

14 January 2025

Harvest Festivals

Key Points:

Why In News:

- ❖ The President of India has extended greetings to citizens on the occasion of Lohri, Makar Sankranti, Pongal, and Magh Bihu. These harvest festivals are celebrated in various forms across different regions of the country.

Harvest Festivals in India

- ❖ **About:** Celebrated to mark the end of the harvesting season under various names like Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Magh Bihu, Lohri, etc.

Astronomical Significance:

- ❖ Marks the Sun's transition into the Capricorn (Makara) zodiac sign.
- ❖ Signifies the start of the Sun's northward journey (Uttarayan).
- ❖ Represents the shift from winter to warmer months, symbolizing the end of inactivity.
- ❖ Follows the solar cycle, resulting in a fixed date (14th January), unlike festivals based on the lunar cycle.

Cultural Significance:

- ❖ Rituals include bathing, offering Naivedhya (food) to Lord Surya, giving charity, performing Shraddha, and breaking fast.
- ❖ Devotees bathe in sacred rivers like the Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna, and Cauvery.

Regional Celebrations:

- ❖ **Tamil Nadu (Pongal):** A four-day festival marking the rice harvest. Homes are decorated with traditional kolams made from rice powder.
- ❖ **Karnataka:** Tradition of sharing sesame and jaggery mixture to symbolize harmony and goodwill. Farming communities dress cattle in colorful costumes and jewels, performing 'Kicchu Haisodu' (jumping over fire pits).

- ❖ **Punjab (Lohri):** Celebrated with bonfires, folk songs, and offerings like groundnuts and popcorn to the fire.
- ❖ **Bihar (Khichdi)** involves preparing a dish of rice and lentils called Khichdi. Distribution of sesame and jaggery ladoos or chikkis.
- ❖ **Rajasthan and Gujarat:** Celebrated with kite-flying competitions and festivals, including the International Kite Festival in Ahmedabad. Skies are lit with lanterns in the evening.
- ❖ **Assam (Magh Bihu):** Marks the annual harvest and the beginning of the Assamese new year.
- ❖ **Odisha (Makar Sankranti):**
ମକର ସଂକ୍ରାନ୍ତି ଦିନ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ମକର ରାଶିରେ ପ୍ରବେଶ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ସୌର ଗଣନା ଅନୁସାରେ ମକର ସଂକ୍ରାନ୍ତିକୁ ମକର ମାସର ପ୍ରଥମ ଦିନ ହିସାବରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରାଯାଏ । ସଂକ୍ରାନ୍ତି ହେଉଛି ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କର ସଂକ୍ରମଣ ବା ଗୋଟିଏ ରାଶିରୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଶିକୁ ଚଳନ କରିବାର ଦିନ । ମକର ସଂକ୍ରାନ୍ତି ଦିନ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଧନୁ ରାଶିରୁ ମକର ରାଶିକୁ କ୍ରମଶଃ ଗମନ କରନ୍ତି । ଏହି ଦିନଠାରୁ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କର ଉତ୍ତରାୟଣ ଗତି ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥାଏ ।

ପ୍ରତି ସଂକ୍ରାନ୍ତିରେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଗୋଟିଏ ଲେଖ୍ୟ ରାଶିକୁ ଗମନ କରି ସେଥିରେ ଏକ ମାସ ଅବସ୍ଥାନ କରନ୍ତି । ମକର ସଂକ୍ରାନ୍ତି ଦିନ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉତ୍ତରାୟଣ ହୋଇ ମକର ରାଶିକୁ ଆସନ୍ତି । ଏହି ଦିନ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉତ୍ତରଦିଗକୁ ଯାତ୍ରା କରି ଛଅ ମାସ ଅବସ୍ଥାନ କରୁଥିବାରୁ ବିବାହ, ଡ଼ାକ, ଯଜ୍ଞାନୁଷ୍ଠାନ, ଗୃହ, ଦେବାଳୟ ପ୍ରଭୃତି ଆଦି ସମସ୍ତ ଶୁଭକର୍ମ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହୁଏ । ଏହି ସମୟରେ ଅଳ୍ପାଂଶ ଘିଅ ପାଇଁ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉପାସନ କରାଯାଏ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପ୍ରବାଦ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ମକରଠାରୁ ଦିନ ବଢ଼େ ହୁଏ, ଅର୍ଥାତ ଏହି ଦିନଠାରୁ ଦିନ ଜନଶଃ ବଢ଼ୁଛି ।

ମକର ସଂକ୍ରାନ୍ତି ଦେବକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଧାନ, ଆଖୁ ଆଦି ନୂଆଫସଲ ଅନଳ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ତେଣୁ ସେଦିନ ନୂଆ ଧାନରୁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ଅପଞ୍ଚ ଅରୁଆ ଚାଉଳ, ନୂଆଗୁଡ଼, ଛେନା, ନଡ଼ିଆ, ପାଚିଲା କଦଳୀ, ଘିଅ, ଛାଉ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଗୋଟିଆ ଗୋଟିଏ ସୁମିଷ୍ଟ ଭୋଗ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରି ଗୃହଦେବତାଙ୍କୁ ଓ ଧ୍ୟାନଶକ୍ତିରେ ଭୋଗ କରାଯାଏ । ଏହି ଭୋଗ 'ମକର ଚାଉଳ' ଭାବେ ପରିଚିତ । ଏହି ଭୋଗ ଖୁଆଖୋଇ ହୋଇ ଗୋଟିଏ 'ମକର' ବସନ୍ତି । କେତେକ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ନୂଆଧାନର ଚାଉଳରେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ପୋଡ଼ିପିଠା ସହିତ ଗୁଡ଼, କଦଳୀ, ନଡ଼ିଆ ଓ ଅରୁଆଚାଉଳରେ ଭୋଗ କରାଯାଇ ଦେବାଦେବୀଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଦିଆଯାଏ । ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କ ଯୋଗୁଁ କୃଷିକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଶସ୍ୟ ଉତ୍ପନ୍ନ ହେଉଥିବାରୁ କୃଷକମାନେ ମକରସଂକ୍ରାନ୍ତିର ପୂଣ୍ୟକାଳରେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କୁ ନୂତନ ଶସ୍ୟ ଅର୍ପଣ କରି ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରିଥାନ୍ତି ।



PM Modi to attend AI Summit in France

Key Points:

- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Summit in France from February 10 to 11. This summit will allow for an international conversation on AI. The summit, to be hosted by France at the Grand Palais in Paris, will convene Heads of State and government, leaders of international organisations, CEOs from large and small companies, representatives from academia, NGOs, artists, and members of civil society.



- ❖ The event will focus on five key themes: public interest in AI, the future of work, innovation and culture, trust in AI, and global AI governance.

India to host 28th CSPOC with focus on AI and social media

Key Points:

- ❖ India will host the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of Parliaments of Commonwealth Countries (CSPOC) in 2026. The event will focus on the use of artificial intelligence and social media in parliamentary processes.
- ❖ The CSPOC platform was described as a space for enhancing cooperation and exchanging parliamentary practices among member countries. India's history of hosting the conference in 1970-71, 1986, and 2010, and India invited presiding officers from Commonwealth nations to join the 2026 event in New Delhi.



Nicolas Maduro takes oath as Venezuela's President

Key Points:

- ❖ Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro was sworn in for a new term, amid renewed protests and rebukes from the United States and others who believe he stole last year's vote. Mr. Maduro's 2018 reelection was widely rejected as a sham after authorities banned key opponents from running. And Venezuela's Opposition faction accuse him of outright ballot fraud last year.



About Venezuela

- ❖ Capital- Caracas
- ❖ Currency- Venezuelan bolívar
- ❖ President- Nicolás Maduro
- ❖ Official language- Spanish
- ❖ Continent- South America



PM - Ayushman Bharat Yojana Launched In Odisha

Key Points:

ଏଣିକି ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଆୟୁଷ୍ମାନ ଭାରତ ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଜନ ଆରୋଗ୍ୟ ଯୋଜନା ଉପଲକ୍ଷ ହେବ । ଏନେଇ ସୋମବାର ନୂଆ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀର ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ଭବନରେ ଆୟୋଜିତ ଏକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମରେ ନ୍ୟାସନାଲ୍ ହେଲଥ ଅଥରିଟି ଓ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ବିଭାଗ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଚୁକ୍ତି ସ୍ୱାକ୍ଷରିତ ହୋଇଛି ।

ଏହି ଯୋଜନା ଦ୍ୱାରା ୧ କୋଟି ଲକ୍ଷ ପରିବାର ଉପକୃତ ହେବେ । ୨୩ ଲକ୍ଷରୁ ଅଧିକ ୭୦ ବର୍ଷରୁ ଊର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱ ବରିଷ୍ଠ ନାଗରିକ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ସୁବିଧା ପାଇବେ । ଚିକିତ୍ସା କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଏହି ଯୋଜନା ଯୁଗାନ୍ତକାରୀ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଆଣିବ । ହିତାଧିକାରୀ ଦେଶର ୨୯ ହଜାରରୁ ଅଧିକ ଚିକିତ୍ସାଳୟରେ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ସୁବିଧା ପାଇପାରିବେ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପଞ୍ଚାୟତରେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ହେବ ଆୟୁଷ୍ମାନ ଆରୋଗ୍ୟ ମନ୍ଦିର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ହେବ ବୋଲି ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାଝୀ କହିଛନ୍ତି ।

ଏହା ଦ୍ୱାରା ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ରାଜ୍ୟର ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ଜନ ଆରୋଗ୍ୟ ଯୋଜନା ସହିତ ଆୟୁଷ୍ମାନ ଭାରତ ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଜନ ଆରୋଗ୍ୟ ଯୋଜନା ଯୋଡ଼ିହୋଇଛି ।

ଚେଷ୍ଟା ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାର ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ପ୍ରତି ପଞ୍ଚାୟତରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ଆୟୁଷ୍ମାନ ଆରୋଗ୍ୟ ମନ୍ଦିର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା କରିବେ । ସେଠାରେ ହେଲଥ ଶର୍କର ଯୋଗ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ନିଯୋଜିତ ହେବେ । ଏହି ସବୁ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଗୁଡ଼ିକର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣାଙ୍ଗ ଡିଜିଟାଲ୍ ବିବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ କରାଯିବ ବୋଲି ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ କହିଛନ୍ତି ।

- ❖ This scheme was launched on 23rd September, 2018 in Ranchi, Jharkhand by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY is the largest health assurance scheme in the world which aims at providing a health cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization to over 12 crores poor and vulnerable families (approximately 55 crore beneficiaries) that form the bottom 40% of the Indian population.



Benefit Cover Under PM-JAY

- ❖ Medical examination, treatment and consultation
- ❖ Pre-hospitalization
- ❖ Medicine and medical consumables
- ❖ Non-intensive and intensive care services
- ❖ Diagnostic and laboratory investigations
- ❖ Medical implantation services (where necessary)
- ❖ Accommodation benefits

- ❖ Food services
- ❖ Complications arising during treatment
- ❖ Post-hospitalization follow-up care up to 15 days

ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ କହିଛନ୍ତି, ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ନରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ମୋଦୀଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଏହି ଯୋଜନା ୨୦୧୮ ମସିହାରୁ ଲାଗୁ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ଏଥିରୁ ବଞ୍ଚିତ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଏହି ଯୋଜନା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ନିଜସ୍ୱ ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ଜନ ଆରୋଗ୍ୟ ଯୋଜନା ସହିତ ଯୋଡ଼ିହେବ ଏବଂ ଏହା ଦ୍ୱାରା ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ୧ କୋଟିରୁ ଅଧିକ ପରିବାର ଦେଶର ୨୯ ହଜାର ଚିକିତ୍ସାଳୟରେ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ସୁବିଧା ପାଇପାରିବେ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ମାତ୍ର ୯୦୦ ହସ୍ପିଟାଲରେ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ସୁବିଧା ମିଳୁଛି ବୋଲି ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ କହିଛନ୍ତି ।

ଚଳିତ ବଜେଟ୍ରେ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ୨୧ ହଜାର କୋଟି ଟଙ୍କାର ବ୍ୟୟ ଲାଗିଯାଇଛି ଯାହାକି ପୂର୍ବ ବର୍ଷ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ୩୨.୨ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ଅଧିକ ଏବଂ ଏହା ରାଜ୍ୟ ବଜେଟ୍‌ର ୮ ପ୍ରତିଶତ । ଏହି ପରିମାଣ ଜାତୀୟ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟନୀତିର ସୁପାରିଶ ଅନୁରୂପ ହୋଇଛି ବୋଲି ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ କହିଛନ୍ତି ।

- ❖ **The One Nation- One Health Card:**
- ❖ The One Nation One Health Card is a digital health card that allows people to access healthcare services across India. It aims to provide affordable and quality healthcare to all citizens. Health record wallet: A place to store and digitize health records Unique Health ID: A smart card that allows citizens to access their health records Telemedicine: Allows patients to consult with healthcare providers remotely. ଏହି ଯୋଜନାରେ ପୁରୁଷମାନେ ୫ ଲକ୍ଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ସୁବିଧା ପାଇପାରିବେ । ମହିଳା ହିତାଧିକାରୀମାନେ ୧୦ ଲକ୍ଷ ଟଙ୍କା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ସୁବିଧା ପାଇବେ । ଏହି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମରେ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଜଗତ ପ୍ରକାଶ ନନ୍ଦା, କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଶିକ୍ଷା ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଧର୍ମେନ୍ଦ୍ର ପ୍ରଧାନ, ଆଦିବାସୀ ବ୍ୟାପାର ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜୁଏଲ ଓରାମ, ରେଲୁ, ଆଇ.ଟି, ସୂଚନା ଓ ପ୍ରସାରଣ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଅଶ୍ୱିନୀ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ, ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଉପ-ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ କନକ ବର୍ଦ୍ଧନ ସିଂହଦେଓ, ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଡ. ମୁକେଶ ମହାଲିଙ୍ଗ ପ୍ରମୁଖ ନିଜର ଅଭିଭାଷଣ ରଖିଥିଲେ ।

Kumbhvani FM Channel Launched for Maha Kumbh 2025

Key Points:

- ❖ On January 10, 2025, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated 'Kumbhvani' (103.5 MHz), a dedicated FM channel by All India Radio, to enhance the Maha Kumbh 2025 experience. The event was attended by Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Dr. L. Murugan, who participated online.

MD: India's weather tracker turns 150 years old

Key Points:

- ❖ On January 15, 2025, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) will turn 150 years old. IMD was set up by the provincial British government in the country in 1875 and its first (Imperial) Meteorological Reporter was Henry Francis Blanford.
- ❖ India Meteorological Department (IMD) is an Indian agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India. It is the principal agency responsible for meteorological observations, weather forecasting and seismology.
- ❖ IMD is headquartered in Delhi and operates hundreds of observation stations across India and Antarctica. Regional offices are at Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Nagpur, Guwahati and New Delhi. IMD is also one of the six Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres of the World Meteorological Organisation. It has the responsibility for forecasting, naming and distribution of warnings for tropical cyclones in the Northern Indian Ocean region, including the Malacca Straits, the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf.

DRDO's HIMKAVACH: Advancing Cold Weather Military Apparel

Key Points:

- ❖ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has unveiled the HIMKAVACH multi-layer clothing system, engineered to enhance the operational efficiency of military personnel in extreme cold conditions.
- ❖ This innovative apparel has successfully completed user trials, demonstrating its effectiveness in temperatures ranging from +20°C to -60°C.

- ❖ HIMKAVACH is a multi-layered clothing system meticulously crafted to provide optimal insulation, breathability, and protection against moisture.
- ❖ The outer layer is designed to repel water and wind while maintaining breathability. The inner layers trap heat close to the body, ensuring warmth even in frigid conditions.



Prime Minister Modi inaugurates Z-Morh Tunnel in Kashmir

Key Points:

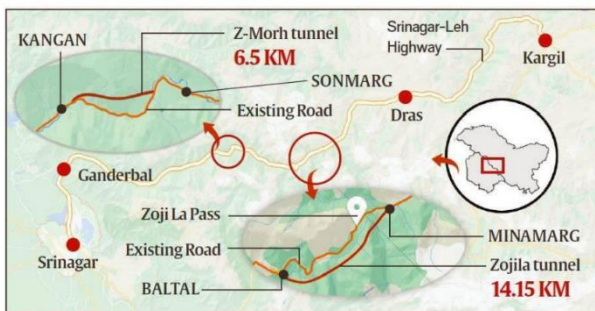
- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Z-Morh tunnel in Gagangir in the Sonamarg area of the Ganderbal district of central Kashmir on 13 January 2025. The tunnel is part of the central government's India-China Border Roads initiative which seeks to build road infrastructure along the northern and northeastern border. It is also expected to boost tourism in the area and provide uninterrupted connectivity between Srinagar and Ladakh.



About the Z-Morh Tunnel or Sonmarg Tunnel

- ❖ The Z-Morh Tunnel is situated at an altitude of 8,652 feet above the mean sea level.
- ❖ The 6.5 km two-lane tunnel is built on the Srinagar-Leh National Highway which links Gagangir with the Sonmarg town in Ganderbal district of Kashmir.
- ❖ It is called Z-Morh due to the Z-shaped stretch of road it bypasses. The tunnel bypasses the avalanche-prone section of the route which is blocked during the winter month due to heavy snowfall.

- ❖ With the opening of the Tunnel, the commuting time between the two regions will be reduced from over two hours to just 15 minutes.
- ❖ Construction of the 2,700 crore Z-Morh tunnel began in May 2015 under the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).
- ❖ The tunnel is part of the broader Zoji La Tunnel project which aims to provide round-the-clock road access between Srinagar and Ladakh.
- ❖ The tunnel was completed in February 2024 but it was officially inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in January 2025.



The strategic importance of the Z-Morh Tunnel

- ❖ During the Kargil conflict in 1999 when the Pakistani force captured mountain heights in Kargil (in Ladakh) the Indian army faced huge problems in sending supplies to the troops at the forward base.
- ❖ Ladakh remains cut off from the country during the winter season due to heavy snowfall. The troops in these areas are dependent on the Indian Air Force for

supplies through helicopters and transport planes.

- ❖ To ensure uninterrupted connectivity to Ladakh, the government of India started a 14-km U-shaped Zoji La Tunnel and the Z-Morh Tunnel project.
- ❖ Once both the tunnels are complete it will significantly strengthen India's defence in the Ladakh and Kargil sectors.

Impact on Tourism and Connectivity

- ❖ The Z-Morh Tunnel will also benefit the civilian population of Sonamarg by providing them with reliable access to Srinagar and Jammu for daily needs.
- ❖ It will also boost tourism in the Sonmarg area where the tourists avoided visiting it in winter as the road access to the region was blocked.
- ❖ The state government intends to start a great ski resort in the region which is expected to benefit the economy of the region.

The first edition of the Kho Kho World Cup starts in New Delhi

Key Points:

- ❖ The first edition of the Kho Kho World Cup started at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi on 13 January 2025. The World Cup was inaugurated by Sudhanshu Mittal, President of the Kho Kho Federation of India.
- ❖ The Kho Kho World Cup has been organised by the Kho Kho Federation of India with support from the Indian Olympic Association in New Delhi from 13-19 January 2025. During the World Cup, each team will consist of 12 players, however during a match only 9 players from each team will actually take the field.



Team and Participants

- ❖ The first edition of the Kho Kho World Cup features 20 countries' men's and 19 women's teams. The men and women kho kho teams have been divided into four groups. The 15-member Indian men's team is led by Pratik Waikar and the women's team is led by Priyanka Ingle.

Men's Kho Kho Teams

- ❖ Group A: India, Peru, Brazil, Bhutan, Nepal,
- ❖ Group B: South Africa, Argentina, Netherlands, Ghana, Iran
- ❖ Group C: Bangladesh, South Korea, Poland, the United States of America, Sri Lanka,
- ❖ Group D: England, Australia, Germany, Kenya, Malaysia

About Kho Kho Game

- ❖ According to many experts, the ancient Indian sport of Kho Kho has its origin in Mahabharata.
- ❖ The first Kho Kho tournament was organised in 1914 in Pune and was organised by the Pune Deccan Gymkhana Club which also formulated the rules and regulations of the game.
- ❖ At the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, three Indian traditional sports Kho Kho, Kabaddi,

and Mallakhamb were included as a demonstration sport.

- ❖ It was also introduced as a demonstration sport at the 1982 Delhi Asian Games.
- ❖ The first All India Kho Kho Championship for men was held at Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh in 1959-60 while the national championship for women was played in Kolhapur, Maharashtra in 1960-61.
- ❖ The first Kho Kho Asian Championship was held in Kolkata in 1996.

Kho Kho Federation of India

- ❖ Kho Kho Federation of India is the sports governing body in India. It was set up in 1955.
- ❖ Headquarters: New Delhi
- ❖ President: Sudhansu Mittal

Russia ships 6th nuclear reactor for Kudankulam plant at Tamil Nadu

Key Points:

- ❖ The Russian government-owned company Rosatom has shipped the 6th and final unit of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant being set up in Kudankulam, Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu, on board a specialised ship.
- ❖ The construction of upcoming units of the Russian-assisted Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant was delayed due to the ongoing Ukraine-Russia conflict. The conflict caused logistical and ocean freight problems for importing components and equipment from Ukraine and Russia.



About the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant

- ❖ In 1988 an agreement was signed between the government of India and the Soviet Union to construct a 6000 MW nuclear power plant in Kudankulam, Tamil Nadu.

- ❖ The nuclear plant will be the largest nuclear power plant at a single location in the country.
- ❖ The power plant consists of 6 units of 1000 MW capacity each.
- ❖ In 1998 the agreement was updated between India and the successor state of the Soviet Union, Russia, which allowed India to keep the spent fuel of the nuclear reactor within India.

Three Phases of Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant

- ❖ The project is being constructed in three phases. In each phase two reactors of 1000 MW each will be constructed.
- ❖ The first two reactors of phase one have become operational and the electricity generated is shared between Tamil Nadu and its neighbouring states according to the central government's power distribution framework.
- ❖ The state where the atomic power plant is situated gets 50 % of the power generated, its neighbouring states share 35% of the power, and 15% of the power is allocated to the national grid.
- ❖ All six units will be constructed, maintained, and operated by the government of India owned Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL).
- ❖ The Russians are supplying the nuclear reactors and enriched uranium to be used as the fuel for the reactors.
- ❖ The reactor uses a Russian developed Pressurised Water Reactor or VVER reactor.
- ❖ The existing nuclear power plants in India use pressurised heavy water reactors or boiling water reactor technology.

Installed Nuclear Power plant in India

- ❖ According to the Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL) in 2024 there were 24 operational nuclear reactors in the country with an installed capacity of 8080 MW.

- ❖ The government has set a target to increase the power capacity to 22480 MW by 2031-32.
- ❖ Asia's first research nuclear reactor 'Apsara' became operational at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre's Trombay campus in Mumbai and it was closed in 2009.
- ❖ The nuclear reactors are operated by the government-owned Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL).
- ❖ The first nuclear power plant to become operational in India was established at Tarapur, Maharashtra in 1969.

| Nuclear Power Plant | Location/State | Reactor Type | Installed Capacity | Total installed Capacity | Date of commencement of the first unit |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Tarapur Atomic Power Station (TAPS) | Tarapur, Thane District Maharashtra | -Boiling Water Reactor (BWR) -Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) | 2x160 MW 2X 540 MW | 1400 MW | 28 October 1969 |
| Rajasthan Atomic Power Station (RAPS) | Rawatbhata, Chittorgarh District, Rajasthan | Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) | 1x0 MW 1X200 MW 4X220 MW | 1080 MW | 16 December 1973 |
| Madras Atomic Power Station (MAPS) | Kalpakkam, Chennai District, Tamil Nadu | Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) | 2X220 MW | 440 MW | 27 January 1984 |
| Kaiga Atomic Power Station | Kaiga/Karnataka | Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) | 4x 220 MW | 880 MW | 16 November, 2000 |

| Nuclear Power Plant | Location/State | Reactor Type | Installed Capacity | Total installed Capacity | Date of commencement of the first unit |
|--|---|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Narora Atomic Power Station (NAPS) | Narora, District. Bulandshahar, Uttar Pradesh | Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) | 2X 220 MW | 440 MW | 1 January, 1991 |
| Kakrapar Atomic Power Station (KAPS) | Kakrapar, Surat District, Gujarat | Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) | 2X 220 MW 2X700 MW | 1840 MW | 6 May 1993 |
| Kudankulam Atomic Power Station (KAPS) | Kudankulam, Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu | Pressurised Heavy Reactor (PWR)/ VVER | 2X1000 MW | 2000 MW | 31 December 2014 |
| Total | | | 24 Reactors | 8080 MW | |

Madhya Pradesh CM launches Swami Vivekananda Yuva Shakti Mission

Key Points:

- ❖ Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav launched the Swami Vivekananda Yuva Shakti Mission on the occasion of the National Youth Day on 12 January 2025 in Bhopal. Every year 12 January is observed as National Youth Day since 1985 to mark the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav also inaugurated the world's largest 3-D rangoli, depicting Swami Vivekananda at the Shaurya Smarak in Bhopal.



About Swami Vivekananda Yuva Shakti Mission

- ❖ The Swami Vivekananda Yuva Shakti Mission has been launched by the state government keeping in mind Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guiding principle of GYAN (Focusing on the Poor, Youth, Farmers, and Women) and inspired by the principles of Swami Vivekanand.
- ❖ The Chief Minister also launched the Swami Vivekananda Yuva Shakti Mission Portal and theme song.
- ❖ The Portal will give information related to the mission to the general public.

Aim of the Mission

- ❖ The main aims of the mission are as follows;
- ❖ The state government will try to provide employment to more than 70% of the youth by 2028.
- ❖ All youth of the state are to complete education up to class 12th by 2030.
- ❖ As part of employment generation efforts, vacant job positions of the past three years will be filled in a single year through the Public Service Commission.
- ❖ Encourage the participation of the youth in social initiatives for the betterment of society.

World's Largest 3-D Rangoli

- ❖ Chief Minister Mohan Yadav also inaugurated the world's largest 3-D rangoli, depicting Swami Vivekananda in the Shaurya Smarak, Bhopal.
- ❖ The 18,000-square-foot artwork (225 x 80 feet) has been created by renowned rangoli artist Shikha Sharma Joshi and her team and it also features Prime Minister Modi and Chief Minister Yadav.
- ❖ The Rangoli made of 4,000 kilograms of eco-friendly natural colours conveys the

Swami Vivekananda Yuva Shakti Mission motto of Dialogue, Strength, and Prosperity(Samvad, Samarthya, Samridhi).

- ❖ Shikha Sharma Joshi is the ambassador of India's cleanest city, Indore.

ICMR's first infectious disease research, diagnostic lab to come up in Bengaluru

Key Points:

- ❖ Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI) has been chosen by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to establish South India's first Infectious Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (IRDL).
- ❖ This initiative aims to enhance the diagnostic and research capabilities for infectious diseases in the region.
- ❖ The laboratory will focus on diseases caused by bacteria, fungi, and parasites, facilitating faster diagnosis and improving healthcare outcomes. This project is part of a larger national effort to build specialized labs in medical colleges across India.

Piyush Goyal launches Bharat Cleantech Manufacturing Platform

Key Points:

- ❖ Union Minister of Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal has unveiled the 'Bharat Cleantech Manufacturing Platform', which the Centre described as an "initiative designed to enhance India's cleantech value chains in the solar, wind, hydrogen, and battery storage sectors".
- ❖ The unveiling came as part of the Bharat Climate Forum 2025 organised in New Delhi. The launch of the Bharat Cleantech Manufacturing Platform will provide an opportunity for the Indian firms to collaborate, to co-innovate and will help provide a platform for financing, to share ideas, technologies and resources.
- ❖ This will help India become an attractive business case and a global leader in the sustainability and cleantech sector.

National Waterways will get Rs 50,000 crore in investment over the next 5 year

Key Points:

- ❖ An investment of Rs 50,000 crore will be made to boost infrastructure along national waterways in the next five years. According to the statement, the investment proposals were announced in Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC) meeting at Kohora in Kaziranga. IWDC was organised by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), the nodal agency for development of waterways under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW).



Bangladesh cricketer Tamim Iqbal announces retirement from International Cricket

Key Points:

- ❖ Tamim Iqbal has announced his retirement from international cricket. This is the second time he has called time on his career, having previously retired in July 2023 in an emotionally charged press conference, only to reverse the decision within 24 hours after intervention from Bangladesh's then prime minister Sheikh Hasina.
- ❖ Tamim concluded his career with 15,192 runs for Bangladesh, the second-highest in the country's history after Mushfiqur Rahim. The 35-year-old scored 5134 runs in 70 Tests, 8357 runs in 243 ODIs, and 1758 runs in 78 T20Is.



Recently Retired Players

- ❖ Martin Guptill (New Zealand) – International cricket
- ❖ Rishi Dhawan (India) – limited-overs cricket.
- ❖ Siddharth Kaul (India) – All forms of cricket
- ❖ Prajnesh Gunneswaran (India) – Professional tennis
- ❖ Wriddhiman Saha (India) – Cricket
- ❖ Matthew Wade (Australia) – International Cricket

India pacer Varun Aaron retires from all forms of cricket

Key Points:

- ❖ Varun Aaron has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket at the age of 35. Having retired from red-ball cricket at the end of the 2023-24 Indian domestic season, Aaron officially stepped away from representative cricket after Jharkhand's exit from the Vijay Hazare Trophy, where he featured in four matches, picking up three wickets at an average of 53.3. Aaron's journey into the limelight began at just 21 during the 2010-11 Vijay Hazare Trophy, where his raw pace turned heads, most notably with a fiery 153kph delivery against Gujarat in the final.

