

## International

### India's Humanitarian Assistance to Bolivia

To help combat forest fires, in Bolivia India has extended humanitarian assistance. Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal said that the consignment consisting of 16 tons of firefighting gear, first-aid kit, medicines, and other utilities has departed for Bolivia. The assistance would also help in tackling environmental crises and health issues caused by forest fires.

### Man-Made and natural disasters force 9 million children out of school across Ethiopia

Man-Made and natural disasters force 9 million children out of school across Ethiopia as per The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Humanitarian Situation Report. UNICEF said the education sector has been impacted severely in different parts of Ethiopia, particularly in the country's Amhara and Oromia regions.

### World Braille Day

World Braille Day is being observed on January 4<sup>th</sup>. The day is observed annually to raise awareness about the importance of Braille as a means of communication for blind and partially sighted people. In 2018, the United Nations General Assembly decided to proclaim the 4th of January as World Braille Day to commemorate the birth of Louis Braille, the visionary behind the braille system. As per the World Health Organization, at least 1 billion people globally have a near or distance vision impairment that could have been prevented or has yet to be addressed.

## National

### Draft of Digital Personal Data Protection Rules 2025, released

The draft of Digital Personal Data Protection Rules 2025 was released by the Central Government. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 received the assent of President Droupadi Murmu in August 2023. The guidelines proposed mandatory and verifiable parental consent for children to open social media accounts. Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini

Vaishnaw shared that the Draft rules are open for consultation and sought people's views.

### Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025

The Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025 started in New Delhi on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2025. The theme of the six-day Mahotsav is Building a Resilient Rural India for a Viksit Bharat 2047. The Mahotsav aims to enhance rural infrastructure, create self-reliant economies, and foster innovation within rural communities. The objective of this event includes promoting economic stability and financial security among rural populations, with a special focus on North-East India.

### The Indian Navy is set to commission three frontline combatants

In a move that will provide a significant boost to its combat potential, the Indian Navy is set to commission three frontline combatants- 'Nilgiri,' the lead ship of the Project 17A stealth frigate class; 'Surat,' the fourth and final ship of the Project 15B stealth destroyer class; and 'Vaghsheer,' the sixth and final submarine of the Scorpene-class project-at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai on 15 January. All three platforms have been designed and constructed entirely at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai.

### Vande Bharat sleeper train achieves a top speed of 180 kilometers per hour during trials

In its multiple trials in the last three days, Vande Bharat sleeper train achieved a peak speed of 180 kilometers per hour. Vande Bharat sleeper trains are designed with features like automatic doors, ultra-comfortable berths, onboard WiFi, and an aircraft-like design. Passengers in the country are already enjoying world-class travel experiences through 136 Vande Bharat trains running across the country.

## Business/Economy

### Revamped portal 'BAANKNET' for the e-auction of properties launched

The revamped portal 'BAANKNET' for the e-auction of properties was launched by the Government. The platform consolidates information on e-auction properties from all public sector banks and offers a one-stop

destination for buyers and investors to discover a wide range of assets. The listings in the portal include residential properties such as flats, independent houses, and open plots, as well as commercial properties, industrial land and buildings, shops, vehicles, plant and machinery, and agricultural and non-agricultural land.

### **SBI report mentions a significant decline in rural poverty**

According to the State Bank of India's research on the consumption expenditure survey, India's rural poverty has declined significantly to 4.86 percent in the financial year 2023-24, compared to 25.7 percent in the financial year 2011-12. The survey notes urban poverty has fallen to 4.09 percent from 13.7 percent over the last twelve years.

### **Amendment in the Foreign Trade Policy, 2023**

To bring legal backing to the Foreign Trade Policy, 2023, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade has notified amendment to it. The amendment makes it necessary to consult with stakeholders to seek views, suggestions, comments, or feedback from relevant stakeholders.

It also provides the mechanism to inform reasons for not accepting views, suggestions, comments, or feedback concerning the formulation or amendment of the Foreign Trade Policy, 2023.

### **DPIIT signs MoU with the SPF**

To promote the Indian start-up ecosystem globally the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade- DPIIT signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Startup Policy Forum (SPF). A two-day SPF Baithak will also be held from the 15<sup>th</sup> of this month in New Delhi as a part of the National Startup Week celebrations. The event will offer a meaningful platform to announce new collaborations between DPIIT and SPF members.

### **EPFO's Centralized Pension Payments System is fully operational**

Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, EPFO's Centralized Pension Payments System is now fully operational in the country. The Labour and Employment Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya said this modern system will ensure that pensioners can access their pensions from any bank, anywhere in the country swiftly without hassles. It will eliminate the need for physical verification visits and simplify the pension disbursement process.

### **Sports**

### **The International Championship of Handball gets underway**

The International Championship of Handball – IHF Trophy Men's Youth and Junior (Continental Phase – Asia) got off to a start in Lucknow for the first time in the KD Singh Babu Stadium. Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and India—are taking part in the tournament. This is a qualification tournament, and the winner will qualify for the world championship.

### **Trophies and mascots for the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup unveiled.**

The trophies and mascots for the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup scheduled to be held from January 13 to 19 in India were unveiled in New Delhi. The tournament will feature 21 men's teams and 20 women's teams from 24 countries. The men's championship trophy is blue, symbolising trust and determination, while the women's trophy is green, representing growth and vitality. The mascots, gazelles named Tejas and Tara, embody speed, agility, and teamwork. This event marks a significant milestone for Kho Kho, aiming to establish it as a global sport.