

A Weekly E-newspaper Initiative of the HULAHUL FOUNDATION

THE HULAHUL TIMES

Evolving Today For A Better Tomorrow

ISSN 2583-5033



UNITED BY UNIQUE: THE GLOBAL CALL OF WORLD CANCER DAY 2026

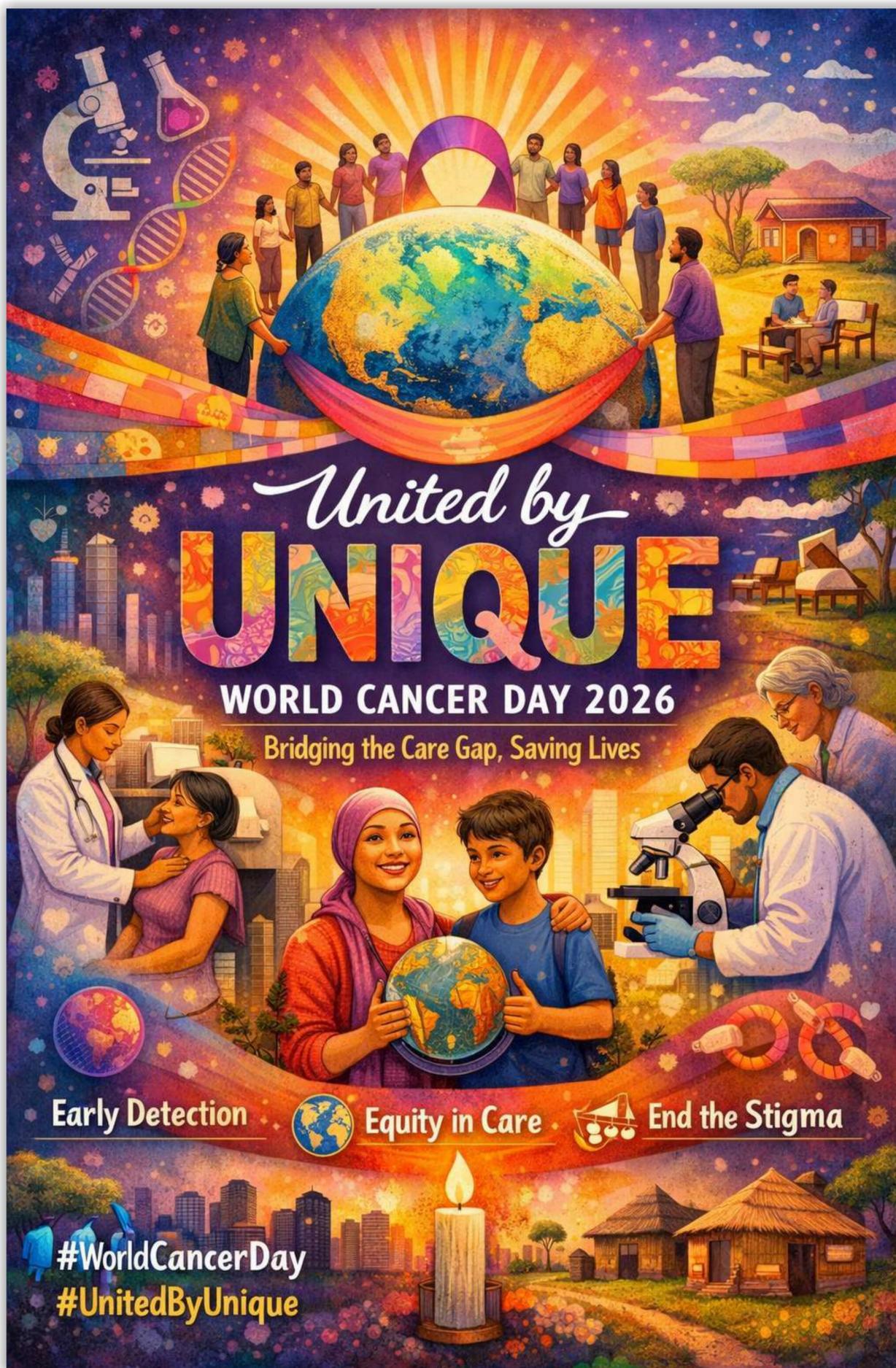
Every year on February 4th, the world pauses to acknowledge a challenge that touches almost every family on the planet. World Cancer Day is not just a date on the calendar; it is a global movement led by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) to inspire action, improve education, and bridge the massive gaps in care that exist across different borders and backgrounds.

As we observe World Cancer Day in 2026, the theme "United by Unique" takes center stage. This powerful message reminds us that while we are united in the fight against a common enemy, every patient's journey is distinct shaped by their culture, community, and personal lived experience.

Cancer remains one of the leading causes of death worldwide. According to current global health data, over 10 million people succumb to the disease annually, and the number of new cases is projected to rise significantly by 2040. However, the most striking statistic isn't just the death toll, but the preventability of the disease. Experts estimate that between 30% and 50% of cancer deaths could be prevented by modifying risk factors and implementing better screening strategies.

The 2026 campaign continues to build on the mission of achieving equity. The "care gap" refers to the reality that a person's chance of surviving cancer often depends on their zip code, income level, or ethnicity.

- **Access to Screening:** Early detection through mammograms, Pap smears, and colonoscopies can turn a terminal diagnosis into a manageable condition.
- **Stigma and Education:** In many communities, cancer is still whispered about in hushed tones. Breaking the silence is the first step toward seeking help.
- **Technological Equity:** While "Liquid Biopsies" and targeted therapies are revolutionizing care



in developed nations, many in low-income regions still struggle to access basic palliative care.

One of the primary goals of World Cancer Day is to replace fear with facts. Misinformation often leads to delayed treatment, which can be fatal.

1. **"Cancer is a death sentence":** False. With modern advances, many cancers are now considered chronic, manageable conditions rather than terminal ones.
2. **"Cancer is contagious":** It is not. While some viruses (like HPV) can increase the risk of cancer, the disease itself cannot be "caught" like a cold.
3. **"Sugar feeds cancer":** While obesity is a risk factor, cutting out all sugar will not "starve" cancer cells in a way that cures the disease.

The beauty of World Cancer Day is that it empowers the individual. You don't need to be a doctor to make a difference:

- **Educate Yourself:** Learn the early warning signs, such as unexplained weight loss, persistent coughs, or unusual lumps.
- **Pledge for Prevention:** Commit to a healthier lifestyle; quitting tobacco remains the single most effective way to reduce cancer risk.
- **Show Solidarity:** Use the hashtags #WorldCancerDay and #UnitedByUnique to share stories of survivors and caregivers, helping to humanize the statistics.

World Cancer Day 2026 reminds us that although our stories are unique, our resolve is the same. By standing together, we can ensure that quality cancer care is a right for all, not a privilege for the few.

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Durgesh K. Dubey

SANT RAVIDAS: THE SAINT WHO GAVE INDIA THE COURAGE TO WALK WITH DIGNITY

In the ancient city of Kashi, where the river Ganga flows carrying prayers, hopes, and centuries of wisdom, lived a saint whose life quietly transformed Indian thought. His name was Sant Ravidas. He was born into a humble family of leather workers, a profession that society looked down upon. Yet Ravidas rose above social boundaries and became one of India's greatest voices of equality, dignity, and ethical living.

Sant Ravidas did not seek power, wealth, or recognition. His strength lay in his clarity of thought and purity of heart. He believed that human worth is not decided by birth, caste, or occupation, but by conduct and compassion. This belief made him a guiding light for generations, especially for the youth of India.

From a young age, Ravidas observed a painful contradiction in society. People bathed daily in the Ganga and performed rituals, yet practiced discrimination and cruelty. This troubled him deeply. From this reflection came one of his most famous and powerful lines:

मन चंगा तो कठौती में गंगा। - If the mind is pure, even a small bowl of water becomes as sacred as the Ganga.

Through this simple statement, Ravidas challenged blind ritualism. He taught that spirituality does not live in rivers or temples alone it lives in pure thoughts and ethical actions. For today's youth, this message is deeply relevant in a world where appearances often matter more than values.

Ravidas continued his work as a cobbler with pride. He never felt ashamed of labour. Instead, he taught that honest work is sacred. His humility attracted seekers from all backgrounds saints, householders, and even royalty. Among them was Meerabai, a princess who accepted Ravidas as her spiritual guide. Ravidas treated her not as royalty, but as an equal seeker, proving that wisdom recognises no social rank.

Sant Ravidas often used everyday examples to explain deep truths. In one of his profound verses, he said:

तुम चंदन हम इरंड बापुरे, सांगि तुमारे बासा।
नीच रुख ते ऊँच भए हैं, गंध सुगंध निवासा ॥

You are sandalwood, I am a simple castor plant; By staying in your company, even a low tree becomes fragrant.

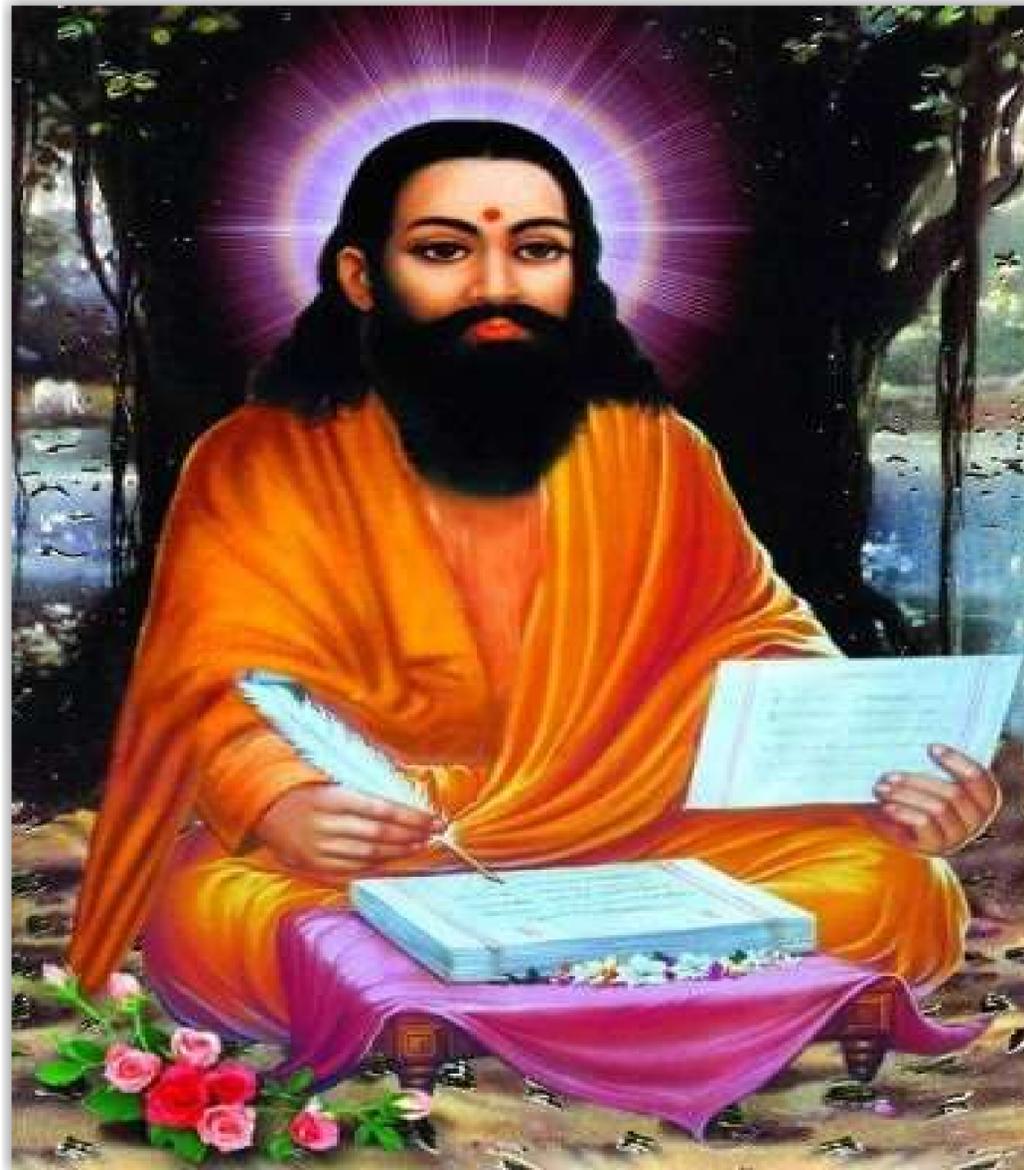
Through this doha, Ravidas explained the power of good association. He believed that when young people surround themselves with noble thoughts and virtuous company, they rise above limitations. This teaching makes him a true youth icon, guiding young minds to choose values over shortcuts and character over convenience.

Sant Ravidas also spoke deeply about karma and responsibility. He did not believe in escaping the world in the name of spirituality. Instead, he taught that action is unavoidable

and meaningful when done with truth:

करम बंधन में बन्ध रहियो फल की ना तज्जियो आस।
कर्म मानुष का धर्म है सत् भाखै रविदास ॥

Human beings are bound by action; do not abandon hope of its fruits. Righteous action is the true duty of humans, says Ravidas.



This teaching was revolutionary. Ravidas encouraged youth to work hard, act honestly, and remain hopeful without becoming greedy. He taught that success must be pursued ethically, and failure must be faced with dignity.

Sant Ravidas was not only a spiritual thinker; he was also a visionary social reformer. His most famous idea was Begumpura, an ideal society free from fear, discrimination, and exploitation. He described it in powerful words:

बेगमपुरा शहर का नाऊँ,
दूख अन्दोह नहीं तिहि ठाऊँ।
ना तसवीस खिराज न माल,
खौफ न खता न तरस जवाल ॥

Begumpura is the name of that city, Where there is no sorrow or suffering. There is no tax, no oppression, no fear, No injustice or punishment.

Begumpura was not a fantasy city. It was Ravidas's ethical blueprint for society. A place where every human lives with dignity. For today's youth, this vision inspires a commitment to social justice, inclusion, and responsible citizenship.

Sant Ravidas further clarified what true governance and social happiness should look like:

ऐसा चाहूँ राज मैं, जहाँ मिले सबन को अन्न।
छोट-बड़ी सब सम बसे, रविदास रहे प्रसन्न ॥

I desire a kingdom where everyone receives food, Where all small or great live equally; only then will Ravidas be happy.

This doha reveals Ravidas's deep humanity. For him, spirituality was incomplete if people remained hungry or unequal. He connected faith with social responsibility, making him one of India's earliest thinkers on inclusive development.

Sant Ravidas is considered a youth icon of India because he addressed the very struggles youth face even today identity, inequality, pressure, and self-worth. He taught young people to respect themselves through honest work, to question injustice without hatred, and to seek progress without losing humanity.

His contribution to youth development lies in shaping character rather than careers alone. He wanted youth to be strong in values, disciplined in action, and compassionate in outlook. He believed that a nation rises not when a few succeed, but when everyone is treated with dignity.

Sant Ravidas lived simply and passed away quietly, but his thoughts became immortal. His verses entered the Bhakti tradition and India's moral consciousness. He did not leave behind monuments; he left behind principles.

The life and philosophy of Sant Ravidas teach us that true greatness lies in inner purity, dignity of labour, ethical action, and social equality. He showed that youth do not need anger to bring change; they need clarity, courage, and compassion. By dreaming of Begumpura and living a life of humility and truth, Sant Ravidas became a timeless guide for India's youth. His message remains clear even today: when the mind is pure, actions are righteous, and society is just, humanity itself becomes sacred. Sant Ravidas reminds us that the highest form of devotion is to live as a good human being.

Ravi Singh

THE SKY WAS NEVER THE LIMIT, IT WAS JUST THE BEGINNING!

From the moment she saw her first airplane cross the horizon, a little girl named Kanika dreamed of soaring high not just in the skies, but in life itself. While others saw clouds and endless blue, her young heart saw possibilities. A love for flight blossomed early, but life's storms were yet to come.

Kanika's world wasn't painted with smooth skies. At the age of 21, just when most young adults are mapping out careers and choices, she was handed the most harrowing challenge of her life a diagnosis of Hodgkin's lymphoma, a form of cancer that threatened not only her health but her dreams. It felt like a storm so brutal that even the brightest dreams dimmed under its shadow.

In a hospital room full of beeps and sterile white walls, Kanika faced a test of courage that few her age can imagine. Many would have succumbed to fear, despair, and surrender. But Kanika held on to a belief that life is not measured by the battles we face, but by the strength we summon to fight them. She fought with everything she had body, mind, and spirit and emerged victorious. She didn't just beat cancer... she transcended it.

Yet this victory was not a stop sign but a launch pad.

A Vision Born from Struggle

Kanika had always loved aviation but after her personal fight with mortality, this passion transformed into purpose. She saw an industry riddled with opacity: private jets were shrouded in hidden costs, unreliable service, and inaccessible doors. That's when the idea bold and unprecedented took flight. What if air travel could be more transparent, more

efficient, more human? What if she could build a bridge between dreams and reality?

With nothing but a heartbeat full of resolve and a vision that refused to fade, Kanika co-founded JetSetGo in 2014 India's first transparent marketplace for private aircraft charters. Imagine launching a business in a field dominated by decades-old players, where trust



is earned over lifetimes and every barrier appears too high to cross. Yet she did it. One step. One conversation. One refusal to give up.

Kanika didn't come from a lineage of aviation tycoons. She wasn't handed funding or legacy backing. She started with a minuscule investment mere Rs. 5,600 and a relentless belief that if she could dream it, she could build it. Investors initially turned her away. Doors slammed. Skepticism met her at every corner. Some saw a young woman with too much ambition and too little experience. But every no hardened her resolve, every rejection became fuel for her fire.

Soaring Above Every Limit

JetSetGo was not merely a business it was a statement. It told the world that age, gender, and adversity don't define destiny. Under Kanika's leadership, the company didn't just survive it thrived. What began as a tiny startup grew into one of India's most respected aviation companies, operating a fleet of private jets and helicopters, serving over 100,000 passengers, and rewriting what was once considered

impossible.

Her journey became so inspiring that she was invited as a judge on Shark Tank India, joining a panel that shapes and mentors new entrepreneurs. A girl who once struggled to get people to believe in her idea was now sitting in a seat where her voice could change others' destinies. It was poetic life's beautiful symmetry that turns pain into purpose and trials into triumph.

More Than a Success Story — A Legacy of Hope

Kanika didn't just build a company worth hundreds of crores; she built a legacy of

courage. Her life is more than numbers it is proof that every setback can be a setup for a comeback. She shattered stereotypes in a male-dominated industry, proving that determination is stronger than doubt, and vision is more powerful than obstacles.

Her accolades from Forbes 30 Under 30 to being featured in BBC's 100 Most Inspirational Women are not just reminders of success, but celebrations of resilience and courage. She reminds us that dreams don't require permission they only require a heart brave enough to chase them.

A Message from Her Journey

Kanika's story teaches us:

- The darkest storms often produce the brightest rainbows. When cancer threatened to consume her future, she turned it into the source of her strength.
- Ideas are born from pain, but flourish through perseverance. The challenges in aviation became the fuel that propelled JetSetGo to success.

• Success is never about where you start but how passionately you pursue your destination. She began with a small investment and built a company celebrated worldwide.

Kanika's life is a testament to the fact that dreams are not just for dreaming... they are for flying. And if you dare to believe in yourself, the sky is merely the starting point.

Dr. Smita Ravikumar Kuntay

EDITOR



Dr. Smita Ravikumar Kuntay

UPI BEYOND PAYMENTS: THE INFRASTRUCTURE BEHIND EVERY DAY INDIA

Apps like PhonePe, Google Pay, Paytm and BHIM have evolved far beyond payments into full-fledged digital marketplaces. Within a single UPI-enabled app, users can pay bills, invest, book travel, access credit, shop, and track expenses. This is the essence of a super-app one interface delivering multiple services. The result is greater convenience for users, stronger customer loyalty for businesses, and rapid scaling of India's digital economy.

Students: Early Beneficiaries of the UPI Revolution

Students are among the biggest beneficiaries of UPI's expansion. With no need for credit cards or complex banking, even first-time earners gain access to digital finance. Consider a final-year student interning at a startup. Her stipend is credited to her bank account. Through UPI, she invests small amounts in mutual funds, pays for online courses, manages subscriptions, and tracks expenses all without stepping into a bank. UPI democratizes financial access. Age, income, and location are no longer barriers to digital participation.

Small Businesses, Big Impact

For MSMEs and local vendors, UPI has been revolutionary. A kirana shop, a street vendor, or a tuition teacher can accept payments instantly without expensive machines or paperwork. But the evolution doesn't stop there. With transaction history now visible, small businesses gain:

- Access to micro-credit
- Better cash-flow visibility
- Digital bookkeeping integration
- Faster settlements

A vegetable seller using UPI today could qualify for a small business loan tomorrow purely based on transaction data. Payments are turning into financial identities.

UPI Meets Credit, Investments and Insurance

One of the biggest shifts is UPI's entry into financial products. Credit on UPI, autopay mandates, and investment integrations are

blurring the line between payments and finance

Users can:

- Set up SIPs using UPI autopay
- Pay insurance premiums instantly
- Use short-term credit for small purchases
- Automate subscriptions and bills

For young professionals, this creates a habit-based financial system. Money management becomes embedded in daily behaviour, not postponed decisions.

Government Services at One Tap

UPI has also become a bridge between citizens and governance. From FASTag payments and metro tickets to tax payments and utility bills, public services are increasingly UPI-enabled. This reduces friction, increases transparency, and improves compliance. When payments become easy, participation increases.

What makes UPI different from global super-apps Unlike closed ecosystems elsewhere, UPI is platform-neutral. Any bank, fintech, or app can build on it. This open architecture encourages innovation without monopoly. For students of commerce and finance, this is a case study in:

- Platform economics
- Network effects
- Public digital infrastructure
- Financial inclusion at scale

UPI is not just a product, it is policy-backed innovation.

Challenges beneath the convenience

As UPI expands, risks grow too:

- Over-spending due to frictionless payments
- Data privacy concerns
- Fraud and phishing attacks
- Dependence on a single digital layer

The speed that makes UPI powerful can also make users careless.

Career opportunities hidden in UPI's



growth

UPI's expansion has created careers beyond banking:

- Fintech product managers
- Payment risk analysts
- Digital compliance experts
- Data analysts and UX designers
- Financial inclusion strategists

For students, understanding how UPI works is not optional, it is employability knowledge.

The bottom line

UPI started as a payment tool and has evolved into India's digital backbone. As it connects shopping, finance, credit, and services, it is fast becoming the country's super-app ecosystem. Soon, the real question won't be whether you use UPI but how much of your daily digital life depends on it. Because today, UPI is not just how India pays; it is how the economy moves.

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.

Not long ago, UPI was celebrated for a simple miracle: sending money instantly from one bank account to another. Paying a friend, splitting a restaurant bill, or transferring rent became effortless. But quietly, and almost unnoticed, UPI has begun a far bigger transformation. It is evolving from a payment tool into the backbone of India's emerging super-app economy. UPI is no longer just about transactions. It is about integration.

From Payment Rail to Digital Ecosystem

UPI was built as an open, interoperable payment system and that openness is now its greatest strength. What began as simple peer-to-peer transfers has expanded into bills, subscriptions, credit, investments, and public services. Today, students and professionals alike use UPI to manage everyday finances like college fees, recharge a phone, pays EMIs, books metro tickets, shops online, investments etc. paying within a single app, marking its shift from mere transactions to a seamless part of daily digital life.

The Rise of the UPI Super-App

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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.

INTRODUCTION TO FLASH FICTION

Flash fiction is an extremely short story, typically under 500 words, that delivers a complete narrative in a very limited space. Despite its brevity, flash fiction contains essential elements of storytelling character, setting, conflict, and resolution.

This genre demands precision, creativity, and impactful language. Writers must choose words carefully to suggest more than what is written. Flash fiction often leaves readers with a twist, a surprise, or a thought-provoking ending.

Key Features of Flash Fiction:

- Concise and compact storytelling
- Minimal characters and setting
- Suggestive rather than descriptive
- Often ends with a twist or emotional impact
- Encourages reader imagination

Flash fiction is increasingly popular in the digital age because it suits modern readers' short attention spans while still offering meaningful literary experiences.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Nobel Prize in Literature was established by Alfred Nobel in 1901. It is awarded annually to an author who has produced outstanding work in the field of literature. The prize recognizes writers from around the world for their contribution to poetry, novels, drama, essays, and other literary forms. Encouraging love for language, literature, and thoughtful expression. Rabindranath Tagore became the first Indian to win this prestigious award in 1913 for Gitanjali.
- The Nobel Prize in Literature is awarded by the Swedish Academy based on an author's overall contribution to literature rather than a single book. The selection focuses on originality, artistic excellence, and the impact of the writer's work on society. This approach ensures that literature which inspires thought, empathy, and human values is globally recognized.
- Poetry was one of the earliest forms of literature, long before novels and dramas existed. In ancient times, poems were memorized and passed down orally from generation to generation. This tradition helped preserve culture, language, and values even before writing systems developed.
- Literature often reflects the society in which it is written, capturing the emotions, struggles, and hopes of people across time. Many classic literary works have influenced social reforms by questioning injustice and promoting equality. Through stories and poems, writers become silent changemakers of history.

GRAMMAR TIP

Difference between "Among" and "Between"

Between

Used for two people or things
Shows one-to-one relationship
Example: Divide the cake between Ram and Shyam

Among

Used for more than two people or things
Shows a collective relationship
Example: Divide the sweets among the children.

Note: "Between" can also be used for more than two when referring to individual relationships.

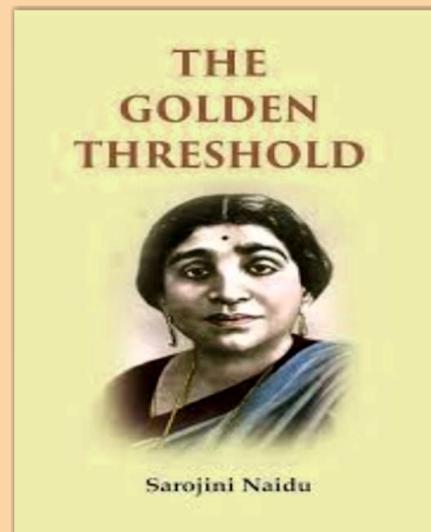
WRITER OF THE WEEK

Sarojini Naidu (1879–1949),

Sarojini Naidu, fondly called the Nightingale of India, was a celebrated poet, freedom fighter, and orator. Her poetry is known for its lyrical beauty, rich imagery, and deep patriotism. Writing in English, she beautifully blended Indian themes with musical verse. Apart from her literary achievements, she played a significant role in India's independence movement and became the first woman Governor of an Indian state (Uttar Pradesh). Her works such as *The Golden Threshold*, *The Bird of Time*, and *The Broken Wing* reflect her love for nature, Indian culture, and humanity.

BOOK REVIEW

The Golden Threshold



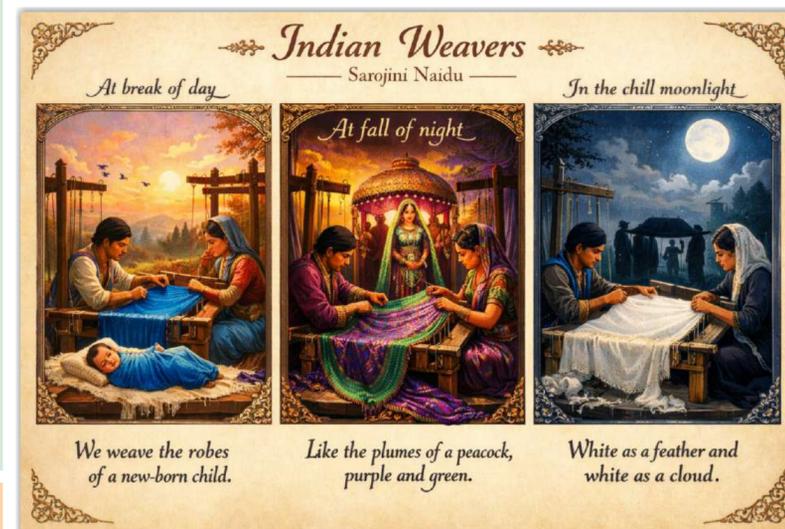
The Golden Threshold is a celebrated collection of poems that reflects Sarojini Naidu's deep connection with Indian culture, traditions, and emotions. The title symbolizes a poetic gateway where Indian sensibilities meet English literary expression, capturing the beauty of everyday life through lyrical verse. The book explores themes of love, nature, faith, womanhood, and Indian social life, often drawing inspiration from bazaars, festivals, and folk traditions. Rich in imagery and musical rhythm, the poems are simple yet emotionally powerful. *The Golden Threshold* is admired for its elegance and cultural authenticity, making it a landmark work in Indian English literature and an enduring source of literary inspiration.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"We want deeper sincerity of motive, a greater courage in speech and earnestness in action."

— Sarojini Naidu

CREATIVE WRITING



INDIAN WEAVERS

Weavers, weaving at break of day,
Why do you weave a garment so gay?

Blue as the wing of a halcyon wild,
We weave the robes of a new-born child.

Weavers, weaving at fall of night,
Why do you weave a garment so bright?

Like the plumes of a peacock, purple and green,
We weave the marriage-veils of a queen.

Weavers, weaving solemn and still,
What do you weave in the moonlight chill?

White as a feather and white as a cloud,
We weave a dead man's funeral shroud.

Poetry by
Sarojini Naidu

WORD OF THE WEEK

Ephemeral (adjective)

Meaning: Lasting for a very short time.

Example: The beauty of the rainbow was ephemeral but unforgettable.

IDIOM HIGHLIGHT

Once in a blue moon

Meaning: Something that happens very rarely.

Example: He visits his hometown once in a blue moon.

ECONOMIC SURVEY 2026: LIVESTOCK & FISHERIES DRIVING INDIA'S AGRICULTURAL GROWTH



13%, while fisheries and aquaculture expanded by more than 140% in the same period. These trends have helped strengthen rural livelihoods by diversifying income sources beyond seasonal crop yields.

Horticulture has also emerged as a key contributor, with production surpassing foodgrain output in 2024-25 and anchoring the shift towards nutrient-rich, high-value agriculture. India now leads global production in several horticultural categories such as onions and ranks among the top producers of fruits, vegetables and potatoes.

The Survey notes that average annual growth in agriculture and allied sectors has been around 4.4% at constant prices, with allied activities helping to stabilise expansion despite crop sector volatility. Looking ahead, greater emphasis on diversification, value addition, and strengthening livestock and fisheries is seen as central to inclusive rural growth, higher farm incomes and broader economic development.

The Economic Survey 2026 highlights a significant shift in India's agricultural growth story, underscoring how livestock and fisheries are emerging as powerful engines of expansion, alongside traditional crop production. The report, tabled in Parliament, emphasises that while foodgrain output remains important for food security, the agriculture sector's future growth will increasingly be driven by allied activities that offer higher value addition and stronger income potential for rural households.

Over the past decade, growth in livestock and fisheries has outpaced that of crops. The livestock sector's gross value added soared by nearly 195% between FY15 and FY24, indicating a compound annual growth rate of nearly

BARTRONICS AND ORIGO COMMODITIES JOIN FORCES TO EXPAND AGRI-FOCUSED BUSINESS

Bartronics India Limited has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Origo Commodities India Private Limited to jointly expand their agricultural business activities through strategic collaboration. The partnership aims to leverage the complementary strengths of both organisations. Bartronics' extensive rural network and agritech footprint and Origo's expertise in post-harvest supply chain and commodity services to build a more integrated and efficient ecosystem for farmers.

A key focus of the alliance is Project Avio, Bartronics' agri-commerce initiative designed to support farmers across the entire value chain, from access to agricultural inputs to market linkages, post-harvest services and trade facilitation. By combining digital tools, rural reach and supply-chain capabilities, the partners aim to improve operational efficiency and expand market access for both producers and agribusinesses. The initiative targets creating up to USD 1 billion in agribusiness over the next three years, underscoring its ambitious scale.



Under the MoU, Bartronics and Origo will explore technology-enabled services such as storage solutions, financing support and enhanced trade facilitation, which can help reduce bottlenecks that often hinder farm profitability. Both companies emphasise that the collaboration will strengthen India's agritech landscape, enable farmers to participate more effectively in formal markets, and foster sustainable rural growth.

Overall, this partnership reflects a growing industry trend where technology, finance and supply-chain expertise converge to create value-added solutions for farmers and agribusiness stakeholders across India.

AGRICULTURE STILL THE BACKBONE OF INDIA'S ECONOMY, SAYS MINISTER CHOUHAN



Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan reaffirmed that agriculture remains the backbone of the Indian economy, highlighting its vast contribution to livelihoods and food security during an interaction with farmers on 26 January 2026. He noted that nearly 70 per cent of India's population depends directly or indirectly on farming and allied activities, making agriculture a foundational pillar of the nation's economic structure.

To ensure farmers receive fair returns, Chouhan affirmed that the government is working towards 100 per cent procurement of major pulses including toor, masoor and urad at the Minimum Support Price (MSP). He also highlighted policy measures such as a 30 per cent import duty on pulses to protect domestic producers.

The Minister said the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) will be strengthened further, with plans to extend insurance coverage to include crop losses from wild animal damage and waterlogging, and to ensure timely claims by imposing interest penalties for delayed payments.

Chouhan also spoke about digital reforms like the introduction of a Farmer ID to streamline access to loans, insurance and welfare schemes, and stricter action against fake seeds, fertilisers and pesticides, including higher penalties and possible imprisonment for violators.

His remarks reflect the government's continued focus on farmer welfare, risk mitigation and technological integration in agriculture all aimed at strengthening the sector's resilience and supporting its crucial role in India's growth story.

INDIA STANDS FIRM ON DAIRY, STAPLES IN EU TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

India has taken a firm stance in its newly concluded Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the European Union (EU) by excluding key agricultural sectors from tariff reductions, a move aimed at safeguarding the livelihoods of small and marginal farmers. According to the Commerce Ministry, India did not offer any import duty cuts to the EU on dairy products, rice, wheat, pulses, tea and coffee sectors considered vital for food security and rural income. This approach ensures that competitively priced European imports do not undercut domestic producers in these sensitive categories.



preferential market access for about 87 per cent of tariff lines in other agricultural goods such as tea, coffee, spices and table grapes, which could help boost India's export potential in these categories.

The agreement, likely to be signed and implemented later this year, reflects India's strategy to balance growth in exports with defending critical sectors that underpin rural livelihoods and food sovereignty, even as it engages in deeper trade opening with the EU.

In addition to dairy and staple grains, the Indian government also shielded other important farm segments including beef and poultry, fish and seafood, cheese, maize and corn, fruits and vegetables, nuts, edible oils, spices and tobacco by keeping them outside the scope of tariff concessions. Such protections are seen as essential to protect farming households and support traditional agricultural value chains.

While sensitive items remain protected, the FTA does grant

GROW IN INDIA: DIET AND THE AGRI-ECONOMIC CONNECTION

A senior member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) has underscored that India's agricultural strategy must align closely with domestic food consumption patterns and nutritional needs if the sector is to grow sustainably and equitably. The idea behind "Grow in India, what we eat in India" reflects a push for production systems that are better suited to the nation's dietary realities rather than export-oriented or cash-crop models alone.

India's food habits are highly diverse and shaped by region, culture and climate. The advisory member argued that this diversity should guide policy decisions around crop planning and market incentives moving beyond a focus on staple cereals like rice and wheat toward nutrient-rich pulses, millets and horticulture crops that reflect everyday diets and public health priorities. This approach also supports national goals like improved food security and reduced malnutrition, since healthier food systems depend on a better balance between what farmers



grow and what consumers eat.

Linking production to consumption patterns can reduce waste, enhance food sovereignty, and strengthen rural incomes by creating better market signals for crops that are both locally important and nutritionally valuable. It also taps into broader economic objectives ensuring that agricultural growth is inclusive, resilient and rooted in real domestic demand rather than disconnected production incentives.

Dr. Smita Ravikumar Kuntay

GOOGLE TO ROLL OUT AI-POWERED JEE MAIN PRACTICE TESTS ON GEMINI PLATFORM



finalised. Through Gemini, students can access JEE Main mock tests simply by prompting "JEE Main practice test." The platform allows learners to customise difficulty levels, generate additional questions, and align tests with individual preparation strategies. After each test, students receive detailed scores, explanations for incorrect answers, and interactive feedback. Gemini also enables follow-up quizzes, personalised video explanations, and AI-generated study guides using Google's Canvas tool.

Speaking at the summit, Google India Vice President Preeti Lobana said the company aims to blend the science of learning with a tutor-like experience for students. Complementing student tools, Google has launched the Gemini AI Academy for teachers, offering AI-assisted lesson planning, assessments, and classroom workflows.

Aligned with NEP 2020, the initiative strengthens India's growing leadership in AI-based learning and exam readiness.

Tech giant Google has announced the launch of AI-powered JEE Main practice tests through its generative AI platform Gemini, marking a significant step in AI-driven exam preparation for Indian students. The announcement was made at the AI Impact Summit 2026 held in New Delhi.

As part of a broader push to integrate artificial intelligence into education and skilling, Google has also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Chaudhary Charan Singh University to work towards establishing an AI-enabled university in India. While the collaboration has been formalised, operational details are yet to be

MAHARASHTRA CLEARS PM-SETU PLAN TO MODERNISE ITIS AND ACCELERATE SKILLING

The Maharashtra Cabinet has approved the PM-SETU plan, a major initiative aimed at modernising Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and strengthening skill development to boost employment across the state. The decision marks a significant push towards aligning vocational education with industry needs and future-ready jobs. Under the PM-SETU framework, ITIs in Maharashtra will undergo comprehensive upgradation, including modern infrastructure, advanced equipment, and industry-relevant curricula. The focus is on bridging the skill gap by ensuring students are trained in emerging technologies and practical competencies demanded by the job market.



workforce. Officials said the initiative will prioritise sectors with high employment potential and support the broader national vision of linking education, skilling, and economic growth. PM-SETU is expected to benefit thousands of students annually, especially those from rural and semi-urban areas, by providing them access to quality vocational training.

The plan also emphasises closer collaboration between ITIs and industry partners to enhance apprenticeship opportunities, on-the-job training, and placement outcomes. By integrating skilling with real-world requirements, the government aims to improve employability among youth and support local industries with a skilled

With this approval, Maharashtra reinforces its commitment to transforming ITIs into centres of excellence, positioning skill development as a key driver of jobs, productivity, and inclusive growth.

CBSE MAKES COUNSELLORS MANDATORY IN SCHOOLS TO STRENGTHEN STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH



The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has directed all its affiliated schools to appoint socio-emotional and career counsellors, following observations made by the Rajasthan High Court during a public interest litigation (PIL). The move aims to provide structured emotional support and career guidance to students, especially during critical academic years.

As per the directive, CBSE schools must ensure access to trained counsellors for students in Classes 9 to 12. These professionals will address issues related to mental health, stress, anxiety, behavioural challenges, and career planning. The initiative recognises that academic pressure and uncertainty about future choices have a direct impact on students' well-being and overall development.

The High Court had stressed the need for systematic counselling frameworks in schools, citing rising concerns over exam stress and emotional distress among adolescents. Acting on this, CBSE emphasised that counselling should be an integral part of the schooling system rather than a reactive measure.

Schools may appoint qualified in-house counsellors or engage external professionals who meet the required standards. CBSE has also encouraged schools to sensitise parents and teachers, promoting an environment where seeking guidance is normal and encouraged.

This mandate marks a significant policy step towards holistic education, reinforcing that emotional well-being and career readiness are as vital as academic achievement.

PARIKSHA PE CHARCHA 2026: PM MODI TO GO LIVE WITH STUDENTS NATIONWIDE IN FEBRUARY



Prime Minister Narendra Modi will interact with students, parents, and teachers in the first week of February as part of Pariksha Pe Charcha 2026, marking the ninth edition of the flagship exam-related interaction. In a first-of-its-kind format, the Prime Minister will connect with students from multiple locations across the country, expanding the event beyond its traditional single-venue setting at New Delhi's Talkatora Stadium. The move aims to turn exam conversations into a nationwide dialogue focused on confidence, clarity, and stress-free preparation.

the largest student engagement initiatives in the world.

The interaction will be broadcast live on DD National, DD News, DD India, All India Radio, major private TV channels, and digital platforms including YouTube, Facebook Live, MyGov.in, and Swayam Prabha channels.

Held ahead of the examination season when CBSE board exams begin in mid-February and competitive exams like JEE follow PPC is a key part of the government's "Exam Warriors" initiative to reduce exam anxiety and promote emotional well-being among learners.

Organised annually since 2018, Pariksha Pe Charcha is designed to help students approach board and entrance examinations with a calm and positive mindset. The programme is open to students from Class 6 onwards, along with teachers and parents. According to official data, over 4.5 crore students have registered for PPC 2026 so far, along with more than 28 lakh teachers and over 6 lakh parents, making it one of

IIT KANPUR'S MOBILE SCIENCE LAB TAKES HANDS-ON STEM LEARNING TO RURAL UP SCHOOLS



The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur has launched a mobile science laboratory to bring experiential STEM education to students in rural schools across Uttar Pradesh, bridging gaps in access to quality science learning.

Designed as a fully equipped "science bus," the initiative introduces school students to practical experiments in physics, chemistry, biology, and basic design thinking. The mobile lab travels directly to rural campuses, transforming school grounds into interactive learning spaces where students can observe, experiment, and question scientific concepts beyond textbooks. Faculty members, researchers, and trained instructors from IIT Kanpur guide students through age-appropriate demonstrations and

hands-on activities, helping them connect classroom theory with real-world applications. The programme aims to spark curiosity, nurture scientific temper, and encourage early interest in STEM careers among children who often lack exposure to laboratory infrastructure.

According to the institute, the mobile lab also supports teachers by demonstrating low-cost experiments and innovative teaching methods that can be replicated in regular classrooms. Special focus is placed on inquiry-based learning, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills essential for future-ready education. By taking science education beyond campus walls, IIT Kanpur seeks to promote inclusivity and equity in learning opportunities. The initiative aligns with national efforts to strengthen STEM education at the grassroots level and inspire rural students to imagine pathways in science, technology, engineering, and innovation. The mobile science lab stands as a model of how premier institutions can actively contribute to community-focused education reform.

Durgesh K. Dubey

UNION BUDGET 2026-27: BUILDING BIG, SPENDING SMART, REFORMING STEADY

India's Budget Session this year carried the familiar mix of expectation and anxiety, households looking for relief, businesses seeking predictability, and states demanding stronger support. Against an uncertain global environment, Budget 2026-27 chooses a clear path: strengthen domestic growth through investment, accelerate strategic infrastructure, and simplify governance without shaking fiscal stability. It is a Budget that tries to sound practical rather than theatrical, yet it does contain a few headline-grabbing moves that deserve to be spotlighted separately.

The Big Picture: Growth with Prudence

At its core, Budget 2026-27 reflects a mature economic posture: push growth, but don't lose balance. With global demand softening and geopolitical risks affecting trade and energy markets, the emphasis is on building internal strength investing in infrastructure, strengthening domestic manufacturing, and enabling states and cities to execute development at scale. The continued expansion of capital expenditure now at ₹12.2 lakh crore signals confidence in the infrastructure-led strategy. In practical terms, capex spending creates jobs quickly (construction, engineering, logistics), while also raising long-term productivity (better transport, smoother freight movement, improved urban systems). For a young country where employment demand is relentless, this approach remains one of the most reliable levers.

Transport and Mobility: High-Speed Rail as Economic Connectors

The announcement of seven high-speed rail corridors is among the most ambitious mobility signals in recent years. Such corridors are not only about faster travel; they reshape regional economies. High-speed routes can pull investment into new nodes, expand labour mobility, strengthen tourism circuits, and create satellite growth around stations and corridor-linked industrial zones. If executed well, these corridors could reduce congestion pressure on major metros while encouraging balanced growth across adjacent cities and regions. For citizens, the promise is simple: time saved, connectivity improved, and economic activity distributed more widely.

A Historic Push for Defence Modernisation and Self-Reliance

The Union Budget 2026-27 marks a watershed moment for India's defence preparedness, with an all-time high allocation of ₹7.85 lakh crore to the Ministry of Defence; around 15% higher than the previous year and the largest share among all ministries. A standout feature is the record ₹2.19 lakh crore provided under the capital head, reflecting a sharp 24% jump in capital acquisition to fast-track modernisation of the armed forces. Importantly, ₹1.39 lakh crore has been earmarked for procurement from

domestic industries, including private players, reinforcing the thrust on indigenisation and reducing import dependence. Higher allocations for operational readiness ensure sustained maintenance, spares and frontline preparedness in a challenging geopolitical environment.

of industrial competitiveness will belong to countries that secure reliable supply chains for critical inputs.

Biopharma and Healthcare: Innovation with a Human Face

Economic Region over five years recognises a reality that India's growth is increasingly urban and cluster-driven. Instead of treating cities as isolated units, CER planning encourages integrated development transport, housing, industrial corridors, skilling, and services built around economic geography. This can help smaller cities and peri-urban belts become genuine growth engines rather than spillover zones struggling for infrastructure.

Tax Reform: Compliance Without Fear

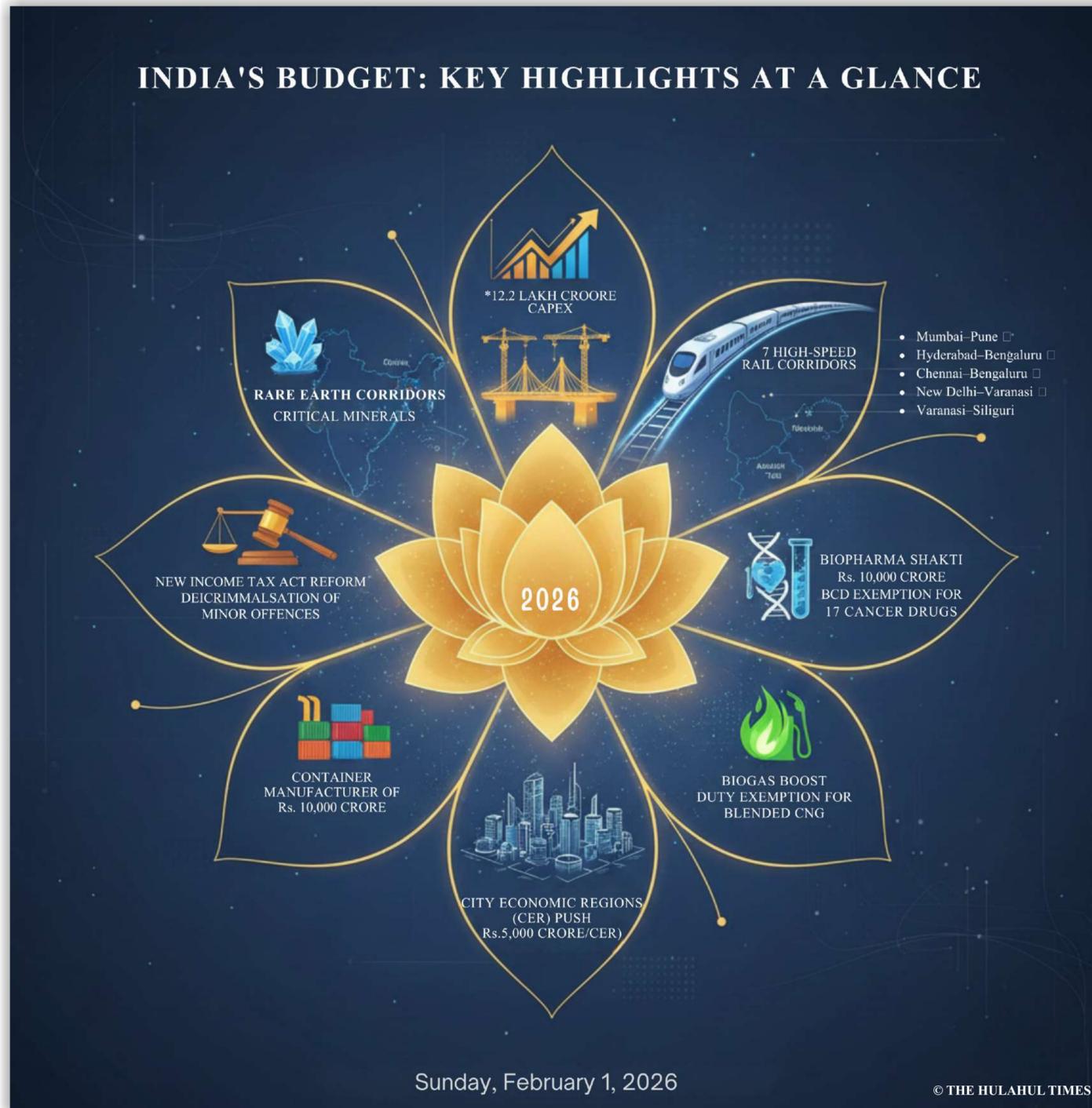
A notable shift in tone comes through the New Income Tax Act proposal, particularly the move to decriminalise non-production of accounts and documents, replacing prosecution with fines for minor offences. This is not just a legal change; it reflects a broader policy intent to reduce fear-based compliance and promote trust-based administration. For small businesses and ordinary taxpayers, this can reduce friction and anxiety, especially where technical lapses often become disproportionately stressful.

Manufacturing and Logistics: Containers, Biogas and Quiet Competitiveness

The ₹10,000 crore container manufacturing ecosystem scheme is an important industrial move that may not feel "headline" at first glance, but it carries real strategic value. Containers are the backbone of global trade. Domestic capacity can reduce import dependence, improve availability, and support exports through smoother logistics. Similarly, duty exemption for biogas-blended CNG supports a cleaner fuel ecosystem while encouraging waste-to-energy models. It quietly aligns climate goals with energy security and rural enterprise opportunities.

A Budget That Reflects Economic Maturity

Budget 2026-27 is not dramatic, and that may be its greatest strength. It reflects an economy confident enough to focus on execution rather than announcements, and a government willing to prioritise long-term credibility over short-term applause. The real challenge now lies beyond the Budget speech. Execution will determine whether capital spending delivers quality assets, whether states use transferred funds effectively, and whether fiscal discipline holds in the face of political pressures. If implemented well, this Budget could mark a turning point not because it promised everything, but because it chose to do a few important things consistently and responsibly. In an age of noise, restraint can be a virtue. Budget 2026-27 reminds us that steady progress, though less glamorous, often delivers the most lasting results.



Strategic Minerals: Rare Earth Corridors and Global Supply Chains

The Budget's focus on rare earth corridors in Odisha, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu is a strategic statement. Rare earths and critical minerals are now at the heart of global competition powering electric vehicles, semiconductors, renewable energy systems and defence technologies. Creating dedicated corridors signals that India wants to move from being a raw-material participant to a value-chain player: mining, processing, logistics, and advanced manufacturing. This matters because the next decade

The proposed ₹10,000 crore Biopharma Shakti initiative is a long-term bet on innovation and self-reliance in advanced healthcare. It signals support for domestic research, new drug development, and high-value manufacturing in life sciences. Alongside it, the basic customs duty exemption for 17 cancer drugs directly touches citizens. It is the kind of measure that doesn't need complex explanation, families battling serious illness know what lower costs can mean.

City Economic Regions: Funding Growth Where People Live

The CER proposed ₹5,000 crore per City

Dr. (Mrs) Chandra Hariharan Iyer

EXPERT



Dr. (Mrs) Chandra Hariharan Iyer

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FAQs ON
Learning and Development through
Ancient Indian WisdomMail your questions on
thehulahultimes@gmail.com

or

DM your questions on our instagram
handle @thehulahultimes**Q. Is Ethical Leadership Possible Without Practical Policies?**

Ans. In modern organizational management, formulating policies that are both ethical and practical is critical for maintaining discipline, integrity, and trust within the workplace. Policies act as guiding frameworks, establishing boundaries, clarifying expectations, and aligning behavior with organizational values. However, as Dennis Peasley highlights in the context of Herman Miller, even well-intentioned rules fail if they are impractical or unenforceable. For instance, rules like separating men's and women's underwear on a clothesline may exist legally but lack practical enforceability, rendering them ineffective. Similarly, in businesses, policies that are unrealistic, overly restrictive, or detached from the practical realities of operations tend to be ignored, thereby undermining the overall goal of ethical conduct. Ancient Indian wisdom provides enduring insights into this delicate balance between ethical idealism

and practical applicability. The Subhashitam, “धर्मेण हि मानवाः संज्ञन्ते, अन्यथा तु विनश्यन्ति,” teaches that human systems and social structures survive and thrive only when guided by dharma, the principle of righteous action. Policies, like dharma, must be aligned with practical human behavior to succeed.

The first principle in crafting effective policies is understanding human nature. The Subhashitam “स्वभावो नोपदेशेन शक्यते कर्तुमन्यथा; सुप्तमपि पानीयं पुनर्गच्छति शीतताम्” emphasizes that a person's intrinsic nature cannot be altered merely through instruction. Similarly, in organizational settings, policies that ignore practical human tendencies—such as workload, cognitive limitations, or behavioral inclinations—are unlikely to be followed. Ethical ideals, no matter how noble, must be tempered by realistic expectations. Policies should account for the way employees think, behave, and interact, ensuring that rules are actionable rather than aspirational statements that inspire compliance only in theory. Understanding human behavior allows leaders to craft policies that are grounded in reality, thereby ensuring higher adoption and adherence.

Practicality in policy formulation requires moderation and balance. The Subhashitam “अतिवृष्टिः पयः पीतं, अत्यल्पं च न जीवति; अत्यन्तं सर्वमत्यन्तं न वरं न च शोभनम्” reminds us that extremes—whether excessive or insufficient—are neither effective nor desirable. Applying this to organizational policies, excessively rigid rules can stifle innovation, create resentment, or encourage covert non-compliance. Conversely, overly lenient or vague policies fail to guide behavior, leaving employees uncertain about expectations. Effective policies strike a balance, clearly defining boundaries while providing flexibility for human judgment and situational variation. They should encourage ethical conduct without being so restrictive that they appear arbitrary or oppressive.

Transparency and clarity enhance both ethical alignment and practical enforceability. The Subhashitam “सत्यं ब्रूयात् प्रियं ब्रूयात् न ब्रूयात् सत्यमप्रियम्; प्रियं च नानृतं ब्रूयात् एष धर्मः सनातनः” teaches that truth, delivered with clarity and kindness, is central to dharmic conduct. Organizational policies must be communicated in straightforward language, free of ambiguity, and with clear rationale for their existence. Employees are more likely to adhere to policies when they understand the underlying ethical principles and practical necessity. Transparency fosters trust, reduces confusion, and ensures that policies are respected rather than merely tolerated.

Accountability and enforceability are essential components of practical policies. The

Subhashitam “अन्येभ्यः परं कर्तव्यम्, स्वार्थं परित्यजेत् शीलवान्” emphasizes prioritizing duty over self-interest. A policy may be ethically sound, but if enforcement mechanisms are absent or inconsistent, it fails to influence behavior. Practical policies include clear consequences for violations and consistent monitoring to ensure adherence. Enforcement should be fair and impartial, guided by ethical principles rather than personal bias. Employees are more likely to respect and follow policies when they perceive consistent and just accountability measures.

Integration of ethics into practical policies requires foresight and reflection. The Subhashitam “वृथा बुद्धिर्विनाऽभ्यासं वृथा अभ्यासो विनाऽधिना; यो हि संयोजयेदेतदुभयं स विजानती” highlights that knowledge without practice, or practice without understanding, is ineffective. Similarly, ethical policies must be integrated with practical workflows and business processes. For example, in information security or human resources, policies must be tailored to the specific operational context, providing guidance that employees can realistically implement. Policies that exist only on paper, disconnected from day-to-day operations, undermine credibility and ethical commitment.

Detachment from unrealistic idealism strengthens policy effectiveness. The Subhashitam “फलमूलाश्रिता नित्यं नापि मूलफला वनाः; संगमूलाश्रिता नित्यं नापि मोक्षफला नराः” teaches that attachment to desired outcomes can cloud judgment. Policies should be designed to facilitate ethical conduct, not to fulfill abstract ideals that are unachievable in practice. For instance, expecting absolute perfection in employee behavior ignores human tendencies, resulting in disillusionment or non-compliance. Practical policies guide behavior incrementally, recognizing human limitations while reinforcing ethical principles.

Another key principle is inclusivity and adaptability. The Subhashitam “शीलवान् पुरुषः सर्वत्र विजयी भवति, आसक्तिमुक्तः सदा सुखी” teaches that virtue, combined with detachment, ensures lasting success. Ethical policies must be inclusive, respecting diversity, and adaptable to different operational scenarios. They should provide guidance for various situations without being rigidly prescriptive, ensuring relevance across departments, teams, and changing circumstances. Adaptable policies maintain ethical integrity while remaining practically implementable, fostering a culture of responsible decision-making.

Practical policies also foster organizational trust and culture. The Subhashitam “कृतज्ञता एव साधूनां भूषणं हि परं स्मृतम्; अकृतज्ञः पुरुषः पापी लोकद्विष एव च” emphasizes that gratitude and recognition reinforce virtue. Policies that are both ethical and practical cultivate trust, morale, and

mutual respect. Employees are more likely to follow guidelines they perceive as reasonable, fair, and aligned with organizational values. Policies become tools for cultural reinforcement, promoting ethical behavior while ensuring operational efficiency.

Finally, ongoing evaluation and feedback are vital. Policies are not static; they must evolve with changing circumstances, technologies, and organizational needs. The Subhashitam “मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः; बन्धाय विषयासक्तं मुक्त्यै निर्विषयम् स्मृतम्” reminds us that reflection and awareness are key to progress. Leaders should periodically review policies for practicality, ethical alignment, and effectiveness, incorporating feedback from employees. Continuous refinement ensures that policies remain enforceable, relevant, and respected, bridging the gap between ethical ideals and operational reality.

Ethical leadership cannot thrive in a vacuum; it requires the support of practical policies that translate moral principles into actionable guidance. A leader's intentions, no matter how virtuous, will falter if the rules and frameworks governing behavior are unrealistic, unenforceable, or disconnected from daily operations. As the Subhashitam teaches, “स्वभावो नोपदेशेन शक्यते कर्तुमन्यथा; सुप्तमपि पानीयं पुनर्गच्छति शीतताम्,” understanding human nature is essential—policies must align with how people actually behave. Practical policies bridge the gap between ethical ideals and real-world application, ensuring that employees can follow them consistently while maintaining integrity. Without such frameworks, ethical leadership risks becoming symbolic rather than effective, with noble principles failing to guide actual decisions and actions in the organization.

In conclusion, formulating policies that are ethical yet practical is both a moral and operational imperative. Ancient Indian wisdom, expressed through subhashitam such as “धर्मेण हि मानवाः संज्ञन्ते, अन्यथा तु विनश्यन्ति,” “अतिवृष्टिः पयः पीतं, अत्यल्पं च न जीवति,” and “अन्येभ्यः परं कर्तव्यम्, स्वार्थं परित्यजेत् शीलवान्,” emphasizes the integration of dharma, moderation, accountability, and awareness in human conduct. Practical ethical policies recognize human nature, balance ideals with feasibility, ensure transparency, enforce accountability, and adapt to real-world circumstances. They transform abstract ethical principles into actionable guidance, fostering trust, discipline, and a culture of integrity. Organizations that embrace this approach not only uphold ethical standards but also enhance efficiency, employee engagement, and long-term sustainability.

Ravi Singh

WHAT LIFE TEACHES YOU WHEN THE APPLAUSE ENDS AND REALITY TAKES OVER

Applause is exciting. It arrives suddenly, fills the spaces with acknowledgment, and convince us if only for a moment that we have arrived. Whether it follows an achievement, a promotion, a performance, or a personal milestone, applause feels like proof that our efforts mattered. Yet life's most profoundly lessons rarely unfold under bright lights. They begin quietly, often after the clapping fades and the room empties.

When the applause ends, the first lesson life teaches is humbleness. Recognition is temporary, but character is fixed. The world fastly moves on to the next story, the next success, the next hero. In that silence, we are reminded that our worth cannot depend solely on public approval. What remains is not the noise of praise, but the discipline, values, and integrity that carried us there in the first place.

The second lesson is emotional resilience. Applause often marks a peak, and peaks are followed by valley. Life does not pause to admire our achievements for long. New challenges arise, expectations rise, and sometimes failure follows success. When no

one is cheering, we learn to stand on our own motivation. We discover whether we were driven by passion or merely by applause. This is where real strength is tested, not in celebration, but in continuety.

Life also teaches the importance of purpose over performance. Applause celebrates results, but purpose sustains effort. After recognition fades, the question becomes: Why did I start? If our work is rooted only in validation, exhaustion soon replaces enthusiasm. But if it is rooted in meaning, we continue even when no one is waching. Purpose gives direction when external encouragement disappears.

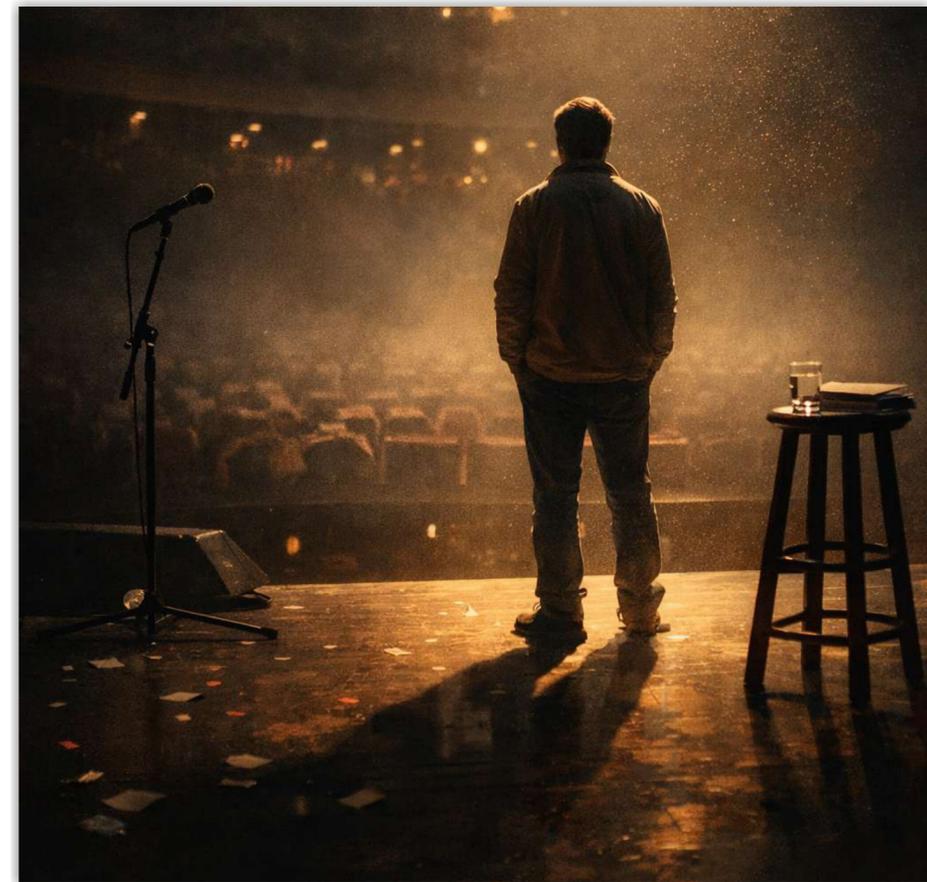
Another quiet lesson is gratitude. Applause focuses attention on the individual, but reflection reveals the unseen support behind every success mentors, family, colleagues, and even critics who shaped growth. When the noise dies down, gratitude grows louder. We begin to acknowledge the collective effort that applause often overlooks. This awareness grounds us and keeps arrogance at bay.

Perhaps the most important lesson life teaches after the Applause ends is self-

awareness. Without external affirmation, we are forced to confront ourselves honestly. Are we still content? Are we growing? Are we aligned with who we want to become? Silence becomes a mirror. It exposes insecurities, but it also reveals inner strength that applause can mask.

Finally, life teaches us that the most meaningful achievements are often invisible. The courage to begin again, the patience to improve quietly and the wisdom to remain kind without recognition these do not receive applause. Yet they define the depth of a life well lived.

Applause may mark a moment, but character defines a journey. When the clapping fades and the spotlight dims, life gently reminds us that true fulfilment is built not in moments of recognition, but in the quiet consistency that follow them.



WHY NOT EVERYONE NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND YOUR JOURNEY

One of the pressures of modern life is the expectation of being understood by everyone. We explain our choices, justify our silence, and defend our dreams as if they require universal approval. Somewhere along the way, we are made to believe that if people do not understand our journey, we must be wrong. But in reality, one of the life's most freeing lessons is this: not everyone needs to understand your journey and that is perfectly okay.

Your journey is shaped by experiences which others have not lived, emotions they have not carried, and battles they have not fought. What looks like hesitation to someone else may be survival for you. What appears like a risky decision may be the result of years of silent preparation. Everyone view your path through the lens of their own lives, not yours. Expecting them to fully understand is often unrealistic and unfair to yourself.

The need for constant explanation can quietly drain your energy. When you spend too much time convincing others, you begin to doubt yourself. External opinions grow louder, and your inner voice slowly fades. Life then becomes less about growth and more about approval. True progress, however, often happens in solitude, clarity, and conviction far away from public validation.

Another truth is that misunderstanding does not equal disrespect. Some people may care deeply about you and still not comprehend your choices. Their confusion does not cancel your courage. Their inability to relate does not invalidate your vision. Understanding this helps you release resentment and move forward with grace rather than defensiveness.

Life also teaches that timing plays a powerful role. Many people do not understand your journey because they are not meant to yet. Results often explain what words cannot. What feels questioned today may be

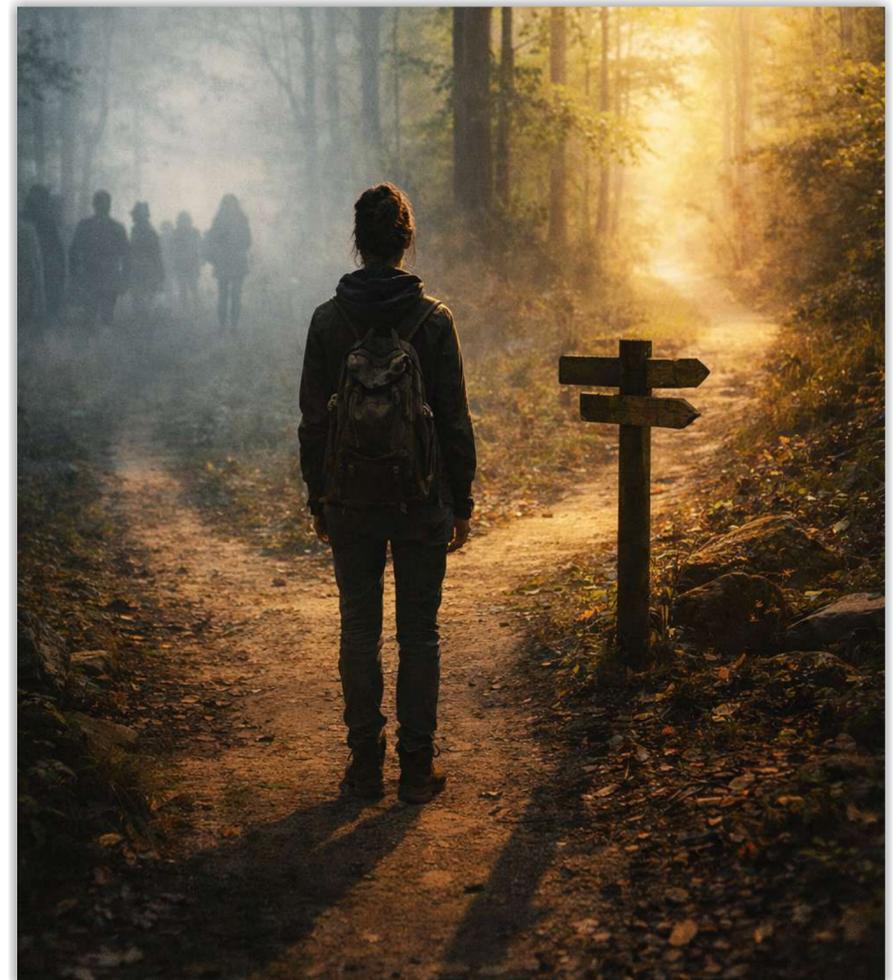
admired tomorrow. But even that admiration should not become the goal. Growth rooted only in future approval still keeps you tied to external judgment.

There is also strength in privacy. Not every plan needs an audience. Not every struggle requires a witness. Some journeys are meant to be walked quietly, allowing you to grow without interference, comparison, or unnecessary opinions. Silence can protect focus. Privacy can preserve peace.

Most importantly, your journey is not a performance. It is a process. Life unfolds differently for everyone, and comparison only distorts that truth. When you stop seeking understanding from everyone, you start trusting yourself more deeply. You learn to measure progress by alignment rather than applause, by peace rather than praise.

In time, you realize that the people who truly matter do not need constant explanations. They may not understand every step, but they respect your right to take it. And those who do not understand and never will were never meant to walk that path with you anyway.

Life becomes easier when you accept this. You move with less fear, less justification, and more authenticity. Because in the end, the only understanding that truly sustains you is your own belief in why you started and the courage to keep going, even when no one else fully understands the road you are on.



Afreen Mazgaonkar

ARIJIT SINGH RETIRES FROM PLAYBACK SINGING, RETURNS TO INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

Indian singer Arijit Singh has announced that he will stop performing Bollywood playback singing to dedicate his time to studying Indian classical music. Arijit shared a statement with his fans and the media which described his film music career as fulfilling yet he now experiences a strong desire to return to his original musical roots and his first musical inspiration the classical music tradition. Arijit expressed gratitude to the industry, filmmakers and listeners who supported him through years of chart-topping hits. He explained that he wants to explore the deep spiritual nature and complex traditions of Indian classical music through his work as a performer and his studies of the music. His fans throughout the world

experienced both sadness and admiration because he chose to pursue his true passion. Many people observed that his classical training background which he learned through demanding practice sessions created the emotional depth and subtle details he displayed during his playback performances. Arijit will close a chapter in his artistic career because he will no longer record music for film soundtracks. The artist will begin a new stage in his career which lets him develop his musical skills through a form of music that has supported him since childhood. Concerts, teaching and classical recordings are expected to be the focus of his next phase, keeping his musical journey alive in a different, deeply personal way.



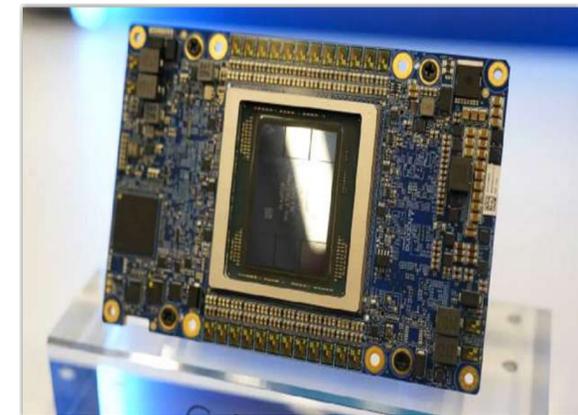
INDIA FINALISES EIGHT FTAS COVERING 37 DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO BOOST TRADE

India has established eight free trade agreements which extend to 37 developed countries according to Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal. These agreements enable India to enhance its international trade activities through improved economic ties with essential markets. The FTAs include partnerships with countries and blocs such as the UAE, Australia, Mauritius, Oman, the UK, New Zealand, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and ongoing negotiations with the European Union. The agreements establish trade relations with numerous advanced economies while providing access to substantial markets which commercial entities can utilize. The trade pacts will implement tariff reductions and regulatory simplifications which will create better conditions for investment activities according to the minister. The expected benefits from this initiative will extend to manufacturing services agriculture and micro small and medium enterprises. India is also exploring or negotiating additional agreements with several countries and regional blocs which demonstrates its commitment to using trade as a means for economic development and international competitiveness.



INDIA TARGETS 3 NM CHIP MANUFACTURING BY 2032 IN NEW SEMICONDUCTOR ROADMAP

India aims to achieve 3-nanometer chip production capacity by 2032 according to its semiconductor manufacturing plan. The Indian government has established 2032 as the target year for India to develop its domestic 3-nanometre chip production system through its new semiconductor roadmap. The plan marks a major step in India's push for technological self-reliance and reduced dependence on imported chips. The roadmap supports India's existing expertise in chip design because it aims to develop proficiency in advanced semiconductor manufacturing which represents one of the most difficult technological fields of our time. The government aims to develop the complete semiconductor ecosystem through its program which provides financial support to fabless startups and promotes joint efforts among



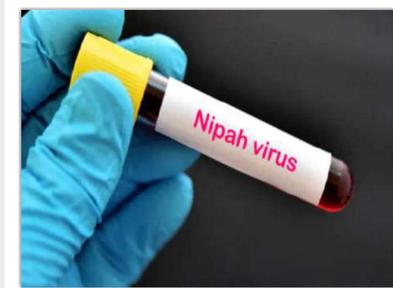
businesses and academic and research institutions. The priority will focus on essential chip categories which include computing, power electronics, networking, sensors, memory, and radio-frequency components that serve consumer electronics and defence and space industries. India must show significant progress towards fulfilling its domestic semiconductor requirements by 2020 according to official milestones. The roadmap indicates that India intends to establish itself as a global semiconductor hub which will reach full operational capacity by the early 2030s.

DELHI POLLUTION PERSISTS AS AIR QUALITY REMAINS POOR; IMD ISSUES YELLOW ALERT

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert for rain yet Delhi's air quality still remains in the poor category. The national capital and NCR areas have experienced hazy weather and decreased visibility because pollution levels create ongoing health hazards for people living there. The yellow alert shows that western disturbance weather will bring light to moderate rain and thunderstorms and gusty winds. The expected rainfall will provide temporary relief because it will settle dust and pollutants according to experts yet they warn that its effects will not last. The winter weather patterns with their low wind speeds and temperature inversions create conditions which trap pollutants near the earth's surface, these conditions prevent any lasting improvements to air quality. The data shows that January 2026 achieved the second best air quality for that month since 2022, because the air quality during that time showed improvement compared to previous years. The officials explain that "better" does not mean "safe" because pollution levels still exceed healthy limits on many days. The authorities monitor the ongoing situation while they recommend vulnerable people such as children and elderly and people with respiratory illnesses to avoid outdoor activities for extended periods.



WHO REPORTS INDIA FACES LOW NIPAH VIRUS THREAT BECAUSE NO SPREAD EVIDENCE EXISTS



The Nipah virus remains a public health threat in India according to authorities who state that the virus does not spread beyond its current limits. The virus is a zoonotic disease which enables transmission from animals to humans with fruit bats serving as the main natural disease carriers. Infected animals transmit their disease to humans through three methods which include direct contact and consumption of contaminated food and close contact with sick people. Health officials have confirmed that all new cases receive immediate detection and isolation which successfully stops the spread throughout the community. The testing protocols and contact tracing systems and surveillance systems have been improved in areas that experienced previous outbreaks. Health facilities received guidance to implement infection control protocols while monitoring patients who showed symptoms which included fever and respiratory distress and neurological complications. Public awareness functions as an essential element in containment efforts because authorities request people to stop eating partially eaten fruits and to practice hygiene and to report symptoms at an early stage. The research evidence shows that Nipah virus infection leads to high death rates but early diagnosis with supportive treatment improves patient outcomes which demonstrate the need for ongoing monitoring and emergency response planning.

INDIA STARTUP NEARS LAUNCH OF FIRST INFLATABLE SPACE HABITAT

The Indian space technology startup plans to launch its first inflatable space habitat which represents its most important achievement to date. The Bengaluru-based startup reached its first significant milestone when it finished all required safety tests in collaboration with its overseas partners which now enables them to start their upcoming in-space testing program. Astronauts will use the inflatable habitat as a space station because it provides them with a lightweight design that transforms into an expanded space area when they deploy it from its initial compact, folded state. Shaping habitats into space missions requires their design to support extended missions with less launch weight while providing astronauts with more operational space compared to standard space modules. The upcoming space stations and lunar bases and deep space exploration missions will benefit from this development. The project shows how India's private space industry has transformed its scientific abilities into innovative space exploration technologies. The startup creates advanced living environments which support national space missions while positioning India as a major force in future human spaceflight programs and the creation of eco-friendly space infrastructure.



Afreen Mazgaonkar

SURYAKUMAR YADAV MAKES HISTORY WITH NEW WORLD RECORD



Suryakumar Yadav established a new international cricket record through his powerful batting display which included his ability to hit the ball hard and his exceptional timing skills and his unique hitting methods. Suryakumar has developed into one of contemporary cricket's most exciting players through his dynamic batting style which enables him to score runs at a fast pace in all cricket formats. His performance against elite opponents demonstrated his ability to perform consistently through his intelligent shot selection and his trademark aggressive playing style. The record watchers include fans and experts who acknowledge Suryakumar's impact on the game through his performance which produced new statistical achievements. The new record established by Suryakumar demonstrates that India possesses batting depth which extends beyond the

legendary run-scoring abilities of Virat Kohli. The historic event establishes Suryakumar Yadav as a crucial player in international cricket while adding another chapter to India's cricketing heritage. The sport will remember his performance as a historic achievement.

IIS DANGAL CHAMPIONSHIP GOES NATIONAL IN 2026, OPENS DOORS FOR WRESTLERS ACROSS INDIA

The IIS Dangal Championship will become a national wrestling championship in 2026 which will enable Indian wrestlers to reach higher competition levels while displaying their skills. The championship has advanced from its previous status as a regional event because wrestling has become more popular while the sport now provides better development opportunities for athletes. The national status of the IIS Dangal Championship will now draw more competitors to the event because the championship will showcase both rising wrestlers and seasoned athletes who aim to achieve victory and fame. The championship organisers will establish competition standards and fair play regulations which will help the event become an esteemed Indian wrestling competition. Wrestling coaches and athletes and fans have supported the new regulation because they expect it will help the sport grow beyond its traditional regions of strength. The national championship provides wrestlers with exposure and competitive experience which will help them build successful careers while preparing for upcoming inter-state and international events. Wrestling communities throughout the nation are preparing for the championship because they believe it will discover new talent while strengthening India's overall presence in the sport.



CHANDIGARH BADMINTON PLAYERS SHINE AT ALL-INDIA BADMINTON TOURNAMENT

The performance of the Chandigarh team at this year's all-India badminton championships has resulted in a positive result for the Chandigarh team since all of their athletes performed successfully in every category of the tournament. Players from all parts of India showcased their skills, talent and ability to demonstrate exceptional footwork and ultimately create an effective and efficient strategy in both singles and doubles play. The players achieved personal success through their victories which contributed to Chandigarh's total achievements at the national tournament. The coaches praised the players because their disciplined training routine enabled them to handle the extended matches which occurred throughout the tournament. Chandigarh badminton players have achieved success because regional badminton development has progressed through better coaching methods and upgraded training facilities which enable young players to compete at advanced levels. Friends, family and fans celebrated the wins saying the results would inspire more youth in the city to pursue the sport. Chandigarh badminton players have established themselves as future stars who will compete in national and inter-state events.



14-YEAR-OLD JENSI KANABAR BECOMES FIRST INDIAN GIRL TO WIN AUSTRALIAN OPEN U-14 TENNIS TITLE

The 14-year-old Indian girl JenSI Kanabar became the first Indian female player to win the Australian Open U-14 tennis championship. Her historic victory at one of the most important junior tournaments in the world marks a significant achievement which benefits Indian tennis and all young athletes who practice their sports in India. Throughout her Australian Open matches Kanabar showed excellent control of her game together with exceptional tactical skills and strong groundstroke techniques. She maintained her concentration throughout high-pressure situations during important matches which led her to the finals before she ultimately secured victory in the tournament. The historic victory demonstrates to all young Indian athletes that they can achieve international success in their sports. The victory will help develop future Indian tennis stars. JenSI Kanabar will continue her progression through junior tennis because of her victory. She has the potential to become a professional circuit contender. The Australian Open U-14 championship victory created a new beginning for Indian tennis.



INDIA WINS GOLD IN ICE HOCKEY AT KIUG 2026 AFTER THRILLER VS CHANDIGARH



The Indian team achieved victory against Chandigarh during their ice hockey match at the KIUG 2026. The match reached its highest point when players displayed their full potential through their quick and precise ice hockey performance. The Indian team established its match dominance through effective goal scoring while their defense maintained lead protection during critical game periods. The match showed exceptional goaltending skills together with players who executed fast skating movements while working together on the ice which proved that Indian ice hockey continues to progress. Chandigarh maintained their strong performance throughout the entire match but India's ability to score during important moments became the decisive factor in their victory.

The victory represents a major milestone for India's winter sports development because it demonstrates how Indian athletes are mastering sports that originate from colder countries. The gold medal brings national pride to the team while it demonstrates how ice hockey develops as a popular sport with future potential in India. The victory generated strong emotional responses from both fans and officials because they saw it as a major accomplishment, which would increase public interest and financial support for ice hockey and winter sports throughout the country.

TEJASWIN SHANKAR STUNS OLYMPIC MEDALLIST SHELBY MCEWEN TO WIN HIGH JUMP TITLE IN KANSAS

Indian high jumper Tejaswin Shankar produced a sensational performance in Kansas, where he beat Olympic medallist Shelby McEwen to clinch the high jump title at a major international meet. Shankar demonstrated his athletic development through his successful high jump attempts which he performed with both proper execution and consistent performance against top-level competitors. Shankar achieved his victory through three essential elements which included precise timing and explosive power and strong mental concentration. The Indian athlete successfully competed against seasoned international jumpers who included McEwen and maintained his focus throughout the competition while clearing vital heights during crucial moments. His winning performance underlined his rising stature in the global athletics circuit. Shankar received a major confidence boost through his achievement, which he needs to proceed with his international career, where he must prove himself against elite opponents to build his championship credentials. Athletes and coaches praised his technique and discipline, noting that this win could be a pivotal moment in his career. Shankar's achievement demonstrates the increasing participation of Indian track and field athletes in international events which motivates both fellow athletes and young candidates in India. Continued dedication and determination will lead to his upcoming international success in high jump events.



Dr. Smita Ravikumar Kuntay & Ajab Tinwala

EXIM BANK DEPUTY MANAGER RECRUITMENT 2026



The Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank) has announced the Deputy Manager (Banking Operations) Recruitment 2026. This is a great opportunity for qualified finance professionals and Chartered Accountants to build a prestigious career in an all-India level financial institution.

Organization: Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank)

- Post Offered: Deputy Manager (Banking Operations)
- Total Vacancies: 20 Posts
- Job Location: Anywhere in India

Eligibility Criteria

- Age Limit: 21 years to 28 years (as on 31 December 2025)
- Age Relaxation:
- SC/ST: 5 years
- OBC (NCL): 3 years
- PwBD: 10 years
- (As per Government of India rules)

Educational Qualification:

- Minimum 60% in Graduation (3-year full-time) AND
- Post Graduation (MBA/PGDBA/PGDBM/MMS –

Selection Process:

- Written Test (Subjective)
- Personal Interview
- Document Verification

Important Dates:

- Online Registration Starts: 26 January 2026
- Last Date to Apply & Pay Fee: 15 February 2026
- Tentative Written Exam: February 2026

Application Fee:

- Examination fee details will be available in the official notification
- (Mode of Payment: Online only)

How to Apply:

- Candidates must apply online only through the official EXIM Bank website. Complete registration, upload required documents, pay the examination fee online, and submit the application before the last date..

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

RBI OFFICE ATTENDANT RECRUITMENT 2026 – APPLY ONLINE FOR 572 POSTS

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released the official notification for Office Attendant Recruitment 2026, offering a golden opportunity for 10th pass candidates to secure a stable and prestigious central government job. Selected candidates will be posted at various RBI regional offices across India with attractive salary and benefits.

Organization: Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

- Post Name: Office Attendant
- Total Vacancies: 572
- Job Location: RBI offices across India

Eligibility Criteria:

- Age Limit: 18 years to 25 years (as on 01 January 2026)
- (Age relaxation applicable as per Government of India rules.)

Educational Qualification:

- Candidates must have passed 10th Standard (SSC/Matriculation) from the concerned State/UT under the regional jurisdiction of the RBI office applied for. Applicants must be undergraduate as on 01 January 2026; candidates who are graduates or possess higher qualifications are not eligible.

- Local Language Proficiency:
- Applicants must be proficient in the local language of the State/UT (reading, writing, speaking, and understanding).

Selection Process

- Online Test
- Language Proficiency Test (LPT)
- Document Verification

Application Fee

- General/OBC/EWS: ₹450 + GST
- S C / S T / P w B D / E x - Servicemen: ₹50 + GST
- RBI Staff: Nil
- (Payment mode: Online only)

Important Dates

- Online Registration: 15 January 2026
- Last Date to Apply: 04 February 2026
- Tentative Online Test: 28 February & 01 March 2026

How to Apply:



- Candidates must apply online only through opportunities.rbi.org.in. Complete registration, fill the application carefully, upload required documents, pay the fee, and submit the form before the closing date.

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

RRB GROUP D RECRUITMENT 2026 – APPLY ONLINE FOR 22,000 LEVEL-1 POSTS



The Railway Recruitment Boards (RRB) under the Ministry of Railways have released the notification for Group D (Level-1) Recruitment 2026. This large-scale recruitment drive offers around 22,000 vacancies for 10th pass and ITI/NAC qualified candidates across India, providing a secure and respected career in Indian Railways.

Organization: Railway Recruitment Boards (RRB), Ministry of Railways

- Post Name: Level-1 Posts (Track Maintainer

- Grade-IV, Assistant Posts, Pointsman, etc.)
- Total Vacancies: Approx. 22,000
- Job Location: All India

Eligibility Criteria:

- Age Limit: 18 years to 33 years (as on 01 January 2026)
- (Age relaxation applicable as per Government of India norms.)
- Educational Qualification:
- Candidates must have passed 10th Standard and possess ITI or National Apprenticeship Certificate

(NAC) issued by NCVT/SCVT.

Selection Process:

- Computer Based Test (CBT)
- Physical Efficiency Test (PET)
- Document Verification
- Medical Examination

Application Fee

- General/OBC: ₹500 (₹400 refunded after appearing in CBT)
- S C / S T / P w B D / F e m a l e / E x - Servicemen/Transgender/Minorities/EBC: ₹250 (fully refundable after CBT)
- (Payment Mode: Online only)

Important Dates

- Indicative Notice: 27 December 2025
- Online Application Start: 20 February 2026
- Last Date to Apply & Pay Fee: 02 March 2026 (23:59 Hrs)
- CBT Date: To be notified

How to Apply:

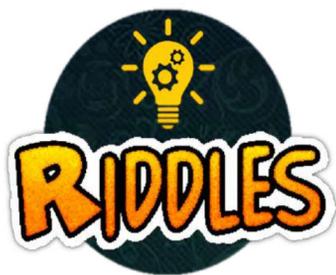
- Candidates must apply online only through www.rrbapply.gov.in. Complete One-Time Registration (OTR), select preferred RRB/Zone, upload required documents, pay the fee, and submit the application before the deadline.

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

Deepika Singh

QUIZ TIME

1. Who presented the Union Budget in Parliament today?
2. What is the fiscal deficit target announced for the current financial year?
3. Which sector received the highest allocation in today's budget?
4. What major announcement was made for infrastructure development?
5. Was there any change announced in income tax slabs for individuals?
6. Which initiative was introduced to support farmers and agriculture growth?
7. What percentage of central taxes will be shared with states as per today's budget?
8. Which sector was highlighted for boosting domestic manufacturing?
9. What key announcement was made regarding health or medical education?
10. What is the main objective of today's Union Budget?



BUDGET

1. I grow roads, rails, and jobs alike, Money flows to me in record spike. Who am I?
2. I balance spending, income, and debt, Too high or too low—markets fret. What am I called?
3. I feed the nation, from soil I rise, Seeds, schemes, and support are my allies. Who am I?
4. I was expected to change, but stayed the same, Salaried people still know my name. What am I?
5. I build tomorrow, not today alone, Growth and stability are my tone. What is my goal?

1. Infrastructure
2. Fiscal Deficit
3. Agriculture
4. Tax Slabs
5. Development

(II) RIDDLES

10. Growth
9. Healthcare
8. Manufacturing
7. 41%
6. Agriculture
5. Unchanged
4. Capex
3. Infrastructure sector
2. 4.3% of GDP (Fiscal Deficit Target)
1. Nirjala Sitharaman

(I) QUIZ TIME

ANSWERS



SMOKED PALAK-CORN KOFTA IN SILKEN GREEN GRAVY

This Week, We're Relishing Smoked Palak-Corn Kofta in Silken Green Gravy – Wholesome, Aromatic, and Comfortingly Elegant!

Smoked Palak-Corn Kofta in Silken Green Gravy is a modern vegetarian creation rooted in Indian comfort cuisine. Tender koftas made from fresh spinach and sweet corn are gently pan-fried and immersed in a smooth, herbaceous palak-based gravy. The natural sweetness of corn balances the earthiness of spinach, while a subtle smoke infusion adds depth and warmth. Light yet indulgent, this dish bridges nutrition and indulgence, making it suitable for everyday dining as well as refined festive spreads.

Ingredients:

- **For the Koftas:** Finely chopped spinach (palak) – 1 cup, Boiled sweet corn (coarsely crushed) – ¾ cup, Besan (gram flour) – 2 tbsp, Green chilli (finely chopped) – 1 tsp, Ginger (grated) – 1 tsp, Garam masala – ¼ tsp, Salt – to taste, Oil – for shallow frying
- **For the Green Gravy:** Blanched spinach puree – 1½ cups, Onion (paste) – ½ cup, Ginger-garlic paste – 1 tsp, Cashew paste – 2 tbsp, Green chilli paste – ½ tsp, Cumin powder – ½ tsp, Garam masala – ¼ tsp, Fresh cream – 2 tbsp, Butter – 1 tbsp, Kasuri methi (crushed) – ½ tsp, Salt – to taste

Preparation

1. In a bowl, combine chopped spinach, crushed corn, besan, green chilli, ginger, garam masala, and salt. Mix gently to form a soft mixture.
2. Shape into small koftas and shallow fry on medium heat until evenly golden. Set aside.
3. Heat butter in a pan and sauté onion paste until soft and lightly aromatic. Add ginger-garlic paste and cook briefly.
4. Stir in spinach puree, cumin powder, salt, and cashew paste. Simmer on low heat until the gravy turns smooth and glossy.
5. Add cream, garam masala, and kasuri methi, mixing gently to retain the fresh green colour.
6. Just before serving, place the koftas into the gravy and simmer for 2–3 minutes.
7. For a smoky finish, place a hot charcoal in a small bowl inside the pan, drizzle ghee over it, cover for 30 seconds, and remove immediately.

Serving Tip:

Serve Smoked Palak-Corn Kofta in Silken Green Gravy hot with soft phulkas, butter roti, or lightly scented jeera rice. Ideal for intimate dinners, festive menus, or curated vegetarian platters, this dish celebrates familiar Indian flavours elevated



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

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