

7. Short news

1. India Added Two New Ramsar Sites

Ahead of World Wetlands Day, Patna Bird Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh and Chhari-Dhand in Gujarat have been officially designated as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention.

Ramsar Sites in India

1. Total Ramsar sites in India- Inclusion of these two sites brings the country's total to 98 (previously 96).
2. India became a party to the Ramsar Convention in 1982, committing to protect globally important wetlands
3. Top State- Tamil Nadu leads with 20 Ramsar sites, followed by Uttar Pradesh (now 11 after the recent addition).

Patna Bird Sanctuary

Location- Jalesar, Etah district, Uttar Pradesh.

Established- 1991

1. It centres around a natural freshwater shallow wetland (lake) that attracts birds.
2. The wetland area is a classic example of a rainfed wetland in the Gangetic plains.
3. Biodiversity- More than 106 species of migratory and resident birds are known to have their resting habitats at Lake.
4. The entire lake area gets covered by profuse growth of macrophytic vegetation of water hyacinth and Potamogeton.
5. The important aquatic birds inhabiting the lake are Lesser Whistling-Duck, Graylag Goose, Comb Duck, Ruddy Shelduck, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Indian Spot-billed Duck, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail.

Chhari-Dhand Wetland Reserve (Gujarat)

Location- Near Banni grasslands, Kutch district, Gujarat.

Type- Seasonal saline wetland (monsoon-fed), linked to arid-zone ecology of Kutch.

Biodiversity hotspot- Supports 250+ bird species; major wintering and breeding ground. Supports Greater & Lesser Flamingos, pelicans, cranes, ducks, raptors.

World Wetlands Day

1. World Wetlands Day is celebrated annually on February 2 every year.
2. February 2 marks the anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands (known as the Ramsar Convention) in Ramsar, Iran, on February 2, 1971.
3. 2026 Theme- "Wetlands and traditional knowledge- Celebrating cultural heritage".

2. Jal Jeevan Scheme

A periodic survey by the Ministry of Jal Shakti on public satisfaction with the Har Ghar Jal (Jal Jeevan Mission) shows that while nearly universal tap coverage has been achieved in rural India, actual usage, regularity and water quality remain significantly lower.

About the Survey

Survey Name- Functionality Assessment of Household Tap Connections.

Coverage- Surveyed 2.37 lakh households across 19,812 villages, out of about 19.3 crore rural households covered under the scheme.

Village Selection- Only villages certified as 'Har Ghar Jal (HGJ)' villages were assessed, where States had reported 100% tap coverage. India has about 2.72 lakh HGJ villages out of 5.8 lakh total villages.

Key Highlights from the Survey

Tap Access- About 98% of households reported having a tap connection.

Actual Water Flow- Only 83% of households said water had flowed through the tap at least once in the seven days prior to the survey.

State-wise Variation-

1. Top Ranking- Goa, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and several Union Territories reported over 97% availability
2. Bottom Ranking- Bihar (61%), Uttar Pradesh (72%) and Nagaland (74%) recorded the lowest availability.

Adequacy of Water Supply-

1. Minimum Supply Norm- Only 80% of households reported receiving the sanctioned 55 litres per person per day.
2. Lowest Reporting States- Sikkim (24%) and Gujarat (58%) recorded the lowest adequacy levels among States

Water Quality Concerns-

1. Quality Parameters Tested- E. coli, total coliform, and pH levels.
2. Compliance- Only 76% of households received water that met the prescribed quality standards.
3. Overall Functionality- Considering availability, regularity and water quality, only 76% of households were benefiting from the scheme as intended
4. Water Quality Satisfaction- Except for Tripura (43%), most States reported over 85% satisfaction with water quality, despite laboratory tests showing lower compliance

About Har Ghar Jal Scheme

Har Ghar Jal is the rural drinking water supply component of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).

Objective- To provide 55 litres of potable water per person per day to every rural household through functional household tap connections.

Coverage- The scheme effectively started in 2020 and covers 19.3 crore rural households across India.

Timeline- The original target of 100% coverage and functionality by 2024 has now been extended to 2028.

Institutional Coverage- Beyond households, the scheme also provides water connections to village schools, Anganwadi centres, and community/public institutions to improve public health and service delivery.

Nodal Agency- Implemented by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Funding Pattern-

1. 50-50 cost sharing between the Centre and States,
2. 90-10 cost sharing for Himalayan and North-Eastern States, and
3. 100% Central funding for Union Territories

3. Chakra – Centre of Excellence (Coe)

The State Bank of India (SBI) has launched CHAKRA – Centre of Excellence (CoE) to support financing of sunrise sectors.

What are Sunrise sectors?

Sunrise sectors are new and rapidly growing industries that have high future potential in terms of investment, innovation, employment generation, exports, and economic growth, mainly because they are driven by emerging technologies, new consumer demands, and changing global trends.

About 'CHAKRA' – Centre of Excellence (CoE)

It is established as a dedicated institutional platform for financing emerging and strategic sectors of the economy.

Core Objective- It aims to facilitate structured, knowledge-driven financing for next-generation, technology-intensive and sustainability-oriented industries that will drive India's economic transformation.

Role- CHAKRA will function as a centre of expertise, supporting SBI's Project Finance and Structuring teams and acting as an advisory hub for the wider Indian financial ecosystem.

Targeted Sectors- CHAKRA focuses on eight strategic sectors- Renewable Energy, Advanced Cell Chemistry & Battery Storage, Electric Mobility, Green Hydrogen, Semiconductors, Decarbonisation, Smart Infrastructure, Data Centre Infrastructure.

Investment Potential- These 8 sectors are projected to unlock cumulative capital expenditure of over ₹100 lakh crore by 2030.

Institutional Collaboration- SBI has signed MoUs with nearly 21 financing institutions.

1. Key collaborators include- Development Finance Institutions, Multilateral agencies, Banks & NBFCs, Industry bodies, corporates & start-ups, Academia and policy think-tanks
2. International collaboration- Japanese banks MUFG and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) to bring foreign capital and expertise.

Role of SBI under CHAKRA-

1. Capital Mobilisation- Facilitate both domestic and foreign debt capital as sectors scale up.
2. Risk Assessment- Strengthen sector-specific appraisal and risk management frameworks
3. Innovative Finance- Develop financing structures aligned with evolving business models and policy priorities.

Strategic Significance

1. Global Value Chains- Enhances India's integration into global technology and manufacturing networks.
2. Sustainability- Aligns finance with climate and decarbonisation goals
3. Technology and AI Enablement- Promote technology-driven financing models, including the use of AI and advanced analytics in project appraisal and risk assessment.

4. Guru Ravidas Jayanti

On 1 February 2026 Guru Ravidas Jayanti the President, Vice President and Prime Minister extended greetings, highlighting Sant Ravidas' message of equality, social harmony and human dignity.

About Guru Ravidas Jayanti- Guru Ravidas Jayanti is observed to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sant Guru Ravidas, a revered saint of the Bhakti movement. It celebrates his teachings on equality, devotion, compassion and social justice, which challenged caste-based discrimination and religious

orthodoxy. The day serves as a reminder of India's long tradition of social reform through spiritual movements and promotes inclusive values in society.

About Sant Ravidas- Sant Ravidas was a prominent 15th–16th century Bhakti saint, known for advocating a society based on equality, dignity and devotion to a formless divine. **Early Life-** Born into a socially marginalised community.

1. Disciple of Jagatguru Ramanand.
2. Contemporary of Sant Kabir and spiritual guide of Meera Bai.

Key Contributions

Spiritual Philosophy- Emphasised Nirguna Bhakti, worship of a formless God and the concept of Sahaj, symbolising spiritual harmony.

Social Reform- Strongly opposed caste discrimination and untouchability; upheld gender equality and human dignity.

Literary Legacy- His verses are included in the Guru Granth Sahib, reflecting influence across religious traditions.

Religious Influence- Considered the founder of the Ravidassia religion, centred on equality and devotion.

Significance- Sant Ravidas' teachings remain relevant for building an inclusive, just and harmonious society rooted in equality, compassion and moral values.

5. PAIMANA Portal

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has operationalised PAIMANA Portal, a new web-based portal for monitoring Central Sector Infrastructure Projects worth ₹150 crore and above.

About PAIMANA Portal

PAIMANA stands for Project Assessment, Infrastructure Monitoring & Analytics for Nation-building.

Nature- A centralised national digital platform for mandated monitoring of major central infrastructure projects.

Replaces- *Online Computerized Monitoring System (OCMS-2006)*

Nodal Ministry- It is a flagship digital initiative of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

Purpose- The portal is designed to strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and analytics of large infrastructure projects through a technology-driven approach.

One Data, One Entry Principle- It is integrated with DPIIT's Integrated Project Monitoring Portal (IPMP/IIG-PMG) through APIs, enabling seamless data sharing and avoiding duplication.

Inter-Ministerial Coordination- Operationalised in coordination with over 20 Central Ministries and Departments, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) and DPIIT

Key Features of the PAIMANA Portal

Centralised Repository- PAIMANA provides a single-window platform for ministries, departments, and implementing agencies to upload, track, and review project-related information.

Advanced Data Analytics- It incorporates web-based analytical tools, including interactive dashboards, reporting and query modules, and review cases to identify delays and data gaps.

Role-Based Access- The system uses role-based user access, ensuring data security and accountability among different stakeholders. The portal offers real-time dashboards with drill-down

capabilities, allowing monitoring of project progress across sectors, states, and timelines. Automation- Nearly 60% of project data is auto-updated, significantly reducing manual data entry and reporting burden on ministries and implementing agencies

Current Status and Progress

Projects Onboarded- 1,392 ongoing infrastructure projects are currently onboarded on the PAIMANA portal.

Data Sanitisation- A comprehensive data sanitisation exercise of the IPMP database is underway.

Future Expansion- Continuous efforts are ongoing to onboard additional stakeholders, along with legacy and newly sanctioned projects

6. Grammy Award to Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama won his first Grammy Award in 2026 in the category of Best Audio Book, Narration and Storytelling Recording for "Meditations- The Reflections of His Holiness the Dalai Lama".

About the Dalai Lama

The 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism and a global advocate of peace, compassion and non-violence.

Key Contributions

1. Global Peace Advocate- Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (1989) for promoting non-violent solutions to conflicts.
2. Interfaith & Ethical Dialogue- Promotes harmony among religions, mindfulness and ethical living.
3. Environmental Awareness- Emphasises ecological responsibility and compassion towards nature.
4. Cultural Outreach- Uses modern platforms to spread Buddhist philosophy, mental well-being and universal human values.

Current Residence- He has been living in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, the seat of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, since 1959.

About the Grammy Awards

The Grammy Awards are prestigious annual honours recognising excellence in the global music and audio recording industry.

Awarding Authority- Presented by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) in the US.

Latin Grammy Awards- presented by the Latin Academy (LARAS) for Spanish and Portuguese recordings.

Categories

1. Music performance, composition and production.
2. Spoken word, narration, audiobooks and global music categories.

Notable Indians with Grammy Awards

1. Pandit Ravi Shankar- Multiple Grammy wins.
2. A.R. Rahman- Two Grammys (2009).
3. Zakir Hussain- Multiple Grammy Awards.
4. Shakti (band)- Grammy winner for global music collaboration.