

## International

### Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week 2026

Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week 2026, the event which is expected to be the world's largest sustainability gathering, hosted by Masdar under the patronage of President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, will begin next week, bringing together heads of state, ministers, government officials, business leaders, investors and innovators to address key global sustainability challenges.

The 2026 edition of ADSW will be the biggest to date. ADSW 2026 will introduce new platforms and AI-enabled systems and showcase advanced clean technologies. The programme includes the IRENA Assembly, World Future Energy Summit, Zayed Sustainability Prize awards and a series of forums focused on climate finance, youth engagement and green hydrogen.

### Intense fighting breaks out in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo

Intense fighting has broken out in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo between government forces and Kurdish militia, forcing thousands of residents to flee their homes. Clashes erupted on 6<sup>th</sup> January between Syrian army units and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in the predominantly Kurdish neighbourhoods of Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah. Many families are reported to be moving towards the Afrin enclave, northwest of Aleppo, in search of safety. At least twelve people have been killed over two days of fighting, with casualties reported on both sides, including civilians.

### 450 million US dollars in assistance to help Sri Lanka recover from Cyclone Ditwah.

To help Sri Lanka recover from Cyclone Ditwah, India has begun implementing a 450 million US dollars assistance package,

which includes 350 million US dollars in concessional lines of credit and 100 million US dollars in grants, targeting restoration of roads, railways and bridges, housing reconstruction, health and education facilities, agriculture support and disaster preparedness. Operation Sagar Bandhu, launched on the day the cyclone made landfall, delivered over 1,100 tonnes of relief, deployed Indian naval and air force assets, an NDRF contingent, helicopters, a field hospital and modular emergency medical units.

## National

### 70th Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar 2025.

Ashwini Vaishnaw, the Union Railway Minister, will confer the 70th Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar 2025 upon 100 railway officials and present 26 shields to the best-performing railway zones in New Delhi on January 9. The prestigious awards are being given in recognition of exemplary service and outstanding contributions to Indian Railways. Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar is among the highest honours in Indian Railways, celebrating dedication, innovation, and excellence in service across the organisation. It covers a wide spectrum of contributions in innovation, operational efficiency, safety, security, revenue augmentation, timely completion of projects, excellence in sports, and other distinguished areas of service.

### India to be made child marriage-free by 2030.

The Bal Vivah Mukat Bharat campaign is aimed at reducing the prevalence of child marriage (a pervasive social issue that disproportionately affects young children, especially girls in a majority of cases, and particularly from the marginalised communities) by 10 per cent by 2026 and

making India child marriage-free by 2030, the Government has said. Since its launch in 2024 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the initiative has made substantial strides in curbing child marriages across India, achieving key enforcement and awareness milestones that align with national child protection goals.

### **An Integrated Digital Portal – PANKHUDI launched.**

Annpurna Devi, the Union Women and Child Development Minister, launched an Integrated Digital Portal – PANKHUDI to strengthen coordination, transparency and structured stakeholder participation in initiatives for Women and Child Development in the country. The portal focuses on thematic areas including nutrition, health, early childhood care and education, child welfare, and women's safety and empowerment.

PANKHUDI is being developed as a single-window digital platform that brings together individuals, Non-Resident Indians, non-governmental organisations, and institutions to support women and children through Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives. All contributions through the portal are accepted only through non-cash methods.

### **Aadhaar mascot, Udai, launched by the UIDAI.**

Following a nationwide Mascot Design Contest on the MyGov platform last year, inviting people to design an official mascot for Aadhaar, the Unique Identification Authority of India, UIDAI, launched the Aadhaar mascot, Udai. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology said the mascot will be helpful in making Aadhaar-related information more relatable and people-friendly. It added that the mascot will simplify communication of Aadhaar services – including updates, authentication, and offline verification.

### **Project Veer Gatha 5.0 elicits a record response.**

Launched on 8th September last year, Project Veer Gatha 5.0 has witnessed a record participation of one crore 92 lakh students from around one lakh 90 thousand schools. Veer Gatha is a joint initiative of the Defence Ministry and the Education Ministry. Defence Ministry said that over 28 thousand students from 91 CBSE-affiliated schools across 18 countries took part for the first time.

Veer Gatha 5.0 introduced innovative features to enhance student engagement. For the first time, the initiative incorporated short-video formats such as videography, anchoring, reporting and storytelling. It encouraged students to create content centred on Samarik Parampara – India's rich military traditions, strategies, campaigns and heroic legacies.

One hundred winners have been selected at the national level. The 100 super-winners selected at the national level will witness the parade at Kartavya Path as special guests on Republic Day.

### **The 53rd edition of the New Delhi World Book Fair 2026.**

The 53rd edition of the New Delhi World Book Fair 2026, which will bring together publishers, authors, readers, and cultural voices from India and across the world, will be held from 10th to 18 January at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. The book fair will attract participation from over one thousand publishers representing more than 35 countries. Qatar is the Guest of Honour country, and Spain is the Focus Country. There will be a dedicated children's pavilion at the book fair this year. The book fair will pay tribute to the Indian Armed Forces and their contribution to the nation since Independence through the Theme – Indian Military History: Valour and

Wisdom @ 75. There will be an exhibition of over 500 books on Indian military history, defence and strategy.

## **Business / Economy**

### **Indian Army and HDFC Bank renew their MoU till 2029.**

HDFC Bank and the Indian Army have renewed their Memorandum of Understanding, till 2029, to provide banking services and Personal Accident Insurance coverage to Army personnel. This compensation is given in case of accidental death or disability for serving and retired personnel of the Indian Army.

The Memorandum of Understanding provides enhanced Personal Accident Insurance cover of one crore rupees for all Serving Personnel, including Agniveers and Pensioners, along with Air Accident Insurance cover of one crore rupees. Other associated benefits, including child education cover of five lakh rupees and girl child marriage cover of five lakh rupees, will be covered under this agreement.

### **A report from Morgan Stanley estimates India's real GDP growth at 7.6 per cent.**

A report from Morgan Stanley estimated real GDP growth at 7.6 per cent year-on-year for Financial Year 2026 — above the National Statistical Office's (NSO) first advance estimate, which pegged real GDP growth at 7.4 per cent Year-over-year.

As per the report, the combined impetus from fiscal and monetary policy support, improved purchasing power and labour market outlook is likely to ensure consumption recovery gains more breadth. The report said a broader-based pickup in capital expenditure is expected as improving investor sentiment encourages private investment activity. Domestic demand is likely to drive growth, amidst

continued tariff and geopolitics-related global uncertainty.

### **The Indian automobile sector records a 7.71 per cent year-on-year growth in the last calendar year.**

The Indian automobile sector recorded a positive growth with total sales crossing 2 crore 81 lakh units, marking a 7.71 per cent year-on-year growth in the last calendar year. As per the data released by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), two-wheelers remained the largest segment, showing a rise of 7.24 per cent, followed by passenger vehicles with a surge of 9.7 per cent. Meanwhile, Rural Passenger Vehicle sales grew over 12 per cent, compared to just over 8 per cent in urban markets. In December last year, auto retail sales rose sharply by 14.63 per cent year-on-year, led by strong growth in passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles and three-wheelers. The improvement was driven by the implementation of GST 2.0 reforms, which increased affordability amid festive demand.

### **Robust Rabi sowing this season.**

Rabi crop sowing has covered over 634 lakh hectares across the country as of the 2nd of January 2026, as per the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. The ministry said Rabi sowing has seen strong growth this season, with the total area rising by 16 lakh hectares compared to last year. Wheat has been sown over 312 lakh hectares, while rice covers 42 lakh hectares.

Pulses have also recorded an increase, with sowing reaching 140 lakh hectares, up from 130 lakh hectares during the same period last year.

As per the progress report released by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers'

Welfare, Shri Anna and Coarse Cereals were sown on more than 55 lakh hectares. The area sown with Oilseeds crossed over 86 lakh hectares.

### **The fifth edition of Trade Watch Quarterly launched by NITI Aayog.**

The fifth edition of Trade Watch Quarterly for the first quarter of the financial year 2025-26 was launched by NITI Aayog in New Delhi. The latest edition of the publication highlights emerging structural shifts in India's trade profile, including the rising contribution of technology-intensive exports, the continued strength of services-led growth, and changes in import composition reflecting deeper integration into global value chains.

### **Sports**

### **Australia records a 4-1 series win in the Ashes series.**

Australia clinched the Ashes series by winning the fifth test at the Sydney Cricket Ground. The Australians retained the Ashes

with wins in the first three tests, but England narrowed the margin after its drought-breaking win in Melbourne. The Australians bowled England out for 342 on the fifth day of the series finale, and chasing 160 for victory, finished at 161-5, romping home with five wickets to spare.

### **PV Sindhu, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty in quarterfinal of the Malaysia Open.**

In Badminton, two-time Olympic medallist ace shuttler PV Sindhu outclassed eighth seed Tomoko Miyazaki of Japan by 21-8, 21-13 in the Round of 16 and will take on third-seeded Japanese Akane Yamaguchi in the quarterfinal of the Malaysia Open in Kuala Lumpur. In men's doubles, the top Indian pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will take on the Indonesian duo M S Fikri and F Alfian in the quarterfinals today. They beat Malaysia's world number 17 Junaidi Arif and Roy King Yap 21-18, 21-11 in the pre-quarterfinals.