





The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India

WEEKLY BULLETIN

ASSOCHAMVOICE



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Cabinet Decisions

Cabinet approves three new corridors as part of Delhi Metro's Phase V (A) Project

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved three new corridors - 1. R.K Ashram Marg to Indraprastha (9.913 Kms), 2. Aerocity to IGD Airport T-1 (2.263 kms) 3. Tughlakabad to Kalindi Kunj (3.9 kms) as part of Delhi Metro's Phase – V(A) project consisting of 16.076 kms which will further enhance connectivity within the national capital. Total project cost of Delhi Metro's Phase – V(A) project is Rs.12014.91 crore, which will be sourced from Government of India, Government of Delhi, and international funding agencies.

The Central Vista corridor will provide connectivity to all the Kartavya Bhawans thereby providing door step connectivity to the office goers and visitors in this area. With this connectivity around 60,000 office goers and 2 lakh visitors will get benefitted on daily basis. These corridors will further reduce pollution and usage of fossil fuels enhancing ease of living.

Details:

The RK Ashram Marg – Indraprastha section will be an extension of the Botanical Garden-R.K. Ashram Marg corridor. It will provide Metro connectivity to the Central Vista area, which is currently under redevelopment. The Aerocity – IGD Airport Terminal 1 and Tughlakabad – Kalindi Kunj sections will be an extension of the Aerocity-Tughlakabad corridor and will boost connectivity of the airport with the southern parts of the national capital in areas such as Tughlakabad, Saket, Kalindi Kunj etc. These extensions will comprise of 13 stations. Out of these 10 stations will be underground and 03 stations will be elevated.

After completion, the corridor-1 namely R.K Ashram Marg to Indraprastha (9.913 Kms), will improve the connectivity of West, North and old Delhi with Central Delhi and the other two corridors namely Aerocity to IGD Airport T-1 (2.263 kms) and Tughlakabad to Kalindi Kunj (3.9 kms) corridors will connect south Delhi with the domestic Airport Terminal-1 via Saket, Chattarpur etc which will tremendously boost connectivity within National Capital.

These metro extensions of the Phase – V (A) project will expand the reach of Delhi Metro network in Central Delhi and Domestic Airport thereby further boosting the economy. These extensions of the Magenta Line and Golden Line will reduce congestion on the roads; thus, will help in reducing the pollution caused by motor vehicles.

The stations, which shall come up on the RK Ashram Marg - Indraprastha section are: R.K Ashram Marg, Shivaji Stadium, Central Secretariat, Kartavya Bhawan, India Gate, War Memorial - High Court, Baroda House, Bharat Mandapam, and Indraprastha.

The stations on the Tughlakabad – Kalindi Kunj section will be Sarita Vihar Depot, Madanpur Khadar, and Kalindi Kunj, while the Aerocity station will be connected further with the IGD T-1 station.

Construction of Phase-IV consisting of 111 km and 83 stations are underway, and as of today, about 80.43% of civil construction of Phase-IV (3 Priority) corridors has been completed. The Phase-IV (3 Priority) corridors are likely to be completed in stages by December 2026.

Today, the Delhi Metro caters to an average of 65 lakh passenger journeys per day. The maximum passenger journey recorded so far is 81.87 lakh on August 08, 2025. Delhi Metro has become the lifeline of the city by setting the epitome of excellence in the core parameters of MRTS, i.e. punctuality, reliability, and safety.

A total of 12 metro lines of about 395 km with 289 stations are being operated by DMRC in Delhi and NCR at present. Today, Delhi Metro has the largest Metro network in India and is also one of the largest Metros in the world.

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Industry Developments

Overall

Output of eight core industries rises by 1.8% in November 2025

The index of eight core industries rose by 1.8 per cent on a year-on-year basis in November 2025. The index rose after falling by 0.1 per cent in October 2025. Electricity generation fell by 2.2 per cent, while output of coal, which is a key input for thermal power generation, increased by 2.1 per cent.

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India to give duty-free access to 54.1% of New Zealand exports

India will give duty-free access to 54.1 per cent of New Zealand exports from day one of the implementation of the free trade agreement, according to media reports. It has given duty concessions on agricultural goods such as apples, kiwifruit, manuka honey and albumins (including milk albumin), however, with quotas and minimum import prices (MIP).

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Agri & Food processing

India excludes dairy sector from duty concessions with New Zealand

Rice exports from India have remained flat at around USD 7.3 billion during April-November 2025 compared to USD 7.29 billion in the same period last year. This was due to higher global stocks and robust crop yield across major producing countries. Rice exports from India declined by 30 per cent to USD 0.8 billion in November 2025 from USD 1.1 billion in the year-ago month.

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Rice stocks rise to record-high of 57.6 mt as of 1 Dec 2025

India's rice stocks have risen to a record-high of 57.6 million tonnes (mt) as of 1 December 2025. This is much higher compared to the government's target of 7.6 mt for 1 January 2026. Rising rice stocks are likely to allow India, world's largest rice exporter to boost exports, putting pressure on supplies from rivals like Thailand, Vietnam and Pakistan, according to media reports.

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Pulses prices to remain stable in coming months

The prices of pulses are expected to remain stable in coming months. This would be due to adequate buffer, robust sowing and encouraging crop prospects. Currently, the government has nearly two million tonnes (mt) of buffer stock of pulses. Also, the sowing of rabi pulses, including gram, masoor (lentils) and urad increased by 14.5 per cent to 13.4 million hectares (mha) in the current season compared to the previous season.

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FSSAI bars herbal infusions from using 'tea' label

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has asked companies to stop using the word 'tea' for herbal and plant-based infusions that are not derived from the Camellia sinensis plant, citing consumer misbranding concerns.

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Aviation

IndiGo can operate 5 leased B737 planes from Turkey only till March

IndiGo can operate five narrow body leased B737 planes from Turkey only till March 2026, according to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The DGCA has further clarified that no further extension will be provided to the airline. The extension till March 2026 was provided as IndiGo still awaits the delivery of its A321-XLR long range aircraft.

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Air India makes changes to its North America schedule

An Air India spokesperson said that the airline has made changes to its North America schedule to better deploy capacity and manage rising costs linked to ongoing airspace restrictions. The decision is part of a wider adjustment to its international network, according to the airline.

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Air India to stop its non-stop flights to San Francisco

Air India has decided to stop its non-stop flights to San Francisco from Bengaluru and Mumbai starting 1 March 2026. The decision is part of a wider adjustment to its international network. This decision has, however, caused confusion among passengers who have already booked tickets, especially for travel after 28 February 2025.

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Automobiles and Ancillaries

Delhi govt to roll out new EV policy from next financial year

The Delhi government has decided to roll out a new electric vehicle (EV) policy from the next financial year. Emphasis will be laid on subsidies, vehicle scrappage incentives and neighbourhood-level charging infrastructure. The move is aimed at curbing air pollution and accelerating the adoption of cleaner mobility in the national capital.

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Car prices set to rise in 2026 due to cost pressures

Car prices in India are expected to increase in 2026 as auto manufacturers pass on rising costs to consumers. Higher commodity prices, a weaker rupee, and increased logistics expenses have led manufacturers to announce price hikes of up to around three per cent across various models. While competition may limit the extent of these increases, the adjustments reflect the industry's response to persistent inflation and currency pressures, marking the first round of price changes since the GST rate cut in September.

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Kia opposes proposed fuel efficiency concession for small petrol cars

Kia India has written to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) opposing a proposed concession under the upcoming CAFE-3 fuel efficiency norms that would benefit petrol cars weighing less than 909 kg. The company argues that the move would weaken the overall purpose of emission reduction, create an uneven playing field favouring one dominant player in the segment, and disrupt long-term product planning.

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Banking and Financial Services

SBI Cards sees defaults declining

SBI Cards is witnessing a steady decline in defaults, according to Salila Pande, managing director. This decline is supported by improved repayment behaviour and lower delinquency rates. The bank's slippage ratio improved in the previous quarter, while gross non-performing assets fell to 2.85 per cent, dropping below three per cent for the first time in several quarters.

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SBI Cards expects 200 million credit cards in India by 2030

India is expected to have around 200 million credit cards by 2030, up from about 110-116 million at present, according to Salila Pande, managing director, SBI Cards. The overall credit card market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 20-21 per cent over this period.

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Monetary policy stepped in to support growth by rate cut

The minutes of the monetary policy committee meeting held on 3 to 5 December 2025 stated there is a case for supporting growth through demand stimulus to preserve the growth momentum in H2 of 2025-26. From the fiscal side, the GST 2.0 reforms, the Rs 25,060 crores Export Promotion Mission to support diversification of markets, a Rs 20,000 credit guarantee scheme, and notification of the new labour codes, among other measures, have been announced to support economic growth, the minutes stated.

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Energy & Natural Resources

Coal's share in India's energy mix to shrink to 30-35% by 2047

The share of coal in the energy mix of India is expected to fall to 30-35 per cent by 2047, according to experts. Currently, the share of coal is at 70 per cent. The drop in share will reflect a long-term shift towards diversified energy sources.

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NUPPL commences initial operations at Pachwara South Coal Block

Neyveli Uttar Pradesh Power (NUPPL) has commenced initial operations at the Pachwara South Coal Block, according to media reports. The Pachwara South Open Cast Project, located in the Dumka district of Jharkhand, has an approved capacity of nine million tonnes per annum (MTPA).

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ArcelorMittal announces three RE projects in India

ArcelorMittal has announced three renewable energy (RE) projects in India with a combined solar and wind capacity of one gigawatt (GW), according to media reports. These projects will involve an investment of about USD 900 million. The projects include 36 megawatts (MW) of solar capacity in Amaravati, a 400 MW solar project with 500 megawatt-hours (MWh) of battery energy storage in Bikaner.

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CPSUs form JV with state govts for 33 solar park projects

Thirty-three out of 55 solar parks approved under the 'Development of Solar Parks and Ultra-Mega Solar Power Projects' scheme are currently under development through partnerships between Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) and state governments.

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Healthcare

Fortis to acquire TMI Healthcare for Rs.4.3 billion

Fortis Healthcare is set to acquire TMI Healthcare, which operates the People Tree Hospitals in Yeshwanthpur, Bengaluru, for Rs.4.3 billion. The deal includes the hospital, its infrastructure and the land on which it operates, along with an adjoining land parcel.

[Read more](#)

Karnataka CM flags off 81 'Arogya Sethu' mobile health units

On 19 December 2025, Karnataka Chief Minister (CM) Siddaramaiah flagged off 81 'Arogya Sethu' mobile health units (MHUs). These units are aimed at delivering primary healthcare services to people living in remote, inaccessible, forest and hilly regions of the state.

[Read more](#)

Govt considers new law to regulate medical research standards

The government is evaluating a proposal to introduce new legislation to strengthen oversight of medical research in India. The planned framework would set clear ethical standards, improve regulatory coordination and enhance safety and quality across research institutions and investigators.

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Infrastructure

Kokeni-Pachound road in J&K inaugurated

The Kokeni-Pachound road in Jammu & Kashmir's (J&K) Chenani-Ghoordi Assembly constituency was inaugurated on 21 December 2025. It has been constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) at an estimated cost of Rs.350 million.

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Uttar Pradesh CM inaugurates new overbridge in Gorakhpur

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister (CM) Yogi Adityanath inaugurated a new overbridge in Gorakhpur on 20 December 2025. The aim is to ease the traffic congestion and improve the convenience of commuters in the city.

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Centre approves 2 corridors in Uttar Pradesh

The central government has approved two key corridors in Uttar Pradesh, including Kanpur-Lucknow and Prayagraj-Varanasi. These corridors are likely to significantly boost the regional connectivity. The projects will also enhance the financial activities and employment in these districts.

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PM lays foundation stone & inaugurates projects worth Rs.32 bln in WB

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi recently laid the foundation stone and inaugurated two national highway (NH) projects worth around Rs.32 billion at Ranaghat in Nadia of West Bengal. The PM inaugurated a 66.7-km-long four-laning of the Barajaguli-Krishnanagar section of NH-34 in Nadia.

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IT & ITES

Puducherry admin to establish IT park

The Puducherry administration is taking efforts to establish an information technology (IT) park in the union territory (UT). The information was shared by Lieutenant Governor (LG) K Kailashnathan. The park will help in providing jobs to students passing out from colleges. Furthermore, the Centre has decided to fund the expansion of the airport, which will facilitate companies to invest in the UT.

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AI systems to operate at scale in 2026: Wipro CTO

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is expected to operate at scale in 2026, the Chief Technology Officer (CTO) of Wipro, Sandhya Arun said. In 2025, the technology landscape shifted to the adoption of generative AI. While in 2026, it will move from isolated experiments to the era of Agentic AI, where networks of collaborating AI agents will manage complex business workflows.

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Infosys receives final nod from US court for McCamish's settlement

Infosys has obtained final approval from a US court for a settlement involving its subsidiary, McCamish Systems, and the plaintiffs related to the 2023 cybersecurity incident. McCamish Systems will pay USD 17.5 million as part of the settlement. The agreement will take effect if no appeal is filed within 30 days.

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Pharmaceuticals

Bharat Biotech, Biofabri partner for TB vaccine development

Bharat Biotech has entered into a technology transfer agreement with Spain-based Biofabri to develop and manufacture a new tuberculosis vaccine candidate, MTBVAC. Under the agreement, Bharat Biotech will take responsibility for large-scale production and supply of the vaccine across more than 70 high-burden countries in Africa and Southeast Asia.

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Cipla rolls out Afrezza

Cipla has launched Afrezza, an orally inhaled rapid-acting insulin, in India, offering a needle-free alternative for diabetes management. The product, approved earlier by the central drugs standard control organisation (CDSCO), will be exclusively marketed and distributed by Cipla and is designed to simplify insulin administration through an inhaler-based system.

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Emcure rolls out Semaglutide weight-loss injection Poviztra in India

Emcure Pharmaceuticals has commercially launched Poviztra, a semaglutide injection for weight management, across India. The once-weekly injectable drug, developed by Novo Nordisk, will be sold in multiple dosage strengths using a pen-based delivery system, with monthly treatment starting at Rs.8,790.

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Regional Developments

Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh CM sanctions projects worth Rs.13.5 bln

CM N Chandrababu Naidu sanctioned projects worth Rs.13.5 billion for the development of layouts in the Land Pooling Scheme (LPS)-8 zone. The authority also approved Rs.4.4 billion for setting up a flood pumping station, Rs.1 billion as additional funds for providing facilities in the residential quarters and nearly Rs.1 billion for establishing a Quantum Computing Research Centre in Amaravati.

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Centre approves legislation to declare Amaravati as capital of AP

The Union home ministry has approved the legislation seeking to declare Amaravati as the only capital of Andhra Pradesh with effect from 2 June 2024. With this, it has provided a statutory status to the capital, as per Hindustan Times. The information was shared by Union minister of state for rural development and communications Pemmasani Chandrasekhar on 21 December 2025.

[Read more](#)

State minister inaugurates renovated District Police Training Centre

Andhra Pradesh home minister Vangalapudi Anitha inaugurated the renovated District Police Training Centre at Kotha Mamidipalem near Ongole. The facility has been upgraded with modern amenities for training constables.

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Gujarat

CM inaugurates first indigenously manufactured 'Made in India' metro

Gujarat Chief Minister (CM) Bhupendra Patel inaugurated the first indigenously manufactured 'Made in India' metro train at the manufacturing plant of Titagarh Rail Systems near Kolkata, West Bengal. This metro, which is to be delivered to Ahmedabad, will meet the growing demand of the metro rail system in the city. It is expected to make public transport systems smoother.

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Gujarat govt introduces major changes to liquor rules at GIFT City

The Gujarat government has introduced major changes to liquor rules at the Gujarat International Finance Tec (GIFT) City and done away with the norm of obtaining a permit for alcohol consumption. Following this, any person from outside the state or India can consume liquor at designated hotels or restaurants inside the GIFT City by just showing a photo ID card.

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1,543 startups in Gujarat get financial support in last 4 years

Around 1,543 startups in Gujarat have received financial assistance from the state government over the last four years under the Student Startup and Innovation Policy (SSIP) 2.0. Approximately Rs.3 billion has been allocated under SSIP 2.0 for a five-year period, with an annual grant of Rs.600 million.

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Haryana

Haryana Assembly passes 8 Bills

The Haryana Assembly passed as many as eight Bills during the final sitting of the winter session. These include the Haryana Shops & Commercial Establishments (Amendment) Bill, Haryana Appropriation Bill, Haryana Technical Education Guest Faculty (Security of Service) (Amendment) Bill, Haryana Housing Board (Amendment) Bill and Haryana Private Universities (Amendment) Bill.

[Read more](#)

Haryana govt issues notification making Hansi separate district

The Haryana government issued a notification making Hansi a separate district today. Following this, the state has a total of 23 districts. The new district has been carved out of Hisar. It will comprise the subdivisions of Hansi and Narnaund. Besides this, state Chief Minister (CM) Nayab Singh Saini announced that the land registration process in all tehsils across the state has become entirely online. Buyers can now apply for registration online from their homes.

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Haryana Assembly passes 8 Bills

On 18 December 2025, as many as seven Bills were tabled in the Haryana Assembly. These include the Haryana Technical Education Guest Faculty (Security of Service) (Amendment) Bill, Haryana Housing Board (Amendment) Bill, Haryana Private Universities (Amendment) Bill and Haryana Abadi Deh (Vesting, Recording & Resolving of Ownership Rights) Bill.

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Karnataka

Works under Sancharayuktha Project in Karnataka to be completed by March 2026

The construction work under the Sancharayuktha Project in Karnataka is set to be completed by March 2026. It includes a 5.5-km-long buffer road work from Koramangala to Sarjapur. The aim is to address the growing problem of congestion in Bengaluru.

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CETPs in Karnataka to be set up without EC

A central expert committee has allowed setting up common effluent treatment plants (CETP) in Karnataka without the requirement of prior environment clearance (EC) from authorities. According to the new set of rules, a CETP can be established at sites that meet the specified criteria, provided that the effluent is transported exclusively through a dedicated pipeline network and not in tankers under any circumstances.

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Karnataka announces incentive of Rs.1,000 per month for teachers

The Karnataka department of school education and literacy has announced an incentive of Rs.1,000 a month to teachers to conduct special classes. The aim is to improve class X results in seven districts of the Kalyana Karnataka region this year. These include Kalaburagi, Koppal, Ballari, Vijayanagar, Yadgir, Bidar and Raichur.

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Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh Cabinet takes several decisions

On 22 December 2025, the Madhya Pradesh Cabinet gave administrative approval of over Rs.25 billion to upgrade the 62.7-km two-lane Badwah-Dhamnod road into a four-lane highway with paved shoulders. The sanctioned cost will cover land acquisition, upgradation and construction.

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Union minister lays foundation stone for medical college in Dhar

Union health minister JP Nadda laid the foundation stone for a medical college in the tribal-dominated Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh today. The college will be established under the public-private partnership (PPP) model. It is aimed at delivering affordable and high-quality healthcare in underserved areas. Similar projects have also been planned for Betul, Katni and Satna.

[Read more](#)

MP govt to introduce new service leave provisions for its employees from 1 Jan 2026

The Madhya Pradesh (MP) government has decided to introduce a comprehensive overhaul of service leave provisions for its employees, starting 1 January 2026. The long-standing Madhya Pradesh Leave Rules will be replaced by the Madhya Pradesh Civil Services (Leave) Rules. The updated framework has been redesigned to closely align with central government norms, while addressing contemporary administrative and social realities.

[Read more](#)

Maharashtra

Cane crushing in Maharashtra gains pace

Cane crushing in Maharashtra is gaining pace this year, with higher cane crushing and sugar output recorded as of 21 December 2025 compared to the same period last year. Nearly 191 sugar mills across the state have crushed 44.6 million tonnes of sugarcane and produced 38 million quintals of sugar.

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PMFME scheme emerges major support programme for micro food processing units in Maharashtra

The Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme has emerged as a major support programme for micro food processing units in Maharashtra. The Union government has released a central share of Rs.6.4 billion for its implementation across the state. The financial assistance has translated into significant on-ground activity.

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Maharashtra's MSEB proposes rooftop solar electricity be credited only for daytime use

The central government's PM Surya Ghar Yojana is promoting rooftop solar in Maharashtra, offering households up to 300 units of free electricity each month. Furthermore, the state government is considering night-time tariff hikes to recover distribution costs. Due to this, many of those who adopted solar to cut bills now fear new rules may make clean energy less affordable.

[Read more](#)

Tamil Nadu

Police station inaugurated at Sengothipalayam in Tamil Nadu's Coimbatore

A new police station was inaugurated at Sengothipalayam in Neelambur in Tamil Nadu's Coimbatore on 22 December 2025. The police station has been established in view of factors such as an increase in population in the panchayat, incidents of crime & accidents and the presence of two arterial roads, including Avinashi Road and the Salem-Kochi highway.

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Tamil Nadu CM inaugurates 2 new police stations in Madurai

On 22 December 2025, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister (CM) MK Stalin inaugurated two new police stations at Chinthamani and Madakulam in Madurai. With this, Madurai police have got 32 police stations, including the all women police stations, reported The Hindu.

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Tamil Nadu CM inaugurates 9 library buildings in Trichy

CM MK Stalin inaugurated nine newly-constructed library buildings in Trichy. With this, the public library infrastructure across both urban and rural areas has been expanded. The projects have been built at an estimated cost of Rs.19.8 million, with each building constructed at Rs.2.2 million.

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Telangana

Telangana govt announces 90% waiver on accumulated interest on property tax arrears

The Telangana government has announced a 90 per cent waiver on accumulated interest on property tax arrears within the limits of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) under a one-time settlement scheme for the financial year 2025-26.

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Telangana govt fixes DA for employees of power utilities at 17.6%

The Telangana government has approved the proposal to fix dearness allowance (DA) for the employees of power utilities in the state energy department at 17.6 per cent. The information was shared by state deputy chief minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka. This will benefit 71,387 employees, artisans & pensioners of the Telangana Power Generation Corporation, Transmission Corporation, Southern Power Distribution Company and Northern Power Distribution Company.

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Telangana's TGSRTC launches new routes connecting Hyderabad's suburbs to IT Corridor

The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) has launched new routes connecting Hyderabad's suburbs to the Information Technology (IT) Corridor. The move is an effort to improve the east-west connectivity of the city and also to enable direct access from residential suburbs to major commercial & IT hubs.

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Uttar Pradesh

UP govt tables supplementary Budget worth Rs.244.9 bln for 2025-26

The Uttar Pradesh government has tabled a supplementary Budget worth Rs.244.9 billion for the financial year 2025-26. The primary objective of this initiative is to address insufficient provisions in existing schemes, meet new requirements and ensure that development works proceed without interruption.

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Uttar Pradesh Cabinet takes slew of decisions

On 22 December 2025, the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet approved a proposal to issue Letters of Comfort (LoCs) for 12 new investment proposals of Rs.160 billion in the state. The 12 new investment proposals include ultra mega projects involving investment of Rs.30 billion & above, super mega projects with investment of Rs.5 billion to Rs.30 billion and mega projects involving investment of up to Rs.5 billion.

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Uttar Pradesh govt launches 2 schemes to enhance road safety

The Uttar Pradesh government has introduced two key initiatives to enhance road safety and minimise accident fatalities across the state. The Sadak Suraksha Mitra programme has been effectively implemented in 28 districts.

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Union Territories

Chandigarh MC mandates segregation of waste

The Chandigarh Municipal Corporation (MC) has made segregation of waste mandatory across the city. Non-segregated waste will no longer be collected. It has been warned that households and commercial establishments handing over mixed garbage will face penalties ranging from Rs.500 to Rs.13,500 per violation.

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Delhi Cabinet approves series of major decisions

CM Rekha Gupta, approved a series of major decisions to strengthen the national capital's fight against pollution and improve environmental governance. Environment minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said that the measures would bring a decisive reduction in sources of air and water pollution, while creating a cleaner and more sustainable urban environment.

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Puducherry admin to hike monthly assistance for PwDs

The Puducherry administration has decided to hike the monthly assistance given to persons with disabilities (PwDs) from Rs.3,000 to Rs.3,500 and from Rs.4,800 to Rs.5,500, depending upon the nature of their disability.

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447,000 quintals of paddy procured in J&K's Jammu

Around 447,000 quintals of paddy has been procured in the Jammu region of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) during the ongoing kharif marketing season (KMS). It is the highest ever in the region. This has surpassed the previous peak of 405,000 quintals recorded during KMS 2021-22.

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International Developments

India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement concludes with broad market access

India and New Zealand have concluded negotiations on a new-generation free trade agreement focused on tariffs, agricultural productivity, investment and talent. The agreement provides zero-duty access on 100% of India's exports, while India offers tariff liberalisation on 70% of lines covering 95% of bilateral trade. New Zealand extends its best-ever services offer across 118 sectors, boosts student mobility with uncapped post-study work visas, commits USD 20 billion in investment, establishes agricultural productivity partnerships with safeguards, excludes sensitive farm products, and allows duty-free inputs for Indian manufacturing.

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India selected to chair Kimberley Process from January 2026

The Kimberley Process Plenary has chosen India to assume the chairpersonship from 1 January 2026, with India taking over as Vice Chair on 25 December 2025. The Kimberley Process is a tripartite initiative of governments, the diamond industry and civil society to prevent trade in conflict diamonds, as defined by UN resolutions. This marks India's third tenure as Chair. The Minister of Commerce and Industry noted that the decision reflects global confidence in India's commitment to transparent trade. India will focus on stronger governance, digital certification, traceability, data-led monitoring and responsible sourcing within the 60-member framework.

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