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Ravi Singh & Naaz

GURU NANAK JAYANTI: CELEBRATING THE LIGHT OF ONENESS AND TRUTH

"He who has no faith in himself can never have faith in God."

– Guru Nanak Dev Ji

Guru Nanak Jayanti, also known as Gurpurab or Prakash Parv, is one of the most important festivals in Sikhism. It signifies the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder and the first Guru of Sikhism. The celebration takes place on the date of Kartik Poornima, which is the fifteenth lunar day in the month of Kartik, based on the Hindu calendar, and generally falls in November according to the Gregorian calendar.

This year, Guru Nanak Jayanti will be observed on Wednesday, November 5. On this occasion, followers throughout India and internationally recall Guru Nanak's lessons concerning the tenets of unity, equality, and service to mankind.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji was born on 15 April 1469 in Rai-Bhoi-di Talwandi, situated in contemporary Pakistan (presently recognized as Nankana Sahib). Being a highly spiritual child, Guru Nanak grew up challenging societal inequalities and religious divisions. Throughout his life, he travelled much sharing the message of "Ik Onkar" (there is but one God) and empathy towards humanity. Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak ji. Its core values include faith, the pursuit of social justice, moral conduct, and prosperity for everyone. Guru Nanak ji is revered by the Sikh community today as the supreme power. And, he has contributed 974 hymns.

There are three pillars of Guru Nanak's teachings which include Vand Chakko (sharing with others), Kirat Karni (working honestly), and Naam Japna (always remembering God). One of his most well-known teachings: "Ek Onkar Sat, Karta Purakh, Nirbhau, Nirvair" means: "There is one God. His name is Truth. He is the Creator, Fearless and without hatred."

Guru Nanak Jayanti celebrations begin days prior with the Akhand P, a 48-hour continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib. This reading starts two days prior to the Jayanti and continues on the festival day.

On the main day, devotees join Prabha Pher, early morning processions with devotional hymns. Which is followed by NKirtans. Guru Granth Sahib is carried in a depalanqun along with the Nishan Sahib, the sacred Sikh flag. This is accompanied by singing and martial displays like Gatka. The Panj Pyare (Five



Belo Ones) lead this lively parade.

Apart of the celebration, the Guru Granth Sahib is read. Free meals are provided to people regardless of their background. Simple, vegetarian meals are prepared and served by volunteers to all the attendees. The Langar serves the meals all day, reflecting Guru Nanak's teachings of seva (selfless service) and equality.

In Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak ji, the celebrations are even more special. Devotees from all over the world attend special events organized by the manji and receive blessings. The Langar serves the devotees at Langar. At the end, Karah Prasad is given. A batmash is created by spiritual music and kirtans.

As described previously, the celebration of the holyday is not confined to India. Guru Nanak Jayanti is also celebrated in other countries like the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Canada. All the devotees visit the nearest Gurudwara to perform special prayers and honor the great Guru Nanak ji.

At this time, Guru Nanak Jayanti celebrates the unity, service, and communal harmony. It brings with it the joy of the festival and serves as a reminder to all that the life is meaningful in embracing the values of equality, truth, honesty and to humanity, the message preached by Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

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VEERANGANA RANI NAIKI DEVI – THE BRAVE QUEEN OF GUJARAT

Many centuries ago, in the land of Gujarat, lived a brave and wise queen named Rani Naiki Devi. She ruled with kindness, courage, and a strong sense of duty. Her story tells us that true strength lies not in power or wealth, but in the courage to do what is right.

The Early Life of a Brave Princess

Rani Naiki Devi was born in Goa into the noble Kadamba family. From childhood, she showed unusual intelligence and confidence. Her father made sure that she was trained not only in music and literature but also in horse riding, archery, and the art of war.

When she grew up, she was married to King Ajayapala of the great Chaulukya (Solanki) dynasty in Gujarat. The two ruled happily and worked together for the welfare of their people. They had a son, Mularaja II, who was still a child when fate struck King Ajayapala passed away suddenly.

Naiki Devi was left as the queen mother, with her little son as the new king. Many ministers and neighboring rulers thought this was a sign of weakness. "How can a woman rule a kingdom?" they whispered. But Naiki Devi proved them wrong. She decided to protect her kingdom, her people, and her child no matter the cost.

The Threat of Invasion

In 1178 AD, a dangerous threat came to Gujarat. Muhammad of Ghor, a powerful invader from Central Asia, set his eyes on the rich land of India. He had already conquered parts of Punjab and thought Gujarat would be easy to capture.

When news of the invasion reached Naiki Devi, she did not panic. Instead, she called a council of ministers and military commanders. "This land is my home," she said firmly. "As long as I live, no foreign ruler will rule over Gujarat."

Her confidence gave hope to everyone. She immediately began preparing for war gathering troops, training soldiers, and strengthening forts. She even took her young son with her to show that courage was greater than fear.

The Battle of Gadaraghata

Naiki Devi chose to confront the enemy in the narrow mountain passes of Gadaraghata, near Mount Abu. The terrain was steep and rocky perfect for ambushing a large army. The Ghurid soldiers, though mighty and well-equipped, were unfamiliar with the area.

When the battle began, the air echoed with the sounds of drums and trumpets. Rani Naiki Devi rode fearlessly at the front, dressed in shining armor. Holding her sword high, she called out to her soldiers:

"Fight not for the crown, but for our motherland! Let no

invader touch her soil!"

The army fought with unmatched bravery. Arrows flew like rain, and the Ghurid forces were trapped in the rocky valleys. The battle raged for hours until the invaders finally began to retreat. Muhammad of Ghor was wounded and forced to flee defeated by a woman he had underestimated.

It was one of the earliest victories of an Indian ruler over a



foreign invader. The people rejoiced. Songs were sung in her honor, and the name Rani Naiki Devi became a symbol of courage and pride.

A Ruler with Wisdom and Compassion

After the war, Naiki Devi continued to rule Gujarat with justice and wisdom. She did not become arrogant because of her victory. Instead, she worked harder to make her kingdom strong and peaceful.

She encouraged trade and farming, built temples and schools, and cared deeply for her people. When there were disputes, she listened patiently and made fair decisions. She believed that a ruler's first duty was not to rule over people, but to serve them.

Her kindness won the hearts of her subjects, and her intelligence earned the respect of neighboring kingdoms. Under her leadership, Gujarat became known not only for its wealth but also for its unity and peace.

Her Values and Philosophy

Rani Naiki Devi's life reflected the deep wisdom of Indian thought. She believed in Dharma — doing one's duty with honesty and without selfishness. She lived by the values taught in the Bhagavad Gita: courage in action, faith in righteousness, and humility in victory.

Her leadership also showed the power of Nari Shakti (women's strength). She proved that women can be both gentle and strong, both nurturing and fearless. Her strength came not from anger, but from love for her people and for her country.

The story of Rani Naiki Devi teaches us many important lessons:

- Courage in Adversity: Even when the world doubted her, she did not give up. She turned fear into strength.
- Duty Before Self: She risked her life not for fame, but for her responsibility as a mother and a queen.
- Humility in Power: Even after victory, she ruled with compassion and fairness.
- Faith in Righteousness: She believed that when one's cause is just, the Divine always gives strength.

Moral of the Story

Rani Naiki Devi's story reminds us that true strength comes from character, not from position or power. She showed that knowledge, courage, and kindness together can change history. Her life teaches us to never underestimate ourselves even when the odds seem impossible.

For the youth of today, her example inspires us to face challenges with honesty, to lead with empathy, and to fight for what is right not with hate, but with conviction and compassion.

Conclusion

Rani Naiki Devi of Gujarat was not just a queen; she was a warrior, a mother, and a visionary leader. She defended her land with courage, ruled with wisdom, and lived by the principles of righteousness.

Her story stands as a shining example of India's timeless values: that Dharma (duty) is greater than desire, that service is greater than power, and that courage with compassion creates true greatness.

Centuries have passed, but her name still inspires every heart that loves freedom and justice. Rani Naiki Devi reminds us that even one person, with faith in truth and love for their people, can stand against empires and win.

Ravi Singh & Naaz

REMEMBERING PIYUSH PANDEY: THE MAN WHO REDEFINED INDIAN ADVERTISING

The Indian advertising industry lost its most celebrated figure on Friday, October 24, 2025 as Piyush Pandey, the creative visionary who revolutionized how brands interacted with the nation, died in Mumbai owing to illness.

Piyush Pandey, an Indian advertising professional and Ogilvy's Chief Creative Officer Worldwide and Executive Chairman India, is regarded as the "Father of Indian advertising." Under him, Ogilvy rose to prominence as the leading advertising firm in India and gained a prominent place in the field of creativity. He received the Padma Shri award in 2016 and the LIA Legend Award in 2024. Mr. Pandey is recognized with creating a unique indigenous effect on Indian advertising, which had previously been influenced by Western concepts of advertising.

Born in Jaipur in 1955 to a government bank employee and a homemaker, Mr. Pandey grew up with his eight siblings in an innovative household that included filmmaker Prasoon Pandey and singer Ila Arun.

After pursuing history at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, and playing cricket at the Ranji Trophy level, he experimented with different professions before finding his calling in advertising at the age of 27.

He often said that brands are built with magic and not just logic. This philosophy of him became the fundamental aspect of his creative approach, preferring building emotional bond in advertising over mere product descriptions.

For more than four decades, Piyush Pandey redesigned Indian advertising, reforming basic commercials into cultural phenomena and making brands like Fevicol, Cadbury, and Asian Paints inalienable from the Indian lives.

When Piyush Pandey joined Ogilvy in 1982

at the age of 27, Indian advertising was predominated by Western style, refined English language, and foreign aesthetics. What he brought rather was the simplicity, culture, and spirit of true India. Introducing campaigns that resonated with Indian audience rather than mere corporate marketing. Sunlight Detergent print ad was the first ad he ever wrote. After 6 years he joined the creative department where he created several memorable ads like Luna

Piyush Pandey (2022).

According to Ogilvy, Mr. Pandey understood people. He spoke to them not through clever words, but through heart and humanity. As he often said, "No campaign is worth its salt unless the people on the street love it." He knew that the true measure of creativity wasn't in trophies, but in how deeply people embraced it. Mr. Pandey was a storyteller in the genuine sense.

brother became the first Asians to receive this lifetime achievement award.

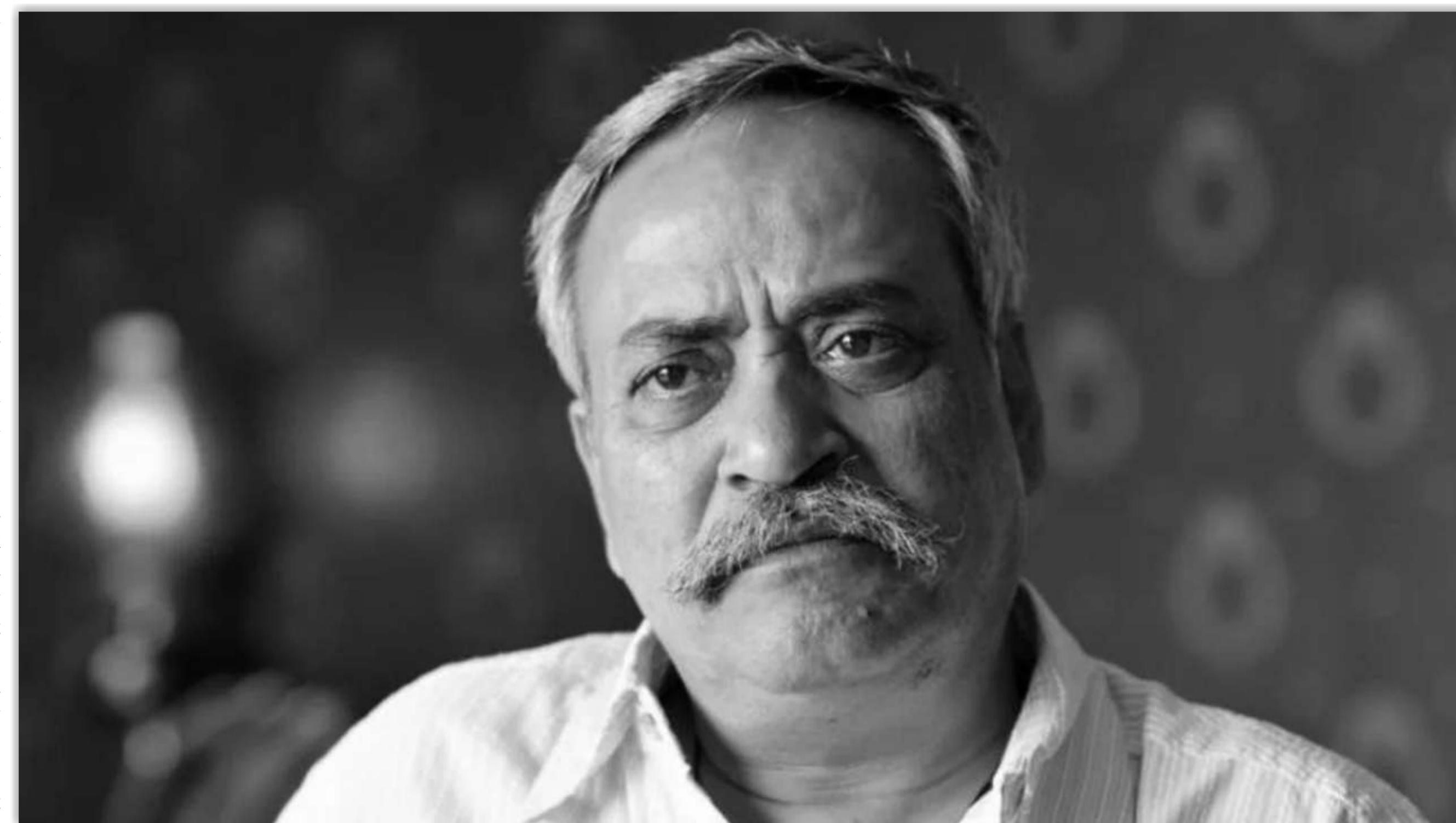
He was named the most influential man in Indian advertising for eight consecutive years by The Economic Times. In 2000, the Ad Club of Mumbai voted his commercial for Fevikwik the commercial of the century and his work for Cadbury the campaign of the century. Pandey was voted Asia's Creative Person of the Year at the Media Asia Awards 2002. He is the only Indian to win a double gold at Cannes (for his Cancer Patients Association anti-smoking campaign) and a triple grand prize at the London International Awards. During Pandey's tenure, O&M India won 25 lions at Cannes. In 2002, he won India's first Silver Pencil at The One Show Awards.

His legacy inspired many in the industry, and his guidance formed generations of creative leaders who went on to define Indian advertising's future.

According to Ogilvy's statement, Mr. Pandey was "battling an infection that took a serious turn" before passing away peacefully Friday morning. Upon his demise, the Ogilvy announced "the world of

advertising has lost a giant. India has lost one of its greatest storytellers. And Ogilvy has lost a piece of its heart. Piyush didn't just work at Ogilvy. He was Ogilvy."

Piyush Pandey's passing marks the end of an era in Indian advertising. His creativity transformed ordinary messages into memorable stories that spoke to every Indian heart. He taught the world that advertising is not about selling products but about connecting people. Though he is gone, his voice and vision, will continue to inspire generations of storytellers.



moped, Fevicol, Cadbury and Asian paints. Three years later he was promoted to creative director, and then to national creative director.

Notable ad campaigns in India designed by Mr. Pandey include: Abki baar Modi sarkar – BJP 2014 election campaign, with the famous slogan "achche din aane wale hain", Polio ad campaign with Amitabh Bachchan — "Do Boond Zindagi ki", Fevicol ad campaigns – Fevicol Bus, Fevicol Fish, Fevicol sofa, Fevikwik ad campaigns such as "Todo Nahin, Jodo", Googly Woogly Woosh – Ponds Ad (2010), and Asian Paints ad campaigns like "Har Ghar Kuch kehta Hai".

Mr. Pandey also wrote books including Pandeymonium (2015) and Open House with

He could take the ordinary and make it unforgettable.

Mr. Pandey was nominated to the board of directors in 1994. Under his leadership, Ogilvy India has been ranked the No.1 Agency for 12 consecutive years in the Agency Reckoner, an independent Marketing & Advertising Survey conducted by The Economic Times. He was also the first jury President from Asia for the Cannes Lions Festival.

He had been honored with over 1,000 awards over the period of his exemplary 40-year career. His laurels included the Padma Shri (2016), the LIA Legend Award (2024), making him the first Indian to receive this prestige, and the Lion of St. Mark at Cannes (2018), where he and his

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EDITORIAL NOTE

Commerce Connect is a student-friendly column that turns money, markets, and management into everyday lessons. From canteen economics to digital wallets, it bridges classroom theory with real-world trends—making commerce not just a subject, but a life skill.

Once dismissed as a “waste of time,” gaming today is rewriting the rules of business, entertainment, and even education. What was once a teenage pastime has evolved into a multi-billion-dollar global industry, with India emerging as one of its fastest-growing markets.

From competitive E-Sports tournaments to full-time streaming careers and gaming startups, this virtual world is no longer child's play it's a thriving marketplace where strategy, creativity, and commerce collide.

The Gaming Boom: From Play to Pay

The numbers speak volumes. According to the 2024 FICCI-EY report, India's gaming industry is valued at ₹28,000 crore and is expected to cross ₹50,000 crore by 2028. With over 450 million gamers, India now has the second-largest gaming population after China.

Titles like BGMI, Valorant, Free Fire, and Call of Duty: Mobile have become household names. Tournaments such as the ESL India Premiership and Skye sports Championship boast prize pools of over ₹1 crore, attracting thousands of participants and millions of

E-SPORTS INC.: TURNING PASSION FOR PLAY INTO PROFIT

viewers online.

For students, this new digital ecosystem isn't just about fun it's a real opportunity. Many are turning passion into profit, using gaming as a launchpad for entrepreneurship, digital content creation, and even financial independence.

Real-Life Example: From Gamer to Earner

Meet Aarav, a 20-year-old commerce student from Pune. What began as a lockdown hobby streaming Free Fire matches now earns him ₹25,000–₹30,000 a month through ads, sponsorships, and brand tie-ups.

Similarly, Ritika, an MBA aspirant, works part-time as a social media manager for an E-Sports firm, handling tournament updates and player promotions gaining real marketing experience along the way.

These stories reflect a clear shift gaming today isn't just play; it's a digital economy where creativity, communication, marketing and strategy turn into income.

Why Gaming Appeals to Gen Z

Gen Z thrives on creativity, community, and instant feedback all core elements of gaming. Unlike traditional sports, gaming is accessible to all, requiring only a smartphone, internet, and skill.

It also nurtures strategic thinking, teamwork, and decision-making, traits highly valued in business and academics. Some companies even use gaming simulations for recruitment and leadership training, acknowledging how digital play sharpens real-world thinking.

But with every opportunity comes responsibility the need to balance play with productivity and passion with prudence.

The Business Behind the Screen

The E-Sports and gaming industry isn't just about players it's an ecosystem buzzing with opportunity.

- **Game Developers:** Companies like Super Gaming (India), Riot Games, and Krafton create and market interactive experiences.

- **Streaming Platforms:** YouTube Gaming, Twitch, and Loco help creators monetize content through ads and donations.

- **Event Management:** Firms organize national tournaments with sponsors like Red Bull, Lenovo, and Airtel.

- **Merchandise & Accessories:** From gaming chairs to limited-edition apparel, retail brands target young gamers.

- **E-Sports Marketing & Analytics:** Startups hire data-driven youth to study audience patterns and boost engagement.

For commerce students, these are emerging career zones offering internships, freelance roles, and entrepreneurial possibilities.

Tips to Turn Gaming into Growth

1. Set Time & Income Goals: Treat gaming like part-time work. Define your play hours, improvement goals, and income targets to stay focused.

2. Build Your Personal Brand: Your gamer tag, logo, and behaviour form your online identity. Professionalism and consistency attract sponsors.

3. Learn the Business Side: Understand monetization, contracts, and copyright laws. Financial awareness prevents exploitation and loss.

4. Explore Beyond Playing: Careers in game design, event management, analytics, and E-Sports journalism are growing fast.

5. Balance Academics & Gaming: Use gaming to enhance focus and creativity not as an escape from studies. Time discipline is key.

6. Stay Cyber-Safe: Avoid shady platforms and tournaments that demand personal or banking details. Stick to verified apps.

Parents & Professors: A Perspective Shift



Parents often see gaming as a distraction, but with guidance, it can become a career incubator. Institutions, too, can channel this digital enthusiasm by organizing inter-college gaming leagues, E-Sports marketing competitions, and workshops on gaming entrepreneurship.

Professors can integrate gaming into commerce learning exploring sponsorship models, influencer marketing, and revenue analytics through real examples students relate to.

The Bottom Line

E-Sports and gaming have transformed from pastime to profession, from leisure to livelihood. The students of today could be the digital athletes, designers, analysts, or entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

The key lies in using gaming wisely as a skill-building tool, not a time sink.

So, the next time you tap “Ready to Play,” remember it's not just a game anymore. It's a marketplace for smart players who know how to level up both on-screen and off it.

Echoes of Expression

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The study of language and literature is not just an academic pursuit, but a journey into the world of imagination, critical thinking, and cultural exchange. This page celebrates creativity, knowledge, and expression by bridging the classics with contemporary voices.

THE RISE OF MAGICAL REALISM IN GLOBAL LITERATURE



Magical realism emerged as a literary mode that blends the fantastical with the ordinary, revealing truth through wonder. While it flourished in Latin American fiction — notably in the works of Gabriel García Márquez — it has found vibrant expression in Indian, African, and postcolonial writing.

Authors like Salman Rushdie, Ben Okri, and Toni Morrison have used magical realism to express histories of oppression, identity, and resistance. The technique allows the extraordinary to coexist with the mundane, offering readers a reality that feels more truthful than realism itself.

By transcending the limits of logic, magical realism reclaims myth, memory, and imagination as tools of survival and storytelling.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Rabindranath Tagore, known worldwide for Gitanjali and India's national anthem, began painting at the age of 60 his artworks were later exhibited across Europe!
- Paulo Coelho wrote The Alchemist in just two weeks he said the story was already "written in his soul." Today, it has been translated into over 80 languages, making it one of the most widely read books in history.
- The first full-length Indian feature film, Raja Harishchandra (1913), was made by Dadasaheb Phalke known today as the "Father of Indian Cinema."
- India's Chandrayaan-3 made history in 2023 by becoming the first mission to successfully land near the Moon's south pole, showcasing India's growing prowess in space exploration.

GRAMMAR TIP

Correct Use of "Fewer" and "Less":

Use **fewer** for countable nouns.

Use **less** for uncountable nouns.

↙ Fewer students attended the seminar this year.

↙ Less water is needed for this experiment.

✗ There are less chairs in the classroom.

Quick tip: If you can count it (books, apples, chairs), use fewer. If you can't (water, time, patience), use less.

WRITER OF THE WEEK

George Orwell (1903–1950)

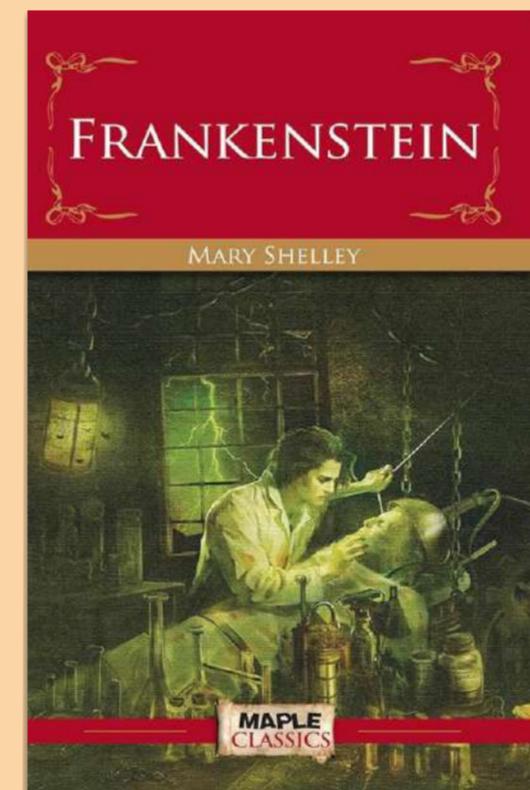
George Orwell, born Eric Arthur Blair, was an English novelist, essayist, and critic best known for his sharp political insight and commitment to truth. His works reveal deep concern for social justice, human freedom, and moral integrity. His famous novels *Animal Farm* and *1984* are timeless allegories against totalitarianism, censorship, and political manipulation. Orwell's lucid prose, moral clarity, and fearless criticism of power continue to make him one of the most influential voices in modern literature.

CREATIVE WRITING



BOOK REVIEW

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley



Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) is a pioneering work of Gothic fiction and early science fiction. The novel tells the story of Victor Frankenstein, a young scientist who creates life from dead matter only to face tragic consequences when his "creature" seeks love, understanding, and vengeance. Shelley's novel explores timeless themes: human ambition, scientific ethics, isolation, and the pursuit of forbidden knowledge. Written when she was just 18, Frankenstein raises profound moral questions about creation, responsibility, and what it means to be human. Its haunting atmosphere and psychological depth continue to inspire literature, cinema, and philosophy proving that Shelley's "modern Prometheus" still burns bright in our collective imagination.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

There is no friend as loyal as a book.

— Ernest Hemingway

IF

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too...

(Kipling's poem *If*— is a timeless reflection on resilience, self-control, and integrity. Its rhythmic cadence and moral clarity have inspired generations to pursue calm courage in the face of adversity.)

Poetry By

- Rudyard Kipling

WORD OF THE WEEK

Word: Ephemeral (adjective)

Meaning: Lasting for a very short time; fleeting.

Example: The beauty of the sunset was ephemeral, fading within moments but leaving a lasting impression.

IDIOM HIGHLIGHT

Every Cloud Has a Silver Lining

Meaning: Even in difficult or unpleasant situations, there's always something positive hidden within.

Example: Though the event got postponed due to rain, it gave the team extra time to plan, proving that every cloud has a silver lining.

Ravi Singh & Kailashkumar Gaunder

BREWING CRISIS FOR SOYBEAN FARMERS IN MADHYA PRADESH

Madhya Pradesh, known as India's "Soy State," is facing a growing crisis as soybean farmers struggle with declining profitability and rising production challenges. Once a dominant oilseed hub, the state now witnesses increasing discontent among cultivators, particularly the younger generation, who are gradually shifting away from soybean farming. The main reasons include soaring input costs for seeds, fertilizers, and diesel, coupled with stagnant yields and poor price realization.



lower risks.

The steady decline in soybean acreage poses a serious threat to the state's agricultural economy and India's edible oil self-sufficiency. Experts emphasize that without comprehensive reforms in procurement systems, seed quality improvement, and better market access, Madhya Pradesh risks losing its status as the country's leading soybean producer—and with it, the livelihood of thousands of farmers.

COIMBATORE FARMERS OPPOSE UNDERGROUND POWER LINE PROJECT ON FARMLANDS



Edayarpalayam, cutting across rich farming belts. Murugasamy argued that if the cables were laid in a straight line, the distance could be reduced to 40 kilometres, minimizing disruption. He also questioned why, unlike Chennai—where similar cables were laid safely along highways—the Coimbatore project was targeting productive farmland instead.

In Coimbatore, nearly 300 farmers have raised strong objections to Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation's (Tangedco) proposal to lay 400kW high-voltage underground power lines through fertile agricultural lands. The farmers, led by Eesan Murugasamy, founder and president of the Tamil Nadu Farmers' Protection Association, submitted a petition urging officials to reconsider the plan, citing severe threats to land value, crop health, and rural livelihoods.

According to the proposed blueprint, the transmission line will stretch nearly 70 kilometres from Kavuthampalayam in Kunnathur to

MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT FORMS COMMITTEE TO FRAME NEW FARM LOAN WAIVER NORMS

Amid intensifying farmer protests across Maharashtra, the state government has constituted a nine-member committee led by Praveen Pardeshi, CEO of MITRA, to draft new norms for a farm loan waiver scheme. The committee's objective is to design a sustainable framework that not only provides immediate relief to debt-ridden farmers but also prevents future financial distress. It is expected to submit its recommendations by April 2026, with the loan waiver rollout targeted for June next year.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis met protesting farmers in Nagpur to address their concerns over crop losses caused by floods, hailstorms, and erratic weather. These disasters have pushed many farmers into severe debt, prompting widespread agitations and road blockades. While acknowledging the state's fiscal challenges—with total debt projected at around ₹9.32 lakh crore—the government assured that interim financial assistance is already



being disbursed, and nearly 90% of eligible farmers will receive aid within weeks.

The newly formed committee will evaluate past loan waiver experiences, identify systemic gaps, and recommend a long-term, data-driven solution to rural indebtedness. Its approach aims to balance farmer welfare with fiscal discipline, ensuring lasting agricultural stability in Maharashtra.

CYCLONE MONTHA DAMPENS COTTON FARMERS' HOPES IN TELANGANA AND ANDHRA PRADESH



Rains could reduce cotton quality and force them to sell below the Minimum Support Price (MSP), as the Cotton Corporation of India accepts produce only with 8–12% moisture content.

The situation is equally grim in parts of Karnataka, where unexpected rains have hurt crop quality in Yadgir, Jevargi, and Shahapur. Normally, cotton arrivals increase by late October, but this year, harvesting delays and poor fibre quality have slowed arrivals nationwide to 70,000–90,000 bales daily. Ginning factories report high moisture and contamination levels, while traders and spinners are purchasing selectively. With uncertainty clouding the 2025–26 cotton season, farmers and mills alike are anxiously awaiting clear skies and improved market conditions.

Cyclone Montha has brought severe distress to cotton farmers in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, as torrential rains damaged standing crops across major agricultural regions. Cotton, paddy, soya, and maize have all suffered substantial losses, with preliminary estimates indicating crop damage over 1.81 lakh hectares in Telangana—including 61,000 hectares of cotton and 1.14 lakh hectares of paddy. In Andhra Pradesh, losses are valued at around ₹820 crore. Farmers fear that the excessive moisture from continuous

PM DHAN-DHAANYA KRISHI YOJANA: A STEP TOWARD SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION



The PM Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY) is a landmark initiative aimed at transforming agriculture across 100 underdeveloped districts in India. With an annual budget of ₹24,000 crore, the scheme integrates 36 central and state programs to promote sustainable, technology-driven, and self-reliant rural livelihoods. It focuses on region-specific interventions based on local agro-climatic conditions and cropping patterns.

The scheme's five key pillars include enhancing productivity through modern farming methods, promoting crop diversification, strengthening post-harvest infrastructure, improving irrigation systems, and expanding access to agricultural credit. Together, these initiatives seek to build climate-resilient and market-oriented farming systems.

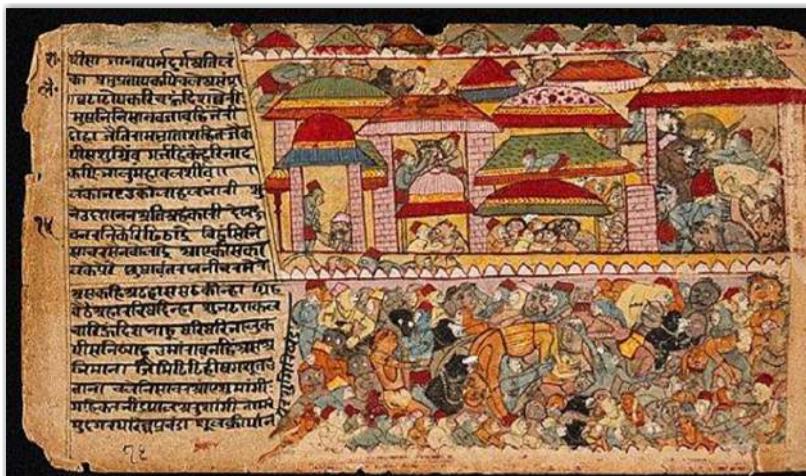
Institutional frameworks like District Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Samitis, chaired by local authorities, will prepare district-specific agricultural plans. Progress will be tracked through 117 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on a digital dashboard to ensure transparency. Collaboration with agricultural universities and NITI Aayog will provide technical expertise and strategic guidance.

Beyond crop cultivation, the scheme supports fisheries, beekeeping, animal husbandry, and agroforestry, aiming to boost income and employment in rural areas. By merging technology, knowledge, and financial support, PMDDKY envisions a self-reliant, prosperous rural India, driving the nation closer to the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Educational News

Dr. Smita Ravikumar Kuntay & Gargi Date

CONSERVING MANUSCRIPTS: 20 INSTITUTES SIGN MOUS WITH GYAN BHARATAM MISSION



Knowledge Systems (IKS).

To further their goals, the Gyan Bharatam Mission recently signed Memorandums Of Understanding(MOUs) with 20 well-known institutes from all around India. The institutes are to be distinguished into two categories: Independent Centres and Cluster Centres.

Independent Centres will focus on their own collection of manuscripts, while Cluster Centres are meant to help and organise other smaller institutes. The institutes are to receive significant fundings from the Government of India for the project. Asiatic Society, Kolkata, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayagraj, and Government Oriental Manuscript Library, Chennai are few of the institutes who have signed the MOU. The Gyan Bharatam Mission plans to sign MOUs with more institutes in the near future.

The Gyan Bharatam mission is an initiative undertaken by the Union Culture Ministry of India to preserve, digitise and propagate our nation's expansive manuscript heritage. The mission which was announced during this year's Union Budget, held its first international conference on Indian manuscripts last month.

Alongside the conservation and translation of manuscripts, the mission will also focus on the creation of the National Digital Repository (NDR). Through the NDR, students and scholars from around the world will get access to an extensive catalogue of Indian manuscripts. The initiative will help facilitate research in various fields and also help in the study of Indian

JOURNEYS OF KNOWLEDGE: UP GOVT SCHOOL STUDENTS EXPLORE INDIA



In an effort to improve the state's quality of education, the Uttar Pradesh Government plans to implement a number of new schemes. Along with organising different workshops and training programs, major focus is going to be paid towards promoting skill-based learning. The government plans to encourage a "learning by doing" culture in its schools.

The LBD (Learning By Doing) model is meant to be adopted by around 3000 selected schools and institutions across the state. The initiative aims to bring classroom learning beyond memorization and rote learning, and facilitate a sense of curiosity, discovery, exploration and understanding among students.

The department of Secondary Education, Uttar Pradesh as recently launched a programme where students from government schools will be sent on educational visits across India. The aim of these visits is to introduce students to the history, culture and accomplishments of various

educational institutions in different states of the country. The educational visits will help students experience the country's diversity and develop a sense of fraternity for their fellow citizens.

A committee made up of four members will select 60 students from each district of the state, based on their willingness to participate and academic performance to be a part of this programme. The program is meant for students from classes 9 to 12. The five day visits will be led by two in charges who will guide the students. Groups with female students will have at least one woman in-charge.

AI TO ENTER CLASSROOMS FROM GRADE 3: MOE CHARTS FUTURE-READY CURRICULUM

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has reaffirmed its commitment to making Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Computational Thinking (CT) integral to future-ready education in India. Under the Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSE&L), AI and CT will be introduced in schools from Class 3 onwards, beginning the 2026-27 academic session, in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2023.

A consultative meeting held on October 29, 2025, brought together experts from CBSE, NCERT, KVS, NVS, and academia. The CBSE has formed an expert committee chaired by Prof. Karthik Raman (IIT Madras) to design the AI and CT curriculum.

The initiative aims to embed AI learning ethically and organically from the foundational stage, fostering "AI for Public Good." It will encourage creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving while ensuring inclusivity and accessibility across all schools.



Secretary Sanjay Kumar emphasized that AI education must be treated as a universal basic skill, integrated with "The World Around Us (TWAU)" and tailored to India's evolving needs. Teacher training through NISHTHA, digital modules, and video-based resources will support effective implementation.

By December 2025, NCERT and CBSE will finalize resource materials, handbooks, and training content under a coordinated framework. With AI becoming a classroom reality, the Ministry envisions nurturing a generation that is not only tech-savvy but also socially responsible and globally competent.

NMC ENLISTS COLLEGES TO PARTICIPATE IN SURVEYS FOR STUDENT MENTAL WELL-BEING



Medical colleges under the National Medical Commission (NMC) have been encouraged to participate in a variety of surveys pertaining to the mental health of students. These surveys conducted through the National Task Force website www.ntf.education.gov.in aim to collect data on the various concerns affecting students from higher education institutions. These include factors like campus atmosphere, inclusivity and belongingness; sources of distress and systemic discrimination; existing support systems and grievance redressal mechanisms.

The NFT was created earlier this year in accordance to a directive issued by the Supreme Court of India to combat the growing number of student suicides in the nation and deal with their mental health concerns. The NTF website hosts a number of surveys that can be answered by students, faculty members, parents and guardians, mental health service providers and

others. NGOs, family and friends, alumni and concerned members of the general public can also participate in the surveys. The various surveys consist of detailed questionnaires which can be answered in both English and Hindi. The response recorded will be kept confidential.

The initiative's goal is to use the opinions and data collected through the surveys to build better support systems for students which can aid in preventing suicides and improve their mental well-being.

A CLEARER PATH: UPSC INTRODUCES SCREEN READER TOOLS FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED ASPIRANTS



In a monumental decision taken by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), the organisation has stated that it plans to use screen reader software for applicants who are blind or visually challenged during its exams. UPSC has informed the Supreme Court (SC) in an affidavit that it will implement this technology after the infrastructure and testing procedures are set up.

This initiative comes on the heels of a petition submitted by "Mission Accessibility" that stressed on the insufficient options presented to people with visual impairments for taking civil services examinations. UPSC also plans to collaborate with the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD), New Delhi and the National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disability (NIEPVD), Dehradun, to discuss the viability of conducting examinations for such candidates who would choose to use screen reader software in NIEPVD's computer labs and regional centers.

While the Supreme Court welcomed the decision, it also voiced concerns about restricting this policy to particular testing locations, pointing out that it would be unjust if candidates with visual impairments had to go to other locations.

The Center had already declared that the Civil Services Examinations (CSE) Rules, 2025 do not need to be revised in order to deal with the issue of screen reader software for visually challenged candidates.

According to the UPSC's counsel, it might be prepared to implement the initiative for the upcoming exam cycle.

Durgesh K. Dubey

GST COLLECTIONS EDGE UPTO 4.6% IN OCTOBER DESPITE MAJOR TAX RATE CUTS

India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections reached ₹1.96 lakh crore in October, marking a 4.6% year-on-year increase, even as significant tax rate reductions came into effect in late September. The growth, though modest, reflects resilient consumer demand and steady compliance despite rate rationalisation on a wide range of products—from essential goods to high-end automobiles.

Resilient Growth Amid Rate Cuts

The latest GST data represents transactions from September, a month when the government implemented sweeping rate cuts on around 375 items, effective from September 22, coinciding with the start of the Navratri festival. The list included daily-use products, kitchen essentials, consumer electronics, and automobiles—a move aimed at stimulating demand ahead of the festive season.

Despite these reductions, October's GST collections surpassed the previous month's figure of ₹1.89 lakh crore and August's ₹1.86 lakh crore, highlighting a gradual recovery in spending activity. However, the 4.6% growth rate is the slowest since June 2021, reflecting temporary revenue moderation as consumers deferred big-ticket purchases awaiting lower prices.

Economists suggest that this short-term dip was expected, given the timing of the rate changes, and anticipate a rebound in the coming months as festival-season spending fully reflects in November's numbers.

Breakdown of Collections

According to official data, October's gross collection comprised:

- Central GST: ₹36,547 crore
- State GST: ₹45,134 crore
- Integrated GST (IGST): ₹1,06,443 crore
- Cess: ₹7,812 crore

Cess revenue recorded a decline as levies were removed on several key items, including small cars, where the rate was cut from 28% to 18%. The net GST revenue, after refunds, stood at ₹1.69 lakh crore, just 0.6% higher than a year earlier. This modest gain was attributed to a 40% surge in refunds, as businesses adjusted input tax credits following the new tax structure.

Festive Demand Expected to Lift November Collections

The festive period has already shown signs of strong consumer momentum. The automobile industry reported a 17% year-on-year jump in domestic passenger vehicle sales in October, suggesting that pent-up demand is translating into higher consumption. Economists expect this surge to reflect in the November GST receipts, which could mark a sharp rebound after two months of subdued growth.

October's figures follow a pattern of softening collections since the record high of ₹2.37 lakh crore in April 2025, though the government remains optimistic that reforms will support sustained revenue growth without stifling demand.

Policy and Market Implications

Analysts view the latest data as a transitional phase rather than a slowdown. The GST rate revisions were designed to simplify the tax structure and boost affordability for consumers, especially during the festive buying cycle. The gradual pickup in receipts, despite substantial cuts, indicates that demand remains fundamentally strong.

Officials expect the next few months to bring clearer insight into how the revised tax regime balances affordability with fiscal stability. Early indicators—including robust sales of durables and vehicles—suggest that the strategy could stimulate consumption without causing a prolonged dip in revenue.

APPLE SETS NEW REVENUE RECORD IN INDIA AS GLOBAL SALES SURGE IN SEPTEMBER QUARTER

Apple Inc. has reported its highest-ever quarterly revenue in India, marking a major milestone in its ongoing expansion across one of the world's fastest-growing smartphone markets. The strong performance, part of the company's broader global results for the September 2025 quarter, underscores how India has become a central pillar of Apple's growth strategy in Asia.

Strong Global Results and India's Record-Breaking Quarter

Apple's total worldwide revenue reached USD 102.5 billion, reflecting an 8% increase compared with the same quarter last year. The company recorded growth across nearly all major regions, including North America, Europe, East Asia, and South Asia—with India emerging as a standout performer.

Industry analysts attribute Apple's record-breaking figures in India to a combination of factors—growing middle-class purchasing power, aggressive retail expansion, and strong demand for premium devices such as the iPhone 16 series. India's expanding base of first-time iPhone users and increasing adoption of Apple's ecosystem of products and services also contributed significantly.

Expanding Retail Presence and Product Portfolio

Apple has been steadily strengthening its physical and digital presence in India. The company recently inaugurated flagship retail stores in Mumbai and New Delhi, its first directly operated outlets in the country, complementing its existing network of authorised resellers and online

channels.

The September quarter also witnessed the launch of several major products—including the iPhone 17 lineup, AirPods Pro 3, and new Apple Watch models—which collectively fuelled consumer excitement. In the computing segment, Apple rolled out upgraded MacBook Pro and iPad Pro models powered by its latest M5 chip, reinforcing its dominance in high-end technology solutions.

According to industry estimates, India is now among Apple's top emerging markets, joining the ranks of Latin America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, where sales have been consistently rising.

iPhone and Services Drive Growth

Globally, iPhone revenue alone contributed USD 49 billion, up nearly 6% year-on-year, led by robust sales of the iPhone 16 and its Pro variants. The company also achieved record revenues in its services division, which includes the App Store, Apple Music, iCloud, and Apple TV+. The increasing number of active devices worldwide has pushed Apple's user base to an all-time high, with India seeing one of the fastest growth rates in device activations.

In emerging markets like India, Apple's strategy of offering financing options, exchange programs, and localised payment solutions has helped bridge affordability gaps while maintaining its premium brand image.

India's Growing Role in Apple's Global Strategy

India's rapid digital adoption and economic expansion have made it a crucial focus for global technology players. For Apple, the country represents not just a massive consumer base but also an emerging manufacturing and export hub, with several of its devices now being assembled locally under government initiatives promoting domestic production.

The record revenue from India signals more than a sales milestone—it reflects Apple's successful alignment with India's digital growth story. With increasing investment in local operations, the company is expected to continue deepening its footprint through new retail outlets, enhanced supply chains, and expanded service offerings.

Looking Ahead

As Apple enters its busiest quarter—driven by holiday demand—the company's strong performance in India is likely to set the tone for its future growth in Asia. Analysts expect the brand to maintain momentum with its latest product launches and expanding retail network.

The September quarter's results reaffirm that Apple's strategy of combining premium innovation with local market adaptation is paying off. India, once considered a challenging market for high-end smartphones, is now emerging as one of Apple's most promising frontiers for long-term growth.

Dr. (Mrs) Chandra Hariharan Iyer

EXPERT



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Q. What is balanced speech?

Ans. The art of balanced speech is one of the most subtle yet powerful dimensions of self-mastery. In the Indian philosophical and ethical tradition, speech (vāṇī) is not merely a tool for communication but a reflection of the mind, character, and moral wisdom of the speaker. Ancient texts, including the Subhashitam's, the Upanishads, and the Dharmasāstras, consistently stress that speech has the power to build or destroy, to heal or harm, and to promote harmony or conflict. Balanced speech, therefore, is not merely about saying the "right words" but aligning one's thoughts, emotions, and intentions with the principles of truth, kindness, appropriateness, and timing. It is an external manifestation of internal equilibrium, a mirror of the self's harmony.

Balanced speech is deeply intertwined with self-awareness, a cornerstone of self-mastery. One cannot speak with balance unless one understands the inner workings

of the mind the impulses, emotions, biases, and habitual thought patterns that often drive spontaneous speech. A Subhashitam captures this insight succinctly: "वाचो हि मनसः प्रतिबिम्बम्" (Speech is the reflection of the mind). If the mind is agitated, restless, or driven by attachment, the words that emerge are likely to reflect the same turbulence, often causing unintended harm. Conversely, when the mind is calm, reflective, and discerning, speech becomes a vehicle of clarity, compassion, and constructive influence. The practice of balanced speech, therefore, begins with self-observation and mindfulness pausing to observe one's emotional state and motivations before uttering words.

The principles of balanced speech are traditionally summarized as truthfulness (satya), pleasantness (priya), non-harmfulness (ahimsa), and appropriateness (samaya). Speaking the truth is fundamental; however, untempered truth can be harsh and destructive if delivered without consideration for the listener's feelings or the situation. Ancient wisdom, articulated in the Subhashitam, advises: "सत्यं ब्रूयात् प्रियं ब्रूयात् न ब्रूयात् सत्यमप्रियम् प्रियं च नानृतं ब्रूयात् एष धर्मः सनातनः॥" (Speak truth, but speak it pleasantly; do not speak unpleasant truths, nor pleasing falsehoods. This is the eternal dharma.) This verse encapsulates the essence of balanced speech: it is not blind adherence to literal truth, nor mere flattery, but a careful harmonization of honesty, tact, and wisdom. By practicing this principle, one cultivates communication that strengthens relationships, prevents conflict, and nurtures mutual respect.

Balanced speech also requires emotional regulation. Often, the most damaging words arise not from ignorance but from unbridled emotion anger, jealousy, fear, or pride. Self-mastery involves creating a mental buffer between impulse and expression, transforming reactive speech into deliberate, conscious articulation. Patience plays a central role in this process. Just as meditation trains the mind to observe thoughts without attachment, cultivating patience allows one to recognize the urge to speak hastily and choose silence or measured speech instead. Silence, when used judiciously, is as much a component of balanced speech as words themselves. It is not avoidance, but a conscious restraint that prevents harm and creates space for reflection and understanding.

Equally important is the aspect of clarity and precision in speech. Balanced speech is neither vague nor unnecessarily elaborate. It communicates the intended message accurately, avoiding exaggeration, ambiguity, or distortion. The Subhashitam's highlight the virtue of clarity: "वाच्यं सुस्पष्टं साधु भाषितं कर्तव्यं" (Speech should be clear and properly articulated). When words are precise and thoughtfully constructed, they reduce the risk of misunderstanding, foster trust, and enhance the effectiveness of communication. In professional, social, and personal contexts, clarity in speech reflects a disciplined mind and enhances the speaker's credibility.

Another facet of balanced speech is the ethical responsibility to use words constructively. Speech has the power to influence thought, inspire action, and shape culture. It can motivate individuals, resolve conflicts, and spread knowledge, or it can incite hatred, propagate misinformation, and deepen divisions. Ancient Indian wisdom treats speech as sacred; careless or malicious words are considered not just socially harmful but spiritually detrimental. This recognition elevates the practice of balanced speech from mere etiquette to a form of ethical and spiritual discipline, emphasizing the speaker's accountability for the consequences of their words.

The social dimension of balanced speech is equally significant. In interpersonal relationships, speech mediates understanding, empathy, and collaboration. A self-balanced individual who practices mindful speech contributes to harmony in families, workplaces, and communities. They are able to navigate delicate situations, offer constructive criticism without offense, and build bridges of trust and cooperation. Moreover, balanced speech fosters inclusivity and respect, ensuring that dialogue is not dominated by ego, prejudice, or impulsivity. It aligns with the broader principle of dharma, or

righteous action, by maintaining social harmony and mutual respect.

Balanced speech also entails adaptability. The same message may require different expressions depending on the context, audience, and timing. A masterful communicator discerns when words are necessary and when silence conveys wisdom more effectively. This adaptability reflects a deep understanding of human nature and the dynamics of interpersonal interaction. Self-mastery, therefore, is not rigid or dogmatic but flexible, discerning, and attuned to the subtleties of each situation.

Finally, the practice of balanced speech nurtures inner peace. When words are aligned with truth, kindness, and appropriateness, the mind experiences less guilt, anxiety, and remorse. Speech that harms others or contradicts one's values generates inner tension, whereas conscious, balanced speech fosters confidence, integrity, and harmony within. In this way, the art of speech becomes both a reflection and a reinforcement of self-mastery, creating a virtuous cycle where inner balance produces harmonious communication, which in turn strengthens inner equilibrium.

In conclusion, the art of balanced speech is a profound aspect of self-mastery that integrates self-awareness, ethical discernment, emotional regulation, clarity, social responsibility, adaptability, and spiritual consciousness. It is not merely about verbal expression but about aligning mind, heart, and intention in every act of communication. Balanced speech embodies the timeless wisdom of the Subhashitam's, teaching that words can be tools of transformation, vehicles of harmony, and instruments of personal and social growth. By mastering the art of speech, one not only cultivates inner equilibrium but also contributes to the creation of a more compassionate, understanding, and balanced society. It is a lifelong discipline, reflecting the principle that true self-mastery manifests both within and through the words we speak.

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Ravi Singh & Saleha Fatima

BECOMING YOUR BEST SELF: THE SCIENCE AND SOUL OF PERSONALITY GROWTH

Everyone wants to become a better version of themselves. We read books, watch videos, or listen to talks that tell us how to improve. But personality growth is not just about changing how we talk or act; it's about understanding who we are on the inside and who we can become. It is both a science and a journey of the soul.

The Science Behind Growth

Science tells us that our personality is shaped by both nature and nurture: our genes and our experiences. We are born with certain traits, but how those traits develop depends on what we go through and the choices we make.

For example, someone who is naturally shy can learn to speak with confidence through practice. The brain is flexible; scientists call this neuroplasticity, which means it can change with new habits and repeated effort. So, when you learn to be more patient, kind, or disciplined, you are actually training your brain to behave differently.

Even small changes make a big difference. Smiling more often can make you feel happier because it releases "feel-good" chemicals in your brain. Keeping a gratitude journal can slowly shift your focus from what's missing in your life to what's already there. Science proves that positive habits rewire the brain, one

thought at a time.

The Soul of Growth

But becoming your best self is not only about psychology or brain science. There's a deeper side—the soul side—which deals with meaning, purpose, and values. Growth begins when you pause and ask yourself, "Who do I really want to be?"

This question isn't about money, fame, or followers. It's about your inner character: your kindness, honesty, courage, and empathy. You can have all the skills in the world, but if you don't have inner balance, peace, or compassion, growth feels empty.

Taking time for reflection through prayer, journaling, or just quiet walks helps you connect with this inner part of yourself. It reminds you that growth isn't a race; it's a lifelong journey. The soul grows not by rushing, but by understanding.

Blending Science and Soul

True personality development happens when science and soul work together. Science teaches us how to grow; the soul tells us why. You might learn through psychology how to manage stress, but it's your inner sense of peace that helps you stay calm when life tests you. You might train your brain to be disciplined, but it's

your values that decide where to use that discipline.

Start by making small, meaningful habits

- **Practice empathy:** Try to understand how others feel before reacting.
- **Reflect daily:** Spend five minutes asking yourself what you learned today.
- **Stay curious:** Read, explore, and question; curiosity keeps the mind alive.
- **Be kind to yourself:** Growth is not about being perfect; it's about being better than yesterday.

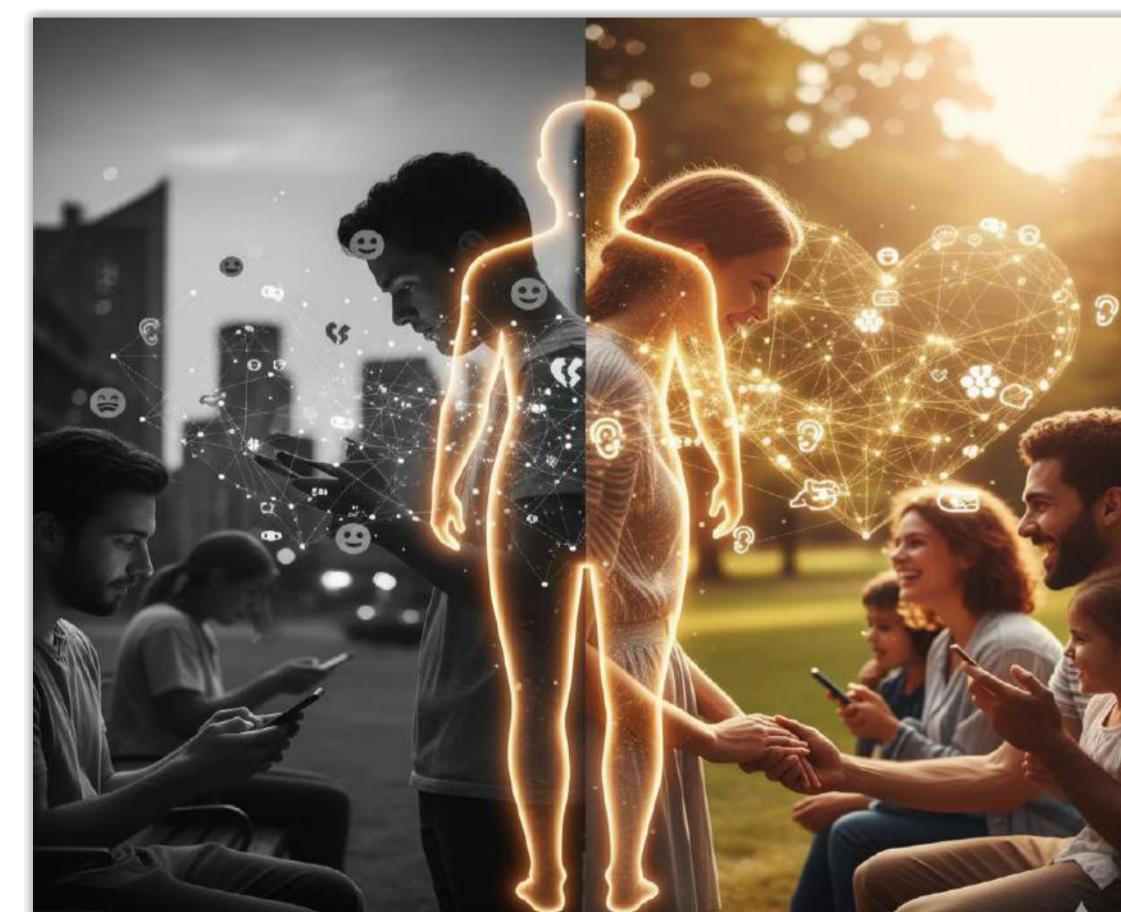
The Journey Never Ends

Personality growth doesn't have a finish line. You will always discover new things about yourself—some that make you proud and others that challenge you. The key is to stay open and humble. Every experience, good or bad, teaches you something about who you are meant to become. When you see growth as both a science to be practiced and a soulful journey to be lived, you stop comparing yourself to others. You realize that the goal isn't to be someone else's "best," but to become your own—genuine,



balanced, and kind. So take a deep breath, look within, and take one small step toward the person you want to be. Growth begins not in a single day, but in the small, steady choices you make every day.

WHY EMPATHY IS BECOMING A RARER SKILL AND HOW TO BRING IT BACK



messages, meetings, and memes, we've started losing the art of caring deeply.

The Quiet Disappearance of Empathy

So why is empathy becoming rare?

One big reason is distraction. Our attention is always divided between apps, notifications, and deadlines. When we're constantly rushing, it's hard to pause and notice what others are feeling. We hear words, but we don't truly listen. Another reason is digital communication. Online, we see people as usernames or profile pictures instead of human beings. It's easy to forget that behind every message or post is a real person with real emotions. This makes it simpler to argue, criticize, or ignore without guilt. Empathy is also fading because of stress and self-focus. Many people feel

overwhelmed with work, studies, or personal struggles so their emotional energy runs low. When we are exhausted, we naturally think more about our own problems and less about others'. It's not that people have become cold-hearted; it's that modern life leaves little room for emotional connection.

Why Empathy Still Matters

Even though empathy is becoming rare, it remains

one of the most important human skills. It's what holds families together, strengthens friendships, and builds peaceful communities. Empathy is not just kindness; it's the foundation of understanding. When you're empathetic, you don't jump to judge someone's actions. You pause to see what might be happening beneath the surface—maybe that rude comment came from pain, or that silence hides sadness. Empathy helps us respond with patience instead of anger. Science even shows that empathy improves mental health. When we connect with others, our brains release oxytocin, a hormone that makes us feel calm and safe. In workplaces and schools, empathy creates trust. People feel heard, supported, and motivated.

How to Bring Empathy Back

The good news is that empathy is not lost—it just needs attention and practice. Here's how we can bring it back into our lives:

1. **Listen without interrupting:** When someone speaks, don't just plan your reply. Listen to understand, not to respond. Sometimes, people don't need advice—they just need to be heard.

2. **Be curious, not judgmental:** Instead of saying, "That's wrong," ask, "Why do you feel that way?" Curiosity opens doors that judgment closes.

3. **Put yourself in someone's place:** Imagine living

their day, carrying their worries. This small mental shift can completely change how you see people.

4. **Limit screen time:** Spend more time talking face-to-face. A real conversation with eye contact and emotion does what hundreds of texts can't.

5. **Show small kindness daily:** Smile at strangers, thank people sincerely, forgive small mistakes. These simple acts remind us that humanity still exists in everyday life.

A World That Feels Again

Empathy is not a fancy word; it's what makes us human. Without it, technology grows, but hearts shrink. We start seeing differences instead of similarities, arguments instead of understanding. But if each of us makes a small effort to listen, to care, to feel, we can slowly rebuild a world that doesn't just think fast, but feels deeply. Empathy doesn't require special training or money. It only asks for one thing: to pause, notice, and truly connect. Because in the end, being human is not about how smart we are, but how much we care.

Empathy is a simple but powerful thing. It means being able to understand what someone else is feeling. It's the ability to step into another person's shoes and see the world from their eyes. It sounds easy, but in today's world, true empathy is slowly disappearing. We live in a time when people are more connected than ever through phones and social media, yet somehow, we are also more emotionally distant than before. We scroll through endless posts, read about pain or joy, and then move on without really feeling anything. Somewhere between

Afreen Mazgaonkar & Nancey Kujur

INDIA AND EU SPEED UP FTA TALKS AHEAD OF DECEMBER DEADLINE



India and the European Union (EU) recently talked about how their Free Trade Agreement (FTA) discussions are moving forward. The meeting took place in Brussels between India's Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and EU Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic. They talked about how to speed up the FTA negotiations and strengthen trade relations between the two sides. Piyush Goyal indicated on social media that both sides wish to finalize a fast, fair, and mutual agreement. His trip came weeks after the 14th round of FTA negotiations concluded on October 6 to 10, when Indian and EU officials met for talks on key FTA issues and topics. Both sides wish to complete the agreement before December. Talks about the FTA, investment protection, and geographical indicator recognition rights (GI)

resumed in 2022 after being suspended for eight years. Trade between India and the EU reached USD 136.53 billion in 2024-25 and the EU is India's largest trading partner. The EU is asking India to lower tariffs on imported cars, medical instruments, wine, and meat, and pass better IP laws to protect new ideas and brand recognition. India is requesting that the agreement help facilitate the sale of clothing, medicines, steel, and machines to other countries. The agreement covers 23 main topics, including trade, investment, customs, and protecting the environment.

ASHISH CHANCHLANI RELEASES TRAILER FOR EKAKI, INDIA'S FIRST HORROR-COMEDY SERIES

Ashish Chanchlani, one of India's biggest digital stars, is back with something completely different a mix of laughter and chills! The YouTuber has just released the trailer of his most ambitious project yet, EKAKI, a horror-comedy web series that also marks his debut as a director. Beginning November 27, the series will be free to watch on YouTube, with a good blend of scary fun and Ashish's fun peculiar humour. Ashish is known for his humorous and relatable videos, but this series will broaden Ashish's special genre by showing him in various roles as writer, director, producer, and actor. After several weeks of teasers and speculation, the trailer is released and it has everything the fans asked for! It shows scary scenes, funny moments, and the perfect mix of fear and fun that only Ashish can create. Joining him in the show are his close friends and popular digital creators Harsh Rane, Sidhant Sarfare, Rohit Sadhwani, Grishim Nawani, Shashank Shekhar, and Akash Dodeja. Fans across social media are calling EKAKI a "game-changer" for Indian YouTube, praising Ashish for stepping beyond comedy sketches and entering the world of storytelling with something fresh and daring.



ISRO SET TO LAUNCH CMS-03, INDIA'S MOST POWERFUL COMMUNICATION SATELLITE

India has achieved another milestone, as the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has now put the 4,410-kilogram communications satellite — the heaviest to be lifted off from Indian soil into geosynchronous transfer orbit — on its heavy-lift LVM3-M5 rocket ("Bahubali"). The lift-off occurred from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, at 5:26 PM, and it smoothly put the satellite into the right orbit. The LVM3-M5 launch vehicle is a three-stage launch system with solid rocket strap-ons, a liquid core stage, and a cryogenic upper stage. All three are made-in-India technologies, and the vehicle had a 100 percent success record in its eight previous launches, and now it has shown that it can carry heavier communication payloads in the country. The new satellite will soon enhance multi-band maritime and land-mass communication services for a minimum of 15 years. This new satellite was designed to replace an earlier series. Officials said this accomplishment underscores the capability of India's self-reliant space programme and reducing dependence on foreign launch services for heavy satellites. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Space Ministry complimented the accomplishment as a rallying point behind Indian scientific innovation and competition in the world.



MAHA MEDTECH MISSION TO BOOST AFFORDABLE AND INDIGENOUS HEALTHCARE INNOVATION IN INDIA

India has started a new project called Maha MedTech (Mission for Advancement in High-Impact Areas – Medical Technology) to improve healthcare and promote innovation. The mission has been launched by the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) in partnership with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Its main goal is to create modern, affordable medical technologies in India, so the country does not have to depend on other nations for healthcare equipment. Through this mission, India wants to support research, develop new ideas, and help local companies make high-quality medical tools and devices. It will focus on important areas like diagnostics, medical imaging, and devices used in hospitals and rural health centers. The program also aims to make healthcare more accessible, especially in smaller towns and villages.



By encouraging young scientists, startups, and industries to work together, Maha MedTech hopes to make India a global center for medical innovation. It will also help reduce the cost of treatment and improve patient care. Overall, the mission is a big step toward building a stronger, self-reliant, and affordable healthcare system in India.

GREEN POWER OF GRASSY TREES IN COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE



Researchers from New York University found that plants such as bamboo, palms, and bananas called "grassy trees" can help reduce climate change. These plants look like trees but grow fast like grass. They become tall without getting very thick and can take in carbon dioxide faster than grasslands. Even though they store less carbon than large forests, they still play an important role in cleaning the air. Grassy trees are also very strong and can grow back quickly after storms, fires, or cutting. This makes them useful for restoring damaged land and keeping nature healthy. Besides that, they provide food, building materials, and shelter, which helps people in local areas. In India, these plants are very helpful because farming, forests, and weather depend on each other. Bamboo, palms, and bananas already grow in many places

across the country. Planting more of them can help make the air cleaner, make the soil healthier, and give people more ways to earn a living. The study says that these plants should be part of climate plans and policies. Instead of focusing only on big trees, India should also grow plants that are fast and strong. Grassy trees can make the country greener and better for the future.

MAPMYINDIA LOOKS TO TEAM UP WITH PERPLEXITY AI TO STRENGTHEN ITS PLACE IN INDIA'S AI FUTURE

After working with Zoho, Mappls MapmyIndia, a top Indian mapping company, has shown interest in partnering with Perplexity AI. This happened after Perplexity's CEO, Aravind Srinivas, said that "maps are the hardest." In reply, MapmyIndia invited the AI company to work together, saying it has many years of experience and a strong mapping system. Founded in 1995, MapmyIndia has built detailed maps across India, claiming accuracy down to individual house numbers in both cities and villages. The company said this level of detail is the result of years of ground surveys and continuous updates — something that even big global mapping companies find difficult to match. After its successful partnership with Zoho, MapmyIndia now aims to work with Perplexity AI to make AI-based tools and assistants smarter using Indian-made geospatial data. The collaboration could help Perplexity improve its search and enterprise solutions with richer, location-based intelligence. MapmyIndia also shared that over 35 million users rely on its Mappls app. It plans to expand globally while continuing to serve as a "swadeshi" (homegrown) platform. The company aims to play an important role in India's digital future by offering accurate, trusted, and locally made mapping technology.



Afreen Mazgaonkar & Nancey Kujur

INDIA CREATES HISTORY: WOMEN IN BLUE LIFT MAIDEN WORLD CUP TROPHY



The Dr DY Patil Sports Academy in Navi Mumbai witnessed a night of glory as the Indian women's cricket team lifted their first-ever ICC Women's World Cup title, defeating South Africa in a gripping 2025 final. It was a match that celebrated not just victory, but the spirit and evolution of Indian women's cricket. Batting first, India posted a record-breaking 298/7, the highest total in a Women's World Cup final. Young star Shafali Verma, recalled as an injury replacement, stole the spotlight with a sensational 87 off 78 balls, while Smriti Mandhana and Deepti Sharma provided steady partnerships to keep the scoreboard ticking. Deepti's composed 58 and Richa Ghosh's late fireworks ensured India's dominance. South Africa's chase never truly took off, as India's bowlers delivered a

disciplined performance. A brilliant direct hit from Amanjot Kaur and crucial breakthroughs from Deepti Sharma dismantled the opposition's hopes. Captain Harmanpreet Kaur's calm leadership culminated in a stunning final catch running back over her shoulder sealing India's historic triumph. This victory is more than a championship; it marks the rise of a new era in Indian cricket one defined by talent, teamwork, and unshakable belief.

GOLDEN CLIMB: MANIKANDAN KUMAR WINS GOLD IN THE PARA CLIMBING WORLD CUP 2025

Manikandan Kumar from India achieved his first gold medal of the 2025 season by winning it in the IFSC Para Climbing World Cup in Laval, France. Competing in the men's RP2 category, he gave an outstanding performance to beat Philipp Hrozek of Germany by a close margin, scoring 44+ to 44. Daniel Wiener of Austria won the bronze medal with a score of 40. After his win, Manikandan proudly said, "World Cup champion once again." This victory adds to his list of achievements, as he had also won gold in the 2024 edition of the event held in Arco, Italy. His hard work and determination have made Manikandan one of India's best para climbers in the world. The 2025 World Cup had a record participation of 18 countries. France led the way with five gold medals and two bronze medals, while Germany won the most medals overall with a total of eight, including one gold, five silver medals, and two bronze medals. Manikandan's victory once again made India proud. His strong will, focus, and love for para climbing continue to inspire many young athletes.



INDIA WINS 8 GOLDS AT SOUTH ASIAN ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

India emerged overall champions at the South Asian Athletics Championships, which took place at Ranchi in 2025, with 20 gold, 20 silver and 18 bronze medals in total. The three-day event at Birsa Munda Stadium saw tough competition, especially from Sri Lanka, which came second with 16 gold, 14 silver, and 10 bronze medals. On the final day, India added eight more gold medals to its tally. Sri Lanka's Pathirage Rumesh T, a national javelin record holder, won gold in men's javelin with a throw of 84.29m, setting a new meet record. India's Uttam Patel earned bronze with 76.30m despite suffering from ankle pain. In the men's events, Ruchit Mori of India set a meet record in the 400m hurdles (50.10s), while Damneet Singh and Ashish Jakhar won gold and silver in hammer throw. Abhishek Pal won gold in the 10,000m run. Among women, India's Amandeep Kaur won the 800m gold, and Reet Rathor claimed victory in the high jump. Sri Lanka's Hatarabage Leka broke the women's javelin record with a throw of 60.14m. India's women's 4x400m relay team also set a new meet record, sealing a proud finish for the host nation.



INDIA BAGS 7 MEDALS AT U-23 WORLD WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS AS HANSIKA AND SARIIKA WIN SILVER

India ended the women's events at the Under-23 World Wrestling Championships in Serbia with seven medals, including two silvers and five bronzes. Hansika Lamba and Sarika Malik won silver medals but missed out on gold. Hansika, competing in the 53kg category, lost 0-4 to Japan's Haruna Morikawa in the final. Morikawa dominated the match with a takedown and a strong headlock, leaving Hansika with no chance to recover. In the 57kg final, Sarika Malik, last year's Asian U-20 silver medallist, faced Japan's Ruka Natami, the 2024 U-23 silver medallist. Sarika started strong and took the first point, but Natami turned the match around with smart moves to win 2-1. Earlier, Nishu (55kg), Neha Sharma (57kg), Pukit (65kg), Srishti (68kg), and Priya Malik (76kg) each won bronze medals. Savita (62kg), Hanny Kumari (50kg), and Diksha Malik (72kg) were eliminated earlier. In the men's freestyle category, Pravinder (74kg) lost his bronze medal match to Japan's Yoshinosuke Aoyagi 2-8, while others were knocked out before the finals. With strong performances from young wrestlers, India closed the women's campaign on a positive note, hoping for gold in the upcoming men's bouts.



SHAINA AND DIKSHA STRIKE GOLD AS INDIA SHINES AT BADMINTON ASIA CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025



India has had its best-ever performance at the Badminton Asia U17 & U15 Championships 2025, winning a total of five medals, which included two gold medals, one silver medal, and two bronze medals. Young shuttlers Shaina Manimuthu (U15) and Diksha Sudhakar (U17) made history by winning gold medals in their respective categories. This is the first time since 2013 that India has claimed two golds at the tournament. That year, Siril Verma had won the U15 boys' singles title, while Chirag Shetty and MR Arjun had taken the U17 boys' doubles crown. In matches, Shaina became only the fourth Indian girl to win the U15 singles title, defeating Japan's Tomita in a thrilling 44-minute final. Later, Diksha created history by becoming the first Indian girl

to win the U17 singles title, comfortably winning the all-Indian final in just 27 minutes. Earlier, Jagsher Singh Khangura and the mixed doubles pair of Jangeet Singh Kajla and Jananika Ramesh secured bronze medals, completing a record-breaking campaign for India.

2025 ASIAN YOUTH GAMES: DHINIDHI DESINGHU SETS NEW 400M FREESTYLE RECORD

Indian swimmer Dhinidhi Desinghu set a new national record in the 400m freestyle event at the Asian Youth Games 2025 in Bahrain. She finished fifth in the final with a time of 4:21.86. The mark bested her own previous record of 4:24.60. Another Indian swimmer, Aditi Satish Hegde, also competed in the same event and finished seventh with a time of 4:32.00 seconds. In the girls' 4x100m freestyle relay, the Indian team completed the race in 4:05.73 seconds, finishing last in the final. Among the boys, Nitishsai Harinath finished fifth in the 50m freestyle final with a timing of 23.72 seconds. In the 400m freestyle race, Dhakshan Shashikumar finished seventh with a time of 4:00.87 seconds. In the 100m butterfly race, Vedant Tandale finished seventh with a time of 56.31 seconds. Even though the Indian swimmers did not win any medals, they did well and showed good progress. Dhinidhi's new record is a proud moment for India and a motivation for young swimmers.



Job Junction

Dr. Smita Ravikumar Kuntay & Sanjana Gupta

RRB NTPC UNDER GRADUATE LEVEL RECRUITMENT 2025

RRB NTPC

UG Level
Recruitment
2025

Apply Now



3,058 posts

The Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs) have released the NTPC Under Graduate Level Recruitment 2025, a golden opportunity for 12th (+2 Stage) pass candidates to build a stable career in the Indian Railways. A total of 3058 vacancies are open under various Non-Technical Popular Categories (NTPC) posts across all Railway Zones in India.

Post Details

- Total Vacancies: 3058
- Post Names & Pay Levels:
 - Commercial cum Ticket Clerk – Level 3 (₹21,700) – 2424 Posts
 - Accounts Clerk cum Typist – Level 2 (₹19,900) – 394 Posts
 - Junior Clerk cum Typist – Level 2 (₹19,900) – 163 Posts
 - Trains Clerk – Level 2 (₹19,900) – 77 Posts

Eligibility Criteria

- Educational Qualification:** 12th (+2 Stage) Pass with minimum 50% marks (relaxable for SC/ST/PwBD/Ex-Servicemen).
- Age Limit:** 18 to 30 years as on 01.01.2026 (Born between 02.01.1996 and 01.01.2008)
- Age Relaxation: OBC – 3 yrs, SC/ST – 5 yrs, PwBD – up to 15 yrs.
- Typing Skill:** For Clerk posts – 30 WPM (English) or 25 WPM (Hindi).

Selection Process

- 1st Stage Computer Based Test (CBT – 100 Questions, 90 mins)
- 2nd Stage CBT (120 Questions, 90 mins)
- Typing Skill Test (for Typist posts only)
- Document Verification & Medical Examination

Application Fee

- UR/OBC/EWS: ₹500 (₹400 refundable)
- SC/ST/PwBD/Female/Minorities/EBC: ₹250 (fully refundable upon CBT appearance)

Important Dates

- Online Registration: 28.10.2025
- Last Date to Apply: 27.11.2025 (11:59 PM)
- Fee Payment Last Date: 29.11.2025
- CBT Dates: To be announced

How to Apply

Visit the official RRB website (www.rrbcdg.gov.in) → Create/Login account → Select CEN 07/2025 → Fill online form → Upload documents → Capture live photo → Pay fee → Submit and download confirmation.

For more details, candidates can refer to the official notification.

RRB JE RECRUITMENT 2025: APPLY ONLINE FOR 2569 JUNIOR ENGINEER, DMS & CMA POSTS

RAILWAY RECRUITMENT BOARDS (RRB)



JUNIOR ENGINEER

2569 VACANCY

RECRUITMENT 2025

The Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs) have released the RRB JE Recruitment 2025 Notification (CEN No. 05/2025) to fill 2569 vacancies for Junior Engineer (JE), Depot Material Superintendent (DMS), and Chemical & Metallurgical Assistant (CMA) posts across India.

Post Details:

- Total Vacancies: 2569
- Posts: Junior Engineer, Depot Material

Superintendent,
Chemical &
Metallurgical
Assistant

- Pay Scale:** Level 6 of 7th CPC (Initial Basic Pay ₹ 35,400 + Allowances)

Job Location:
Across Indian
Railways Zones

Important Dates:
Start of Online
Application: 31st

October 2025

- Last Date to Apply: 30th November 2025 (11:59 PM)
- Fee Payment Deadline: 2nd December 2025

Application Edit Window: 3rd–12th December 2025

Eligibility Criteria:

- JE:** Diploma/B.E./B.Tech in Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Electronics, or related Engineering

disciplines.

- DMS:** Diploma in any Engineering discipline.
- CMA:** B.Sc. with Physics and Chemistry (minimum 45% marks).
- Age Limit:** 18–33 years (as on 01.01.2026). Relaxations as per Govt. norms for SC/ST/OBC/PwBD/Ex-Servicemen.

Application Fees:

- General/Others: ₹500 (₹400 refundable after CBT-I)
- SC/ST/PwBD/Female/Minorities/EBC: ₹250 (fully refundable after CBT-I).

Selection Process: CBT-I (Screening Test) CBT-II (Main Exam) Document Verification & Medical Examination

How to Apply: Visit the official RRB portal from 31st October 2025, register, fill details carefully, upload required documents, pay the fee, and submit your form before 30th November 2025.

For more details, candidates can refer to the official notification.

NMDC APPRENTICE RECRUITMENT 2025: 197 VACANCIES

NMDC Limited, a prestigious Navratna Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Steel, Government of India, invites applications for 197 Apprentice positions at its Bailadila Iron Ore Mine (BIOM), Kirandul Complex, Chhattisgarh. This golden opportunity offers practical, hands-on industrial training for young graduates, diploma holders, and ITI pass-outs under the Apprenticeship Act, 1961.

Vacancy Details

Total Posts – 197

- Trade Apprentices (ITI):** 147 (Fitter, Electrician, Welder, Mechanic, COPA & others)
- Graduate Apprentices:** 40 (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Mining, Computer, BBA, Pharmacy, etc.)
- Technician (Diploma) Apprentices:** 10 (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Mining)

Engineering/Technology, BBA, or Pharmacy.

- Diploma Apprentices:** Diploma in relevant Engineering discipline.

- Age Limit:** Minimum 16 years (as on 26.10.2025).

Candidates must be Indian nationals and not have prior apprenticeship or job experience exceeding 1 year.

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ଏନ୍‌ଏମ୍‌ଡିସି



No of Vacancies: 197

Eligibility: ITI, Diploma

Deadline: 21-11-2025

Post Name: Graduate & Trade Apprentice

Degree/Diploma) portal.

- Carry printout of approved registration, bio-data, educational certificates, caste certificate (if applicable), and ID proof.
- Attend the walk-in on your trade's scheduled date. No Application Fee. No TA/DA.

For more details, candidates can refer to the official notification.

Monthly stipend as per Apprenticeship Rules, 1992. Training period: 1 year gain invaluable industrial experience in one of India's largest iron ore producers.

Eligibility

- Trade Apprentices:** ITI certificate from NCVT/SCVT recognized institute.
- Graduate Apprentices:** Degree in relevant

Walk-in Interview Schedule

Dates: 12th to 21st November 2025 (9:00 AM – 5:30 PM)

Reporting Cut-off: 1:00 PM

Venue: Training Institute, BIOM, Kirandul Complex, Dantewada (C.G.) – 494556

How to Apply

- Register on NAPS (for ITI) or NATS (for

Deepika Singh

QUIZ TIME

- Who has been appointed as the 53rd Chief Justice of India (CJI), effective November 24, 2025?
- 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas' or National Unity Day, observed on October 31, commemorates the birth anniversary of which Indian leader?
- Which Indian city was recently recognized by UNESCO as a 'City of Gastronomy' for its rich Awadhi culinary heritage?
- Which command of the Indian Army successfully conducted the large-scale drone and counter-drone exercise named Vayu Samanvay-II?
- The recently launched 'Aabhar' Online Store on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) is primarily associated with which objective?
- Which Indian tennis star recently announced his retirement from professional tennis after an illustrious 22-year career in the doubles circuit?
- The United States and China recently agreed to establish direct military communication channels. Who represented the US side in this agreement?
- Which Indian state recently declared leprosy a 'notifiable disease,' mandating that all diagnosed cases be reported to health authorities?

RIDDLES

ON SWEETS

- I'm round and golden, soaked in syrup's hug, Often paired with cardamom soft, spongy, and smug. What am I?
- Twisted in a spiral, crisp and orange-bright, I'm fried then soaked and dance on the tongue at night. What am I?
- I'm white, I'm soft, I float in syrup so cool. Chasing me with a spoon makes dessert lovers drool. What am I?
- I'm square or diamond, milky, smooth and dense, Made from reduced milk a sweet with rich sense. What am I?
- Rolled into balls, often with ghee's embrace, I'm sweet, I'm round offered at festivals and grace. What am I?

5. Ladoo (Laddu)

4. Burfi / Barfi

3. Rasgulla

2. Jalebi

1. Gulab Jamun

II) RIDDLES

8. Maharashtra

7. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth

6. Rohan Bopanna

5. Promoting Indian handicrafts and souvenirs

4. South Western Command

3. Lucknow

2. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

1. Justice BR Gavai

III) QUIZ TIME

ANSWERS

Introducing Our New Column

ARTWORK OF THE WEEK

We invite all young artists to showcase their talent in our weekly e-newspaper, The HULAHUL Times. Submit your hand-drawn artwork to be featured!

CRITERIA

- Age Limit: Up to 24 years
- Artwork Size: A4
- Format: Hand-drawn only

SUBMISSION DETAILS

- Email your artwork to: thehulahultimes@gmail.com
- Subject Line: ARTWORK
- Include: Your Name, Age, School/College Name, and Phone Number

CONTACT INFORMATION

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This Week, We're Relishing Bhaat Maas Recipe (Traditional Assamese Fish Curry with Rice).

Bhaat Maas, a homely and comforting dish from Assam, beautifully captures the essence of Assamese cuisine simple, earthy, and full of local flavors. Literally translating to "Rice and Fish," this meal is a staple in Assamese households, often prepared with freshwater fish, mustard oil, and fresh herbs that lend it a distinctive aroma and taste.

Ingredients:

For the Fish Curry (Maas): 500 g freshwater fish (Rohu or Catla), cut into pieces, 2 tbsp mustard oil, 1 medium onion, finely chopped, 1 tomato, finely chopped, 1 tsp ginger-garlic paste, 2 green chilies, slit, 1/2 tsp turmeric powder, 1 tsp red chili powder, Salt to taste, A handful of coriander or curry leaves, 1 tbsp lemon juice, 1 cup water (adjust as needed)

For the Rice (Bhaat): 1 cup Joha or any short-grain rice, 2 cups water, 1/2 tsp salt

Steps:

1. Prepare the Fish: Wash the fish pieces thoroughly and pat them dry. Rub with a little salt and turmeric powder. Shallow-fry them lightly in mustard oil until golden on both sides. Remove and keep aside.

2. Make the Curry Base: In the same pan, add a bit more mustard oil if needed. Sauté chopped onions until golden brown. Add ginger-garlic paste and green chilies, cooking until the raw smell disappears. Add tomatoes and cook until soft and pulpy.

3. Add Spices and Simmer: Sprinkle turmeric, red chili powder, and salt. Stir well. Add about 1 cup of water and let it simmer for 5–7 minutes. Gently slide the fried fish pieces into the curry. Cover and cook on low flame for 10 minutes, allowing the fish to absorb the flavors.

4. Finish with Fresh Herbs: Garnish with chopped coriander or local herbs like Manimuni (Asiatic pennywort) or Dhekia xaak (fern leaves) if available. Add a drizzle of lemon juice for a refreshing tang.

5. Prepare the Bhaat (Rice): Rinse the rice thoroughly. Boil 2 cups of water with salt. Add rice and cook until soft and fluffy. Drain excess water if necessary.

Serving Tip:

Serve hot Bhaat Maas with steamed rice and a wedge of lemon. Accompany it with a side of khadiya (green chili chutney) or khar for an authentic Assamese experience. Simple, wholesome, and heartwarming Bhaat Maas is not just food; it's a taste of Assam's rivers and traditions served on a plate!