

06 January 2025

Telangana's Rythu Bharosa Scheme Expansion

Key Points:

- ❖ Farmers in Telangana will receive ₹12,000 per acre annually under the Rythu Bharosa scheme, an increase from the current ₹10,000, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said.
- ❖ Further, families of landless farm labourers will receive a similar amount annually under the newly introduced Indiramma Atmeeya Bharosa scheme. These schemes will be implemented starting January 26.
- ❖ Addressing the media after a Cabinet meeting held at the Secretariat here on Saturday (January 04), Mr. Reddy criticized Opposition parties and certain sections of the media for spreading 'misinformation' about Rythu Bharosa.
- ❖ He clarified that the financial assistance under the scheme will be provided without any conditions.



Faiz Ahmed Kidwai Appointed as DGCA Director General

Key Points:

- ❖ Senior IAS officer Faiz Ahmed Kidwai, a 1996- batch officer from the Madhya Pradesh cadre, has been appointed as the new DirectorGeneral (DG) of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).
- ❖ His appointment, approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, fills the position left vacant after his predecessor, Vikram Dev Dutt, was elevated and transferred to the Ministry of

Coal. Kidwai now faces key challenges, including resolving disputes over pilot duty and rest norms. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is a statutory body of the Government of India to regulate civil aviation in India. It became a statutory body under the Aircraft (Amendment) Act, 2020.

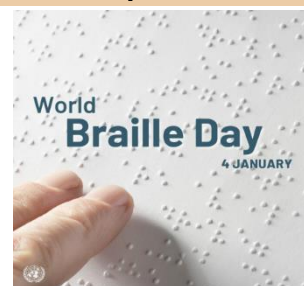


World Braille Day

Key Points:

- ❖ World Braille Day is observed annually on January 4 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, the inventor of the Braille system.
- ❖ Recognized by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2018, this day emphasizes the importance of Braille as a critical tool for literacy, independence, and inclusivity for visually impaired individuals.

The theme for 2025 is "Celebrating Accessibility and Inclusion for the Visually Impaired."



Mike Johnson Re-Elected as US House Speaker

Key Points:

- ❖ Republican Mike Johnson won re-election to the House speakership on a first ballot Friday, pushing past GOP hard-right holdouts and buoyed with a nod of support from President-elect Donald Trump.

- ❖ A collection of hardline Republicans convened in the back of the House chamber during a tense roll call on the first day of the new Congress, one by one declining to vote or choosing another lawmaker.
- ❖ The standoff sparked fresh turmoil signaling trouble ahead under unified GOP control of Washington.



Jammu is to be the 69th Railway Division of the Indian Railway

Key Points:

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Railways will set up its 69 railway division at Jammu under the Northern Railway Zone. This was intimated to the Northern Zone by the ministry in its official communication issued by the ministry on 1st January 2025 as reported by Akashvani (formerly All India Radio).
- ❖ Currently, the Indian Railways has 68 divisions and when the notification is issued by the Indian Railways, Jammu will be the 69th division of the Indian Railways. India has the fourth largest rail network in the world after the United States of America, China, and Russia.



- ❖ However, the Indian railways is the world's largest railway system under single management and the largest employer with around 1.25 million employees.

- ❖ To manage the vast network the Indian Railway has divided its operation into 17 Zones and within the Zones the network is divided into divisions. Northern Zone is the largest zone of the Indian railways.

About Proposed Jammu Division

- ❖ The Jammu Division will be under the Northern Railway Zone. It will be formed by reorganising the existing Firzampur division and it will manage the 742.1 km network. The proposed Jammu division will include five sections: Pathankot-Jammu-Udhampur (now martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan), Srinagar-Baramulla, Bhogpur Sirwal-Pathankot, Batala (excluding)-Pathankot, and Pathankot-Joginder Nagar.

Status of Konkan Railway and South Coast Railway Zone

- ❖ Konkan Railway is managed by the Konkan Railways Corporation Limited and it is owned by the Indian Railways, Government of Maharashtra, Government of Karnataka, Government of Goa and Government of Kerala.
- ❖ It operates a 741-kilometre line connecting Mumbai to Mangalore.
- ❖ It is not considered as an operational zone of the Indian railways.

Railway Zones and Divisions in The Country

- ❖ Currently, there are 17 Railway Zones and 68 Divisions in the country

S.NO.	RAILWAY ZONES	Headquarter	DIVISIONS
1.	Central Railway	Mumbai	Mumbai (CST), Bhusawal, Nagpur, Solapur, Pune.
2.	Eastern Railway	Kolkata	Asansol, Howrah, Malda, Sealdah.
3.	East Central Railway	Hajipur	Danapur, Dhanbad, Mughalsarai, Samastipur, Sonpur.
4.	East Coast Railway	Bhubaneswar	Khurda Road, Sambalpur, Waltair.
5.	Northern Railway	New Delhi	Ambala, Delhi, Lucknow, Moradabad, Ferozpur.
6.	North Central Railway	Allahabad	Prayagraj, Agra, Jhansi.
7.	North Eastern Railway	Gorakhpur	Lucknow, Izzatnagar, Varanasi.

S.NO.	RAILWAY ZONES	Headquarter	DIVISIONS
8.	Northeast Frontier Railway	Guwahati	Katihar, Alipurduar, Rangiya, Lumding, Tinsukia.
9.	North Western Railway	Jaipur	Ajmer, Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur.
10.	Southern Railway	Chennai	Chennai, Madurai, Palghat, Trichy, Trivandrum, Salem.
11.	South Central Railway	Secunderabad	Guntakal, Guntur, Hyderabad, Nanded, Secunderabad, Vijayawada.
12.	South Eastern Railway	Kolkata	Adra, Chakradharpur, Kharagpur, Ranchi.
13.	South East Central Railway	Bilaspur	Bilaspur, Nagpur, Raipur
14.	South Western Railway	Hubli	Bangalore, Hubli, Mysore
15.	Western Railway	Mumbai	Mumbai (Central), Vadodara, Ratlam, Ahmedabad, Rajkot and Bhavnagar.
16.	West Central Railway	Jabalpur	Bhopal, Jabalpur, Kota.
17.	Metro Railway	Kolkata	Not applicable.

India provides \$5 Lakh aid to earthquake-hit Vanuatu

Key Points:

- ❖ The government of India has announced an aid of \$ 5 lakh to the quake-hit tiny Pacific Ocean country Vanuatu. The aid will be used to support relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction efforts in the country.
- ❖ The South Pacific Ocean island nation of Vanuatu was hit by successive earthquakes on 17 December and again on 22 December 2024.
- ❖ The first earthquake of 7.3 magnitude hit the country on 17 December which led to the death of around 14 persons and injury to over 200 people.
- ❖ The country declared a dawn-to-dusk curfew across the country to cope with the death and devastation caused by the earthquake.
- ❖ The second earthquake of 6.1 magnitude struck the country again on 22 December 2024 causing panic in the country.. The successive earthquakes have caused massive damage to several commercial and residential buildings, embassies and a hospital collapsed as a result of the powerful earthquake.



India Vanuatu Relation

- ❖ India established diplomatic relations with Vanuatu in 1986 though India does not have an embassy in the country. Currently the Indian High Commission in Wellington, New Zealand looks after the Vanuatu. Vanuatu is a member of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) which also includes 13 other countries of

the region. The first Indian minister to visit Vanuatu was Piyush Goel in October 2016. In the past, India has provided financial assistance to Vanuatu to deal with natural disasters.

- ❖ India gave \$ 2.5 lakh to Vanuatu in March 2015 in the aftermath of the destruction caused by Cyclone Pam.
- ❖ In June 2018, India gave a grant of \$ 2 lakh as humanitarian assistance for the resettlement in the Ambae islands after the eruption of a volcano.
- ❖ According to the Ministry of External Affairs, India has given US\$ 669,093 to Vanuatu since 2006 for various community development projects until October 2023.

About Vanuatu

- ❖ Vanuatu is an island nation in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. It consists of 13 main islands and many smaller islands.
- ❖ It is located about 800 km west of Fiji and 1,770 km east of Australia.
- ❖ Vanuatu gained independence in 1980.
- ❖ The main population of the country is ethnic Melanesian.
- ❖ Capital: Port-Vila
- ❖ Prime Minister -Charlot Salwai
- ❖ Currency- Vatu

PM Modi inaugurates Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025 in New Delhi

Key Points:

- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav being organised in New Delhi on 4 January 2025. During the inaugural ceremony the Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman, and Union Minister of State for Finance, Pankaj Chaudhary were also present.
- ❖ The Grameen Bharat Mahostav is being held in New Delhi from 4-9 January 2025. The Grameen Bharat Mahotsav brings together the leaders from the government, rural economy, and industry to discuss ways and strategies to build a prosperous and self-reliant rural India.



Organiser of the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav

- ❖ The Grameen Bharat Mahotsav has been organised by the Department of Financial Services, the Union Ministry of Finance, and the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

Theme and Motto of the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav

- ❖ The theme of the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav is "Building a Resilient Rural India for a Viksit Bharat 2024". The motto of the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav is "गांव बढ़े, तो देश बढ़े" (If villages grow, the country grows").

Objectives of the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav

- ❖ The following are the main objectives of the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav.

Explore strategies for the implementation of rural development programs

- ❖ The Mahotsav will provide a platform for the stakeholders to explore and build strategies to implement four key pillars of rural development; Self-reliance for farmers and artisans; rural women empowerment; skill development for the rural youth; financial inclusion for marginalised rural communities.

Platform for rural entrepreneurs to build market linkage

- ❖ The Mahotsav will provide a platform for rural entrepreneurs to display their rural products like the Geographical Indication (GI) certified goods, organic, tribal goods, handlooms, etc. It will help rural entrepreneurs and artisans in building links with potential buyers and investors.

High-Level Panel Discussions

- ❖ The Mahotsav will also host a level panel discussion with a focus on rural development. It will bring together various experts and will discuss issues like organic agriculture, empowering rural women entrepreneurs, inclusive development of the North-East, etc.

About National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

- ❖ The National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is an apex rural financial institution in India.
- ❖ It was set up on the recommendation of the B.Sivaraman Committee set up by the RBI in 1979.
- ❖ It was set up under the provision of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act 1981.
- ❖ It commenced its operation on 12 July 1982.
- ❖ It is 100 % owned by the government of India.

Function

- ❖ It has supervisory power over the rural credit institutions in India like the Regional Rural Banks (RRB), State Cooperative Banks(SCB), and District Central Cooperative Banks(DCCB).
- ❖ NABARD has been given the responsibility to nurture and develop rural credit institutions in India and it provides them financing facilities.
- ❖ It plays a crucial role in the development and facilitation of the microfinance sector in India.
- ❖ It doesn't provide loans to an individual but provides loans to rural credit institutions.
- ❖ It is not the regulator of the rural credit institution. RBI is the regulator of the rural credit institution.
- ❖ Headquarters: Mumbai

Parental consent must for children's accounts: Centre in draft social media rules**Key Points:**

- ❖ Children below the age of 18 will now need parental consent to open social media accounts, according to the draft rules of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, which were published by the Centre on Friday.
- ❖ The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in its notification, announced that the public is invited to submit objections and suggestions to the draft rules through the government's citizen engagement platform, MyGov.in. The feedback will be considered after February 18, 2025.



- ❖ The draft provides an example of the verification process: if a child wants to create a social media account, the platform, referred to as the Data Fiduciary (DF), must first confirm that the child's parent has given consent.
- ❖ The parent must prove their identity, having previously verified their age and identity details. The DF is then responsible for confirming the parent's credentials before processing the child's data. Since the introduction of the DPDP Act in 2023, debates have erupted over its provisions related to children's data.
- ❖ Leading tech companies, including Meta and Google, have called for the legal age requirement to be lowered from 18 to 14, arguing that the current threshold is problematic for platforms aimed at teenagers. Despite this pushback from the tech industry, the government has

maintained the 18-year age limit in the draft rules.

- ❖ **What is an example of a data fiduciary?**
For example, if you run a website that collects customer data to improve user experience, you are a Data Fiduciary because you are responsible for how that data is processed.
- ❖ Every Data Fiduciary has a legal obligation to handle data responsibly and ensure compliance with relevant laws and privacy regulations. According to the draft, these data companies will be able to keep this data only for the time for which people have given their consent. After this, they will have to delete this data. E-commerce, social media and gaming platforms will come under the category of companies responsible for the data.
- ❖ The Act has the provision to impose a penalty of up to Rs 250 crore on data fiduciaries - entities responsible for determining the purpose and means of processing of personal data. The feedback can be submitted on mygov.in. The draft rules have been issued after 14 months of Parliament approving the Digital Data Protection Bill 2023.
- ❖ **What is the US Presidential Medal of Freedom, awarded to Messi, George Soros and Hillary Clinton**
- ❖ US President Joe Biden recognised the contributions of 19 public figures in politics, entertainment, sports and more through a ceremony on Sunday (January 5) at the White House for awarding the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
- ❖ The New York Times said the honorees included some of the Democratic Party's "best-known leaders and boosters: Hillary Clinton, philanthropist and major Democratic donor George Soros, and Robert F. Kennedy, who was given the recognition posthumously."

- ❖ Others included Argentinian footballer Lionel Messi, anthropologist Jane Goodall and actor Denzel Washington. Messi was unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts.

What is the US Presidential Medal of Freedom?

- ❖ The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the United States' highest civilian honour, often given in recognition of a body of work over a person's lifetime. A Congressional Research Service report from November 2024 says it was created by President Harry S. Truman (1945 to 1953) in 1945.
- ❖ Later re-named by President John F Kennedy in 1963, it allows the President to recognise "any person who has made an especially meritorious contribution to (1) the security or national interests of the United States, or (2) world peace, or (3) cultural or other significant public or private endeavors." The medal itself has a white star over a red pentagon, surrounded by five gold eagles. At its centre is a blue circle with 13 gold stars.

Blinkit launches 10-minute ambulance service, starting with Gurugram

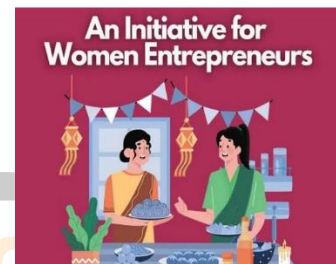
Key Points:

- ❖ Quick-commerce company Blinkit has launched a 10-minute ambulance service in Gurugram. Blinkit plans to expand the service to other cities in India in the next two years. The ambulances would have medical equipment such as oxygen cylinders, AEDs (Automated External Defibrillator), stretchers, monitors, suction machines, emergency medicines, and injections. The ambulance will come with a paramedic, an assistant, and a trained driver. CEO of Blinkit – Albinder Dhinds.
- ❖ While the first five ambulances will immediately take to the roads of Gurugram, more users will be able to book a Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulance through the Blinkit app.

Women Entrepreneurship Platform Partners with Mira Bhayandar Municipal Corporation to Empower Women Entrepreneurs

Key Points:

- ❖ The Mira Bhayandar Municipal Corporation (MBMC) has conceptualized a flagship initiative called 'Faral Sakhi', aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs in the city of Mira Bhayandar, Maharashtra. The program will provide comprehensive training and support to help women entrepreneurs engaged in traditional snack production to scale their ventures sustainably and effectively. MBMC collaborated with the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) of NITI Aayog and formally launched 'Faral Sakhi' under the Award to Reward initiative of WEP.



- ❖ WEP, incubated in NITI Aayog in 2018 as an aggregator platform, transitioned into a publicprivate partnership in 2022.
- ❖ The 'Faral Sakhi' initiative aims at creating permanent employment opportunities for women by engaging them in the production and sale of traditional festive snacks ('Faral'). A central kitchen, set up by MBMC, enables women from self-help groups (SHGs) to prepare these snacks professionally.
- ❖ 25 women from Mira Bhayandar will be selected for technical training in business operations. This training, facilitated by the Centre for Education, Governance, and Public Policy (CEGP Foundation), will equip participants with the skills and knowledge needed to establish sustainable businesses and contribute to the local economy.

Renowned botanist K S Manilal passes away at 86

Key Points:

- ❖ Renowned botanist K S Manilal, who revived the Latin book 'Hortus Malabaricus', a landmark 17th-century botanical compendium about the medicinal plants of Kerala, by translating it into English and Malayalam, passed away in Thrissur. He was 86. Manilal also served as the Head of the Department of Botany at Calicut University.
- ❖ He received the E K Janaki Ammal Taxonomy Award (2003) and the Netherlands Government's highest civilian honour, the Officer of the Order of Orange-Nassau, awarded by Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands. India honoured him with the Padma Shri in 2020.

Pakistan begins its two-year tenure as non-permanent member of UNSC

Key Points:

- ❖ Pakistan began its two-year tenure as a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on January 1. Pakistani delegation will play an active and constructive role in addressing key challenges facing the world. Pakistan replaced Japan, which currently occupies the Asian seat in the Security Council, a primary instrument for establishing and maintaining international peace.
- ❖ Pakistan will sit in the Security Council for the 2025-26 term as a non-permanent member the eighth time that the country has had a seat on the 15-member body's horseshoe table.



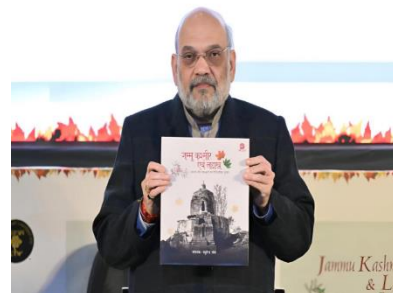
UNSC
Security Council

- ❖ Pakistan's earlier terms on the council were in 2012-13, 2003-04, 1993-94, 1983-84, 1976-77, 1968-69 and 1952-53. In the June election in the General Assembly, Pakistan was elected along with Denmark, Greece, Panama and Somalia to replace Japan, Ecuador, Malta, Mozambique and Switzerland whose terms end on December 31, 2024.
- ❖ The new members join the five veto-wielding permanent members the United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom and France and the five countries elected as non-permanent members last year Algeria, Guyana, South Korea, Sierra Leone and Slovenia.

Amit Shah released Jammu Kashmir & Ladakh Through The Ages Book

Key Points:

- ❖ Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah has released the book 'Jammu Kashmir & Ladakh Through the Ages: A Visual Narrative of Continuities and Linkages' in New Delhi. The editor of the book is Professor Raghuvendra Tanwar, Chairman, Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR).





Recent Books in News

- ❖ In Pursuit of Democracy – Najma Heptulla
- ❖ The Nehru Development Model – Arvind Panagariya
- ❖ Living with Birds – Asad Rahamani
- ❖ Modi's Governance Triumph: Reshaping India's Path to Prosperity – Tarun Chugh
- ❖ Breaking Rocks and Barriers – Sudipta Sengupta
- ❖ Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi' – Dr R Balasubramaniam
- ❖ I have the Streets – R Ashwin & Sidharth Monga

