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National News

Govt to Set Up Bureau of Port Security to Boost Port and Vessel Safety



That is a significant development for India's maritime infrastructure. The establishment of the **Bureau of Port Security (BoPS)** represents a shift toward a more centralized, specialized, and statutory approach to safeguarding the nation's "blue economy."

By placing this under the **Merchant Shipping Act, 2025**, the government is providing a modern legal backbone to address 21st-century threats like cyber-attacks on port operating systems, smuggling, and maritime terrorism.

Why the BoPS is a Strategic Milestone

The creation of a dedicated bureau addresses several historical gaps in maritime oversight:

- **Standardization:** Currently, security protocols can vary between Major Ports (central-controlled) and Non-Major Ports (state-controlled). BoPS will likely act as a unifying regulatory body to ensure high security standards nationwide.



- **Intelligence Integration:** By focusing on "intelligence sharing," the bureau will bridge the gap between local port authorities, the Indian Coast Guard, and national security agencies.
- **Risk-Based Planning:** Instead of a "one-size-fits-all" security model, the bureau will implement security measures based on the specific cargo, location, and threat profile of individual ports.
- **International Compliance:** This move aligns India more closely with the **International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code**, enhancing India's reputation as a secure global trading partner.

Feature	Previous Arrangement	Bureau of Port Security (BoPS)
Primary Focus	Physical guarding and policing	Intelligence, risk-management, and tech-driven security
Jurisdiction	Primarily Major Ports	Ports, vessels, and port facilities nationwide

Impact on Trade and Economy

As India aims to become a global manufacturing hub, port efficiency is tied directly to security. A secure port reduces insurance premiums for shipping lines, prevents costly disruptions to supply chains, and boosts investor confidence in maritime infrastructure projects.

Comparison: Current vs. New Framework

Feature	Previous Arrangement	Bureau of Port Security (BoPS)
Authority	Fragmented across various agencies/CISF	Centralized statutory body
Legal Basis	Various older maritime acts	Merchant Shipping Act, 2025

International News

Elon Musk Becomes First Individual to Reach \$700 Billion Fortune



This is a monumental shift in the global wealth landscape. By crossing the **\$700 billion** threshold, Elon Musk hasn't just broken a record; he has entered a level of individual wealth that is historically unprecedented, now dwarfing the net worth of other tech giants by hundreds of billions.

The **December 19, 2025**, ruling by the Delaware Supreme Court is the primary catalyst here. By determining that the previous rescission of his 2018 pay package was "improper and inequitable," the court effectively handed Musk the keys to a fortune that had been "on hold" during the legal battle.

Breakdown of the \$749 Billion Fortune

With the legal clouds cleared, Musk's wealth is now anchored by two massive pillars:

1. The Restored Tesla Package

- Reinstated Value:** The stock options, originally valued at \$56 billion in 2018, are now worth approximately **\$139 billion** due to Tesla's growth.
- The "Forbes Bump":** Forbes previously applied a 50% "valuation discount" to this package due to the legal uncertainty. Removing that discount added roughly **\$70 billion** to his public valuation overnight.
- Total Tesla Stake:** Musk now holds about 12% of common stock plus these options, bringing his total Tesla interest to roughly **\$338 billion**.

2. The SpaceX Surge

- Private Valuation:** A recent private tender offer valued SpaceX at **\$800 billion**.
- Musk's Share:** With an estimated 42% stake, his holdings in the aerospace giant are worth roughly **\$336 billion**, nearly rivalling his stake in Tesla.

Key Implications of the Ruling

The Delaware Supreme Court's decision is significant for more than just Musk's bank account:

- Vindication of Performance:** The court noted that it was impossible to "unscramble" Musk's six years of work, during which he met all the ambitious milestones set in 2018.
- Governance Shifts:** Despite the win, the ruling left some criticisms of Tesla's board independence intact, though it concluded that total rescission of the pay was an "extreme" and "unfair" remedy.
- Wealth Gap:** At **\$749 billion**, Musk is now nearly **\$500 billion** richer than the world's second-wealthiest person (Larry Page), a gap larger than the entire net worth of most other top ten billionaires.

Comparison: Musk's Wealth Milestones

Milestone	Date Reached	Primary Driver
\$300 Billion	Nov 2021	Tesla Stock Surge
\$400 Billion	Dec 2024	Post-Election Market Rally
\$500 Billion	Oct 2025	SpaceX Valuation Increase
\$700 Billion+	Dec 2025	Delaware Court Ruling



International News

India and New Zealand Wrap Up Free Trade Agreement Negotiations



This historic agreement, finalized on **December 22, 2025**, is a landmark achievement in India's "Act East" and Indo-Pacific outreach. Finalizing an FTA with a developed nation in just **nine months** is exceptionally rare and signals a high degree of mutual trust between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Christopher Luxon.

The deal is designed to double bilateral trade—currently at **\$2.4 billion**—within the next five years.

Key Pillars of the India-New Zealand FTA

1. Market Access & Trade in Goods

- **For India:** New Zealand will provide **zero-duty access** to 100% of Indian exports. This is a massive win for labor-intensive sectors like **textiles, apparel, leather, and footwear**, which previously faced tariffs up to 10%.

- **For New Zealand:** India has offered tariff concessions on 70% of its products (covering 95% of NZ's current exports).
- **Sensitive Exclusions:** India successfully protected its **dairy sector** (milk, cheese, butter) and other sensitive items like onions and almonds, which are completely excluded from the deal to safeguard Indian farmers.

2. Services and "Unprecedented" Mobility

New Zealand has offered India its most ambitious services package to date, covering **118 sectors**:

- **Student Benefits:** No numerical caps on Indian students. They are guaranteed **20 hours of work per week** while studying and extended post-study work visas (up to 3 years for STEM and 4 years for PhDs).
- **Professional Visas:** A new **Temporary Employment Entry (TEE)** visa for 5,000 Indian professionals (IT, engineering, healthcare, and even yoga/Ayush practitioners).
- **Youth Opportunity:** 1,000 "Working Holiday Visas" annually for young Indians to live and work in NZ for 12 months.

3. Investment Commitment

- **The \$20 Billion Pledge:** In a move similar to India's recent deal with the EFTA (European Free Trade Association), New Zealand has committed to facilitating **\$20 billion in investment** into India over the next 15 years.



- **Rebalancing Mechanism:** If these investment targets aren't met, India retains the right to suspend certain FTA benefits, ensuring the deal remains mutually beneficial.

Comparison: Impact on Specific Sectors

Sector	Impact of the FTA
MSMEs	Reduced costs for raw materials and easier entry into a high-purchasing-power market.
Indian Students	Guaranteed work rights and clear post-study pathways in New Zealand.
Farmers (India)	Fully protected from dairy and sensitive veg imports; gains access to NZ agri-tech.
Tech/Healthcare	Streamlined visa pathways for 5,000 skilled professionals to work in NZ.

Sports

Smriti Mandhana Achieves Record as First Asian to Reach 4,000 T20I Runs

What an incredible way for Smriti Mandhana to mark her return to the international stage! By reaching this milestone on **December 21, 2025**, she has cemented her place as a true pioneer of Asian cricket.

While the run-a-ball 25 she scored in Visakhapatnam might seem modest on paper, its historical significance is massive. She is now

only the **second woman in history** to cross the 4,000-run mark in T20Is, joining the legendary Suzie Bates of New Zealand.

Breakdown of Mandhana's 4,000-Run Milestone



What makes this record even more impressive is the "how" and "when" of the achievement:

- **Fastest to the Mark:** Mandhana reached 4,000 runs in just **3,227 balls**. To put that in perspective, Suzie Bates (the only other woman in the "4,000 club") took 3,675 balls. This highlights Mandhana's incredible strike rate and aggressive intent throughout her career.
- **A "World Champion" Comeback:** This was her first game since leading India to their **maiden ODI World Cup title** just last month. Returning with a historic record proves she hasn't lost any of her momentum.
- **Closing in on 10,000:** With this knock, she has reached **4,007 T20I runs**. Combined with her 5,322 ODI runs and 629 Test runs, she is now just **42 runs away** from becoming the first Indian woman to score 10,000 runs in international cricket across all formats.

Match Highlights: India vs. Sri Lanka (1st T20I)

The record was part of a dominant team performance at the ACA-VDCA Stadium:



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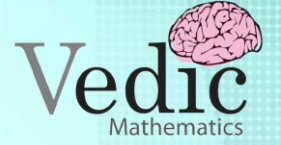
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Category	Details
The Record	4,007 career T20I runs (First Indian & Asian woman)
Match Score	India (122/2) defeated Sri Lanka (121/6) by 8 wickets
Key Performer	Jemimah Rodrigues (69* off 44 balls)
Series Lead	India leads the 5-match series 1-0

Elite Company

Mandhana is now part of an ultra-exclusive group. Including men's cricket, she is only the **fifth person ever** to achieve 4,000 T20I runs, alongside:

1. **Babar Azam** (Pakistan)
2. **Rohit Sharma** (India)
3. **Virat Kohli** (India)
4. **Suzie Bates** (New Zealand)

With four matches left in the series, she is almost certain to cross the **10,000-run total international career mark** in the coming days.

Sports

Sukhman Singh Triumphs at IGU 124th Amateur Championship

This win by Sukhman Singh at the **Tollygunge Club** on **December 21, 2025**, is truly a "full circle" moment for one of India's most prominent golfing families.



By capturing the **124th Amateur Golf Championship of India**, Sukhman has achieved something that even his father—former India No. 1 and amateur legend **Simarjeet Singh**—never managed to win during his illustrious career.

The victory is particularly impressive given the history of the event; established in **1892**, it is the world's second-oldest amateur golf championship after the British Amateur.

Match Summary: The 36-Hole Final

The final against **Harman Sachdeva** was a showcase of mental toughness and technical precision:

- **The Early Grind:** The match was tightly contested early on, remaining **All Square (AS)** through the first six holes.
- **The Breakout:** Sukhman found his rhythm after the 6th hole, surging to a **4-up** lead by the 12th hole and finishing the first 18 holes at **2-up**.
- **Harman's Fightback:** Sachdeva showed grit in the second half of the match, cutting Sukhman's lead down to just **3-up** by the 23rd hole.



- **The Birdie Blitz:** Sukhman responded with a "birdie storm," winning three of the next two holes to go **6-up** by the 25th hole.
- **Final Result:** The match ended on the **29th hole** when Sukhman went **7-up with 7 holes to play (7&7)**, making his lead mathematically unassailable.

Sukhman Singh's "Monster" Season

This championship is the crown jewel of a highly successful 2025 season for the 19-year-old Noida golfer:

Tournament	Result
IGU Amateur Championship of India	Winner
IGU Rajasthan Amateur	Winner
Andhra Pradesh Amateur	Runner-up
South African Amateur Strokeplay	4th Place

"It still feels like a dream... I have been working my whole life for getting there, but to finally being able to do it, feels amazing. My father is the one who kept pushing me." — **Sukhman Singh**

Historical Context

By winning at Tollygunge, Sukhman adds his name to a trophy that has previously been held by legends of Indian golf. The fact that he secured the win with seven holes to spare highlights the "dominant performance" you mentioned—one of the largest margins of victory in a final in recent years.

Awards

Ravi Deecee Receives Prestigious French Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres Award



This award for Ravi Deecee on December 4, 2025, marks a proud moment for Indian language publishing, specifically highlighting the global reach of Malayalam literature.

The conferral of the **Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres** (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters) by French Ambassador **Thierry Mathou** recognizes Deecee's role in turning **DC Books** into a bridge between French and Indian cultures.

Why Ravi Deecee was Honored

The French government cited several specific contributions that have enriched the literary dialogue between the two nations:

- **Translating French Giants:** Under his leadership, DC Books has brought the works of iconic French authors like **Annie Ernaux, Jean-Paul Sartre, David Diop, and Emmanuel Carrère** to Malayalam readers, making

global thought accessible in a regional Indian language.

- **Kerala Literature Festival (KLF):** As the founder and chief facilitator of KLF, Deecee has created one of Asia's largest platforms for international writers. Notably, France was the **Guest Nation** for the 2025 edition of the festival.
- **Vagamon Writers Residency:** He played a pivotal role in establishing this residency in Kerala as part of France's **Villa Swagatam** program, allowing French and international authors to live and create in India.
- **Lifelong Legacy:** The award also acknowledges the three-generation legacy of the Deecee family (his father was the legendary **D.C. Kizhakemuri**) in promoting the "paperback revolution" and abolishing taxes on books in India.

About the Honour

The *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* was established in 1957. It is one of the most respected cultural awards in the world, with three ranks: **Chevalier (Knight)**, **Officier (Officer)**, and **Commandeur (Commander)**.

Notable Indian Recipients

By receiving this insignia, Ravi Deecee joins a distinguished list of Indian cultural icons:

- **Writers:** Mahasweta Devi, Upamanyu Chatterjee, and M. Mukundan.
- **Cinema:** Shah Rukh Khan, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, and Kamal Haasan.
- **Publishing:** Recently, Tamil publisher Kannan Sundaram and Aditi Maheshwari.

"The most meaningful legacy is not what we leave behind, but what we leave within others. Books shape values, expand imagination, and nurture empathy across cultures." — **Ravi Deecee**

Key Milestone Summary (December 2025)

Feature	Details
Award Date	December 4, 2025
Presented By	H.E. Thierry Mathou (Ambassador of France to India)
Location	Embassy of France, New Delhi
Key Achievement	Integration of French literature into the Malayalam ecosystem

State News

Porunai Archaeological Museum



The inauguration of the **Porunai Archaeological Museum** on **December 20, 2025**, marks a

crowning achievement for Tamil Nadu's cultural preservation efforts. Located near the Reddiarpatti hillock on the outskirts of Palayamkottai, this 13-acre facility is designed not just as a storehouse for antiquities, but as a living bridge to the 3,300-year-old **Thamirabarani (Porunai) River Civilization**.

The museum's red-and-white architecture incorporates traditional Tamil elements like the *thinnai* (veranda) and *thalvaram* (corridor), making it as much a cultural statement as it is an educational hub.

The "Iron Age" Revelation

One of the most significant reasons for the museum's existence is the scientific re-dating of Tamil history:

- **Sivakalai Findings:** Carbon dating of rice husks and iron tools from Sivakalai has pushed the dawn of the Iron Age in India back to **3300 BC**.
- **Adichanallur Evidence:** Metal artifacts here have been dated to **2613 BC**.
- **Global Context:** These findings suggest that the people of the Porunai river basin were using advanced iron-smelting technology over 5,300 years ago, making it one of the oldest known Iron Age sites globally.

Museum Highlights and Experience

The museum is organized into distinct galleries, each focusing on a specific excavation site:

Site	Primary Exhibits
Adichanallur	Gigantic burial urns, gold diadems, bronze figurines, and over 1,500 antiquities.
Sivakalai	160 burial urns, graffiti-inscribed potsherds, and ancient iron implements.
Korkai	Glass beads, shell bangles, and Sangam-era coins reflecting its history as a major Pandyan port.
Thulukkarpatti	Rare pottery with Thamizhi (Tamil-Brahmi) script and over 5,000 graffiti-bearing sherds.

Modern Attractions

To engage younger generations and tourists, the museum includes:

- **5D & 7D Virtual Reality:** A boat simulator that takes visitors on a virtual journey along the ancient Thamirabarani River.
- **Interactive Boards:** High-tech displays that explain ancient iron-smelting and pottery-making techniques.
- **Amphitheater & Handicrafts:** A space for performing arts and local artisan outlets, promoting modern Tirunelveli culture alongside its ancient roots.



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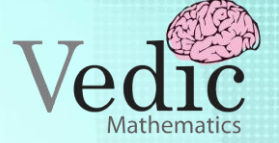
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Detailed Analysis of Recent Current Affairs: Multiple Choice Format

Q.1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated the new terminal building of which international airport in Northeast India?

- A) Imphal International Airport
- B) Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport
- C) Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport
- D) Dibrugarh Airport

1. C

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the new terminal building of the popular Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati, Assam. He also unveiled an 80-foot-tall statue of Assam's first Chief Minister, Gopinath Bordoloi. Designed to handle 13 million passengers annually, the terminal building is inspired by Assam's biodiversity and cultural heritage, with a bamboo grove as its central theme.

Q.2. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a commemorative postage stamp on which medicinal plant at the 'Second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine'?

- A) Tulsi
- B) Ashwagandha
- C) Aloe Vera
- D) Neem

2. B

At the 2nd WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine in New Delhi, Narendra Modi released a commemorative postage stamp on Ashwagandha. Ashwagandha is one of India's most famous medicinal plants. This release reflects India's commitment to promoting traditional medicine and strengthening its global recognition as a pillar of holistic and preventive healthcare.

Q.3. Where did Jammu and Kashmir recently launch its first 'Gen Z Post Office'?

- A) AllMS Vijaypur
- B) Srinagar City Center
- C) Jammu University
- D) Gulmarg

3. A

Jammu and Kashmir has achieved a major breakthrough in modernizing public services. The state's first "Gen Z Post Office" has been launched at the AIIMS Vijaypur campus. This initiative reflects the Department of Posts' (India Post) changing vision to make postal services digital, accessible, and in line with the expectations of the youth. With this, AIIMS Vijaypur has become the first AIIMS in the country to establish a Gen Z Post Office.

Q.4. Where was the "Zero to Century: A Century of Atal Bharat" program recently held?

- A) Shimla
- B) Chandigarh
- C) Indore
- D) Varanasi

4. C





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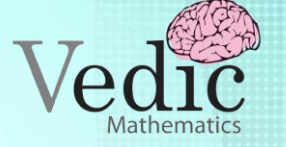
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To mark the birth centenary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a commemorative event titled "Zero Se Century Tak: Atal Bharat Ki Century" was held in Indore. It celebrated Vajpayee's leadership legacy, commitment to sustainable development, and environmental protection. A statue of Lokmata Devi Ahilyabai, representing India's administrative and cultural heritage, was unveiled on the Daly College campus. The event showcased the vision of "Atal Bharat," emphasizing good governance, development, national pride, and environmental jurisprudence.

Q.5. Which Indian team recently won the 'Most Inspirational Award' in the NASA International Space Apps Challenge 2025?

- A) Space Explorers (Mumbai)
- B) Photonics Odyssey (Chennai)
- C) Skyroot Team (Hyderabad)
- D) Agnikul Vision (Chennai)

5. B

Indian team Photonics Odyssey from Chennai won the Most Inspiring Award for their satellite internet concept in NASA's 2025 International Space Apps Challenge. Their project aims to expand broadband connectivity to remote areas of India and connect the more than 700 million people who still lack broadband access.

Q.6. Which institute recently won the title of 'India's Best Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Institute' for the second consecutive year?

- A) AIIMS, New Delhi
- B) PGIMER, Chandigarh

C) JIPMER, Puducherry

D) CMC, Vellore

6. B

The Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, has been awarded the Best Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Institute by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for the second consecutive year. The award was presented during ARISE 2025 at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan in New Delhi. PGIMER also received the same honor last year.

Q.7. Which country recently launched its first polymer one-riyal banknote, which will enter circulation on January 11, 2026?

- A) UAE
- B) Oman
- C) Qatar
- D) Kuwait

7. B

In a major step towards modernising its currency system Oman has launched its first polymer one rial banknote. Which is a marking a historic shift from traditional paper based currency. Issued by the Central Bank of Oman, the new note will officially enter circulation on January 11, 2026.

Q.8. How much sovereign lending has the Asian Development Bank (ADB) recently committed to India for the year 2025?

- A) USD 2.5 billion
- B) USD 4.258 billion
- C) USD 5.0 billion





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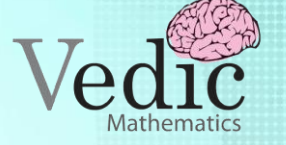
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D) USD 3.125 billion

8. B

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has committed \$4.258 billion in sovereign loans to India by 2025, covering 16 new projects across a range of sectors. The Manila-based lender said the funding was approved during the year to support government programmes at the central and state levels.

Q.9. According to a Worldline India report, what was the total volume of UPI transactions in the third quarter (Q3) of 2025?

A) 40.21 billion

B) 59.33 billion

C) 75.00 billion

D) 50.12 billion

9. B

According to a Worldline India report, the total number of UPI transactions in the third quarter (Q3) of 2025 was 59.33 billion, up 33.5% compared to the previous year, and the total value was ₹74.84 lakh crore, up 21%, making it the most dynamic real-time payments market in India.

Q.10. Ram Vanji Sutar, who recently passed away at the age of 100, was the designer of which world-famous statue?

A) Statue of Liberty

B) Statue of Equality

C) Statue of Unity

D) Statue of Belief

10. C

Renowned sculptor Ram Vanji Sutar died at his home in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. He was 100 years old and had been battling age-related ailments. Sutar was known for designing the world's tallest statue – the Statue of Unity – in Gujarat.

Q.11. Who recently won the IGU (Indian Golf Union) 124th Amateur Golf Championship?

A) Gaganjeet Bhullar

B) Sukhman Singh

C) Arjun Atwal

D) Jeev Milkha Singh

11. B

Noida golfer Sukhman Singh won the 124th IGU (Indian Golf Union) Amateur Golf Championship, the world's longest-running amateur matchplay event. He defeated Harman Sachdeva with a sizable 7-up lead after 29 holes of the 36-hole final. Sukhman was tied until the 6th hole, then 4-up after 12 holes and 2-up after 18 holes, maintaining the pressure with powerful driving and putting.

Q.12. Which ship was recently commissioned by the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) in Goa?

A) ICG Ship 'Vikram'

B) ICG Ship 'Amulya'

C) ICG Ship 'Sajag'

D) ICG Ship 'Vigraha'

12. B

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) ship Amulya, the third ship in the Adanya-class Fast Patrol Vessel series, was commissioned in Goa. Built by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) with over 60%





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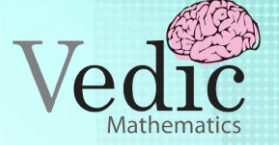
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indigenous components, supporting Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make-in-India. The 51-meter vessel features a modern design for endurance, efficiency, and rapid response. Powered by two 3000 KW diesel engines, the ship has a top speed of 27 knots and an endurance of 1,500 nautical miles.

Q.13. Which state government recently launched a conservation initiative to save the smooth-coated otter in the Cauvery River Delta?

- A) Tamil Nadu
- B) Andhra Pradesh
- C) Odisha
- D) Gujarat

13. A

Tamil Nadu has launched a conservation initiative to protect smooth-coated otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) in the Cauvery River Delta from habitat loss and increasing human-animal conflict. The program will estimate populations, map habitats, study threats such as pollution, dams, and pesticides, and restore habitats by planting reeds and building fish ladders.

Q.14. Google recently announced US\$8 million in funding to support Artificial Intelligence (AI) Centers of Excellence (CoEs) in which country?

- A) The United States
- B) India
- C) Armenia
- D) Saudi Arabia

14. B

Global tech giant Google announced funding of USD 8 million (approximately Rs 72.4 crore) to support four Artificial Intelligence (AI) Centres of Excellence (CoEs) supported by the Government of India (GoI) during the 'Google Lab to Impact Dialogue' held as part of the India AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi.

Q.15. Which bank recently entered into a bancassurance partnership with Icritas Small Finance Bank (ESFB)?

- A) LIC
- B) Canara HSBC Life Insurance
- C) HDFC Life
- D) SBI Life

15. B

Canara HSBC Life Insurance and Equitas Small Finance Bank have entered into a strategic bancassurance partnership aimed at expanding the reach of life insurance across diverse regions of India. This collaboration combines Canara HSBC's insurance portfolio with Equitas Bank's branch network, thereby promoting financial inclusion across multiple customer segments.





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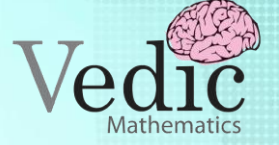
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Historical and Technical Events of 25th December 2025

1904: The country's first cross-country motorcar rally started from Delhi to Mumbai.



This is a fascinating piece of Indian automotive history! The rally you're referring to, often called the **Delhi-Bombay Motor Trials**, was indeed a watershed moment for transportation in India. It proved that "horseless carriages" could survive the rugged, dusty, and often roadless terrain of the subcontinent.

The event wasn't just a race; it was an endurance test designed to convince the public (and the British Raj) that motorcars were a viable alternative to trains and horses.

The Great 1904 Delhi-Bombay Trials

The rally was organized by the **Motor Union of Western India** and attracted global attention, appearing in newspapers from London to New York.

1. Key Statistics and Facts

- **Starting Line:** The rally flagged off from the Maidan in Delhi on December 26, 1904.
- **The Route:** Covering roughly **810 miles** (1,303 km), the path took drivers through Agra, Gwalior, Biaora, Indore, and Nashik.
- **The Finish Line:** The cars arrived at the **Watson's Hotel** in Bombay on January 2, 1905.
- **Participants:** About **33 cars** started the rally, a mix of European manufacturers and wealthy Indian royalty.

2. Notable Participants

The entry list was a "Who's Who" of the era, reflecting the racial and social hierarchies of the time:

- **The Maharajas:** Indian royalty were the earliest adopters of cars. Participants included the **Maharaja of Gwalior** and the **Maharaja of Kapurthala**.
- **European Drivers:** Many entries were driven by British officers or representatives of European car makers looking to break into the Indian market.
- **The Winner:** The coveted **Gwalior Cup** (for the best performance) was won by **S.M. Edwards** driving a **12-hp Lanchester**.

Challenges of the Journey

In 1904, the "Grand Trunk Road" was not the highway we know today. Drivers faced extreme conditions:



- **Infrastructure:** There were few bridges over major rivers; cars often had to be loaded onto bullock carts or ferries to cross water.
- **Supplies:** There were no "petrol pumps." Fuel (then called *petroleum spirit*) had to be sent ahead by rail in 2-gallon tins and stored at specific checkpoints.
- **Dust:** The "bullock track" roads kicked up thick clouds of dust that blinded drivers, making goggles a mandatory piece of safety equipment.

Feature	1904 Motor Trials	Modern (Approx)	Record
Max Speed	~20-30 mph	75+ (Expressways)	mph
Road Type	Dust/Dirt tracks	National Highways/Expressways	

Impact on India

This rally directly led to the "Automobile Boom" in the country.

- **The Raj's Interest:** Following the success, the British administration began investing in better road surfaces (metalling) to facilitate motorized troop movements and administrative travel.
- **Luxury Market:** It established India as one of the world's most lucrative markets for luxury brands like **Rolls-Royce**, which became the preferred vehicle for Indian Maharajas for decades to come.

1925: Establishment of the Communist Party of India.



Comparison: 1904 vs. Modern Records

Feature	1904 Motor Trials	Modern (Approx)	Record
Duration	8 Days	~18-20 Hours (Driving)	
Fueling	Pre-staged rail shipments	Thousands of fuel stations	

This month marks a massive milestone for the Communist Party of India (CPI). As you noted, the party was founded in December 1925, which means it is currently celebrating its **centenary (100th anniversary)**.

The 100-year journey of the CPI is deeply intertwined with India's struggle for independence and its post-colonial political landscape.

The Founding: Kanpur, 1925

While communist groups had been forming in various pockets (including an émigré group formed by **M.N. Roy** in Tashkent in 1920), the **Kanpur Communist Conference** held from **December 26–28, 1925**, is recognized by the CPI as its formal foundation on Indian soil.

- **Convened by:** Satyabhakta (who later left the party due to ideological differences regarding international affiliation).
- **Presided by:** Malayapuram Singaravelu Chettiar, a pioneer of the labor movement in South India who famously organized India's first May Day celebration in 1923.
- **First General Secretary:** S.V. Ghatge.
- **Significance:** It was the first time diverse communist groups from Bombay, Bengal, Punjab, and Madras united under a single national banner.

Current Leadership and Centenary (2025)

As of **December 2025**, the party is in the midst of nationwide centenary celebrations:

- **General Secretary:** D. Raja remains the General Secretary. He was recently re-elected for a third term at the 25th Party Congress held in Chandigarh (September 2025), making him the first Dalit leader to lead a major Left party for such a tenure.
- **Centenary Events:** Large-scale rallies and seminars are being held this week in **Kanpur** (at the Comrade Ajay Ghosh Auditorium) and other major centers like Alappuzha and Chennai to commemorate the 100-year milestone.

- **Political Stand:** In his recent centenary addresses, D. Raja has emphasized the CPI's role as the first party to demand "**Purna Swaraj**" (Complete Independence) back in the 1920s and its current commitment to protecting the secular fabric of the Constitution.

Key Pillars of CPI History

Event	Year	Significance
First May Day	1923	Organized by Singaravelu Chettiar in Madras.
Ban on CPI	1934	Declared illegal by the British; members worked within the Congress.
Kerala Victory	1957	Formed the first democratically elected Communist govt in the world (led by EMS Namboodiripad).
The Great Split	1964	The party split into the CPI and the CPI(M) due to ideological differences.

Note on the Founding Date

It is interesting to note that the two main communist parties in India recognize different birthdays. The **CPI** celebrates **December 26, 1925** (Kanpur), while the **CPI(M)** celebrates **October 17, 1920** (Tashkent).¹⁰



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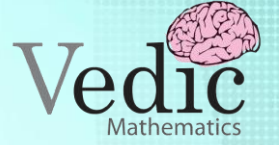
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1997: Naveen Patnaik, son of prominent Odisha leader Biju Patnaik, founded the Biju Janata Dal (BJD).



It is timely that you mention the **Biju Janata Dal (BJD)**, as the party is currently observing its **28th Foundation Day** this week (December 26, 2025).

However, there has been a major shift in the political landscape of Odisha recently. While Naveen Patnaik remains the undisputed leader of the BJD, he is **no longer the Chief Minister of Odisha**.

Current Status (December 2025)

The 2024 Assembly elections marked a "historic upset" in Odisha politics:

- **The New Chief Minister:** Following the BJP's victory in the June 2024 elections, **Mohan Charan Majhi** became the 15th Chief Minister of Odisha.
- **Naveen Patnaik's Role:** After 24 years of continuous rule (2000–2024), Naveen Patnaik now serves as the **Leader of the Opposition** in the Odisha Legislative Assembly.

- **Historical Record:** His 24-year tenure remains the second-longest for any Chief Minister in Indian history, just behind Pawan Kumar Chamling of Sikkim.

BJD: 28 Years of Political Journey

The BJD was formed on **December 26, 1997**, following a split in the Janata Dal. Its journey is defined by several key phases:

1. The Foundation (1997–2000)

Born out of the vacuum left by the legendary Biju Patnaik, the party was founded with the "Conch" symbol to protect Odisha's interests. Naveen Patnaik, then a political novice, was brought in to lead based on his father's legacy and his own "Mr. Clean" image.

2. The NDA Era (1998–2009)

The BJD was a founding member of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). It formed a stable coalition with the BJP both at the Centre (under Atal Bihari Vajpayee) and in the state. This partnership ended in 2009 just before the general elections.

3. The Period of Dominance (2009–2024)

For 15 years, the BJD ruled Odisha independently. This era was characterized by:

- **Secular Identity:** The party distanced itself from the BJP to project a strictly regional and secular image.
- **Welfare Governance:** Landmark schemes like *Kalia* (for farmers) and *Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana* helped maintain a massive rural vote bank.



- **Disaster Management:** Odisha became a global model for cyclone management under Patnaik's leadership.

The 2024 Turning Point

The party lost power in 2024 due to a combination of strong anti-incumbency and the BJP's aggressive campaign focusing on "Odia Asmita" (Odia Pride) and the perceived influence of former bureaucrat V.K. Pandian.

BJD Foundation Day (December 26, 2025)

As the party gathers at its headquarters, **Sankha Bhawan**, this week, the focus is on reorganization. Naveen Patnaik has recently urged party workers to counter "misinformation" and prepare for a long-term role as a constructive opposition.

Key Fact	Details
Founded	December 26, 1997
Current President	Naveen Patnaik
Current State Power	Opposition (51/147 seats)
Centenary Aim	Patnaik recently stated the BJD will serve for "the next 100 years."

2006: Australian spinner Shane Warne created history by taking 700 wickets in international test cricket.

While we are celebrating the **19th anniversary** of this feat this week (it occurred on **Boxing Day, December 26, 2006**), it remains one of the most iconic "scripts" ever written in sporting history.



Shane Warne entered that Boxing Day Test at his home ground, the **Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG)**, on 699 wickets. The atmosphere was electric, with a record crowd of **89,155** fans packed into the stadium to witness history.

The 700th Wicket: A Masterclass in Drift and Spin

The dismissal of **Andrew Strauss** was vintage Warne. It wasn't just about the number; it was the sheer skill involved:

- **The Setup:** Warne had been probing Strauss for several overs.
- **The Ball:** At exactly 3:18 PM, Warne bowled a classic leg-break. The ball drifted through the air, dipped sharply, pitched outside off-

stump, and spun back through the "gate" between Strauss's bat and pad.

- The Result:** The ball clipped the top of the off-stump. The MCG erupted in a roar that remains one of the loudest in Australian sports history.

Why It Was the "Perfect Script"

Warne himself famously remarked after the match, *"I don't know who's writing my script, but it's pretty good."* The circumstances were almost too perfect to be real:

1. It was his **home ground** (Melbourne).
2. It was the **Boxing Day Test**, the biggest day on the Australian cricket calendar.
3. It was against Australia's oldest rival, **England**, in an Ashes series.
4. He had announced just days earlier that he would be **retiring** at the end of the series.

Warne's Legacy by the Numbers

Shane Warne didn't just reach 700; he finished his career with a mountain of records that paved the way for future spinners.

Statistic	Details
Total Test Wickets	708 (Second only to Muttiah Muralitharan)
700th Victim	Andrew Strauss (England)
Test Debut	1992 vs. India (Sydney)
5-Wicket Hauls	37

Statistic	Details
10-Wicket Matches	10

Did you know? In November 2025, the MCG announced a special exhibition called *"Warne: Treasures of a Legend,"* featuring the actual ball from this 700th wicket.¹⁰ It is currently on display at the Australian Sports Museum for fans to see during this year's Boxing Day Test.

The Club of 700

Today, the "700 Club" is still incredibly exclusive. Only three bowlers in the 148-year history of Test cricket have reached this summit:

1. **Muttiah Muralitharan** (800 wickets)
2. **Shane Warne** (708 wickets)
3. **James Anderson** (704 wickets)

1925 – The Gregorian calendar was adopted in Türkiye.



This was a profound moment in the secularization and modernization of Turkey. On

December 26, 1925, the Turkish Grand National Assembly passed **Law No. 697**, which formally abolished the complicated multi-calendar system in favor of the international standards used by the "contemporary world."

This reform was a cornerstone of **Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's** vision to align the newly formed Republic of Turkey with global economic and political systems.

The "Calendar Jumble" Before 1926

Prior to this law, the Ottoman Empire and the early Republic struggled with three overlapping systems, leading to massive administrative confusion:

- Hijri Calendar (Lunar):** Used primarily for religious purposes and holidays. Because it is roughly 11 days shorter than the solar year, religious dates "drifted" through the seasons.
- Rumi Calendar (Solar):** An Ottoman fiscal calendar based on the Julian system. It started the year in March and had a 584-year offset from the Gregorian year.
- Gregorian Calendar:** Used unofficially in international trade and diplomacy, but not legally recognized for internal state affairs.

The 1925 Solution

The new law simplified everything:

- Official Adoption:** The **Gregorian Calendar** became the sole legal calendar for the state starting **January 1, 1926**.
- Standardization:** The year **1341** (Rumi) was officially followed by the year **1926**, aligning

Turkey's dates perfectly with Europe and the Americas.

Replacing the "Sunset Clock" (Alaturka Time)

Perhaps even more radical was the change in how Turks measured the hours of the day.

- The Alaturka System (Sunset Clock):** In this traditional system, the day ended and a new one began exactly at **sunset** (12:00). Because sunset times change daily, people had to reset their watches almost every evening to stay accurate.
- The Alfranga System (International Time):** The 1925 reform replaced the sunset clock with the **24-hour international clock** based on the **Greenwich Mean Time (GMT)** standard.
- The Logic:** Moving the start of the day to **midnight** allowed for fixed working hours, standardized train schedules, and synchronized international banking—tasks that were nearly impossible when "noon" shifted every day.

Impact of the Reform

Feature	Old System (Pre-1926)	New System (Post-1926)
New Year's Day	March 1 (Rumi)	January 1
Year Count	1341	1926

10 Years of Excellence



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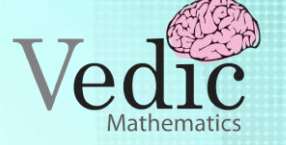
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Feature	Old System (Pre-1926)	New System (Post-1926)
Start of Day	Sunset	Midnight
Hour Length	Fluctuated with seasons	Fixed (60 minutes)



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We wish best for your studies & Exams

Best Wishes

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