (e-B-4)** on January 1, 2026, represents a significant policy shift by the Government of India. It specifically targets the "bottleneck" that many Indian manufacturers faced when trying to bring in Chinese technical experts for critical industrial tasks.

Permitted Activities

To maintain security and regulatory oversight, the e-B-4 visa is restricted to clearly defined industrial purposes:

- **Technical Setup:** Installation, commissioning, and plant design.
- **Maintenance:** Essential repairs, quality checks, and maintenance of imported machinery.

- Operational Support:** IT/ERP systems ramp-up and training of Indian staff.
- Strategic Visits:** Senior management and executive visits for investment planning.
- Supply Chain:** Vendor empanelment and supply chain development.

- A) e-Industrial Support Visa
 B) e-B-4 Production Investment Business Visa
 C) e-PLI Manufacturing Visa
 D) e-Trade Facilitation Visa

2. To invite a Chinese professional under the e-B-4 category, on which portal must an Indian company first register?

- A) IndianVisaOnline portal
 B) National Single Window System (NSWS)
 C) Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) portal
 D) Invest India digital window

3. What is the approximate processing time for the issuance of an e-B-4 Visa as per the official advisory?

- A) 7-10 days
 B) 20-25 days
 C) 45-50 days
 D) 90 days

4. Which of the following activities is NOT explicitly mentioned as a permitted purpose for the e-B-4 Visa?

- A) Installation and commissioning of equipment
 B) Long-term permanent employment in an Indian firm
 C) Quality checks and essential maintenance
 D) IT and ERP system ramp-up

5. How long is a Chinese business traveler permitted to stay in India on a single trip under the e-B-4 Visa?

Why This Matters Now

- Manufacturing Continuity:** Many Indian companies under the **Production Linked Incentive (PLI)** schemes rely on Chinese machinery. The e-B-4 visa ensures that "downtime" is minimized by allowing technicians to arrive faster.
- Regulatory Control:** Unlike general business visas, the e-B-4 requires a "cooling-off" period of **60 days** before a repeat application can be filed, preventing the misuse of the visa for long-term employment.
- Digital Integration:** By using the **National Single Window System (NSWS)**, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) can track which sectors are utilizing this expertise, providing better data for future policy.

Note for Travelers: Upon arrival, e-B-4 visa holders must register electronically with the **FRRO** (Foreigners Regional Registration Office) within **14 days**, regardless of how short their stay is.

MCQs: India's New e-B-4 Visa Category

- What is the official name of the new e-visa category launched by India for Chinese nationals in January 2026?

- A) 30 days
- B) 90 days
- C) Up to six months
- D) One year

6. Within how many days of arrival in India must an e-B-4 visa holder register with the FRRO?

- A) 7 days
- B) 14 days
- C) 30 days
- D) Registration is not required

Following this, the US administration has moved to take oversight of Venezuela's oil sector, which holds the world's largest proven reserves (roughly **303 billion barrels**).

Recent Developments: The "Oil Grab"

On January 6-7, 2026, President Trump announced a series of measures to overhaul the Venezuelan energy landscape:

- **Asset Transfer:** Venezuela's interim authorities are reportedly "turning over" **30 to 50 million barrels** of sanctioned oil currently stranded in tankers and storage.
- **Direct Control:** Trump stated he would personally oversee the proceeds from the sale of this oil, valued at approximately **\$3 billion**, to benefit the people of both nations.
- **US Industry Re-entry:** The White House is convening meetings with executives from **ExxonMobil, Chevron, and ConocoPhillips** to plan billions in investments to repair Venezuela's crumbling infrastructure.

Global & Regional Impact

While the immediate market reaction has been relatively stable, the long-term implications are profound:

Impact Area	Consequences
Global Prices	Brent crude fell toward \$60/barrel as markets anticipate a massive "upside risk" to global supply in the coming years.
China	Beijing, which previously took ~80% of Venezuela's crude, has

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

US Move on Venezuela's Oil



In a dramatic escalation of geopolitical tensions, US President Donald Trump announced on **January 3, 2026**, that US forces had captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, during **Operation Absolute Resolve**.

Impact Area	Consequences
	condemned the move as a violation of sovereignty.
Energy Security	The Western Hemisphere (US, Guyana, Venezuela) could soon control 30% of global reserves , shifting power away from OPEC.

Practice MCQs on the US-Venezuela Oil Sector Announcement

1. According to President Trump's January 2026 announcement, what is the primary objective of the US taking control of Venezuela's oil sector?

A) To lower domestic US taxes through oil revenue

B) To revive the industry using American companies and infrastructure

C) To transition the country entirely to renewable energy

D) To permanently annex Venezuelan territory

2. Which Venezuelan leader was reportedly captured by US forces prior to the announcement regarding the oil sector?

A) Juan Guaidó

B) Delcy Rodríguez

C) Nicolás Maduro

D) Hugo Chávez

3. What is the immediate anticipated impact on global oil prices following this announcement?

A) Severe and immediate price spikes (shocks)

B) A complete collapse of the global energy market

C) No immediate price shocks are expected

D) An immediate 50% decrease in gasoline prices

4. How does the Trump administration plan to address the "broken" state of Venezuela's oil industry?

A) By providing direct cash grants to the captured government

IN Impact on India

For India, the removal of sanctions and US oversight could be a major financial and strategic windfall:

- Recovery of Dues:** State-run ONGC Videsh (OVL) has nearly **\$1 billion** in dividends and dues stuck in Venezuela.⁶ A US-led restructuring could finally unlock these payments.
- Reviving Production:** OVL holds a **40%** stake in the San Cristóbal field.⁷ Officials suggest they could move rigs from **Gujarat** to Venezuela to boost production from 5,000 bpd to nearly **100,000 bpd**.
- Strategic Sourcing:** Before 2019, Venezuela was India's **5th largest** supplier.⁸ Indian refineries (like Reliance and Nayara) are specifically configured to process Venezuela's heavy crude, offering a cheaper alternative to Middle Eastern oil.⁹

Quote: "We are going to have our very large United States oil companies go in, spend billions of dollars, fix the badly broken infrastructure, and start making money for the country." — Donald Trump, Jan 3, 2026.

- B) By involving American companies to rebuild and manage operations
- C) By selling all Venezuelan oil reserves to China
- D) By shutting down the refineries for environmental safety

5. Why might this decision significantly affect India in the long term?

- A) India is the world's largest producer of oil
- B) India relies heavily on energy imports and global market stability
- C) India has a mutual defense treaty with the captured President
- D) India is planning to take control of Venezuela's agricultural sector

Mumbai, marking a major structural shift in how India governs its massive digital economy.

Chaired by RBI Governor **Sanjay Malhotra**, this new statutory body replaces the earlier *Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems (BPSS)*. While the old BPSS was an internal committee of the RBI, the PRB is a more independent, high-powered board with direct representation from the Central Government.

Structure of the New Oversight Body

The PRB is designed to bring together diverse expertise to balance innovation with financial stability.

Role	Member
Chairperson	Sanjay Malhotra (Governor, RBI)
RBI Representatives	T. Rabi Sankar (Deputy Governor) & Vivek Deep (Executive Director)
Govt. Nominees	S. Krishnan (Secretary, MeitY), Nagaraju Maddirala (Secretary, DFS), and Aruna Sundararajan (IAS Retd.)
Permanent Invitee	Principal Legal Adviser of the RBI

Key Outcomes of the First Meeting

The meeting set the "roadmap" for India's digital payments through the end of the decade:

On January 5, 2026, the Payments Regulatory Board (PRB) held its inaugural meeting in



- Payments Vision 2028:** The Board reviewed a draft document outlining the next phase of India's payment journey. Key goals include tripling digital transaction volumes by 2030 and making UPI a truly global public good.
- Digital Payments Survey:** Members analyzed the latest RBI survey results, which show that digital payments now account for **97.6%** of total transaction value in India, with paper-based instruments like cheques shrinking to just 2.4%.
- Global Interoperability:** A major focus was placed on cross-border linkages, ensuring that UPI and RuPay systems are compatible with international markets like the UAE, Singapore, and European corridors.

New Regulatory Priorities for 2026

Starting this year, the PRB will oversee several critical transitions aimed at protecting consumers:

- Risk-Based Authentication:** By April 2026, banks must move beyond simple SMS OTPs to more advanced "zero-trust" models using biometrics, device binding, and behavioral analytics.
- Payment Aggregator (PA) Rules:** New, stricter norms for PAs (like Razorpay or Cashfree) regarding merchant due diligence and capital requirements are being phased in throughout 2026.
- AePS Security:** Stricter KYC norms for Aadhaar-Enabled Payment System (AePS) operators came into effect on **January 1,**

2026, to curb rising instances of biometric fraud in rural areas.

Digital Payments Oversight MCQs

- What is the primary purpose of the newly constituted oversight body mentioned in the text?**
 - To increase the interest rates on digital savings accounts
 - To guide, supervise, and strengthen payment and settlement systems
 - To promote the use of physical currency over digital transactions
 - To limit the number of digital transactions allowed per citizen
- Which institution is responsible for operationalising this dedicated board?**
 - Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)
 - Ministry of Finance
 - Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
 - National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)
- Why has strong and independent regulation become essential for India's payment ecosystem?**
 - Because digital transactions are expanding rapidly across the country
 - Because the country is moving back to a barter system

C) To reduce the number of banks operating in India

D) To discourage international investment in fintech

4. The new board aims to align India's payment and settlement systems with:

A) Local village council guidelines

B) Global standards

C) Outdated 20th-century banking protocols

D) Regional trade agreements only

The bank has slashed both its Base Rate and BPLR by **45 basis points (0.45%)**, marking its second major reduction in recent months.

Revised Lending Rates

The adjustment directly impacts older loans that haven't yet migrated to newer benchmarks like MCLR or EBLR.

Rate Type	Old Rate	New Rate (Eff. Jan 7, 2026)	Total Reduction
Base Rate	11.15%	10.70%	45 bps
BPLR	16.15%	15.70%	45 bps

BANKING/ECONOMY

Karur Vysya Bank Cuts Base Rate and BPLR from January, 2026



Karur Vysya Bank (KVB) has announced a significant reduction in its legacy lending benchmarks, effective **January 7, 2026**. This move follows a series of repo rate cuts by the RBI throughout 2025, which brought the policy rate down to **5.25%** by December.

Understanding the Benchmarks

While most new retail loans (Home, Auto, Personal) are now linked to the **External Benchmark Lending Rate (EBLR)**, these older benchmarks still govern a significant portion of long-term portfolios:

- Base Rate:** This is the minimum interest rate set by the bank. No loan can be offered below this rate (except for specific cases like staff loans or agricultural credit). Borrowers who took out home or property loans between **2010 and 2016** are often still on this system.
- BPLR (Benchmark Prime Lending Rate):** An even older system (pre-2010) primarily used for corporate credit and older CC (Cash Credit) limits. Because BPLR is often much higher than modern rates, a 45 bps cut provides substantial relief to businesses with large outstanding balances.

Why This Matters to You

- Lower EMIs:** If your loan agreement mentions "Base Rate + Spread," your interest rate will automatically drop by 0.45% starting today, January 7.
- Corporate Relief:** Businesses using BPLR-linked working capital limits will see their interest outgo decrease, potentially improving their profit margins for Q4 FY26.
- Signal for Others:** KVB's move reflects a broader "easing stance" in the private banking sector. With the RBI's repo rate at 5.25%, other private lenders may follow suit to remain competitive.

Lending Rates & Benchmarks MCQs

- Karur Vysya Bank has announced a reduction in which of the following lending benchmarks?**
 - Repo Rate and Reverse Repo Rate
 - Base Rate and Benchmark Prime Lending Rate (BPLR)
 - Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)
 - Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)

- What is the definition of the "Base Rate" in the context of Indian banking?**

- The maximum rate a bank can charge its most creditworthy customers
- The interest rate at which the RBI lends to commercial banks

C) The minimum interest rate below which banks are not allowed to lend, except in special cases

D) The rate used exclusively for personal and home loans

- According to the exchange filing, what does the revision in rates reflect about the bank's stance?**

A) A tightening of credit availability

B) An easing stance in lending costs

C) A complete halt on corporate lending

D) An increase in the cost of borrowing for all customers

- Which of the following statements about the Benchmark Prime Lending Rate (BPLR) is correct based on the text?**

A) It is the newest benchmark introduced by the RBI in 2026

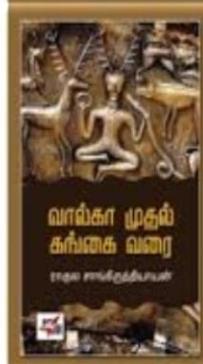
B) It is an older benchmark primarily used for pricing corporate loans

C) It is only applicable to small-scale agricultural loans

D) It is a fixed rate that never changes regardless of market conditions

STATE NEWS

Tamil Translation of From Volga to Ganga



The recent publication of the seventh Tamil translation of *From Volga to Ganga* (*Volgavilirundhu Gangai Varai*) marks a major literary event in Tamil Nadu. This 2026 edition, translated by the noted theatre practitioner A Mangai, is specifically designed to bring this historical masterpiece to a new generation of readers at an affordable price.

The Latest Edition (2026)

This new version is not just a reprint but a fresh linguistic approach to Rahul Sankrityayan's complex historical narrative.

- The Translator:** A Mangai (the pseudonym of Dr. V. Padma) is a renowned feminist scholar, playwright, and former English professor at Stella Maris College. Her background in theatre and gender studies brings a unique perspective to the social evolutions described in the book.
- The Publisher:** Seer Vasagar Vattam released the book in early January 2026, priced at a modest ₹100.
- Source Material:** Unlike some earlier versions, this translation is based on the LeftWord English edition, which was translated by the British Marxist historian

Victor Gordon Kiernan and artist Kanwal Dhaliwal.

- Massive Reception:** The edition has seen unprecedented demand, with **20,000 copies** pre-booked and an additional 10,000 expected to be sold at the **Chennai Book Fair** this month.

Historical Context of the Book

Originally written in **1942** while Sankrityayan was imprisoned in **Hazaribagh Central Jail** for his role in the independence movement, the book is a "genre-defying" work of historical fiction.

Feature	Details
Structure	20 interconnected short stories.
Timeline	Spans 8,000 years (6000 BCE to 1942 CE).
Journey	Traces the migration of people from the banks of the Volga (Eurasia) to the Ganga (India).
Themes	Matriarchy to patriarchy, the advent of metals, the rise of Buddhism, Sufism, and Marxist ideals.

The Legacy of Tamil Translations

The book has a deep-rooted history in Tamil intellectual and political circles, often recommended to new members of progressive movements.

- The First Translation (1949):** Done by **Gana Muthiah** and published by **Tamil**



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Puthakalayam. It became a massive bestseller and remains iconic.

A) Third

B) Fifth

C) Seventh

D) Tenth

4. Who is the translator of the most recent Tamil edition of the book?

A) A. Mangai

B) Rahul Sankrityayan

C) Periyar

D) Arundhati Roy

5. A. Mangai, the latest translator of the work, is professionally known as a:

A) Historian and Archaeologist

B) Theatre practitioner and English teacher

C) Political scientist and Journalist

D) Full-time novelist

6. Which organization published the latest Tamil edition of *From Volga to Ganga*?

A) Sahitya Akademi

B) Oxford University Press

C) Seer Vasagar Vattam

D) Penguin Books

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Who is the original author of the famous book *From Volga to Ganga*?

A) A. Mangai

B) Rahul Sankrityayan

C) Seer Vasagar Vattam

D) Mahatma Gandhi

2. Rahul Sankrityayan, the author of the book, was a prominent scholar and writer from which country?

A) Russia

B) Nepal

C) India

D) Sri Lanka

3. The latest Tamil translation of *From Volga to Ganga* marks which edition of translation into this language?



Detailed Analysis of Recent Current Affairs: Multiple Choice Format

Q.1. In which state was the successful night trial of the Agni-V ICBM recently conducted?

- A. Andhra Pradesh
- B. West Bengal
- C. Karnataka
- D. Odisha

1. A

The central government has approved the appointment of Justice Mahesh Sharadchandra Sonak as the Chief Justice of the Jharkhand High Court. According to a notification issued by the Union Ministry of Law and Justice, President Draupadi Murmu approved Justice Sonak's appointment. Justice Sonak is currently a judge of the Bombay High Court. He will assume office on January 8, following the retirement of the current Chief Justice. This appointment follows a recommendation by the Supreme Court Collegium at its recent meeting.

Q.2. Sadanand Vasant Date recently became the new DGP of which state?

- A. Gujarat
- B. Maharashtra
- C. Madhya Pradesh
- D. Odisha

2. B

Sadanand Vasant Date has assumed charge as Maharashtra's Director General of Police (DGP). He replaces Rashmi Shukla, the state's first female police chief. Dr. Sadanand Date is a 1990

batch IPS officer with a long and distinguished career in policing and internal security. Although he is due to retire in December 2026, he will serve a full two-year term as DGP. This is in accordance with Supreme Court directives requiring a minimum tenure for state police chiefs to ensure continuity of service and avoid political pressure.

Q.3. Who recently implemented the world's first carbon tax, CBAM, on steel and aluminum?

- A. India
- B. European Union
- C. African Union
- D. Quad

3. B

The European Union (EU) recently implemented the world's first carbon tax, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), on carbon-intensive goods such as steel and aluminum. Its purpose is to impose a carbon cost on imported goods to remain competitive with European producers.

Q.4. Andre De Grasse, who was recently appointed as the International Event Ambassador for the 21st Tata Mumbai Marathon 2025, belongs to which country?

- A. Canada
- B. America
- C. France
- D. Kenya

4. A

The Tata Mumbai Marathon (TMM), a World Athletics Gold Label race scheduled to be held in Canada on January 18, 2026, has announced Olympic champion Andre De Grasse as its International Event Ambassador for its 21st edition. One of the most accomplished runners of his generation, De Grasse's presence will further strengthen the global reputation of Asia's most famous marathon.

Q.5. What rank has India recently been ranked by the World Health Organization for its contribution to pharmacovigilance?

- A. Fifth
- B. Sixth
- C. Seventh
- D. Eighth
- 5. D

India has been ranked 8th globally by the World Health Organization (WHO) for its contribution to pharmacovigilance (monitoring the safety of medicines), up from 123rd a decade ago; the achievement was announced by Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda while releasing the 'Indian Pharmacopoeia 2026', which highlights India's improvements in drug regulation and reporting.

Q.6. In which state was the Bhoramdev Corridor Project recently launched to promote heritage-based tourism?

- A. Bihar
- B. Tamil Nadu
- C. Chhattisgarh
- D. Madhya Pradesh
- 6. C

The Bhoramdev Corridor Project has been initiated in the state of Chhattisgarh, aiming to promote heritage-based tourism by developing the Bhoramdev Temple and surrounding historical and archaeological sites in Kabirdham district. It is being built at a cost of approximately ₹146 crore under the central government's Swadesh Darshan Scheme 2.0, modeled after the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor.

Q.7. In which city was India's first government hospital-based AI clinic recently established?

- A. Patna
- B. Greater Noida
- C. Bhopal
- D. Surat
- 7. B

Recently, India's first government AI clinic was launched at the Government Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS) in Greater Noida. The clinic will provide AI-based healthcare services to doctors and patients, as well as provide healthcare startups with the opportunity to develop and test AI solutions. Its focus will be on medical imaging, clinical decision support, and data-driven services.

Q.8. Which state recently ranked highest in India's investment charts for FY 2026?

- A. Andhra Pradesh
- B. Tamil Nadu
- C. Madhya Pradesh
- D. Bihar
- 8. A

Andhra Pradesh topped India's investment charts in the first nine months of FY26, garnering 25.3% of total proposed investments, ahead of states like Odisha and Maharashtra, reflecting the investment tilt towards South and East India.

Q.9. Which country recently officially legalized cryptocurrency mining and exchange?

- A. India
- B. Nigeria
- C. Germany
- D. Turkmenistan
- 9. D

In a major economic policy shift, Turkmenistan has officially legalized cryptocurrency mining and exchange. Known for its tightly controlled economy and long-standing isolationist policies, the country is cautiously moving toward opening up its digital sector. The decision is seen as part of efforts to reduce its dependence on natural gas exports, modernize governance, and attract technological investment, although strict government controls will remain.

Q.10. According to the NTCA report, how many tigers died in India in 2025?

- A. 166
- B. 55
- C. 102
- D. 38
- 10. A

India, home to the world's largest tiger population, recorded a worrying increase in

tiger deaths in 2025. According to government data, 166 tigers died during the year. This situation highlights that despite an increase in the overall tiger population, habitat pressure, territorial conflicts, and conservation management challenges remain.

Q.11. Who has recently been appointed the head coach of the Indian women's hockey team?

- A. Peter Wellington
- B. Sjoerd Marijne
- C. Harendra Singh
- D. Andrew Paul Smith

11. B

Hockey India has appointed Dutch coach Sjoerd Marijne as the head coach of the Indian women's hockey team. He led India to a historic fourth-place finish at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. His first major tournament will be the FIH Women's Hockey World Cup Qualifiers, which will be held in Hyderabad from March 8-14, 2026.

Q.12. In which city did Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurate the grand international exhibition of the sacred Piprahwa relics?

- A. New Delhi
- B. Warangal
- C. Rajgir
- D. Ahmedabad

12. A

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Grand International Exhibition of the Sacred Piprahwa Relics of Lord Buddha in

New Delhi. Titled "The Light and the Lotus," the exhibition showcases the relics, brought back after nearly 125 years. The Piprahwa relics were discovered in 1898 and are directly linked to Lord Buddha. The Piprahwa site is connected to ancient Kapilavastu, where the Buddha spent his early life. The government halted their international auction, considering them sacred heritage, not artifacts.

Q.13. The Taimur is an air-launched cruise missile developed by which country?

- A. Iran
 - B. Israel
 - C. Iraq
 - D. Pakistan
13. D

The Pakistan Air Force recently conducted a successful flight test of the indigenously developed Taimur weapon system. Taimur is an air-launched cruise missile developed by Pakistan. It is designed to engage enemy ground and sea targets with high precision. It uses subsonic turbojet propulsion, allowing it to fly at long ranges. The missile has a range of up to 600 kilometers with a conventional warhead. Its stealth features include a box-shaped fuselage, X-type tail, and foldable wings. It flies at very low altitudes to evade enemy air and missile defense systems.

Q.14. What is the IUCN conservation status of the Bactrian camel, which was recently in the news?

- A. Endangered
- B. Critically Endangered

C. Vulnerable

D. Least Concern

14. B

Ladakh's two-humped Bactrian camels will make their first appearance at the 77th Republic Day parade, showcasing their unique heritage. Scientifically known as *Camelus bactrianus*, these large, cloven-hoofed animals are known as the "silent warriors" of Ladakh. They are native to Central Asia, stretching from Afghanistan to China, and are mostly found in the Mongolian steppes and the Gobi Desert. In India, a small population lives in the high-altitude cold desert of Ladakh's Nubra Valley. They are largely herbivorous and are listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Q.15. Which state government recently made newspaper reading compulsory in schools?

- A. Jharkhand
- B. Rajasthan
- C. West Bengal
- D. Madhya Pradesh

15. B

In an effort to promote reading habits among students, improve vocabulary, and increase general awareness, the Rajasthan government has made daily newspaper reading mandatory in all government schools. Students will be required to read the newspaper for at least 10 minutes during the morning assembly. This initiative aims to familiarize students with current affairs and enhance their ability to understand and analyze news at an early age.

FACTS ABOUT BHARAT

Those are fantastic highlights! Maharashtra truly serves as both the economic engine and the cultural heartbeat of Bharat.

To add to your list of facts, here are a few more fascinating aspects of Maharashtra that showcase its historical and natural grandeur:

Historical & Architectural Marvels

- The World's Largest Monolithic Structure:** The Kailasa Temple at Ellora (Aurangabad/Sambhajinagar) was carved out of a single rock from the top down. It is considered one of the most remarkable architectural feats in human history.
- The Gateway of India:** Built to commemorate the visit of King George V, it has since become the symbolic entrance to the country and a primary landmark of Mumbai.

Natural Wonders

- The Lonar Crater Lake:** Located in Buldhana, this is a saline, alkaline lake created by a **meteorite impact** about 52,000 years ago. It is the only hyper-velocity impact crater in basaltic rock in the world.
- The Sahyadri Range:** The Western Ghats in Maharashtra are a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the world's "hottest hotspots" of biological diversity.

Pioneering Progress

- India's First Train:** The very first passenger train in India ran between **Bori Bunder**

(Mumbai) and Thane on April 16, 1853, covering a distance of 34 km.

- Navi Mumbai:** It was developed as one of the largest planned townships in the world to help de-congest the main island of Mumbai.

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