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## Two New Wetlands Added to India's Ramsar List | National Current Affairs | 02 Feb 2026

### Why in News?

Union Environment Minister **Bhupender Yadav** announced the addition of **two new wetlands to India's Ramsar List**, ahead of **World Wetlands Day 2026**.

### Key Points

- **New Ramsar Sites:** **Patna Bird Sanctuary** in **Etah district of Uttar Pradesh** and **Chhari-Dhand** in **Kutch district of Gujarat** have been included in **India's Ramsar list** of wetlands of international importance.
  - India's Ramsar network has grown from **26 sites in 2014 to 98 sites in 2026**.
- **Patna Bird Sanctuary:** Patna Bird Sanctuary is one of the **smallest protected bird sanctuaries** and is an **Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA)**.
- **Chhari-Dhand Wetland:** A **seasonal saline wetland** in the **Rann of Kutch region**, crucial for **migratory waterfowl and desert biodiversity**.
  - It is Gujarat's **fifth Ramsar site** after Nalsarovar, Thol, Khijadiya and Wadhvana.
- **Importance:** The newly added sites support **hundreds of migratory and resident bird species** and host wildlife such as **chinkara, wolves, caracal, desert cats and desert foxes**, besides endangered bird species.
- **Significance:** Inclusion in the Ramsar list reflects **international recognition of India's commitment** to wetland conservation and sustainable management under globally accepted frameworks.
- **Ramsar Convention:** It is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, signed in 1971 at Ramsar, Iran.
  - India became a signatory on 1 February 1982.
- **World Wetlands Day 2026:** It is observed on 2 February.
  - **Theme: Wetlands and Traditional Knowledge: Celebrating Cultural Heritage**

**Read More:** [World Wetlands Day](#), [Ramsar sites](#), [Ramsar Convention](#), [Migratory birds](#)

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## PAIMANA Portal Launched by MoSPI | National Current Affairs | 02 Feb 2026

### Why in News?

The **Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** has operationalised **PAIMANA** — a new **web-based monitoring portal** for Central Sector Infrastructure Projects worth **₹150 crore and above**.

## Key Points

- **PAIMANA:** It stands for **Project Assessment, Infrastructure Monitoring & Analytics for Nation-building** and is a **centralized digital platform** to monitor large infrastructure projects.
  - It has replaced the earlier **OCMS-2006 (Online Computerised Monitoring System)** to improve real-time tracking and analytics.
- **Integration:** PAIMANA is integrated with the **DPIIT's Integrated Project Monitoring Portal** using **APIs (Application Programming Interface)**, enabling **automatic data flow** and reducing manual data entry.
  - The integration follows the principle of **"one data, one entry"** to standardise project reporting and minimise errors.
- **Project Coverage:** As of **December 2025**, a total of **1,392 ongoing central sector infrastructure projects** have been onboarded on the PAIMANA portal.
- **Sectoral Spread:** Projects span key sectors including **Transport & Logistics, Railways, Coal, Power, Housing & Urban Affairs, Water Resources, Telecommunications, Health & Family Welfare**, etc.
- **Features:** The portal offers **interactive dashboards, advanced analytics, role-based access, automated reports and query modules** for better oversight and decision-making.
- **Objective:** To enhance **transparency, data quality and timely implementation** of major infrastructure projects, supporting **nation-building and economic growth**.

Read More: [Digital platform](#), [Economic growth](#), [DPIIT](#)

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## Meghalaya's Living Root Bridges Nominated for UNESCO World Heritage List | National Current Affairs | 02 Feb 2026

### Why in News?

India has submitted the nomination dossier of **Meghalaya's Living Root Bridges**—titled **"Jingkieng Jri / Lyu Chrai Cultural Landscape"**—to **UNESCO**.

## Key Points

- **Nomination Submitted:** India's Ambassador to UNESCO, **Vishal V. Sharma**, handed over the **nomination dossier** to the Director of **UNESCO's World Heritage Centre**.
  - **Heritage Value:** The nomination highlights the **cultural, ecological and technological significance** of the living root bridges, emphasizing **traditional ecological stewardship** and generational knowledge.
- **Location:** The bridges are mainly located across the **southern slopes of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills** in Meghalaya.
- **Cultural Significance:** These bridges are **bio-engineered structures** created and maintained by **indigenous Khasi and Jaintia communities**.
  - Symbolizing a **deep harmony between people, nature, and traditional knowledge**.
- **Global Recognition:** If approved, the site will receive **UNESCO World Heritage status**, bringing global recognition and boosting **conservation efforts and sustainable tourism**.

Read More: [UNESCO](#), [World Heritage Sites](#), [Living Root Bridges](#), [Sustainable tourism](#)

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## US Museum to Return Three Ancient Bronze Sculptures Stolen from Tamil Nadu to India | National Current Affairs | 02 Feb 2026

### Why in News?

The **Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art** announced it would return three ancient bronze sculptures to India. The decision follows a multi-year provenance investigation which confirmed the artefacts were illegally removed from **temples in Tamil Nadu**.

### Key Points:

- **Repatriated Sculptures:** The three relics are masterpieces of South Indian bronze casting, originally used as sacred procession icons in temple rituals:
  - **Shiva Nataraja:** A Chola-period masterpiece dating to circa **990 CE**.
  - **Somaskanda:** A **12th-century** Chola bronze depicting Shiva with his wife Parvati and son Skanda.
  - **Saint Sundarar with Paravai:** A **16th-century** Vijayanagar-period bronze depicting the Tamil saint and his wife.
- **Identification:** The sculptures' original locations were confirmed using rare 1950s photographs from the **French Institute of Pondicherry** archives.
- **Original Sites:** The **Shiva Nataraja** was stolen from the **Sri Bhava Aushadesvara Temple** in Thanjavur district.
  - The **Somaskanda** was traced to the **Visvanatha Swamy Temple** in Alathur village, Thiruvarur district.
  - The **Saint Sundarar** sculpture originated from a Shiva temple in **Veerasolapuram village**, Kallakurichi district.
- **Museum's Ethical Commitment:** The Smithsonian museum cited its **ethical stewardship and transparency policies**, including its **Shared Stewardship and Ethical Returns Policy**, as the basis for agreeing to repatriate the sculptures.
- **Cultural heritage restoration:** Return of sacred temple bronzes strengthens India's efforts to reclaim its **artistic lineage and religious history**.

Read More: [Chola-period](#), [Vijayanagar](#), [Shiva Nataraja](#)

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## Indian Institute of Foreign Trade Tops Times B-School Ranking 2026 | National Current Affairs | 02 Feb 2026

### Why in News?

The **Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT)** has secured the **first position** in the **Times B-School Ranking 2026**, consolidating its status as one of India's leading management institutions with a **distinctive focus on international trade and global business education**.

### Key Points:

- **IIFT:** Established in **1963** as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
  - **Status:** It is a **Deemed-to-be University** with campuses in Delhi, Kolkata, Kakinada, and

GIFT City.

- **Core Focus:** Offers flagship MBA programs, executive education, and doctoral research specifically tailored for **international business**.
- **SRM University AP (Paari School of Business):** Ranked **No. 1** in the **Top Emerging B-School** category.
- **Significance of Ranking:** The **Times B-School Ranking 2026** assesses business schools across parameters such as **academic excellence, employability outcomes, industry engagement, curriculum relevance and reputation**.
  - **Leadership Role:** IIFT's first-place finish reflects its **strength in international business education** and its role in preparing future leaders for global trade dynamics.
- **Strategic Growth:** The achievement is attributed to the institute's expanded global orientation, academic rigor, and the launch of new initiatives like its offshore campus in **Dubai**.
- **Vision 2047:** Commerce Secretary **Rajesh Agrawal** emphasized that the institute's excellence aligns with the national goal of **Viksit Bharat**, nurturing professionals capable of driving India to become a global trade powerhouse.

Read More: [Viksit Bharat](#)

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## Captain Hansja Sharma Becomes First Woman Pilot of Rudra Armed Helicopter | National Current Affairs | 02 Feb 2026

### Why in News?

**Captain Hansja Sharma** has created history by becoming the **first woman pilot in the Indian Army** to be **qualified to fly the Rudra Armed Helicopter** — a highly advanced, weaponised helicopter used in frontline combat roles.

### Key Points:

- **Historical First:** While women have been flying transport and utility helicopters (like Cheetah and Chetak), Captain Sharma is the first to transition to the **Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH-WSI) Rudra**, a dedicated attack platform.
- **Rudra Armed Helicopter:** The Rudra is an armed variant of the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
  - Equipped with a 20mm turret gun, 70mm rockets, and **anti-tank guided missiles**.
  - Designed for **Close Air Support (CAS)** and high-altitude warfare.
- **Gender Neutrality in Combat:** This follows the 2021 decision to allow women into the Army Aviation Corps as pilots. Previously, women were restricted to ground duties or non-combat flying.
- **Modernization of the Aviation Corps:** The induction of skilled pilots like Captain Sharma into the Rudra fleet enhances the operational readiness of the Army's "eyes and ears" in the sky.
- **Indigenous Power:** Operating the Rudra showcases the synergy between human excellence and the **Atmanirbhar Bharat** (Self-Reliant India) initiative in defense manufacturing.

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