

National News & Governance

1. 86th All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC) in Lucknow

- **Event:** Inaugurated by UP Governor Anandiben Patel (Jan 19-21, 2026).
- **Keynote:** Delivered by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.
- **Focus:** Legislative technology, capacity building of lawmakers, and ensuring executive accountability.
- **Participants:** Presiding Officers from 28 states, 3 UTs, and 6 legislative councils.

2. ECI to Host Inaugural IICDEM-2026 in New Delhi

- **Context:** Election Commission of India (ECI) hosting the India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (Jan 21-23).
- **Participants:** 100+ delegates from over 70 countries.
- **Innovation:** Launch of **ECINE**, a one-stop digital platform for global election-related information and services.

3. Indian Railways' OSOP Scheme Powers Local Craftsmanship

- **Milestone:** 2,326 outlets established at 2,002 railway stations.
- **Impact:** Benefited 1.32 lakh local artisans and weavers since its 2022 launch.
- **Objective:** Promotes "Vocal for Local" by turning railway hubs into commercial centers for regional heritage.

4. MP Govt & BHASHINI Sign MoU for Multilingual Governance

- **Collaboration:** Madhya Pradesh Government and MeitY's Digital India BHASHINI Division.
- **Goal:** Deploying voice-first and AI-driven solutions to deliver public services in native languages.
- **Significance:** Aligned with Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) goals for last-mile inclusion.

5. Ministry of MSME Sanctions Two Technology Centres in Himachal Pradesh

- **Locations:** Pandoga (Una) and Parwanoo (Solan).
- **Funding:** ₹10 crore allocated for each centre.
- **Purpose:** Part of 13 new national Extension Centres to provide technical support and skill training for Himachali youth.

6. Second Nationwide Dolphin Survey under Project Dolphin

- **Initiator:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- **Scope:** Phase 1 covers Ganga (Bijnor-Sagar) and Indus rivers; Phase 2 covers Brahmaputra and Sundarbans.

- **Objective:** To assess habitat health and population of Indus, Irrawaddy, and Gangetic dolphins.

7. India Unveils First Tailings Policy for Critical Mineral Recovery

- **Context:** Guidelines for recovering minerals from primary/secondary sources (mine dumps).
 - **Targets:** Recovering companion metals like **Selenium** (from copper) and **Germanium** (from zinc).
 - **Goal:** Reducing import dependence for high-tech manufacturing.
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Economy & Infrastructure

8. India Sets Record with \$47 Billion Electronics Exports in FY2025

- **Data:** Electronics is now India's 3rd largest export category.
- **Key Driver:** Smartphone manufacturing via PLI schemes (contributing ~\$30 billion).
- **Growth:** 11x acceleration since 2014-15; generated 25 lakh new jobs.

9. IMF Raises India's 2025 Growth Forecast to 7.3%

- **Update:** Raised by 0.7 points due to strong momentum in late 2024.
- **Comparison:** India remains the lead contributor among emerging economies.
- **Inflation:** Expected to reach targets within 2025.

10. ADNOC Gas Signs 10-Year LNG Deal with HPCL

- **Value:** \$2.5–3 billion for 0.5 MTPA supply from Das Island.
- **Strategic Goal:** Supports India's target of 15% natural gas in its energy mix by 2030.

11. Piramal Finance Raises \$350 Million from IFC and ADB

- **Details:** First DFI (Development Finance Institution) borrowing under a Sustainable Finance Framework.
- **Target:** Expanding lending for affordable housing and MSMEs in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

12. Sigma Acquires UK's Nasmyth for Global Aerospace-Defence Platform

- **Deal:** ₹213 crore acquisition by Sigma Advanced Systems.
- **Significance:** Sigma becomes the first Indian aerospace firm with a truly global manufacturing presence.

13. Wikipedia Partners with Tech Giants to Monetize AI Content

- **Partners:** Microsoft, Meta, Amazon, Mistral AI, and Perplexity.
- **Goal:** Charging for high-volume data scraping to sustain Wikimedia's non-profit operations.

Banking & Finance

14. EPFO to Launch UPI-Based EPF Withdrawals

- **Effective:** April 2026.
- **Limits:** Initial cap of ₹25,000 per transaction; 75% of balance to remain frozen as per new rules.
- **Benefits:** Faster claim settlements and hassle-free access.

15. RBI Announces Revised Integrated Ombudsman Scheme from July 2026

- **Framework:** Replaces the 2021 scheme to streamline complaints against Banks/NBFCs.
- **Awards:** Up to ₹30 lakh for financial losses and ₹3 lakh for non-financial grievances.

16. IREDA's Arm Sanctions First International Green Energy Loan

- **Lender:** IGGEFIL (IREDA subsidiary).
 - **Recipient:** \$22.5 million to Swarna Solar for a project in **Zambia**.
 - **Milestone:** India's first major green financing footprint in global markets.
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Science, Technology & Environment

17. ChemVolt Global Partners with AP for 5 GWh Li-ion Gigafactory

- **Investment:** ₹2,500 crore in Andhra Pradesh.
- **Timeline:** Phase I (1 GWh) by Q3 2027; Phase II (Total 5 GWh) by Q2 2029.
- **Job Creation:** 1,500 direct and 4,000+ indirect jobs.

18. New Blind Caecilian Species Discovered in Western Ghats

- **Species:** *Gegeneophis valmiki*.
- **Discovery:** Found in Satara district, Maharashtra, by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI).
- **Note:** Earthworm-like amphibian that aerates soil and regulates invertebrates.

19. Solidus Commissions Punjab's Largest 34 MW Solar Captive Project

- **Collaboration:** Solidus Techno Power & Blue Sky NRG.
- **Impact:** Will supply 71 million units of clean energy annually to Madhav KRG Ltd, reducing 67,000 tons of \$CO_2\$.

20. Sault Launches World's First Digital Life Vault

- **Launch:** At TiECon Mangaluru 2026.

- **Function:** Organizes financial assets, memories, and life instructions for legacy management.
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International Relations & Defense

21. India and Japan Conduct Joint HNS Response Drill in Mumbai

- **Vessel:** Onboard ICGS Samudra Prahari.
- **Focus:** Chemical spill response (Hazardous and Noxious Substances) and maritime partnership.

22. Omar Bin Hadi Appointed Bangladesh Diplomat in UK

- **Role:** 2nd Secretary at the UK mission.
 - **Context:** Brother of slain 2024 activist Osman Hadi; appointment reflects political sensitivities of the interim administration.
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Awards & Recognition

23. Bakul Limbasiya Wins APO National Award

- **Sector:** Lab-Grown Diamonds (LGD).
- **Contribution:** Produced India's first LGD in 2004 via Bhathwari Technologies.
- **Administered by:** National Productivity Council.

24. REC Limited Wins Silver at SKOCH Awards 2025

- **Category:** Corporate Net Zero Transition.
- **Note:** REC is a Maharatna NBFC leading financing for India's climate goals.

25. RPF Inspector Chandana Sinha Wins Top Railways Award

- **Award:** Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar.
 - **Achievement:** Rescuing over 150 children in 2024 under **Operation Nanhe Farishte**.
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Sports & Appointments

26. 6th Khelo India Winter Games Kicks Off in Leh, Ladakh

- **Dates:** Jan 20–26, 2026.
- **New Addition:** Olympic Figure Skating (First time).
- **Venues:** NDS Stadium, Guphuks Pond, and LSRC.

27. VP Releases Hindi Edition of Dr. C. Palanivelu's Autobiography 'GUTS'

- **Author:** Dr. C. Palanivelu (pioneer of laparoscopy in South India).
- **Released by:** Vice President CP Radhakrishnan.

28. APEDA Hosts Organic Conclave & Buyer Seller Meet in Assam

- **Location:** Guwahati.
- **Focus:** Strengthening agri-export linkages and promoting the **National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP)**.

29. SeedlingLabs Appoints Dr. Sudhir Kumar Patnaik to Advisory Board

- **Company:** AI-native PDaaS (Product Delivery as a Service) firm.
- **Background:** Dr. Patnaik is a Director at Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham.