

1. Prime Minister Inaugurates Major Infrastructure Projects in Assam and West Bengal

- Projects totaling ₹66,200 crore were launched, comprising ₹47,600 crore for Assam and ₹18,680 crore for West Bengal.
- In Assam, the PM inaugurated the **120 Megawatt (MW) Lower Kopili Hydroelectric Project**, a run-of-the-river facility on the **Kopili River** basin spanning the **Dima Hasao** and **Karbi Anglong** districts.
- Launched **Asom Mala 3.0** with a ₹3,200 crore allocation to lay down a **900 km** road network.
- Launched the **Silchar-Shillong corridor** valued at ₹22,860 crore.
- Inaugurated the **New Jalpaiguri-Guwahati Express** and launched a **Vishwakarma Vatika** in **Jorhat**.
- In **West Bengal**, inaugurated the **Haldia Bulk Terminal**, a fully automated dry bulk (coal and fertilizer) handling facility at the **Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port** in **Kolkata** on the **Hooghly River**.
- Dedicated **Haldia** port mechanization projects and launched a **Vishwakarma Vatika** in **Kolkata**.
- The **Lower Kopili Hydroelectric Project** was developed by the **Assam Power Generation Corporation** with assistance from the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**.
- The **Haldia Bulk Terminal** was developed by **Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (SEZ Ltd)**.

2. Government Expands Women Empowerment via Lakhpati Didi 2.0 and SheMarts

- Introduced the **Lakhpati Didi 2.0** scheme targeting **SHGs**, aiming to empower **3 crore women** by **2027**.
- The scheme provides digital and financial literacy training alongside interest-free loans of up to ₹5 lakh to upgrade small businesses.
- The **Lakhpati Didi 2.0** initiative aims for beneficiaries to achieve an annual household income of at least ₹1 lakh.
- **SheMarts** aims to eliminate middlemen, enabling **SHG** women to directly sell local and handcrafted products to maximize their profits.

3. Updates on Agricultural Subsidies: PM-KISAN and PM PRANAM Schemes

- The **PM-KISAN Scheme** is a fully funded central sector scheme that was launched with retrospective effect from **December 1, 2018**.
- The **PM PRANAM Scheme** was launched for a three-year period (**2022-23 to 2025-26**) to reform fertilizer usage.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** recently distributed **PM-KISAN** funds to over **9.3 crore farmers**.
- A **Parliamentary Standing Committee** labeled the **PM PRANAM Scheme** a "non-starter" because no incentive amounts have been disbursed to eligible states.
- **PM PRANAM** aims to reduce the usage of chemical fertilizers (such as **Di-ammonium Phosphate (DAP)** and **Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium (NPK)**) by offering states a **50% fertilizer subsidy saving** as an incentive.

4. State-Level Development Initiatives and Healthcare Partnerships Announced

- **Maharashtra**: Partnered with **Wadhvani AI** to deploy artificial intelligence in public health, utilizing tools like the "**Cough against TB**" AI system for early screening.
- **Himachal Pradesh**: Collaborated with the **National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)** for the **Dagwar Dairy Project**, selling products under the '**HIM**' brand.
- **Chhattisgarh**: Chief Minister **Vishnu Deo Sai** launched the "**Godam Yojana**" to establish **1,460 cattle shelters** for abandoned and stray cattle.
- **Jammu & Kashmir**: Union Minister **Rajiv Ranjan Singh** announced a ₹100 crore integrated aqua park project in **Anantnag** during a national conference on cold water fisheries.
- **Madhya Pradesh**: **Oil India Limited (OIL)** partnered with the **National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC)** to upgrade tribal health infrastructure in **Rajgarh** district, sanctioning ₹86.27 lakh for ventilators and ultrasound machines.

5. India's Macroeconomic Indicators: WPI, Service Exports, and GDP Projections

- India's **Wholesale Price Index (WPI)** inflation rate for **February 2026** stood at an 11-month high of **2.13%** on a year-on-year basis, rising for the 4th consecutive month.
- The **WPI** data was released by the **Office of the Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, under the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry**.
- India's service exports reached **\$348 billion** between April and January (**FY25-26**).
- The **Union Budget 2026-27** announced safe harbor regimes and tax holidays extending until **2047** for foreign companies offering cloud services utilizing Indian infrastructure.

- Global credit rating agency **Fitch Ratings** projected India's **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** growth for **FY26** to reach **7.5%**.
- Service exports contributed roughly **10%** to the overall GDP, largely driven by business, consultancy, and **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** service exports.
- Tax incentives align with a national target to capture a **10% share** of global services by **2047**.
- The respective base years utilized for economic measurements are **2011-12** for **WPI**, **2024** for the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**, and **2022-23** for **GDP**.

6. SEBI Revises Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS) Norms for Mega IPOs

- **SEBI** Revised **Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS)** norms for mega companies launching **Initial Public Offerings (IPOs)**.
- Expanded the regulatory categories from **three to six**.
- Mandated different public offer percentages and values based on post-issue capital (ranging from up to **₹1,600 crore** to more than **₹5 lakh crore**).
- Decreased the initial listing requirement uniformly from **5% to 2.5%**.
- Launched a digital regulatory guidance platform named "**SEBI Setu**" for end-to-end guidance spanning registration to compliance.
- Preparing a **Common Advertisement Code** to help the public identify recognized advisors.
- Formed a committee headed by **B. Rajendran** to oversee mutual fund distributors and prevent overlapping roles with investment advisors.
- Set minimum capital requirements at **₹5 lakh** for individuals and **₹50 lakh** for companies to become investment advisors.

8. FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) Introduces Major Regulatory and Licensing Reforms

- Increased the basic registration turnover limit from **₹12 lakh to ₹1.5 crore**.
- State licenses now apply to turnovers between **₹1.5 crore and ₹50 crore**, while central licenses apply to businesses exceeding **₹50 crore**.
- Licenses will now carry permanent validity.
- Registered street food vendors will be automatically registered under **FSSAI**.

9. NHAI Revises Rates for FASTag Annual Pass

- Revised rates for the **FASTag annual pass** applicable to non-commercial vehicles, effective **April 1**.
- Increased the pass price by **₹75**, bringing the total to **₹3075** (from the previous **₹3,000**).
- The annual pass provides validity for **one year** or **200 toll crossings**.

10. NMDC Achieves Record 50 Million Tonnes Iron Ore Production

- The **National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC)** is a Navratna government company established in **1958** under the **Ministry of Steel**, led by Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) **Amitabh Mukherjee**.
- Became the first Indian mining company to produce **50 million tonnes** of iron ore in a single financial year.
- This surpassed its previous production high of **45.2 million tonnes**.
- The **Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation (GMDC)** partnered with NMDC to explore the **Rare Earth Elements** sector together.

11. RBI Imposes Financial Penalties on Cashfree Payments and Manappuram Finance

- Imposed a **₹3.10 lakh** penalty on **Cashfree Payments India Pvt Ltd** for withdrawing impermissible amounts.
- Levied a **₹2.7 lakh** penalty on **Manappuram Finance**, a **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)**.

12. Major Corporate Investments, MoUs, and Appointments Announced

- Dubai-based tech firm **Solstice Data** signed a **₹52,600 crore** agreement with the **Kerala government** to establish a **100-acre** AI-driven data center project at the **KINFRA Industrial Park** in **Mattannur** (slated for completion in **5 to 7 years**).
- **DCM Shriram** secured **\$90 million** from the **World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC)** via sustainability-linked non-convertible debentures for its agriculture and chemical business.
- Hyderabad-based **T-Hub** partnered with the **Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)** for startup exchange programs revolving around pharma, aerospace, AI, mobility, and deep tech.
- The **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the **GATI Foundation**.

- **Arun Mammen** was re-elected Chairman of the **Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA)**, replacing **Rajiv Budhraja**.
- Global Japanese apparel retailer **UNIQLO** appointed Indian cricketer **Jasprit Bumrah** as its brand ambassador.

13. ISRO Successfully Tests CE20 Cryogenic Engine

- Successfully conducted a **165-second** sea-level hot test of the **CE20 cryogenic engine** at a **22-ton thrust**.
- The test was executed using a nozzle protection system at the **Mahendragiri** complex.

14. Foundation Stone Laid for Saga Defense Autonomous Maritime Center

- Defense technology firm **Saga Defense** laid the foundation stone for an autonomous maritime shipbuilding and system center.
- The facility is located in the **Nellore** district of **Andhra Pradesh**.

15. National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) Launches New Digital Monitoring Tools

- Jal Shakti Minister **C.R. Patil** inaugurated the new **National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)** office in **New Delhi**.
- Launched the new **NDSA website** featuring an interactive **Geographic Information System (GIS)** map of **6,600 dams**.
- Introduced an AI-driven tool called **NETRA**, developed with the **Weapons and Electronics Systems Engineering Establishment (WESEE)**.
- Launched a visual tool named **Rashtriya Bandh Suraksha Darpan**, developed with the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)**.

16. Multinational Biopharma Facility Inaugurated in Jammu & Kashmir

- Union Minister **Dr. Jitendra Singh** inaugurated a pharmaceutical manufacturing facility in **Ghatti village, Kathua (J&K)**.
- The facility was built with a **₹600-700 crore** investment by **Orchid Pharma** and the **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)**.

17. Department of Posts Expands OTP-Based Speed Post Services

- The **Department of Posts** expanded faster OTP-based delivery services—**Speed Post 24** and **Speed Post 48**—to **Chennai** and six other metros.
- Ensures delivery in **24 or 48 hours**.

18. NCCBM and TraceXro Press Partner for Cement Sector Decarbonization

- The cement industry is a major global polluter, making up **7%** of global emissions, necessitating aggressive decarbonization efforts.
- The **National Council for Cement and Building Materials (NCCBM)** collaborated with Indian startup **TraceXro Press Technology**.

19. Major Legal and Constitutional Developments in India

- The **Right to Die with Dignity** is recognized as a fundamental right falling under **Article 21** of the Constitution, established as a landmark judgment in the **Common Cause case of 2018**.
- A newly introduced bill proposes amendments to the **Transgender Persons Act 2019**.
- Proposes strict definitions and rights for transgender persons encompassing socio-cultural identities like **Kinner** and **Hijra**, but excludes those with different sexual orientations.
- Proposes punishments ranging from **10 years to life imprisonment** and minimum fines of up to **₹5 lakh** for forcing an individual into a transgender identity via mutilation or surgical procedures.

20. INDIA Bloc Submits Notice to Remove Chief Election Commissioner

- The opposition **INDIA bloc** submitted a formal parliamentary notice seeking the removal of **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar**.
- Under **Article 324(5)**, a CEC's removal is conducted similarly to a **Supreme Court Judge** (for proven misbehavior or incapacity).

21. José Antonio Kast Elected as the New President of Chile

- **José Antonio Kast** defeated **Jeannette Jara** to successfully become the new **President of Chile**.
- He succeeds **Gabriel Boric** in the presidential office.

Chile holds the distinct economic status of being the world's largest copper producer.

22. Highlights of the 98th Academy Awards (Oscars 2026)

- The **98th Academy Awards** were held on **March 15** at the **Dolby Theater** in **Los Angeles**, hosted by comedian **Conan O'Brien**.

- The film "**One Battle After Another**" won a total of **6 Oscars**, including **Best Picture, Best Director (Paul Thomas Anderson), Best Supporting Actor (Sean Penn), Best Adaptive Screenplay, Best Film Editing, and Best Casting**.
- The film "**Sinners**" (or **Sinner**) set a historic benchmark by receiving the highest number of nominations (**16**) in Oscars history.
- Lead actor **Michael B. Jordan** won **Best Actor** for "**Sinners**".
- **Jessie Buckley** was awarded **Best Actress** for "**Hamnet**".
- **Amy Madigan** won **Best Supporting Actress** for "**Weapon**".
- The **16** nominations for "**Sinners**" broke all previous Academy records.

23. National Literary and Cultural Awards Announced

- The **Jnanpith Award** was instituted in **1961**, featuring a **₹11 lakh** cash prize, a citation, and a bronze statue of **Goddess Saraswati (Vagdevi)**.
- Renowned Tamil poet, lyricist, and author **R. Vairamuthu** (also known as **R van Mutu**) was honored with the **60th Jnanpith (Ganpith) Award 2025**.
- The selection commission was headed by **Pratibha Ray**.
- At the **100th Annual Conference of the Music Academy** in **Madras**, Veena exponent **Jayanthi Kumaresh** was designated the **Sangita Kalanidhi Award**.
- **Sugandha Kalamegham** and **Trichur C. Narendran** won **Sangita Kala Acharya**.
- **Trichur C. Narendran** (Narendra) was awarded **Nritya Kalanidhi**.
- **A. Janardhanan** won **Nritya Kala Acharya**.
- **R. Vairamuthu** is only the third Tamil literary figure to receive the Jnanpith honor, following **Akilan** and **D. Jayakanthan**.
- **R. Vairamuthu** has previously won the **Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri**, and seven **National Film Awards**.

24. Major Sporting Achievements in Athletics, Tennis, Chess, and Cricket

- **World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026**: Hosted in **New Delhi**, India dominantly topped the medal tally with a record **208 medals (75 Gold, 69 Silver, 64 Bronze)**, while **Russia** finished second globally with **35 medals**.
- **Tennis**: Italian player **Jannik Sinner** secured his maiden **Indian Wells Masters** title (an **Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) Masters 1000** hard-court event in **California, USA**) by defeating **Daniil Medvedev**.
- **Chess**: 16-17 year old **Mayank Chakrabarti** (also spelled Chakraborty) from **Guwahati, Assam**, became India's **94th Grandmaster (GM)**. He attained his final GM norm at the **8th Grandmaster Tournament in Stockholm** after crossing the required **2500 International Chess Federation (FIDE)** rating threshold.
- **Cricket**: Former **Pakistan** cricket captain and wicketkeeper-batter **Sarfraz Ahmed** officially announced his retirement from international cricket.
- **Mayank Chakrabarti** is notably the very first Chess Grandmaster originating from **Assam** and the broader **North-East region**.
- **Jannik Sinner** distinguished himself as only the third player since **1990** (joining **Novak Djokovic** and **Roger Federer**) to win consecutive **ATP Masters 1000** hard-court titles without suffering a single defeat.
- **Sarfraz Ahmed** is famous for leading his nation to victory in the **2017 International Cricket Council (ICC) Champions Trophy**.

25. Professor Arpita Patra Summits World's Highest Volcano

- **Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru** Professor **Arpita Patra** accomplished the feat of successfully summiting **Ojos del Salado**.
- This achievement makes her the second Indian woman to scale this peak, following **Arunima Sinha**.
- **Ojos del Salado** is located on the **Chile-Argentina border** and ranks as the world's highest volcano.

26. Botanical Advancements: Tulip Garden Inauguration and New Plant Species

- **Omar Abdullah** officially inaugurated the **Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden**, geographically situated in the **Zabarwan range** near **Dal Lake** in **Srinagar, Kashmir**.
- A brand new plant species designated "**Osbakia Zubin Garinia**" was formally discovered within **Assam's Manas National Park**.
- The new plant species was named in honor of prominent singer **Zubeen Garg**.
- The garden in **Srinagar** is recognized as the largest tulip garden in **Asia**.

27. Important Days of March and Recent Obituaries

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- **March 13:** Observed as **World Rotaract Day** (celebrating the 58th anniversary of the first club in **North Carolina**) and **World Sleep Day** (Theme: "**Sleep Well and Live Better**").
- **March 14:** Observed as the **International Day of Mathematics** (7th edition; Theme: "**Mathematics and Hope**") alongside the **International Day of Action for Rivers** (29th edition; Theme: "**Protect rivers, protect people**").
- **March 15:** Observed as **World Consumer Rights Day** (Theme: "**Safe Products, Confident Consumer**"). The date also marked the opening of the 14th edition of **AAHAR** (International Food and Hospitality Fair) in **New Delhi**.
- **March 16:** Observed as **National Vaccination Day**, established to commemorate the foundational launch of the **Pulse Polio** program back in **1995**.
- **Commemoration:** **India Post** released a localized special cover to celebrate the birth centenary of the legendary Surbahar artist **Annapurna Devi**.
- **Obituaries:** Veteran Hindi film supporting actress **Madhu Malhotra** passed away at the age of **71**. Additionally, **Kushal Das**, the highly recognized former General Secretary of the **All India Football Federation (AIFF)** passed away.
- **World Consumer Rights Day** specifically honors President **John F. Kennedy's** formal **1962** speech on consumer rights.