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Content

• Uttarakhand Renames Raj Bhavans as Lok Bhavans.....	3
• Finance Commission Grants ₹94 Crores for Uttarakhand PRIs.....	3
• Elephant Safaris Resume in Uttrakhand	3
• Military Exercise SURYA KIRAN Concludes in Uttarakhand	4
• Incentive to Uttarakhand for Mining Sector Reforms	4

National Current Affairs

• India to Host 2 nd WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine	5
• Nuclear Energy Transformation Bill, 2025	5
• Defence Estates Day Celebrations of 100th Year	6
• India, ADB Sign \$2.2 Billion Development Loans.....	6
• National Geospatial Workshop on Geospatial Mission	7
• 25,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras by March 2027.....	7
• Sahakar Sarathi.....	8
• NAMASTE Scheme: Nationwide Survey of Sewer and Septic Tank Workers.....	8
• White Spot diseases in Andhra Pradesh.....	8
• North East Investors Summit, 2025	9
• Prestigious National Awards 2025	9
• OTT Sector as India's Soft Power	10
• Anti-Terror Conference to Be Inaugurated in New Delhi	10
• India to Chair the Kimberley Process from 2026	10
• Veer Bal Diwas.....	11
• New BIS Standard for Incense Sticks	11
• Bronze at 2025 FIDE World Rapid Chess Championship	11
• K-4 medium-range ballistic missile	12
• Bharat Taxi Initiative.....	12

Uttarakhand Renames Raj Bhavans as Lok Bhavans

Why in News?

Uttarakhand has renamed the Raj Bhavans in Dehradun and Nainital as 'Lok Bhavans' following a Union Home Ministry directive encouraging states to drop the colonial-era title and adopt a more people-centric name.

Key Points

- 💡 **Change of Name:** The Governor's Residences in Dehradun (main capital) and Nainital (summer capital) are now officially called Lok Bhavans instead of Raj Bhavans.
- 💡 **Directive:** Home Ministry urged all States and Union Territories to replace 'Raj Bhavan' with 'Lok Bhavan' and 'Raj Niwas' with 'Lok Niwas' to promote a democratic and people-centric identity.
- 💡 **Rationale:** Government officials said that the revised nomenclature highlights the **people-centric role of these institutions**, moving away from **colonial or royal symbolism**.
- 💡 **Implementation:** Signage, official stationery and digital platforms will be updated to reflect the new name in the coming weeks.
- 💡 **Wider Trend:** Many other states and UTs, including West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana, have also adopted the **Lok Bhavan** nomenclature following the central guideline.

Finance Commission Grants ₹94 Crores for Uttarakhand PRIs

Why in News?

The Union Government has released ₹94.236 crore as XV Finance Commission grants for Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Uttarakhand for FY 2025-26.

Key Points

- 💡 **Grant Release:** The government allocated ₹94.236 crore as XV Finance Commission grants to Rural Local Bodies (RLBs)/PRIs in Uttarakhand for FY 2025-26.

- 💡 **Untied Grants:** This includes the second installment of Untied Grants for FY 2024-25 covering 13 District Panchayats, 95 Block Panchayats, and 7,784 Gram Panchayats.
- 💡 **Additional Release:** An amount of ₹13.60 lakh, previously withheld from the first instalment of FY 2024-25, was released to 15 newly eligible Gram Panchayats.
- 💡 **Role of Ministries:** The Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Ministry of Jal Shakti (Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation) recommend the grants, which are released by the Ministry of Finance in two installments during the financial year.
- 💡 **Purpose of Untied Grants:** Untied Grants allow RLBS/PRIs to address **local needs** under the **29 subjects of the Eleventh Schedule**, excluding salaries and establishment expenses.
- 💡 **Tied Grants:** Tied Grants are earmarked for **essential services** like sanitation, ODF maintenance, waste management, drinking water supply, rainwater harvesting, and water recycling.
- 💡 **Finance Commission:** It is a **constitutional body** constituted under Article 280 of the Constitution of India, responsible for **recommending the distribution of financial resources between the Union and the States**, including tax devolution and grants-in-aid.

Elephant Safaris Resume in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

Elephant safaris have resumed in Uttarakhand's **Jim Corbett** and **Rajaji Tiger Reserves** after **seven years**.

Key Points

- 💡 **Background:** Safaris were halted in **2018** due to a **High Court ban** under the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972** and **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960**; however, the Supreme Court later lifted the ban, permitting resumption after regulatory preparations.

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- 💡 **Tourism Experience:** Elephant safaris provide a **slow-paced, elevated forest experience**, enabling better wildlife observation and promoting **biodiversity awareness**.
- 💡 **Economic Impact:** The safaris are expected to **boost eco-tourism revenues** and benefit **local communities** dependent on tourism.
- 💡 **Challenges and Concerns:** Concerns include **animal welfare, habitat disturbance, and ethical use of elephants**, requiring strict **welfare protocols, limited rides, and veterinary monitoring**.
- 💡 **Jim Corbett Tiger Reserve:** Corbett Tiger Reserve in Uttarakhand is India's first national park and a major tiger conservation site under [Project Tiger](#).
 - ❖ **Ancient Name:** Hailey National Park (1936), renamed after Jim Corbett (1957).
 - ❖ **River:** Ramganga flows through the park.
 - ❖ **Location:** Spread across Nainital, Pauri Garhwal, and Almora districts.
 - ❖ **Significance:** India's **first national park**, part of **Project Tiger**.
 - ❖ **Wildlife:** Known for tigers, elephants, leopards, deer, and birds.

Military Exercise SURYA KIRAN Concludes in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

The 19th edition of Joint Military Exercise **SURYAKIRAN** between India and Nepal concluded in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand.

Key Points

- 💡 **Location:** The exercise was held at **Foreign Training Node in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand**.
- 💡 **Operational Focus:** Joint **counter-terrorism operations** in difficult terrain reflecting strong operational coordination and interoperability.
- 💡 **Symbolic Conclusion:** The Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Nepal

- planted a **'Tree of Friendship'**, symbolising mutual trust, and the enduring strength of bilateral defence cooperation.
- 💡 **Defence Diplomacy:** The exercise highlights defence engagement between **India and Nepal**, enhancing mutual preparedness for contingencies in the challenging **Himalayan terrain** and strengthening cooperation in military affairs.
- 💡 **India-Nepal Boundary Dispute:** The dispute mainly concerns the **Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura region**.

Incentive to Uttarakhand for Mining Sector Reforms

Why in News?

The **Central Government** has approved a **₹200 crore incentive** for **Uttarakhand** for its effective implementation of **mining sector reforms** for the financial year 2025–26.

Key Points

- 💡 **National Ranking:** Uttarakhand achieved **second place nationally** in mining reforms.
- 💡 **Scheme:** Allocated under the "[Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment \(SACCI\)](#)" scheme.
- 💡 **Reform Measures:** Implementation of mining reforms through
 - ❖ E-auction system for mineral allocation.
 - ❖ Satellite and digital monitoring of mines.
 - ❖ Transparent licensing and compliance mechanisms.
 - ❖ Measures to curb illegal mining.
- 💡 **Impact on Revenue:** Mining revenue in the state rose significantly due to reforms, enhancing its contribution to the state economy.
- 💡 **Key Minerals:** Limestone, magnesite, gypsum, copper, graphite, soapstone (steatite) and dolomite are the major minerals found in Uttarakhand.



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National Current Affairs

India to Host 2nd WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine

Why in News?

India will host the **Second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine** in New Delhi from 17–19 December 2025, building on the inaugural summit held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, in 2023.

Key Points

- 💡 **Organiser:** Jointly organised by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** and the **Ministry of Ayush** to advance global dialogue on health and well-being through traditional medicine.
- 💡 **Theme:** The summit will be held under the theme **“Restoring balance: The science and practice of health and well-being,”** focusing on equitable, sustainable health systems.
- 💡 **Global Focus:** Policymakers and leaders from over 100 countries will participate **to shape the future role of traditional medicine.**
- 💡 **Vision:** The event aims to reaffirm the relevance of traditional medicine while promoting its integration into **national health systems** based on science, evidence and responsible practice.
- 💡 **WHO Strategy:** Discussions will align with the **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034** to advance people-centred healthcare and planetary well-being.
- 💡 **Plenary Sessions:** Key deliberations will cover **restoring balance in health systems, scientific investment, governance, biodiversity stewardship, and Indigenous rights.**
- 💡 **Innovation & Evidence:** The summit will emphasize innovative approaches to elevate traditional medicine responsibly **through ethical use of digital technologies**, including AI.
- 💡 **Diverse Issues:** Over 25 sessions will address regulation, integration, protection of biodiversity, and intellectual property rights.

WHO

- 💡 **Founded:** 7 April 1948, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- 💡 **Type:** Specialized agency of the **United Nations** for global public health.
- 💡 **Membership:** 194 member states (as of 2025).
- 💡 **Objective:** Promote health, achieve **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**, and respond to **global health emergencies.**
- 💡 **Current Director-General:** Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (since 2017).

Nuclear Energy Transformation Bill, 2025

Why in News?

Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Science and Technology, introduced the **Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Bill, 2025**, in Parliament to modernise India's nuclear energy legal framework.

Key Points

- 💡 **New Legal Framework:** The Bill proposes a comprehensive law for nuclear energy by repealing the **Atomic Energy Act, 1962** and the **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010.**
- 💡 **Energy Security:** It aims to expand nuclear installed capacity to ensure **reliable, clean and round-the-clock power** for future needs such as **data centres.**
- 💡 **Decarbonisation Goal:** The Bill aligns with India's long-term climate commitments, including a target of **100 GW nuclear power capacity by 2047** and **net-zero emissions by 2070.**
- 💡 **Private Participation:** It encourages greater involvement of the **domestic industry and the private sector** in nuclear power development.
- 💡 **Regulatory Mechanism:** The Bill introduces updated provisions for **licensing, safety authorisation, suspension and cancellation** to strengthen regulatory oversight.

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- Civil Liability:** A revised civil liability framework for nuclear damage is proposed to enhance **safety, accountability and compensation mechanisms**.
- Institutional Setup:** The Bill provides for bodies such as the **Atomic Energy Redressal Advisory Council**, Claims Commissioners and a **Nuclear Damage Claims Commission**.
- Technology Coverage:** Nuclear energy and radiation-based technologies are brought under a **modernised regulatory structure**.
- National Transition:** The Bill reflects India's intent to modernise nuclear governance while balancing **clean energy expansion, safety and public interest**.

Nuclear Energy

- First Plant:** Tarapur, Maharashtra (1969)
- Largest Site:** Rajasthan – maximum nuclear power generation.
- Other Key Sites:** Kakrapar (Gujarat), Kudankulam & Kalpakkam (Tamil Nadu), Narora (U.P.).
- Reactor Types:** PHWR (majority), BWR (Tarapur), Fast Breeder Reactor (Kalpakkam).
- Fuel:** Uranium & Thorium (India has largest Thorium reserves).

- Defence Estates Role:** The Department manages the largest landholding of the Government of India under the **Ministry of Defence**.
- Digital Transformation:** Modernised land management with projects like **E-Chhawani**, providing 100% municipal services online to ~20 lakh cantonment residents.
- Awards Recognition:** Won the **National Water Awards** for **Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari** for efforts in water conservation and rejuvenation of water bodies.
- Digitisation:** Complete **digitisation of legacy land records**, ensuring preservation, easy retrieval, and secure archival.
- Raksha Bhoomi Platform:** A centralised software '**Raksha Bhoomi**' serves as a unified repository of all **defence land records** on secure servers.
- Advanced Survey Tools:** Uses Differential **GPS, GIS** tools and high-resolution satellite imagery to improve **land accuracy** and management.
- Tech Innovation:** Centre of Excellence on Satellite and Unmanned Remote Vehicle Initiative leverages **AI/ML** and emerging technologies for next-generation defence land management solutions.

Defence Estates Day Celebrations of 100th Year

Why in News?

Raksha Mantri **Shri Rajnath Singh** will preside over the **Defence Estates Day celebrations** at Raksha Sampada Bhawan, Delhi Cantonment, on **16 December 2025**, marking the **100th year** of the Defence Estates Department.

Key Points

- Celebrations & Awards:** Raksha Mantri will confer the **Raksha Mantri Awards for Excellence in public service for Defence Land Management and Municipal Administration** across **61 Cantonment Boards**.
- Centenary Significance:** The event marks the **100th anniversary** of the Defence Estates Department, with origins tracing back to Barrackpore in 1765 and formalisation on **16 December 1926**.

India, ADB Sign \$2.2 Billion Development Loans

Why in News?

The Government of India and the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** signed agreements for **five loans totalling over \$2.2 billion** to support various key development projects across multiple sectors.

Key Points

- Regional Impact:** Projects span **three states (Assam, Meghalaya and Tamilnadu)**, boosting development across sectors and regions.
- Loan Value:** Agreements worth **over \$2.2 billion** signed between India and **ADB**.
- Projects Covered:** Includes programmes for **skilling, rooftop solar deployment, healthcare, metro rail, and ecotourism**.

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- Skilling Initiative: Supports Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs Programme.
- Solar Programme: Funds Accelerating Affordable and Inclusive Rooftop Solar Systems Development under Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar: Mukt Bijli Yojana (PMSGMBY).
- Healthcare Project: Includes Assam State Tertiary Health Care Augmentation Project (ASTHA).
- Urban Transport: Supports Chennai Metro Rail Investment Project (Tranche 2).
- Ecotourism & Livelihoods: Financing for Integrated Ecotourism and Sustainable Agri-based Livelihood Development in Meghalaya.
- Flagship Programmes: Loans will further India's **national flagship programmes** in renewable energy, healthcare, urban infrastructure and skill development.

ADB

- Established: 1966, headquarters at Manila, Philippines.
- Type: Multilateral development bank for Asia-Pacific region.
- Members: 68 members (49 regional, 19 non-regional).
- Objective: Promote economic growth, poverty reduction and sustainable development.
- India-ADB: India is a founding member and one of the largest borrowers from ADB.

National Geospatial Workshop on Geospatial Mission

Why in News?

The Survey of India (under Department of Science & Technology) will host a National Workshop on Strengthening of Geospatial Ecosystem titled "Geospatial Mission: An Enabler of **Viksit Bharat**."

Key Points

- Inauguration & Venue: The workshop will be inaugurated by Dr Jitendra Singh on 17 December 2025 at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi.

- Objective: To strengthen India's geospatial ecosystem and advance the **National Geospatial Mission**.
- Participants: Will bring together **policymakers, technologists, industry leaders and domain experts**.
- Announced: The **National Geospatial Mission** (announced in the Union Budget 2025–26) aims to modernise geodetic frameworks, enhance geospatial infrastructure, standardise data, and adopt emerging technologies.
- Significance: A key step in realising the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision through enhanced geospatial capabilities.

25,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras by March 2027

Why in News?

The Government has set a new target to increase the number of **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras (JAKs)** in India to **25,000 by March 2027**.

Key Points

- Current Status: As of **30 November 2025**, a total of **17,610 Janaushadhi Kendras (JAKs)** have been opened nationwide, compared to only **80 in 2014**, showing significant expansion of the scheme.
- Target Set: The Government has set a target of increasing JAKs to **25,000 by March 2027** to further improve access to low-cost quality generic medicines.
- About Jan Aushadhi Kendra: It is a **government-supported retail outlet** scheme that sells **quality generic medicines at affordable prices** to the public.
- Growing Awareness: Rising **sales volumes** and an expanding **product basket** under the scheme indicate increasing public confidence and awareness about Janaushadhi medicines.
- Entrepreneur Participation: Enhanced viability and attractiveness of JAKs have led to a **37% increase in outlets** and a **38% increase in MRP sales value** in the last financial year.

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- Application Process: JAKs are opened by inviting online applications from individual entrepreneurs, NGOs, societies, trusts, firms, and companies through the official Janaushadhi website.

Sahakar Sarathi

Why in News?

The Government of India has established Sahakar Sarathi, a Shared Service Entity (SSE), to modernise and digitally empower Rural Cooperative Banks (RCBs).

Key Points

- Establishment of Sahakar Sarathi: Sahakar Sarathi (SSE) has been set up with the approval of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to strengthen the technological and service capabilities of Rural Cooperative Banks.
- Date of Registration: The entity was registered on 21 July 2025 with the aim of providing shared infrastructure for cooperative banking digitalisation.
- Authorised Capital & Shareholding: Sahakar Sarathi has an authorised capital of ₹1,000 crore, with equal 33.33% shareholding each for NABARD, NCDC, and Rural Cooperative Banks.
- Services Provided: It offers shared modern banking infrastructure and digital services including: Common Core Banking Solutions (CBS), Digital payments like AePS and UPI, Cybersecurity, IT governance etc.
- Purpose & Impact: The initiative seeks to help RCBs provide modern, standardised, and digital banking services, enhance customer reach, and improve operational efficiency comparable to other regulated financial institutions.

NAMASTE Scheme: Nationwide Survey of Sewer and Septic Tank Workers

Why in News?

A nationwide survey covering over 4,800 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) was conducted under the National Action

for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) scheme to identify Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) and strengthen their safety and dignity in sanitation work.

Key Points

- Survey Objective: The survey was conducted to identify Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) under the NAMASTE scheme — **not manual scavengers** — to ensure improved working conditions and safety.
- Fatality Data: According to the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK), 471 sanitation workers have lost their lives due to hazardous sewer and septic tank cleaning between 2019 and October 2025.
- Legal Prohibition: Section 7 of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 prohibits hazardous entry into sewer or septic tanks.
- NAMASTE Scheme: Launched in 2023–24 by the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment in convergence with the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs
- Scheme Objectives: The scheme aims to **eliminate manual entry** into sewer and septic tanks and promote **mechanised cleaning** to achieve **zero fatality** and protect workers health.
- Scheme Components: Support includes **safety devices** for Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs), **capital subsidies** for mechanised equipment, **occupational safety training**, and **workshops** on prevention of hazardous cleaning.
- SBM-U 2.0 Linkage: Under Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM-U) 2.0, the Used Water Management (UWM) component focuses on eradicating hazardous sewer/septic tank entry through mechanisation.

White Spot diseases in Andhra Pradesh

Why in News?

The Government of India informed about White Spot Disease outbreaks in aquaculture in Andhra Pradesh

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and the measures taken under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) to monitor and control aquatic animal diseases.

Key Points

- 💡 **White Spot Disease:** In Andhra Pradesh, field teams collected aquaculture samples; 4 samples tested positive under passive surveillance and 23 under active surveillance for White Spot Syndrome Virus (WSSV).
- 💡 **Disease Surveillance:** The National Surveillance Programme for Aquatic Animal Diseases (NSPAAD) is being implemented under PMMSY with a ₹33.78 crore outlay to detect and manage aquatic diseases nationwide.
- 💡 **Sample Analysis:** Samples are analysed at the State Institute of Fisheries Technology (SIFT), Kakinada.
- 💡 **Insurance Support:** Under the Aquaculture Crop Insurance Scheme, 85 aquafarmers in Andhra Pradesh are covered; in 2025, ₹5.21 lakh in claims were disbursed.
- 💡 **Prevention Guidelines:** The Coastal Aquaculture Authority has issued guidelines for SPF shrimp or broodstock centres, hatcheries, farms, health monitoring and SPF certification to prevent WSSV outbreaks.
- 💡 **Biosecurity Measures:** Mandatory quarantine of imported shrimp broodstock and registration of shrimp hatcheries and farms with the Coastal Aquaculture Authority are enforced to limit disease spread.
- 💡 **Laboratory Surveillance:** PCR-based disease surveillance of shrimp and water samples supports early detection and disease control.
- 💡 **Alternative Farming:** The Government promotes Biofloc Technology (BFT) and Recirculatory Aquaculture Systems (RAS) to reduce disease risk and improve biosecurity and sustainability.

North East Investors Summit, 2025

Why in News?

The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) highlighted the aims and key focus area of the Rising Northeast Investors Summit 2025.

Key Points

- 💡 **Event:** Rising Northeast Investors Summit 2025, organised by MDoNER to attract investments to the North Eastern Region.
- 💡 **Focus Sectors:** Tourism & Hospitality, Agro-Food Processing & allied sectors, Textiles, Handloom & Handicrafts, Healthcare, Education & Skill Development, IT/ITeS, Entertainment & Sports, Infrastructure & Logistics, and Energy.
- 💡 **Investment Interest:** The summit and its roadshows collectively garnered investment interests of ₹4.48 lakh crore through MoUs, letters of intent, and investor leads from private and public sector entities.
- 💡 **Renewable Energy Projects:** Renewable energy schemes in the region, including PM Surya Ghar, Muft Bijli Yojana, PM KUSUM, Solar Park projects, off-grid electrification (PM JANMAN), Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA) houses, and bio-gas plant installations across the North East.

Prestigious National Awards 2025

Why in News?

The National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) under the Ministry of Culture has been conferred with two prestigious National Awards 2025 by the Public Relations Society of India (PRSI) for excellence in communication and public engagement.

Key Points

- 💡 **Awards Received:** NCSM won two PRSI National Awards 2025 — one for the “Har Ghar Museum” initiative in the Best Use of Social Media in a Corporate Campaign category and another for the “Waste to Art” publication in the Special/Prestige Publication category.
- 💡 **Har Ghar Museum Campaign:** A nationwide campaign inviting people to share photos, videos, and stories of personal collections to create a digital archive of everyday heritage and boost public engagement.

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- 💡 **Waste to Art Publication:** Demonstrate the transformation of 1,250 kg of waste into art installations at NCSM, promoting **circular economy** and public engagement in **sustainable creativity**.
- 💡 **Public Engagement:** The Har Ghar Museum campaign has achieved **over 10 million views** on social media, **over 1 million individual engagements**, and **150+ curated entries**, reflecting strong nationwide participation.
- 💡 **Award Ceremony:** The awards were presented at the **47th All India Public Relations Conference** held in Dehradun, Uttarakhand from **December 13 to 15, 2025**.

OTT Sector as India's Soft Power

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting** highlighted the growing role of the **OTT (Over-The-Top)** sector as a key driver of India's soft power and global cultural outreach.

Key Points

- 💡 **OTT Platform :** OTT (Over-The-Top) refers to digital platforms that deliver video, audio, or media content directly to users via the internet, without relying on traditional cable or satellite television networks (e.g., Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+ Hotstar).
- 💡 **Soft Power Role:** The OTT sector promotes Indian stories, culture, creativity, and heritage to audiences within India and across the world.
- 💡 **Revenue Growth:** Video subscription revenues in India grew by 11% in 2024, reaching ₹9,200 crore.
- 💡 **User Base:** Estimated 9.5–11.8 crore individuals in India pay for OTT streaming services.
- 💡 **WAVES OTT Platform:** Prasar Bharati's WAVES OTT platform recorded over 80 lakh downloads in its first year and provides free access to Doordarshan and All India Radio archives, regional arts, documentaries and multilingual content.
- 💡 **Support for Creators:** WAVES OTT has created a framework to support emerging filmmakers and content creators with global distribution opportunities.

- 💡 **Anti-Piracy Measure:** The newly added **Section 7(1B)(ii)** of the **Cinematograph Act, 1952** empowers the government to take action against intermediaries hosting **pirated films** online.

Anti-Terror Conference to Be Inaugurated in New Delhi

Why in News?

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah will inaugurate the Anti-Terror Conference in New Delhi on **26 December 2025**.

Key Points

- 💡 **Inaugurated By:** Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah will preside over the inauguration.
 - ❖ **Aim:** The conference is aimed at strengthening India's counter-terrorism preparedness and coordination.
- 💡 **Organiser:** The conference is organised by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- 💡 **Vision:** Shaped under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of zero tolerance for terrorism.
- 💡 **Focus Areas:** This include foreign evidence collection, digital forensics, data analysis in counter-terrorism investigations and disrupting terror-financing networks.
 - ❖ **Counter-Radicalisation:** Preventing radicalisation and recruitment, especially through digital platforms.

India to Chair the Kimberley Process from 2026

Why in News?

India has been selected to assume the **Chairpersonship of the Kimberley Process (KP)** from **1 January 2026**.

Key Points

- 💡 **Kimberley Process (KP):** An international multilateral initiative aimed at preventing the trade in conflict diamonds.

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- ❖ **Conflict Diamonds:** These are rough diamonds used by rebel groups to finance armed conflicts against legitimate governments.
- 💡 **Tripartite Structure:** The KP is a joint initiative of governments, the international diamond industry, and civil society organisations.
- 💡 **Headquarters:** Not a formal organisation; operates through member states and rotating chairs
- 💡 **Certification Scheme:** The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) came into effect on 1 January 2003 under a UN Security Council mandate.
- 💡 **Global Coverage:** The KP has 60 participants, including the European Union and its Member States.
- 💡 **India's Role:** This will be the third time (2008, 2019, and 2026) India has been entrusted with this leadership responsibility.

Veer Bal Diwas

Why in News?

The Ministry of Women and Child Development announced that Veer Bal Diwas will be observed nationally on 26 December to honour the bravery and values of young heroes.

Key Points

- 💡 **Veer Bal Diwas:** This day honours the supreme sacrifice of the Sahibzadas — the sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who attained martyrdom in 1705 resisting forced conversion.
- 💡 **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar:** The President of India, Droupadi Murmu, will present this award to children for exceptional achievements in bravery, arts, science, social service, environment, and sports.
- 💡 **Awardees:** This year, 20 children from 18 States and Union Territories have been selected for the award.
- 💡 **Ceremony Details:** The award ceremony is held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

New BIS Standard for Incense Sticks

Why in News?

The Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Pralhad Joshi, released a new BIS standard for incense sticks, to enhance consumer safety and product quality, on National Consumer Day 2025 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

Key Points

- 💡 **Standard Title:** IS 19412:2025 – Incense Sticks (Agarbatti) is an Indian Standard developed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).
- 💡 **BIS:** It is India's national standards body, established under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016, responsible for setting and certifying quality and safety standards.
- 💡 **Consumer Confidence:** Products complying with IS 19412:2025 are eligible to carry the BIS Standard Mark, enabling consumers to identify safe, tested, and quality-assured incense sticks.
- 💡 **Prohibited Substances:** The standard restricts the use of insecticidal chemicals such as alethrin, permethrin, cypermethrin, deltamethrin, and fipronil.
- 💡 **Product Coverage:** It applies to machine-made, hand-made, and traditional masala agarbattis, prescribing norms for raw materials, burning quality, fragrance performance, and permissible chemical limits.

Bronze at 2025 FIDE World Rapid Chess Championship

Why in News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Indian chess grandmasters Arjun Erigaisi and Koneru Humpy for winning bronze medals at the 2025 FIDE World Rapid Chess Championship.

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Key Points

- 💡 **Venue:** The Championship was held in **Doha, Qatar**.
- 💡 **Medal Winners:** Arjun Erigaisi and Koneru Humpy
- 💡 Arjun Erigaisi won the bronze medal in the **Men's section**.
- 💡 Koneru Humpy secured bronze in the **Women's section**

ADB

- 💡 **2025 FIDE World Rapid Chess Championship:** The FIDE World Rapid Championship features a **13-round Swiss system format** with rapid time controls, testing players' skill at high speed.
 - ❖ Gold – Men's section: **Magnus Carlsen (Norway)**
 - ❖ Gold – Women's section: **Ju Wenjun (China)**

K-4 medium-range ballistic missile

Why in News?

India successfully test-fires 3,500-km **K-4 Medium-Range Ballistic Missile** from nuclear-powered submarines.

Key Points

- 💡 **Launch Platform:** The launch was carried out from **INS Arighat**, a nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) of the **Indian Navy**, in the **Bay of Bengal**.
- 💡 **Strategic Significance:** Enhances India's sea-based nuclear deterrence and contributes to the **nuclear triad** — the ability to deploy nuclear weapons from **land, air, and sea**.
- 💡 **Second-Strike Capability:** The test strengthens India's **second-strike capability**, ensuring that even after absorbing an initial attack, India can respond decisively.
- 💡 **DRDO Role:** The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** developed the

K-4 missile, which uses **solid fuel and advanced navigation systems**.

- 💡 **Ballistic missiles:** They are **rocket-propelled weapons** that follow a **free-fall trajectory** after launch. They can carry **conventional or nuclear warheads** and be launched from **land, sea, or air**.
 - ❖ Based on range, they're classified as **short** (< 1,000 km), **medium** (1,000–3,000 km), **intermediate** (3,000–5,500 km), or **long-range or intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs)** (> 5,500 km).
 - ❖ **Agni-V** is India's longest-range missile, an ICBM with a range of over 5,000 km.

Bharat Taxi Initiative

Why in News?

The Government of India has launched **Bharat Taxi**, a **first-of-its-kind driver-owned, cooperative ride-hailing initiative**, aimed at providing a fair, transparent and equitable alternative to private taxi aggregators.

Key Points

- 💡 **Bharat Taxi:** It is a **government-backed ride-hailing platform** developed as a **cooperative model**, where **drivers are shareholders and co-owners** instead of being dependent on traditional private companies.
- 💡 **Objective:** The scheme aims to **empower taxi drivers** by ensuring fair earnings, reduce dependence on private aggregators (like Ola and Uber), and offer **affordable, transparent transport services to passengers**.
- 💡 **Cooperative Structure:** The service is operated by **Sahakar Taxi Cooperative Limited**.
- 💡 **Launch:** The service is set to launch across the country from **January 1, 2026**.
- 💡 **Driver Benefits:** Driver-owned model, No commission and Profit sharing.
- 💡 **Passenger Benefits:** Transparent pricing, Affordable rides and Multiple vehicle options.



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