

8. Short News

1. International Security- EU Designates IRGC as Terrorist Group

Listing- In January 2026, the European Union officially added Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to its terrorist list.

Rationale- The move follows years of debate and was finally triggered by the IRGC's "lethal crackdown" on domestic protesters and its role in regional instability.

Legal Consequences-

1. Criminalization- Dealing with the IRGC by EU individuals or entities is now a criminal offense.
2. Financial Impact- All assets belonging to the IRGC within the EU are frozen.
3. Travel Restrictions- High-ranking IRGC officials are banned from entering EU territory.

Context- This aligns the EU with the United States, which designated the IRGC as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in 2019.

2. Cultural Heritage- Living Root Bridges UNESCO Nomination

Nomination- India has formally submitted the nomination dossier for Meghalaya's Living Root Bridges (titled "*Jingkieng Jri / Lyu Chrai Cultural Landscape*") for the UNESCO World Heritage 2026-27 evaluation cycle.

Traditional Knowledge- These bridges are grown using the aerial roots of Rubber Fig trees (*Ficus elastica*) by the Khasi and Jaintia tribal communities.

Sustainability- Unlike concrete or steel structures, these bridges are "living," becoming stronger with age and lasting up to 300 years.

Mother Earth (Mei Ramew)- The nomination highlights the indigenous philosophy of harmony with nature and reverence for the environment.

3. Social Issues- Kalbeliya Community Burial Rights

NHRC Cognizance- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) issued a notice to the Rajasthan government in late January 2026 regarding the Kalbeliya community's demand for designated burial grounds.

The Issue- While the nomadic Kalbeliyas (traditionally snake charmers) follow the Nath tradition (burial instead of cremation), they lack allocated graveyards. Families are often forced to bury their dead on private lands, leading to abuse and eviction.

NHRC's View- The Commission emphasized that the State has a duty to uphold the dignity of the dead, and denying burial space constitutes a serious human rights violation.

Public Health- National Leprosy Day 2026

Observance- India marked National Leprosy Day on 30 January 2026 (Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary).

Theme- "Leprosy is curable, the real challenge is stigma."

Current Status- India aims for a "Leprosy-Mukt Bharat" by 2027.

Medical Fact- Leprosy is completely curable via Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT), which is provided free of cost. Stigma remains the primary barrier to early detection and treatment.

5. Energy- World Nuclear Performance Report 2025

Record Generation- Global nuclear reactors generated 2667 TWh of electricity in 2024, a new all-time high, surpassing the 2006 record.

Performance- The average capacity factor (actual output vs. potential) rose to 83%.

Future Goals- The report, published by the World Nuclear Association (WNA), calls for tripling global nuclear capacity by 2050 to meet decarbonization and AI-driven energy demands.

India's Role- India is identified as one of the top five countries (with China, France, Russia, and the US) poised to lead this massive expansion.

6. Spirituality- Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji Prakash Purab

Celebration- The Prakash Purab (birth anniversary) of the seventh Sikh Guru, Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji, was celebrated on 31 January 2026.

Legacy- Known for his "Tender-Hearted" nature, he emphasized compassion and social service.

Contributions- Established free hospitals and promoted herbal medicines. Pioneered environmental ethics in Sikhism by protecting wildlife and creating gardens at Kiratpur Sahib.

7. Economy- FPI Outflows and Market Volatility

Outflow Data- Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) net sold ₹35,962 crore from Indian equities in January 2026—a five-month high.

Key Drivers-

1. Weak Earnings- Slowing momentum in corporate profits.
2. Rupee Depreciation- The Rupee hit levels near ₹90–92, increasing currency risk for overseas investors.
3. Budget Concerns- Proposals to raise the Securities Transaction Tax (STT) on futures and options (F&O) dampened tactical FPI sentiment.
4. Global Factors- Uncertainties regarding US tariffs and high global bond yields led to a "risk-off" sentiment.