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Top Stories of The Day

- Squadron Leader **Bhawana Kanth** becomes IAF's first woman Fighter Combat Leader official.
- **Iga Swiatek** defeats Elena Rybakina to win 2026 Canadian Open women's singles title.
- **BHASHINI and NITI Aayog** sign agreement advancing multilingual voice-first AI governance nationwide.
- Government renews **PCIM&H-IPC** MoU under One Herb One Standard initiative.
- **India and Malaysia** begin Exercise Udara Shakti 2026, strengthening air-force interoperability.
- Defence Ministry signs ₹1,577 crore contracts for advanced **loitering munition systems**.
- Ministry launches **SNEHA e-book** promoting active ageing, dignity and senior citizens' welfare.
- **CCRAS-NIIMH and SEMIRI** sign MoU to digitise Ayurveda medical manuscripts.
- **President Murmu** approves 78 gallantry awards, including 13 posthumous honours nationwide.
- **PM Modi** announces AI training for one crore youth and seven-pillar development framework.

Squadron Leader Bhawana Kanth: IAF's First Woman Fighter Combat Leader



TACDE, Gwalior:

- The Tactics and Air Combat Development Establishment (TACDE) is a premier IAF training establishment focused on advanced tactical training, air-combat procedures and operational leadership. It plays an important role in developing specialised combat skills among fighter pilots.

Significance:

- Squadron Leader Bhawana Kanth has become the first woman officer of the Indian Air Force (IAF) to qualify as a Fighter Combat Leader (FCL). The achievement marks an important milestone in the increasing participation of women in India's combat and specialised military roles.
- Women in combat roles: Demonstrates the progressive integration of women into high-end operational and leadership positions in the armed forces.
- Military professionalisation: Highlights the importance of specialised training and tactical expertise in modern air warfare.
- Gender equality: Strengthens the principle of equal opportunity based on professional competence and operational capability.
- Defence preparedness: Advanced combat leadership is important for effective utilisation of fighter aircraft in increasingly complex aerial warfare.

Fighter Combat Leader (FCL):

- The FCL qualification is an advanced professional qualification involving air-combat tactics, operational planning, combat leadership and employment of fighter aircraft. It is associated with the Tactics and Air Combat Development Establishment (TACDE), Gwalior, the IAF's premier institution for advanced tactical and air-combat training.

About Bhawana Kanth:

- Bhawana Kanth was among India's first three women fighter pilots, along with Avani Chaturvedi and Mohana Singh.
- The three were inducted into the fighter stream of the IAF in 2016 under the government's experimental scheme to induct women as fighter pilots.
- In 2019, Bhawana Kanth became the first woman fighter pilot to qualify for combat missions after completing operational training on the MiG-21 Bison.
- She was awarded the Nari Shakti Puraskar for her contribution and achievement in the field of defence.

Government Policy Link:

- The induction of women fighter pilots was initially introduced as an experimental scheme in 2015 and was subsequently made a permanent feature. Women officers are now being inducted into an expanding range of combat and command-related roles across India's armed forces.

Exam Focus Points:

- Person: Squadron Leader Bhawana Kanth
- Achievement: First woman IAF officer to qualify as Fighter Combat Leader
- Institution: TACDE, Gwalior
- Service: Indian Air Force

- Earlier Milestone: First woman fighter pilot to qualify for combat missions
- First Three Women Fighter Pilots: Bhawana Kanth, Avani Chaturvedi and Mohana Singh

- Strategic Link: Women's participation, military modernisation and combat readiness

Iga Swiatek Wins Canadian Open 2026 Women's Singles Title



- Polish tennis star Iga Swiatek defeated Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan in the final to win the women's singles title at the 2026 Canadian Open in Toronto.
- It was Swiatek's first title of the 2026 season and her first Canadian Open final appearance.

Canadian Open:

- The Canadian Open, also known as the National Bank Open, is a major professional tennis tournament and part of the WTA 1000 category. It is traditionally played on hard courts and serves as an important preparation event ahead of the US Open.

Canadian Open 2026 Champions:

Category	Winner(s)	Country
Men's singles	Ben Shelton	United States
Women's singles	Iga Swiatek	Poland
Men's doubles	Orlando Luz / Rafael Matos	Brazil / Brazil
Women's doubles	Kateřina Siniaková / Zhang Shuai	Czech Republic / China

About Iga Swiatek:

- Iga Swiatek is one of the leading players in women's tennis and a six-time Grand Slam singles champion. She has won the French Open four times, the US Open once and Wimbledon once. She has also won multiple WTA 1000 titles.
- Her Canadian Open victory is particularly significant because it ended a lengthy title drought and provided momentum ahead of the US Open. The victory also took her total WTA 1000 titles to 12, moving her ahead of Aryna Sabalenka (11) and close to Serena Williams' record of 13.

About Elena Rybakina:

- Rybakina represents Kazakhstan and won the 2026 Australian Open, defeating Aryna Sabalenka in the final. She is also the 2022 Wimbledon champion.

Exam Focus Points:

- Winner: Iga Swiatek
- Country: Poland
- Runner-up: Elena Rybakina
- Country: Kazakhstan
- Tournament: Canadian Open 2026
- Category: WTA 1000
- Surface: Hard court
- Venue: Toronto, Canada
- Swiatek's 2026 achievement: First title of the season
- Grand Slam titles: 6

BHASHINI–NITI Aayog Partnership: Multilingual AI for Inclusive Governance



- The Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and NITI Aayog have signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) to advance multilingual, voice-first Artificial Intelligence (AI) for citizen-centric governance and public service delivery.
- The partnership will be implemented through the BHASHINI for Seva/Sanchalan initiative.

Key Objectives:

- Provide government information and services in citizens' preferred Indian languages.
- Promote voice-first and multilingual AI for citizens with varying levels of digital literacy.
- Integrate BHASHINI's language technologies into NITI Aayog's digital platforms, document systems and communication workflows.
- Develop sector-specific voice bots and reference applications.
- Improve translation models using specialised government terminology.
- Enable two-way communication between citizens and government.

BHASHINI Ecosystem:

- The collaboration will involve BHASHINI Udyat, BHASHINI Mitra, BHASHINI AppMitra, BHASHINI Sahayogi and BHASHINI Pravakta. Through BHASHINI Sahayogi, the partnership will use BhashaDaan

for collecting and curating linguistic data through text, audio and video contributions.

NITI TARA:

- The partnership also builds upon NITI TARA (Toolkit for Analysis, Review & Action), which supports grassroots, data-driven governance through multi-sectoral dashboards and collaborative planning tools. It has conducted 200+ capacity-building sessions and empowered 4,000+ officials from districts and blocks.

SMRITI:

- SMRITI (System for Meeting Recording, Information & Transcription Interface), developed in collaboration with BHASHINI, automates meeting minutes and facilitates multilingual transcription and translation, improving administrative efficiency.

About BHASHINI:

- BHASHINI is India's national platform for AI-powered multilingual digital inclusion, operating under the Digital India Corporation (DIC), MeitY. It supports 36 Indian text languages, 23 Indian voice languages and 35 international languages, powers 800+ government websites, and has enabled 9+ billion cumulative AI inferences.

Exam Focus Points:

- Ministry: MeitY
- Partners: DIBD & NITI Aayog
- Initiative: BHASHINI for Seva/Sanchalan
- Focus: Multilingual, voice-first AI
- NITI TARA: Data-driven grassroots governance
- SMRITI: Automated meeting recording, transcription and translation

- BHASHINI: 36 Indian text + 23 Indian voice languages

One Herb, One Standard: Government Renews MoU for Medicinal Plant Standardisation



- The Government of India has renewed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) under the Ministry of Ayush and the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- The partnership aims to establish uniform, reliable and scientifically robust quality standards for medicinal plants used across India's traditional systems of medicine.
- One Herb, One Standard:
- The initiative builds on the "One Herb, One Standard" programme launched in 2022. Its objective is to ensure that the same medicinal plant has consistent identity, quality and safety parameters irrespective of the traditional medicine system in which it is used.

Systems Covered:

The standardisation framework covers medicinal plants used in:

- Ayurveda
- Siddha
- Sowa-Rigpa
- Unani
- Homoeopathy

- The renewed MoU will particularly focus on developing standards for single drugs of plant origin.

Key Objectives:

- Establish common scientific quality standards for medicinal plants.
- Reduce variations in quality benchmarks across traditional systems.
- Improve identity, purity, quality and consistency of herbal raw materials.
- Strengthen the safety and credibility of traditional medicines.
- Align Indian standards with global quality benchmarks.
- Support the wider acceptance and export potential of Indian traditional medicines.

Institutional Significance:

- PCIM&H: Develops pharmacopoeial standards and formulary specifications for Indian systems of medicine and Homoeopathy.
- IPC: Develops and publishes standards for the identity, purity and strength of medicines under the Indian Pharmacopoeia framework.

Why is it Important?

- Standardisation is essential because variations in plant species, geographical origin, processing and adulteration can affect the quality and therapeutic consistency of herbal medicines. Scientifically developed standards can therefore strengthen quality assurance, consumer safety, research and international recognition.

Global Link:

- The initiative is significant amid growing international attention to evidence-based traditional medicine. In May 2025, WHO

Member States agreed on the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034, aimed at promoting safe, effective and evidence-based traditional, complementary and integrative medicine.

Exam Focus Points:

- MoU: PCIM&H–IPC
- Duration: 3 years

- Initiative: One Herb, One Standard
- Launched: 2022
- Ministry: Ministry of Ayush + Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
- Systems: Ayurveda, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa, Unani, Homoeopathy
- Core Theme: Standardisation and quality assurance of medicinal plants

Exercise Udara Shakti 2026: India–Malaysia Strengthen Air Force Interoperability



- The Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) have commenced the bilateral Exercise Udara Shakti 2026 at Subang Air Base, Malaysia. The five-day exercise, focuses on joint training, operational learning, exchange of best practices and enhancing interoperability between the two air forces.
- Indian Rafale fighters are participating alongside Malaysian Su-30MKM and F/A-18D aircraft, enabling training involving different fighter platforms and operational concepts.

- Defence cooperation: Strengthens the growing India–Malaysia defence partnership.
- Indo-Pacific security: Enhances cooperation with a key Southeast Asian partner in the wider Indo-Pacific region.
- Operational readiness: Provides experience in operating with foreign air forces and dissimilar aircraft.
- Capacity building: SME exchanges facilitate sharing of operational experience and best practices.
- Act East Policy: Supports India's broader engagement with Southeast Asia.

India–Malaysia Defence Relations:

- India and Malaysia elevated their relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2024. Defence cooperation includes military exercises, training, staff talks, capacity building and maritime cooperation. The 12th Sub Committee Meeting on Military Cooperation (SCMC) held in New Delhi in July 2026 reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral military cooperation.

Other India–Malaysia Military Exercise:

- Exercise Harimau Shakti is an annual bilateral Army exercise between India and Malaysia. It focuses on sub-conventional operations and counter-terrorism, including cordon-and-search and heliborne operations.

What is Interoperability?

- Interoperability refers to the ability of armed forces from different countries to operate and coordinate effectively during joint missions. It involves compatible procedures, communication, tactics, command structures and operational understanding.

Strategic Significance:

Exam Focus Points:

- Exercise: Udara Shakti 2026
- Countries: India & Malaysia
- Forces: IAF & RMAF
- Venue: Subang Air Base, Malaysia

- Focus: Air-force interoperability and operational learning
- Region: Southeast Asia/Indo-Pacific
- Army Exercise: Harimau Shakti
- Diplomatic Framework: India–Malaysia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2024)

Defence Ministry Signs ₹1,577 Crore Contracts for Loiter Munition Systems



- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has signed contracts worth ₹1,577 crore with Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) and NIBE Private Limited for procurement of Loiter Munition Systems for the Indian Army. The contracts were signed in New Delhi in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh.

What are Loitering Munitions?

- Loitering munitions are unmanned weapon systems that can loiter over a designated area, identify/receive a target and then strike it. They combine features of a drone/UAV and precision-guided munition.
- Unlike conventional artillery ammunition, they can remain airborne for a period before engaging a target, providing greater surveillance, target acquisition and precision-strike capability.

Why is it Important for the Indian Army?

- The procurement is aimed at enhancing the capabilities of Artillery Regiments and improving the Army's overall operational effectiveness.

Operational advantages:

- Precision strike against identified targets.
- Ability to search and loiter before engagement.
- Useful against high-value and time-sensitive targets.
- Can reduce dependence on conventional artillery for certain missions.
- Provides greater flexibility in modern, network-centric warfare.
- Particularly relevant in difficult terrain and contested environments.

Significance for Aatmanirbhar Bharat:

- The procurement from TASL and NIBE is significant from the perspective of indigenisation of defence production and strengthening India's domestic defence-industrial ecosystem. The government has described the acquisition as a step towards a self-reliant defence sector.
- It is also consistent with India's broader push to increase domestic defence manufacturing and reduce import dependence.

Loitering Munition vs Conventional Drone

Feature	Loitering Munition	Conventional UAV/Drone
Primary role	Surveillance + strike	Mainly surveillance/reconnaissance
Weapon itself	Usually expendable	Usually reusable

Target engagement	Can directly strike target	Often requires separate weapon
Loitering	Yes	Yes, depending on type
Nature	Unmanned precision weapon	Unmanned aircraft

Related Government Initiatives:

- **Positive Indigenisation Lists:** The Ministry of Defence has issued lists of defence items that are to be progressively procured from domestic sources.
- **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP), 2020:** Provides the framework for defence procurement and places emphasis on indigenous design, development and manufacturing.
- **iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence):** Promotes innovation and technology development by start-ups, MSMEs and innovators for defence applications.

- **Defence Industrial Corridors:** Two major corridors have been established in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu to develop defence manufacturing ecosystems.

Exam Focus Points:

- **Current Event:** MoD signs contracts for Loiter Munition Systems.
- **Contract Value:** ₹1,577 crore.
- **User:** Indian Army.
- **Companies:** Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) and NIBE Private Limited.
- **Main beneficiary:** Artillery Regiments.
- **Key technology:** Unmanned, loitering, precision-strike weapon.
- **Policy Link:** Aatmanirbhar Bharat + defence indigenisation.
- **DAP:** Defence Acquisition Procedure, 2020.
- **iDEX:** Innovations for Defence Excellence.
- **Defence Corridors:** Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

SNEHA E-Book Launched for Senior Citizens' Welfare and Active Ageing



- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched SNEHA – Stories of Nurturing, Engagement, Happiness and Active Ageing during the 5th meeting of the National Council for Senior Citizens (NCSrC) chaired by Union Minister Dr. Virendra Kumar in New Delhi.
- The e-book documents major programmes, initiatives and achievements of the Senior Citizen Division from October 2024 to June 2026.

Major Government Initiative: AVYAY:

- The meeting also reviewed implementation of the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY), the umbrella scheme for senior citizens. It aims to promote healthy, dignified and active ageing, provide care and shelter to vulnerable elderly persons, and strengthen social and inter-generational support systems.

Important components/initiatives:

- **Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSrC)** – support for senior citizen homes, continuous-care homes, mobile Medicare units and physiotherapy clinics.
- **Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY)** – assistive living devices for eligible senior citizens.
- **Elderline (14567)** – national helpline for senior citizens.

- JEEVAN App – digital platform for elderly safety, welfare, healthcare access and social inclusion.
- SHATAYU Dashboard – focuses on geriatric caregiver support and training.

Current Policy Link: Ayushman Bharat

- The government has extended Ayushman Bharat–PM Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) coverage to all senior citizens aged 70 years and above, irrespective of their socio-economic status. This is important in the context of India's ageing population and rising healthcare needs.

Why is Active Ageing Important?

- India is experiencing a gradual demographic transition towards an ageing population. The policy approach is therefore shifting from merely providing old-age assistance to promoting:
 - Healthy ageing
 - Economic and social participation
 - Age-friendly infrastructure
 - Preventive healthcare
 - Digital inclusion
 - Inter-generational bonding
 - Ageing with dignity and ageing in place
- The government's current approach explicitly emphasises “Ageing with Dignity” and “Ageing at Place.”

Important Data:

- According to Census 2011, India had 10.38 crore senior citizens (60+ years)—5.11 crore males and 5.27 crore females.
- The Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI) found that 23.8% of persons aged 60+ have at

least one limitation in Activities of Daily Living (ADL), highlighting the need for long-term and geriatric care.

Constitutional & Legal Link

- Article 41: Directive Principle concerning the State's provision of public assistance in cases including old age, sickness and disablement, within its economic capacity.
- Article 46: Promotion of educational and economic interests of weaker sections.
- Article 21: Right to life and personal liberty—relevant to dignified ageing.
- Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007: Provides a legal framework for maintenance and welfare of senior citizens and parents.

Exam Focus Points:

- SNEHA: Stories of Nurturing, Engagement, Happiness and Active Ageing.
- Ministry: Social Justice & Empowerment.
- Nodal Ministry for Senior Citizens: Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- Umbrella scheme: AVYAY.
- Key themes: Active ageing + ageing with dignity + ageing in place.
- NCSrC: National Council for Senior Citizens.
- JEEVAN: Joint Elderly Empowerment & Virtual Assistance Network.
- SHATAYU: Senior Holistic Care Assistance and Training for Your Utility.
- Constitutional Link: Article 41.
- Data: 10.38 crore senior citizens as per Census 2011.

CCRAS-NIIMH–SEMIRI MoU for Digitisation of Medical Manuscripts

- The National Institute of Indian Medical Heritage (NIIMH) under CCRAS, Ministry of Ayush, has signed an MoU with the Sevadhi Museum & Indological Research Institute

(SEMIRI), Kottayam, Kerala, to digitise and catalogue hundreds of medical manuscripts related to Ayurveda and allied traditional knowledge.



Key Highlights

- Institutions: CCRAS-NIIMH + SEMIRI.
- Location: Kumaranalloor, Kottayam, Kerala.
- SEMIRI collection: 30,000+ manuscripts, including temple records.
- Focus: Digitisation + descriptive cataloguing of medical manuscripts.
- Catalogue details: Title, author, language, script, subject, material, dimensions, folios, condition and provenance.
- Repository format: AYUSH Manuscripts Advanced Repository.
- Broader initiative: Gyan Bharatam Mission.
- Significance: Preservation of Ayurveda's textual heritage and promotion of research in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).

Gyan Bharatam Mission:

- Gyan Bharatam is a government initiative aimed at the survey, documentation, preservation, digitisation and wider dissemination of India's manuscript heritage. It seeks to make manuscripts accessible to researchers while protecting fragile physical collections.

Why Medical Manuscripts Matter:

These manuscripts provide primary-source evidence about:

- Ayurvedic therapeutics and materia medica
- Diagnostic concepts
- Evolution of medical knowledge
- Traditional pharmaceutical practices
- Scholarly traditions and transmission of knowledge

Additional Key Facts:

- CCRAS: Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences.
- NIIMH: National Institute of Indian Medical Heritage, Hyderabad.
- Ministry: Ministry of Ayush.
- SEMIRI: Sevadhi Museum & Indological Research Institute, Kumaranalloor, Kottayam.
- Ayurveda: One of the major systems covered under India's AYUSH framework.
- Digitisation helps reduce physical handling of fragile manuscripts while improving scholarly accessibility.
- The initiative supports manuscriptology, textual criticism, digital preservation and history of medicine.

Constitutional/Policy Link:

- Article 29: Right to conserve distinct language, script and culture.
- Article 51A(f): Fundamental Duty to value and preserve the rich heritage of India's composite culture.
- SDG 11.4: Strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.

Exam Focus Points

- Current: CCRAS-NIIMH signs MoU with SEMIRI for medical manuscript digitisation.
- State: Kerala
- District: Kottayam
- Manuscripts at SEMIRI: 30,000+
- Main subject: Ayurveda & traditional medical knowledge
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Ayush
- CCRAS headquarters: New Delhi
- NIIMH: Hyderabad
- Major linkage: Gyan Bharatam Mission + Indian Knowledge Systems
- Constitutional Link: Article 51A(f)

Gallantry Awards 2026: President Approves 78 Awards



- On the eve of India's 80th Independence Day, President Droupadi Murmu approved 78 gallantry awards, including 13 posthumous awards, for personnel of the Armed Forces and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

Key Highlights

- Total gallantry awards: 78
- Posthumous: 13
- Kirti Chakra: 9, including 7 posthumous
- Shaurya Chakra: 19, including 1 posthumous
- Bar to Shaurya Chakra: 1
- Bar to Sena Medal (Gallantry): 5
- Sena Medal (Gallantry): 36, including 5 posthumous
- Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry): 3
- Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry): 5
- Occasion: 80th Independence Day, 2026.

Gallantry Awards:

- India's gallantry awards are broadly divided into wartime and peacetime categories.

Wartime Gallantry Awards:

- Param Vir Chakra (PVC) – highest military gallantry award.
- Maha Vir Chakra (MVC)
- Vir Chakra

Peacetime Gallantry Awards:

- Ashoka Chakra – highest peacetime gallantry award.

- Kirti Chakra
- Shaurya Chakra
- Important: The Kirti Chakra is the second-highest peacetime gallantry award, while the Shaurya Chakra is the third-highest.

Important Distinction:

- Gallantry ≠ Distinguished Service
- Gallantry awards recognise exceptional courage and valour in the face of danger.
- Distinguished-service awards recognise exceptional devotion to duty and service.

Constitutional & Institutional Link:

- The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Defence Forces under Article 53, while the President also formally confers various national honours.
- Gallantry awards are announced on important national occasions, particularly Republic Day and Independence Day.

Important Awardees:

Gallantry Award	Recipient	Service/Department	Status
Kirti Chakra	Lt Col Maneo Francis PF	Army	—
Kirti Chakra	Major Jitendra Rathee	Army	—
Kirti Chakra	Havildar Gajendra Singh	Army	Posthumous
Kirti Chakra	Head Constable Jagbir Singh	MHA	Posthumous
Kirti Chakra	SG Constable Jaswant Singh	MHA	Posthumous
Kirti Chakra	SG Constable Balvinder Singh	MHA	Posthumous
Kirti Chakra	SG Constable Tariq Hussain	MHA	Posthumous

Kirti Chakra	Head Constable Bashir Ahmad	MHA	Posthumous
Kirti Chakra	Inspector STF Sunil Kumar	MHA	Posthumous

Bar to Shaurya Chakra — 1

- Major Aditya Pratap Singh — Army

Shaurya Chakra — 19, 1 posthumous:

- Lance Naik Narendra Sindhu — Posthumous

Bar to Sena Medal (Gallantry) — 5

- Major DS Paosho
- Major Anuj Mahajan
- Major Krishan Kant
- Subedar Ramesh Kumar
- Naib Subedar Rajendra Singh

Sena Medal (Gallantry) — 36, 5 posthumous

Gallantry Award	Recipient	Status
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Sena Medal (Gallantry)	Subedar Perbhat Gaur	Posthumous
Sena Medal (Gallantry)	Lance Havildar Palash Ghosh	Posthumous
Sena Medal (Gallantry)	Lance Naik Sujay Ghosh	Posthumous
Sena Medal (Gallantry)	Lance Naik Pritpal Singh	Posthumous
Sena Medal (Gallantry)	Sepoy Harminder Singh	Posthumous

Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry) — 3

- Commander Vineet Sharma
- Commander Yuvraj Kumar
- POA (FD) C. Avinash Annaso

Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) — 5

- Group Captain Rahul Jagotta
- Group Captain Rahul Rawat
- Wing Commander Ashish Rajpoot
- Flight Lieutenant Yash
- Master Warrant Officer Ravinderjit Singh

PM Modi Announces Youth-Centric Initiatives & 'Shakti Ki Saptadhara' for Viksit Bharat



- In his 80th Independence Day address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a set of initiatives focused on youth empowerment, AI skilling and affordable access to competitive-exam preparation. He also outlined “Shakti Ki Saptadhara”, a seven-pillar framework for accelerating India's journey towards Viksit Bharat @2047.

Key Announcements:

AI Training for 1 Crore Youth:

- Government will provide AI skill training to 1 crore (10 million) youth.
- Aim: create a future-ready workforce and strengthen India's position in the global AI ecosystem.

Free Online Coaching for Competitive Exams

- Government plans to provide free online coaching for various competitive examinations.
- The initiative will leverage India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and a network of qualified teachers/educators.

- It seeks to reduce the financial burden of coaching on poor and middle-class families and improve access to quality preparation irrespective of location.

Nationwide Sports Talent Hunt:

- Target age: 5–15 years.
- A nationwide talent-identification programme will be undertaken to identify sporting potential among children.
- The initiative is linked to India's ambition to build a strong pipeline of athletes for national and international competitions.
- The PM also set the broader ambition of India participating in at least three-fourths of Olympic events by 2036.

Semiconductor Manufacturing Push:

- Prime Minister Modi announced that India has started production at three semiconductor manufacturing facilities and that the country is working towards establishing 7–8 additional semiconductor plants in the next 1–2 years. The objective is to strengthen India's semiconductor ecosystem and technological self-reliance.

India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)

- India's semiconductor push is anchored in the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM).
- Approved: 2021
- Initial financial outlay: ₹76,000 crore
- Objective: Develop a complete semiconductor and display ecosystem in India.
- Covers semiconductor fabrication, packaging, testing, design and related infrastructure.

‘Shakti Ki Saptadhara’ – Seven Pillars

Pillar	Focus
Manufacturing Power	Make India a global manufacturing hub.
Agriculture & Food Production	Raise agricultural productivity and strengthen food-processing capabilities.

Technology & Innovation	Promote R&D, innovation, start-ups and emerging technologies.
Gati Shakti	Strengthen infrastructure, connectivity and logistics.
Defence Power	Promote defence indigenisation and technological self-reliance.
Green & Blue Economy	Harness renewable energy and sustainable ocean/marine resources.
Soft Power	Use India's culture, traditions, yoga, films, VFX, gaming and other creative sectors to strengthen global influence.

Why is Saptadhara Important?

- It represents an integrated development approach, linking economic growth with technology, infrastructure, defence, sustainability and India's cultural influence.

Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):

India's DPI ecosystem includes platforms such as:

- Aadhaar – digital identity
- UPI – digital payments
- DigiLocker – digital documents
- CoWIN – digital health/vaccination platform
- ONDC – open digital commerce network
- The proposed free coaching initiative demonstrates how DPI can be used for public-service delivery and educational inclusion.

AI & India:

- The announcement is linked to India's broader effort to develop an AI-ready workforce. Important initiatives include:

IndiaAI Mission – approved in 2024.

- Focus areas include AI compute capacity, datasets, indigenous AI models, skilling and responsible AI.

- AI skilling is important for India's demographic dividend, but also raises issues of automation, employment displacement, algorithmic bias and data governance.

Youth & Viksit Bharat:

- MY Bharat (Mera Yuva Bharat) is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, established to provide young people opportunities for youth development and youth-led development. It targets the 15–29 age group.

Exam Focus Points Points:

- Current: PM announces AI training for 1 crore youth.

- Education: Free online coaching for competitive examinations.
- Technology: Greater use of Digital Public Infrastructure.
- Framework: Shakti Ki Saptadhara.
- Saptadhara: Manufacturing → Agriculture → Technology → Gati Shakti → Defence → Green/Blue Economy → Soft Power.
- Long-term vision: Viksit Bharat @2047.
- AI policy: Link with IndiaAI Mission.
- Social dimension: Reducing inequality in access to coaching.
- Economic dimension: Skilling + employment + demographic dividend.



Lets Revise

- ❖ Who became the first woman officer of the IAF to qualify as a Fighter Combat Leader? **Squadron Leader Bhawana Kanth.**
- ❖ Who won the women's singles title at the 2026 Canadian Open? **Iga Swiatek of Poland.**
- ❖ Which two organisations signed the Statement of Intent for multilingual AI-based inclusive governance? **Digital India BHASHINI Division and NITI Aayog.**
- ❖ What is the duration of the renewed MoU between PCIM&H and IPC? **Three years.**
- ❖ Which two air forces are participating in Exercise Udara Shakti 2026? **Indian Air Force and Royal Malaysian Air Force.**
- ❖ Recently, the Ministry of Defence signed ₹1,577 crore contracts for which equipment? **Loiter Munition Systems.**
- ❖ Recently, SNEHA E-Book Launched for Senior Citizens' Welfare and Active Ageing. what does SNEHA stand for? **Stories of Nurturing, Engagement, Happiness and Active Ageing.**
- ❖ SEMIRI, recently associated with medical manuscript digitisation, is located in which state? **Kerala.**
- ❖ How many gallantry awards were approved by President Droupadi Murmu in 2026? **78, including 13 posthumous.**
- ❖ Which is India's highest peacetime gallantry award? **Ashoka Chakra.**
- ❖ 'Shakti Ki Saptadhara' , recently in news, is associated with what? **A seven-pillar framework for India's development towards Viksit Bharat @2047.**



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IMPORTANCE OF CURRENT AFFAIRS IN UPSC EXAMINATIONS

Current Affairs hold a crucial place in the preparation for the UPSC Civil Services Examination. A comprehensive understanding of recent national and international developments helps aspirants strengthen their General Studies foundation and develop a well-rounded perspective on important issues. Topics such as government policies, schemes, economy, international relations, science and technology, environment, defence, social justice, governance, reports, indices, appointments, awards, and major global events are highly relevant for both the Prelims and Mains examinations. Regular study of current affairs not only enhances factual knowledge but also improves analytical ability, critical thinking, answer-writing skills, and decision-making aptitude. Since UPSC questions often connect contemporary developments with static subjects, consistent preparation of current affairs enables aspirants to understand issues in depth and present balanced, informed, and relevant answers. It also plays an important role in Essay writing, Ethics, and the Personality Test, giving candidates a strong edge throughout the examination process.

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