

ranking of the top four countries in the world as compared to 2024 Global Firepower Index.

- ❖ The Global Firepower Index has been released by a website Globalfirepower.com annually since 2006.

About the Global Firepower Index

- ❖ The Global Firepower Index compares 145 countries military power based on their war-making capabilities across land, sea and air. It doesn't include a country's nuclear weapon capability but only includes conventional military capabilities. The 145 countries military strength is evaluated on more than 60 parameters related to manpower, natural resources, finance and geography.

About India in Global Firepower Index 2025

- ❖ India was ranked at the 4th position with a score of 0.1184. A score of 0.0000 is an ideal score which denotes perfect military strength which no country possesses.
- ❖ The top ranked country, the United States of America, got a score of 0.0744.
- ❖ India was ranked number 1 in the world in the Population Reaching Military age annually.
- ❖ India was ranked second in the world in population, available manpower, vehicles, roadways etc.
- ❖ India secured poor rank in oil consumption, natural gas consumption, coal consumption, external borders and external debts.
- ❖ India was ranked 145th in the world in terms of Helicopter Carrier strength and Mine warfare capability in sea.

Top 10 countries of the Global Firepower Index 2025

- ❖ Following are the top ten countries in the world having the strongest military.
- ❖ United States of America - score 0.0744
- ❖ Russia- score 0.0788

- ❖ China- score 0.0788
- ❖ India- score 0.01184
- ❖ South Korea - score 0.1656
- ❖ United Kingdom - score 0.1785
- ❖ France -score 0.1878
- ❖ Japan- score 0.1839
- ❖ Turkiye-score 0.1902
- ❖ Italy- score 0.2164

India to Host FIDE Chess World Cup 2025

Key Points:

- ❖ India is set to host the prestigious FIDE Chess World Cup 2025, marking a significant milestone for the country as it takes on the role of the host for its first major international chess tournament since the 2022 Chennai Chess Olympiad.
- ❖ India is set to host the prestigious FIDE Chess World Cup 2025, marking a significant milestone for the country as it takes on the role of the host for its first major international chess tournament since the 2022 Chennai Chess Olympiad.
- ❖ This announcement is poised to further elevate India's stature in the global chess arena, especially considering the country's growing influence in the sport.

Details of the Tournament

- ❖ The FIDE Chess World Cup 2025 is scheduled to take place from October 31 to November 27, 2025. This tournament is of paramount importance as it features a knockout format with over 200 players from around the world.
- ❖ It also serves as a vital gateway to the Candidates Tournament, offering three qualification spots.
- ❖ These spots are highly coveted as the Candidates Tournament determines who will challenge the reigning World Chess Champion.

- ❖ Originally, FIDE, the international chess governing body, had listed India as the host nation in its 2025 calendar.
- ❖ However, the announcement was retracted on Monday, with a “to be announced” status replacing it.
- ❖ Despite this, sources within the All India Chess Federation (AICF) have confirmed to Sportstar that the hosting rights for the World Cup have indeed been finalized, reaffirming India’s commitment to hosting this prestigious event.

Historical Context of India’s Chess Achievements

- ❖ India’s involvement in the FIDE Chess World Cup has been noteworthy in recent years. The country’s R. Praggnanandhaa made history in the 2023 edition, when he secured the silver medal after a narrow loss to Magnus Carlsen in the final. His remarkable journey through the tournament captivated chess enthusiasts worldwide, and it underscored India’s rising influence in global chess.
- ❖ Notably, Viswanathan Anand, one of India’s most iconic chess players, remains the only Indian to have won the FIDE World Cup. Anand clinched back-to-back titles in 2000 and 2002, during a period when the format of the tournament included a round-robin stage. His victories during those years cemented his legacy as one of the greatest chess players of all time and helped elevate India’s reputation on the international chess stage.

Arjun Erigaisi and the Road to the Candidates 2026

- ❖ In addition to the achievements of Praggnanandhaa and Anand, India’s Arjun Erigaisi has also made significant strides in the international chess scene. Erigaisi came close to qualifying for the Candidates 2026 through the FIDE Circuit ratings in

2024. However, he narrowly missed out on securing a spot, finishing behind Fabiano Caruana, who earned his qualification as the top-rated player on the leaderboard. Erigaisi’s performance in the FIDE Circuit remains a testament to his skill and potential as a future contender in world chess tournaments.

Significance of India Hosting the FIDE Chess World Cup

- ❖ India’s role as the host for the 2025 FIDE Chess World Cup is of immense significance. The tournament is expected to not only showcase India’s rich chess heritage but also attract international attention to the sport within the country. Hosting such a highprofile event will further promote chess at the grassroots level and inspire future generations of players.
- ❖ This event comes at a time when India has been making waves in the chess world, with young prodigies like Praggnanandhaa and Erigaisi gaining international recognition. The FIDE Chess World Cup 2025 will offer these emerging talents an opportunity to showcase their skills on home soil, which could prove pivotal in their careers.

India ranks 7th in global coffee production as exports hit \$1.29 billion

Key Points:

- ❖ India has emerged as the world’s seventh-largest coffee producer, with exports reaching \$1.29 billion in FY 2023-24, almost double the \$719.42 million recorded in 2020-21, according to the Commerce Ministry.
- ❖ In the first half of January 2025, India exported over 9,300 tonnes of coffee with top buyers including Italy, Belgium, and Russia.
- ❖ Approximately three-fourths of India’s coffee production consists of Arabica and Robusta beans.

- ❖ These are primarily exported as unroasted beans. However, there is a growing demand for value-added products like roasted and instant coffee, further fueling the export boom.



- ❖ Domestic consumption has increased from 84,000 tonnes in 2012 to 91,000 tonnes in 2023. India's coffee is primarily grown in the ecologically rich Western and Eastern Ghats, areas famous for their biodiversity. Karnataka leads in production, contributing 248,020 million tonnes in 2022-23, followed by Kerala and Tamil Nadu. These areas are home to shaded plantations that not only support the coffee industry but also play a vital role in preserving the natural environment, helping to maintain the ecological balance of these biodiversity hotspots.

HSBC India gets RBI approval to open 20 new branches in 20 cities

Key Points:

- ❖ HSBC India, the Indian arm of London headquartered HSBC, has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to open 20 branches across 20 cities. With the addition of 20 branches, HSBC India's branches in the country will reach 46. In 2016 HSBC had 50 branches in the country before it decided to shut down 26.



- ❖ The cities in which HSBC India will open branches are Amritsar, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Dehradun, Faridabad, Indore, Jalandhar, Kanpur, Ludhiana, Lucknow, Mysuru, Nagpur, Nashik, Navi Mumbai, Patna, Rajkot, Surat, Thiruvananthapuram, Vadodara, and Vishakhapatnam.
- ❖ These locations were chosen for their growing wealth pools, targeting affluent, high-net-worth, and ultra-high-net-worth individuals with domestic and international banking and wealth management needs.

Union Cabinet approves ₹11,440 crore revival package for Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited

Key Points:

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved a ₹11,440 crore revival plan for Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the state-owned company operating the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw detailed the plan, which includes an equity infusion of ₹10,300 crore and the conversion of ₹1,140 crore in working capital loans into preferred share capital.

Indian Naval Ship Mumbai participates in multinational La Perouse exercise

Key Points:

- ❖ Indigenously designed and built guided missile destroyer Indian Naval Ship (INS) Mumbai is participating in the fourth edition of the multinational naval exercise La Perouse in the eastern Indian Ocean. The 2025 edition of the La Perouse exercise is being headed by France with eight other countries – India, the US, Canada, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, the UK and Singapore participating as well.
- ❖ The exercise aims to develop common situational awareness by enhancing

cooperation in the field of maritime surveillance, maritime interdiction operations and air operations, along with the conduct of progressive training and information sharing.

- ❖ The indigenously designed and built guided missile destroyer INS Mumbai is participating in the fourth edition of the Multinational Exercise LA PEROUSE.
- ❖ This visit is in consonance with India's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) to enhance maritime cooperation and collaboration for safer and secure Indo-Pacific Region.



India boosts telecom connectivity with Sanchar Saathi App and NBM 2.0 launch

Key Points:

- ❖ Union Minister of Communications Jyotiraditya M. Scindia has unveiled a series of initiatives, including the Sanchar Saathi Mobile App, the National Broadband Mission (NBM) 2.0, and the inauguration of the Intra Circle Roaming (ICR) facility at Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN)-funded 4G mobile sites.
- ❖ NBM 2.0 aims to connect the remaining 170,000 villages across the country. Launched in 2019, the NBM had targeted broadband access to all villages by 2022 through the laying of an incremental 30 lakh km of optical fibre cable and increase in tower density from 0.42 to 1.0 tower per thousand of population by 2024.

Uttar Pradesh govt approves solar power projects worth Rs 10,000 crore

Key Points:

- ❖ Uttar Pradesh has approved solar power projects worth around Rs 10,000 crore to achieve the state's renewable energy capacity of 22,000 megawatt (Mw).
- ❖ Under the roadmap, three solar power projects of 2,000 Mw would be set up in Jhansi, Lalitpur, and Chitrakoot districts, which fall under the Bundelkhand region.
- ❖ While NTPC Green Energy will develop 800 Mw and 600 Mw solar power plants in Chitrakoot and Lalitpur, respectively, Hinduja Group has been chosen to develop a 600 MW unit in Jhansi.
- ❖ The UPNEDA has floated bidding documents for another 1,200 Mw solar power plant at Jalaun, Bundelkhand. Similar projects have been proposed in other places, including Mirzapur, Kanpur, and Prayagraj.

Urbasi Sinha Wins Gates-Cambridge Impact Prize 2025

Key Points:

- ❖ Prof Urbasi Sinha, a faculty member in the Light and Matter Physics team at the Raman Research Institute (RRI) in Bengaluru, was awarded the Gates-Cambridge Impact Prize 2025.
- ❖ Professor Sinha plays a pivotal role in India's 'National Quantum Mission,' an initiative aimed at propelling the country to the forefront of global quantum innovation. Her leadership is instrumental in fostering research and development in quantum technologies, aligning with national objectives to enhance technological competitiveness.



- ❖ The award ceremony took place in Cambridge, UK, and was hosted by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Gates-Cambridge Impact Prize was established to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Gates-Cambridge Scholarship programme.

Recent Award

- ❖ Singapore' Honorary Citizen Award – Tarun Das (Former DG of Confederation of Indian Industry)
- ❖ 14th PSE Excellence Awards by ICC – Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA)
- ❖ Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi' award for leadership – External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar
- ❖ Bhutan's royal honour – Renowned Indian educationist Arun Kapur
- ❖ Jamsetji Tata Award by Indian Society for Quality (ISQ) – Kiran Mazumdar

Viktor Axelsen, An Se-Young Claim India Open Titles

Key Points:

- ❖ Olympic champions Viktor Axelsen and An Se-young secured the men's and women's singles crowns respectively with dominating wins in lop-sided finals at the India Open Super 750 badminton tournament in New Delhi. Axelsen, a 2017 and 2019 winner, prevailed 21-16 21-8 over last year's finalist Lee Cheuk Yiu of Hong Kong in the men's singles summit clash, at the KD Jadhav indoor hall which was almost full despite the fact that no Indian was competing in the two finals.



- ❖ In the women's doubles final, Japan's Arisa Igarashi and Ayako Sakuramoto beat Kim Hye Jang and Kong Hee Young of South Korea 21- 15 21-13.
- ❖ This is only the third tournament together for the Japanese combination with Igarashi, formerly known as Arisa Higashino, making a successful shift to women's doubles from mixed doubles.
- ❖ In the mixed doubles final, China's Jiang Zhen Bang and Wei Ya Xin prevailed 21-18 21-17 over the French combination of Thom Gicquel and Delphine Delrue.

Sarala Aviation unveils prototype for India's first air taxi

Key Points:

- ❖ Sarala Aviation, a Bengaluru-based startup unveiled its prototype air taxi, Shunya, at the Bharat Mobility Global Expo. The company aims to launch the electric flying taxis in Bengaluru by 2028 to become the first to introduce urban air transport in India.
- ❖ The Shunya prototype is designed for short trips of 20-30 kms and can reach speeds of upto 250 kmph.
- ❖ The vehicle can accommodate up to six passengers and carry a maximum load of 680 kg, it is the highest payload eVTOL (electric vertical take-off and landing) vehicle currently on the market.

About Sarla Aviation

- ❖ Sarla Aviation was founded by Adrian Schmidt, Rakesh Gaonkar, and Shivam Chauhan in October 2023. The startup recently raised \$10 million in Series A

funding, led by Accel with participation from Flipkart co-founder Binny Bansal and Zerodha co-founder Nikhil Kamath. Co-founder and CEO of Sarla Aviation – Adrian Schmidt

Mizoram become first state in Northeast to Distributed Property Cards

Key Points:

- ❖ Mizoram, the “first among the northeastern states” , has distributed property cards under the Centre’s village survey scheme to 2,909 beneficiaries since April 2023. 1,754 property cardholders from 18 villages in the state were among 65 lakh beneficiaries across 10 states and two Union Territories (UT).



- ❖ The Survey of Villages Abadi and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas (SVAMITVA), a scheme of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, provides a ‘Record of Rights’ to village household owners with the issuance of legal ownership cards to property owners by mapping land parcels using drone technology. The SVAMITVA scheme was launched by the prime minister on April 24, 2020. The scheme aimed at creating records of rights in revenue documents for inhabited areas in villages using drone and GIS technology.

US Senate confirms Marco Rubio as 72nd Secretary of State

Key Points:

- ❖ The US Senate has confirmed the appointment of Marco Rubio as the 72nd US Secretary of State in the Trump Administration. Rubio won the vote by 99-0 during the 1st session of the 119th Congress.



20 January – National Penguin Awareness Day

- ❖ National Penguin Awareness Day is observed annually on 20 January to raise awareness about penguins, their natural habitats, and the challenges they face due to climate change, habitat destruction, and pollution.
- ❖ The day emphasizes the importance of protecting penguin species, many of which are endangered or at risk due to melting ice caps, overfishing, and ocean pollution.



MSP of Raw Jute increased to Rs.5,650 per quintal for 2025-26 season

Key Points:

- ❖ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the minimum support price (MSP) of raw jute (TD-3 grade) for the agricultural marketing season 2025-26 at Rs 5650 per quintal. The meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs was held in New Delhi on

22 January 2025 and was chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Increase of Rs 315 per quintal for Raw Jute in 2025-26 season

- ❖ The MSP of Rs.5,650/- per quintal for 2025-26 season is an increase of Rs 315 per quintal as compared to the 2024-25 season.
- ❖ The government has been consistently increasing the MSP for raw jute over a period of time. In 2014-15 the MSP was Rs.2400 per quintal which has been increased to Rs.5,650/- per quintal in 2025-26.
- ❖ The MSP of Rs.5,650 per quintal in 2025-26 would ensure a return of 66.8 percent over the all India weighted average cost of production.

About the Golden Fiber- Jute

- ❖ Jute is also known as the golden fiber and India is the largest producer of raw jute in the world.
- ❖ In India, Jute is the second most important cash crop after cotton.
- ❖ Jute is grown in six states of India- West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Odisha, Tripura and Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ West Bengal is the major producer of jute in India followed by Assam and Bihar.
- ❖ Around 40 lakh farming families are directly or indirectly dependent on Jute Industry.

Who buys Jute from Farmers

- ❖ The government of India owned Jute Corporation of India is mandated to buy raw jute from the farmers on the MSP.
- ❖ The Jute Corporation of India was set up by the Government of India in 1971 to buy raw jute/mesta without any quantitative restriction from the farmers on the announced MSP. ▪ About Minimum Support Price

- ❖ In 1966-67 the government of India introduced Minimum Support Crop(MSP) for selected crops.
- ❖ The minimum support price (MSP) is recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) under the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare.
- ❖ However the government of India is not bound to accept the recommendation of the CACP.

Crops under MSP

- ❖ The CACP recommends MSP for 22 mandated crops and a fair and remunerative price (FRP) for sugarcane. The mandated crops are;
- ❖ Cereals -Wheat, Paddy, Maize, Sorghum, Barley, Ragi, Pearl millet
- ❖ Pulses- Chickpea / Gram, Tur, Urad, Lentil, Moong
- ❖ Oilseeds - Soybean, Sesame, Peanut, Rapeseed, Safflower, Niger seed and Sunflower
- ❖ Commercial crops -Copra,, Cotton, Raw Jute and Sugarcane The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Government of India, fixes the MSP of the Toria and De-Husked coconut based on the MSPs of Rapeseed/Mustard Seed and Copra, respectively.

Kochi hosts 7th edition of India Boat & Marine Show

Key Points:

- ❖ The 7th edition of the India Boat & Marine Show (IBMS) was held at Bolgatty Palace Event Centre, Kochi. The event is supported and endorsed by K-BIP of the Kerala government, NSIC, Kochi Water Metro, Kerala Tourism, Indian Coast Guard, Southern Naval Command, Kerala Maritime Board, CIFT and Fisheries Department. Kochi has become a hub for

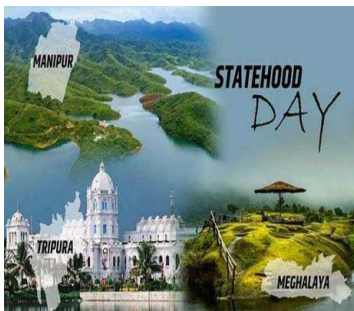
ship repair and shipbuilding with the new projects being commissioned at CSL. The projects will not only boost infrastructure but will also provide employment and support MSMEs.



Tripura, Meghalaya, Manipur celebrate 53rd Statehood Day

Key Points:

- ❖ Every year on January 21, the northeastern states of Manipur, Meghalaya, and Tripura celebrate their Statehood Day, marking the historic moment they attained full statehood under the North Eastern Region (Reorganization) Act of 1971.
- ❖ This momentous occasion reflects the evolution of these regions into integral and empowered states within the Union of India.
- ❖ This day is not just a commemoration of their statehood but also a reflection of their rich history, cultural vibrancy, and contributions to India's identity.



Manipur

- ❖ Known as the “Jewel of India,” Manipur has a long and illustrious history, steeped in traditional art, dance, and literature. The statehood granted in 1972 allowed Manipur to flourish while preserving its unique identity.

Meghalaya

- ❖ Often called the “Abode of Clouds,” Meghalaya became a full-fledged state to honour its distinct cultural and linguistic identity. In 1947, the rulers of the Garo and Khasi region acceded to India. Meghalaya which is located in the northeastern region of the country came into existence as an autonomous state within the state of Assam on April 2, 1970, consisting of United Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the Garo Hills districts.

Tripura

- ❖ Tripura was a princely state till the merger with India on November 15, 1949. Bir Bikram was the last king on the throne before India's independence. After his demise on May 17, 1947, his minor son Kirri Bikram Mannikya took over the throne of Tripura kingdom.
- ❖ However, he could not rule due to his minor status. His widow queen Kanchan Prabha took charge of Tripura and was instrumental in the merger of the Tripura kingdom in the Union of India.

