

17 January 2025

Odisha Govt To Offer Rs 30,000 Per Month To Living Padma Awardees Starting This Month

Key Points:

- ❖ The Odisha government will reward each of the state's Padma awardees with a monthly honorarium of Rs 30,000 beginning this month. The Odia Language Literature and Culture Department issued a notification regarding this on Thursday.
- ❖ The Padma awardees will get an honorarium of Rs 30,000 from the state government in recognition of their remarkable contributions to society in a variety of sectors, according to the notification.
- ❖ All state Padma award recipients who are still alive will receive the honorarium via direct benefit transfer (DBT) beginning in January 2025, according to the statement.

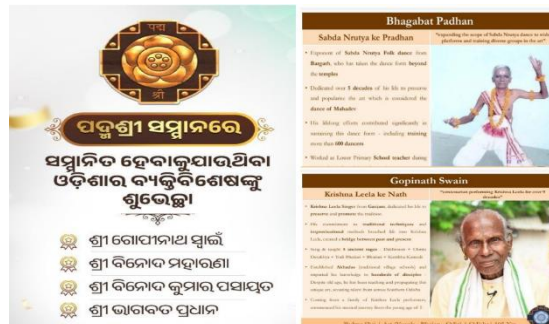


- ❖ The previous Naveen Patnaik-led BJD government in March 2024 has announced to provide an honorarium of Rs 25,000 every month to the notable sons of the land who have been conferred with Padma awards, one of the highest civilian honours of India. In 1954, the Padma Award was introduced. Individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the arts, education, science, athletics, social work, public service, medicine, literature, and

other professions are recognised with this honour.

ତେବେ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ୫୫ଜଣ ଜୀବିତ ପଦ୍ମ ପୁରସ୍କାର ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଅଛନ୍ତି । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ମାସକୁ ୩୦ ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କା ଲେଖାଏଁ ସମ୍ମାନ ସୂଚକ ସହାୟକ ରାଶି ସରକାର ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିବେ । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ବର୍ଷକୁ ରାଜକୋଷରୁ ୨ କୋଟି ଟଙ୍କା ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରାଯିବ ।

୧୧୦ ପଦ୍ମଶ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର କଳା କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ୪ଜଣଙ୍କୁ ପଦ୍ମଶ୍ରୀ ମିଳିବ । କୃଷି ଲାଭାର ସମ୍ବଳିତ ଗୁରୁ ଗୋପାଳାୟ ସ୍ୱାଇଁ ଓ ବରଗଡ଼ର ଶ୍ରୀ ଗୁରୁ ଭାଗବତ ପ୍ରଧାନ, ପଦ୍ମଶ୍ରୀ ଶ୍ରୀ ବିନୋଦ ମହାରଣା, ସମ୍ବଲପୁରର ନାଟ୍ୟକାର ତଥା ଗୀତିକାର ବିନୋଦ ବଣିଶର 'ପଦ୍ମଶ୍ରୀ' ପାଇବାକୁ ମନୋନୀତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି ।



Odisha announces monthly pension of Rs 20,000 for people imprisoned during Emergency

Key Points:

- ❖ The Odisha government has announced a monthly pension of Rs 20,000 and other benefits for people jailed during Emergency. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi declared the provision of monthly pension for those arrested and imprisoned during the Emergency under Maintenance of Internal Security Act, Defence of India Rule or Defence and Internal Security of India Rules.
- ❖ Along with pension, the state government will bear the medical expenses of all the people jailed during the Emergency. Pension and medical facilities will be available to all people still alive as of January 1, 2025.
- ❖ Hundreds were imprisoned in various jails across the country for opposing the Emergency between June 25, 1975 and March 21, 1977.

Prime Minister approves the establishment of the Eighth Pay Commission for central government employees

Key Points:

- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi approves setup of the 8th Central Pay Commission for all employees of the Central Government. Since 1947, seven Pay Commissions have been constituted, with the last one implemented in 2016.
- ❖ As the 7th Pay Commission's term concludes in 2026, initiating the process in 2025 ensures sufficient time to receive and review recommendations before its completion.
- ❖ A pay commission is constituted by the central government once every decade to revise the salary structure of its employees.
- ❖ In addition to revising the salary structure, each pay commission has a term of reference (ToR), which broadly defines its focus.
- ❖ Pay commissions also decide pension payments. There are over 49 lakh central government employees and nearly 65 lakh pensioners. The 7th Pay Commission was set up in 2016, and its term will end in 2026.



- ❖ Justice A.K Mathur had headed the Seventh Pay Commission, announcement of which was done on 4 February 2014. The first pay commission was established in January 1946 and it submitted its report in May, 1947 to the interim government of India. That commission raised the minimum monthly salary from Rs 7,000 to Rs 18,000, while top officials' salaries increased to Rs

2.5 lakh per month. Traditionally, a Pay Commission is set up every 10 years, influencing the income and living standards of millions of employees and pensioners.

- ❖ According to a report by Financial Express, instead of forming a new commission, the government may consider linking salary revisions to performance metrics or inflation rates, allowing for more frequent adjustments.
- ❖ Despite these hints, there are no concrete details, leaving government employees and pensioners uncertain about their financial futures.

Expectations From the 8th Pay Commission

- ❖ If the 8th Pay Commission is set up, employees are likely to push for several key changes:
- ❖ **Higher Minimum Salary:** Employee unions are demanding an increase in the minimum salary from ₹18,000 to between ₹26,000 and ₹30,000 per month, citing inflation and rising living costs.
- ❖ **Fitment Factor:** The fitment factor, which currently stands at 2.57, may be revised to 3.5 or 3.8 to reflect better salary adjustments. The fitment factor for government employees refers to a multiplier used to determine their salary when they are moved to a new pay scale, typically under the implementation of a new pay commission. It is used to adjust their basic salary according to the revised pay structure.
- ❖ **Dearness Allowance (DA):** Given biannually to offset inflation, DA may become more responsive to inflationary trends.
- ❖ **Pension Revisions:** Parity in pensions has been a long-standing demand, particularly for those who retired before the implementation of the 7th Pay Commission.

- ❖ **Updated Allowances:** Housing and travel allowances could see revisions to match current cost-of-living expenses.

India Set to Surpass Japan as World's Fourth-Largest Economy by 2026

Key Points:

- ❖ India is projected to overtake Japan to become the world's fourth-largest economy by 2026, according to the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI).
- ❖ This optimistic outlook is underpinned by robust GDP growth forecasts and strategic policy recommendations aimed at enhancing economic resilience and fostering sustainable development. PHDCCI anticipates India's GDP to grow by 6.8% in the current fiscal year (FY2024-25) and accelerate to 7.7% in FY2025-26. This growth trajectory is expected to elevate India's economic standing globally, enabling it to surpass Japan by 2026.

Rank & Country	GDP (USD)
#1 United States (U.S)	\$30.34 trillion
#2 China	\$19.53 trillion
#3 Germany	\$4.92 trillion
#4 Japan	\$4.39 trillion

Pixxel launches India's 1st private satellite constellation with SpaceX

Key Points:

- ❖ Google-backed Indian space start-up company Pixxel has become the first Indian private company to launch its commercial satellite constellation named Firefly on board a Space X rocket on 14 January (15 January in India) 2025. The SpaceX rocket

also carried the world's first commercial satellite for surveillance of space objects orbiting the earth, made by an Indian space company, Digantara.



From where were the satellites launched?

- ❖ Both the Pixxel and Digantara satellites were launched by Elon Musk's company SpaceX. The satellites were launched aboard the Transporter-12 rideshare mission of SpaceX onboard the Falcon 9 rocket from the Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, the United States of America.

Firefly Constellation of Pixxel

- ❖ Bengaluru-based Pixxel company is building the world's highest-resolution hyperspectral satellite constellation named Firefly constellation.
- ❖ The Firefly constellation initially consists of six satellites which are to be launched in two phases. In the first phase, three satellites were launched on 14 January 2025 and the other three will be launched in the second quarter of this year.
- ❖ The satellites will be placed in a sun-synchronous orbit at roughly 550 km.
- ❖ The company plans to send 18 more satellites in the future to complete its Firefly constellation.
- ❖ When the company starts offering the service it will be the first private company in India to offer hyperspectral imaging satellite service to consumers. At present in India, only the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) offers this service.

Hyperspectral imaging satellites

- ❖ Hyperspectral imaging satellites refer to the use of technology that captures highly detailed data of Earth across hundreds of light bands. The Firefly satellite are world's highest-resolution commercial-grade satellite with a 5- meter resolution.
- ❖ Satellites in this category normally have a 30-meter resolution. The satellite captures data across over 150 spectral bands which enables the satellite to detect subtle changes in chemical compositions, vegetation health, water quality, and atmospheric conditions.

Customers of the Firefly constellation

- ❖ The Firefly constellation will be beneficial for companies engaged in agriculture, mining, environmental monitoring, and defence. It could help in improving crop yields in India, tracking resources, monitoring oil spills and geographic boundaries in much better detail than current technology allows.

Digantara's SCOT Satellite

- ❖ Bengaluru-based space startup company Digantara launched the world's first commercial satellite for surveillance of space objects orbiting the Earth.
- ❖ The satellite named Space Camera for Object Tracking (SCOT) aims to enhance space safety and optimize space traffic management.
- ❖ The SCOT satellite will be placed in the sun-synchronous orbit which will track objects in Low Earth Orbit (LEO).
- ❖ The floating debris in space like man-made objects not in use (used satellites, rocket parts, etc) poses a significant challenge to safe space navigation.
- ❖ The SCOT satellite will continuously monitor objects in the LEO orbit and issue alerts so that space navigation becomes safe.
- ❖ The SCOT satellites are the world's first commercial Space Situational Awareness satellite.

ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup Title in Malaysia

Key Points:

- ❖ India under 19 women's cricket team led by Captain Nikki Prasad will try to defend its ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup title as the 2nd ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup 2025 starts in Malaysia.
- ❖ The 2nd ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup is being organised by the International Cricket Council (ICC) in Malaysia from 18 January to 2 February 2025.
- ❖ The World Cup will be played in 20 overs format and is for women players below 19 years of age. Indian team won the inaugural ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup 2023 under Shaifali Verma's captaincy by defeating England in the final at Potchefstroom, South Africa.

About the International Cricket Council (ICC)

- ❖ The International Cricket Council (ICC) is the world governing body of men's and women's cricket.
- ❖ Members: 108 member countries
- ❖ Full members: 12 countries that are eligible to play test matches (India, Pakistan, England, Australia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, West Indies, Ireland, South Africa and New Zealand)
- ❖ Headquarters: Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- ❖ Chairman: Jay Shah

India & Spain sign two MoUs during Dr. Jaishankar's visit to Spain

Key Points:

- ❖ India and Spain have signed two memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen and deepen the bilateral relations between the two countries. The agreement was signed during External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar's visit to Spain.

- ❖ Dr Jaishankar was on a two-day official visit to Spain on 13 & 14 January 2025 where he met senior leaders of the Spanish government.
- ❖ This was the second visit to Spain by Dr Jaishankar. His previous visit was with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2017.



- ❖ The ties between India and Spain have gained strength in recent times with the successful visit of the President of the Government of Spain (Prime Minister) Pedro Sanchez to India in October 2024.
- ❖ During the visit of Pedro Sanchez, both countries decided to celebrate 2026 as the “Year of Culture, Tourism, and Artificial Intelligence (AI)”.

High-Level Meeting in Spain

- ❖ During his visit to Spain, Dr. Jaishankar met the Spanish King Felipe VI and President Pedro Sanchez.
- ❖ He also met the Spanish Defence Minister Margarita Roble. He said that the C-295 Aircraft Assembly Line Plant at Vadodara has been an important project and has taken the defence and security cooperation between the two countries to the next level. The two sides agreed to further strengthen cooperation in the defence sector.
- ❖ He also met the Foreign Minister of Spain Jose Manuel Albares.

Two MoUs signed between India and Spain

- ❖ During his meeting with the Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares, Dr Jaishankar discussed bilateral cooperation and regional and international issues. The Ministers expressed satisfaction over the

progress in diverse sectors including defence & security, trade & economy, culture, tourism, and people-to-people ties.

- ❖ They also discussed ways of increasing collaboration in new and emerging sectors of digital technology, AI, renewable energy, and space Two MoUs were signed between the two countries;
- ❖ MoU on cooperation in sports;
- ❖ Cooperation on sustainable urban development.

First foreign ambassador to address the Annual Conference of Spanish Ambassadors

- ❖ During his visit to Spain, Dr. Jaishankar was accorded a rare honour as he was invited to deliver the Keynote Address at the 9th Annual Conference of Spanish Ambassadors. The theme of the Conference was ‘A Foreign Policy with Our Own Identity’.
- ❖ Dr Jaishankar is the first foreign ambassador /foreign minister to address the global conference of Spanish ambassadors.
- ❖ Later Dr Jaishankar also addressed the Indian Diaspora in Madrid, Spain.

About the Kingdom of Spain

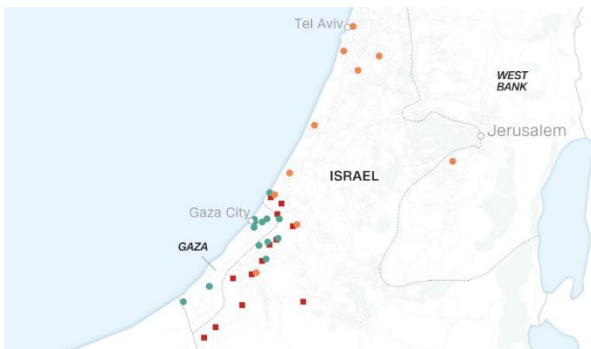
- ❖ The Kingdom of Spain is a West European country located on the Iberian peninsula.
- ❖ Spain is a member of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation(NATO).
- ❖ Capital: Madrid
- ❖ Currency: Euro
- ❖ King: Felipe VI
- ❖ Prime Minister: Pedro Sanchez



Israel and Hamas agree on a ceasefire in Gaza after 15 months of war

Key Points:

- ❖ Israel and the militant Palestinian group Hamas have agreed to a peace deal to end the bloody 15-month war between the two sides in Gaza.
- ❖ The peace agreement was announced by the Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani on 15 January after the meeting between the Israelis and Hamas in Doha, Qatar.
- ❖ The peace deal calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a ceasefire to be implemented in three phases. But the deal needs to be first approved by the Benjamin Netanyahu government of Israel.



- ❖ After the approval of the Israeli government, the ceasefire will come into effect from 19 January 2025.
- ❖ The peace agreement will bring to an end a bloody war between Israel and Hamas which started when Hamas attacked Israel on 7 October 2023 in which around 1200 Israeli and foreigners were killed and 252 were taken hostage.

- ❖ In retaliation, Israel attacked the Hamas stronghold in Gaza in which more than 46,000 people, mostly civilians, were killed.

Main Points of the Peace Agreement

- ❖ The peace deal agreed in Doha will be implemented in three phases.

Phase I:

- ❖ It will start from 19 January 2025 and will be implemented in the next six months.
- ❖ Israel will withdraw its troops from all populated areas of Gaza and will release hundreds of Palestinian prisoners.
- ❖ It will also allow humanitarian aid in Gaza and reopen Rafah crossing with Egypt to allow humanitarian aid.
- ❖ Hamas will release 33 Israeli hostages including women, children, and men over 50.

Phase II

- ❖ After the completion of Phase I, Phase II will be implemented.
- ❖ Israel will withdraw from all areas of Gaza.
- ❖ Hamas will release all the Israeli prisoners.

Phase III

- ❖ In phase III there will be an interim Palestinian Authority in Gaza and West Bank with International partners.
- ❖ Israel and Palestine will negotiate for the creation of an independent state of Palestine.
- ❖ Arab country's security forces will be deployed in Gaza and the West Bank in the interim period to maintain peace before the transition to an Independent Palestinian State.

Who are the Guarantors of the Peace Accord?

- ❖ Qatar, Egypt, and the United States of America have played a crucial role in the signing of the peace accord between Israel and Hamas.

- ❖ All three countries have been made guarantors of the peace deal and they will play a role in enforcing the deal.
- ❖ Egypt and Qatar will play a crucial role in coordinating with humanitarian organisations to facilitate the reconstruction of Gaza, ensuring international assistance reaches those in need.

Why Israel & Hamas Agreed for the Peace Deal

- ❖ The peace deal that has been signed between Israel and Hamas was first proposed by American President Joe Biden in May 2024.
- ❖ It was later approved by the United Nations Security Council. However, the Benjamin Netanyahu government in Israel and Hamas leadership were not willing to accept the peace deal.
- ❖ Some of the reasons why it has been accepted now by both sides are as follows;

Hamas

- ❖ Hamas's top leadership has been virtually eliminated by Israel and it has become very weak.
- ❖ The main backers of Hamas is Iran and its military power has been virtually destroyed by Israel.
- ❖ Iranian-backed Lebanese extremist group Hezbollah was a great supporter of Hamas but the Israeli military action in Lebanon has considerably weakened Hezbollah. It is presently in no position to help Hamas.
- ❖ Donald Trump who will be sworn in as the president of the United States on 20 January 2025 has warned Hamas to release the hostage before he is sworn in or it will face the consequences.

Israel

- ❖ Donald Trump has also put pressure on the Israeli government to end current hostilities with Hamas.
- ❖ Within Israel, many in the government feel that military objectives have been achieved

in Gaza and there was no point in continuing the military offensive.

- ❖ There was pressure on the Israeli government by the families of the hostages to secure the release of the hostages from Hamas.

Gaan Ngai festival commemorates end of harvest season in Manipur

Key Points:

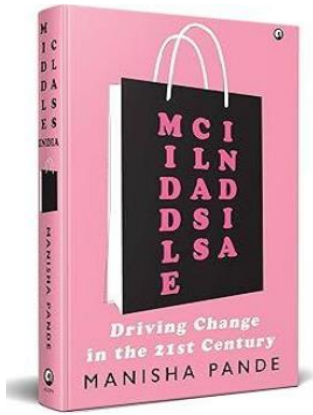
- ❖ The Gaan Ngai festival commemorating the end of the harvest season by the Kabui/Rongmei Naga community is being celebrated in Manipur.
- ❖ Gaan-ngai is the festival of lights and victory, victory over evil; (Gaan means light and Ngai, festival). Another version of Gaan-ngai is the festival of winter.
- ❖ Chakaan means season, Gaan also means winter and Ngai, festival. This festival is also described as a New Year festival as it marks the end of the year and beginning of the New Year.



Manisha Pande's book reveals middle class India as a driver of change

Key Points:

- ❖ Journalist Manisha Pande launched its book Middle Class India: Driving Change in the 21st Century. It is divided into three parts.
- ❖ Part I looks at the middle class in preIndependence India, focusing on the period from 1757 to 1947. Part II concerns itself with the time frame between when India freed itself from the clutches of British colonial rule in 1947 to economic liberalisation in 1991.



- ❖ Part III is about the post-liberalisation scenario, from 1991 until the present day.

Recent Books in News

- ❖ Will India Get Rich Before It Turns 100 – Prosenjit Datta
- ❖ Indian The Meteoric Rise of Indian in America – Meenakshi Ahamed
- ❖ Karma's Child: The Story of Indian Cinema's Ultimate Showman – Subhash Ghai & Suveen Sinha
- ❖ Jammu Kashmir & Ladakh Through the Ages: A Visual Narrative of Continuities and Linkages – Released by Amit Shah (editor Raghuvendra Tanwar)
- ❖ In Pursuit of Democracy – Najma Heptulla

Blue Origin launched its first orbital rocket 'New Glenn'

Key Points:

- ❖ Amazon founder Jeff Bezos's company 'Blue Origin' has launched its first orbital rocket 'New Glenn' from Launch Complex 36 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Florida.
- ❖ New Glenn carries a payload — Blue Ring Pathfinder, which will test key systems for the Defense Innovation Unit's Orbital Logistics programme.
- ❖ In December, Blue Origin announced that New Glenn successfully completed the crucial hot-fire test. It was the first test of the integrated launch vehicle.
- ❖ New Glenn, which is 98 m tall, is the largest and most powerful rocket ever built and launched. It is named after NASA astronaut

John Glenn, the first American astronaut to orbit Earth, completing three orbits in 1962.



Puma ropes in PV Sindhu as a brand ambassador

- ❖ PV Sindhu, two-time Olympic medallist and one of India's greatest sporting trailblazers, has joined forces with sports brand PUMA India in a multi-year partnership as brand ambassador.
- ❖ Sindhu's achievements have played a crucial role in popularising badminton as a competitive sport in India.
- ❖ She is the first Indian to win five badminton world championship medals and has triumphed across the Olympics, Commonwealth Games, Asian Games, and beyond.
- ❖ She has been honoured with the prestigious Khel Ratna award, Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Arjuna Award.



Recent Brand Ambassador

- ❖ Tata Mumbai Marathon – Mo Farah
- ❖ MS Dhoni – Eurogrip Tyres

- ❖ Rashmika Mandanna – Chennai-based real estate developer, DRA
- ❖ Sonu Sood – Brand Ambassador and Honorary Tourism Advisor for Thailand
- ❖ Harbhajan Singh & Sania Mirza – Dubai Sports Council brand ambassador
- ❖ Shreyanka Patil – BOBCARD Limited
- ❖ Rashmika Mandanna – National Ambassador for Promoting Cyber Safety

Centre clears appointment of Justice K Vinod Chandran as Supreme Court judge

Key Points:

- ❖ Patna High Court Chief Justice K Vinod Chandran was elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court Collegium recommended Justice Chandran's name. Justice Chandran was appointed as a judge of the Kerala High Court on November 8, 2011. He was elevated as the chief justice Patna High Court on March 29, 2023.



- ❖ Once he takes oath as a judge of the top court, the working strength of the Supreme Court would rise to 33. Its sanctioned strength is 34, including the chief justice of India. The President, in exercise of powers under Article 124(2) of the Constitution, made the appointment.

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Bumrah and Sutherland named ICC Men's Player of the month for December 2024

Key Points:

- ❖ The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the ICC Men's and Women's Players of the Month for December 2024 as India's Jasprit Bumrah and Australia's Annabel Sutherland.
- ❖ Top-ranked Test bowler Bumrah provided stern resistance to Australia's resurgence in a compelling Border-Gavaskar Trophy series with destructive bowling spells, while Sutherland was in sparkling form during Australia's ODI encounters against India and New Zealand, twice winning Player of the Series accolades for her all-round-contributions. Both players were crowned following a vote conducted among global fans registered at ICCcricket.com and a specialist panel comprising ICC Hall of Famers, former international players, and media representatives.

