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THE HULAHUL TIMES

Evolving Today For A Better Tomorrow



JIVITIYA VRAT: WHEN A MOTHER'S FAITH BECOMES HER CHILD'S SHIELD

Every year in the month of Ashwin, mothers in Bihar, Jharkhand and eastern Uttar Pradesh spend an entire day without eating anything or drinking even a drop of water. They do this for their children. This tradition is called Jivitiya Vrat, and people also know it as Jiutiya or Jivitputrika Vrat. For many women it is the hardest fast of the whole year, yet they wait for it eagerly because it is so deeply connected to their love for their sons and daughters.

The vrat is kept on the Ashtami of Krishna Paksha in the Ashwin month, which usually comes in September or early October. Apart from Bihar, Jharkhand and UP, it is also observed in parts of Madhya Pradesh and by Bhojपुरi and Maithili families in Nepal. Wherever these families have moved, whether to Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai or even countries like Mauritius, they have taken this vrat with them and kept it alive in their new homes.

Preparations begin a few days before the fast. Women clean the house, buy fresh puja items and get their Jiutiya ready. The Jiutiya is a red or yellow thread with a small gold or silver locket, and many families add one bead or pendant for every child in the house. Some mothers keep the same Jiutiya for years and add a new bead whenever a child is born, so the thread slowly becomes a record of the family itself.

Jivitiya is spread over three days. The first day is called Nahay-Khay. On this day the mother takes an early bath and eats only one simple meal. In many homes in Bihar this meal includes marua roti and noni saag, and in some Mithila families fish is also eaten as part of the custom. This meal is meant to give her strength for the difficult day ahead.

The second day is the main fast. From sunrise until the next morning, the mother does not eat or drink anything at all. In the evening, women come together near a pond, a temple or a neighbour's courtyard for the puja. Many of them make a small figure of Jimutavahana from kusha grass, along with figures of an eagle and a jackal shaped from clay or cow dung. They offer flowers, fruits, sindoor and sweets, and in many homes mustard oil and khali are also offered. Later, the mother puts a little of this oil on her children's heads as a blessing. After the puja, an elderly woman usually narrates the vrat

katha while the others listen quietly, and the evening often ends with traditional songs sung together.

On the third day the fast is broken, and this is called Paran. After the morning puja, the family cooks dishes like jhingni ki sabzi, rice and marua roti. The mother finally eats and drinks after more than a full day, and the whole family shares the meal with her.

The most popular story linked to this vrat is about Jimutavahana, a kind and brave Gandharva prince. One day he met an old woman who was crying because her only son was going to be given to Garuda as food. Jimutavahana could not bear to see her pain, so he wrapped himself in a red cloth and lay down on the rock in the boy's place. When Garuda began eating him, he noticed that the prince showed no fear at all. Garuda was so moved that he promised never to harm the Nagas again and brought the dead back to life. Mothers pray to Jimutavahana believing he will protect their children just as he protected that boy.

Another story often told in villages is about a female eagle and a female jackal who lived near the same tree and

decided to keep this fast together. The eagle stayed hungry the whole night, but the jackal secretly ate food when she thought nobody would notice. In their next birth, the eagle's children lived long and healthy lives, while the jackal's children did not survive. Elders share this story so that the fast is kept with honesty, even when no one is watching.

Times have changed a lot, but Jivitiya is still followed with the same devotion. Working mothers in big cities take leave from office for it, and young girls learn the katha by sitting beside their mothers and grandmothers. Many of the songs sung on this day have never been written down and survive only because one generation teaches them to the next. At its core, this vrat shows how much a mother is ready to give up for her child, and her quiet faith that one day of hunger and thirst can bring her family a lifetime of safety and happiness.



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Durgesh K. Dubey

THE MAN WHO TURNED HIS WEALTH INTO WISDOM: THE STORY OF R. M. ALAGAPPA CHETTIAR

In the small village of Kottaiyur in Tamil Nadu, a boy was born on 6 April 1909. His name was R. M. Alagappa Chettiar. He grew up in the well-known Nagarathar community in Chettinad, where enterprise and charity has long been practiced. From an early age, Alagappa was inquisitive and ambitious. He studied at SMS Vidyasala in Karaikudi and later Presidency College, Madras. At only twenty-one, he graduated in M.A. in English Literature. During his student days, he had the chance to meet great teacher and philosopher Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Learning, for Alagappa, was turning to be something more than examinations.

His journey led him to England, where he later received his Chartered Bank qualification, and gained a Barrister-at-Law qualification from the Middle Temple. Both were remarkable achievements for a young Indian of that time. When he returned home, he did not confine himself to only law practice. His enterprising mind was now set on making it big. He went into textiles and later had his share in a number of other enterprises. From plantations and insurance to hotels and aviation, Alagappa was a man of multiple business interests. And within a short time, he has become an industrious industrialist.

Money came to him, but another question slowly became more important: what should a person do with wealth after earning enough for himself? Alagappa found his answer in education.

At the Annie Besant centenary celebrations in Madras, an appeal was made to industrialists to support the education of independent India. Alagappa responded by offering to establish an Arts College in Karaikudi. He did not allow the idea to remain on paper for years. Alagappa Arts College was established in 1947, and this became the beginning of a much larger educational movement.

Karaikudi was not then known as a major centre of higher education. Alagappa imagined something different for the region. He wanted young people to find opportunities closer to their homes. One institution was therefore followed by another. Teacher education, physical education, polytechnic and engineering studies gradually found a place in his educational vision. What had begun as philanthropy was turning into institution building.

This was where his life reflected the Indian idea of 'Vidya Daan '-the sharing of knowledge. Like giving food to satisfy an immediate hunger

or giving money to overcome an urgent problem, education provides an opportunity to create one's own future. Alagappa knew this well and his generous donations were not just an act of generosity; they were investments in humanity that allowed knowledge to live on long after him

He also had a vision beyond colleges. India, newly independent, required scientific research for its development and so when plans were made for setting up a national electrochemical research laboratory, Alagappa wanted Karaikudi to be its home. An extraordinary donation of 300 acres of land plus Rs.15 lakh in cash came from him for this purpose. On 25 th July, 1948, Prime



Minister Jawaharlal Nehru laid the foundation stone while Dr. S. Radhakrishnan formally dedicated the Central Electrochemical Research Institute to the nation in 1953

There was wisdom behind this generosity. Alagappa could have used the land for another commercial venture. Instead, he gave it for scientific research. He understood that a new nation needed laboratories as much as factories and researchers as much as businessmen. Science placed in the service of society could improve industry, create knowledge and strengthen India's independence in a deeper sense.

His educational quest continued. He dreamt of making Karaikudi a hub of education, where education would become a way of life and an all-round development of the people would take place. Besides engineering, institutions of higher learning, like arts, science and teacher training

colleges had also been started by him. Thus was born the Alagappa Chettiar College of Engineering and Technology. From these institutions grew Alagappa University, which came into existence in 1985.

His contributions to philanthropy were not confined only to his native town. His philanthropy was of a special kind. What draws us to his life history is that he has left behind institutions, which came up in a short time span. He was a man who had embarked on a path of philanthropy even as he was busy building up his business empire. He did not leave behind the legacy of philanthropy to his sons and daughters

in their old age. The concept of Dāna finds a place in Indian Philosophy. It requires that one should use one's resources for good and proper causes. Dāna thus is a philosophical standpoint, which Lok Kalyan or welfare of the society, fits into. Wealth has to be used for creating public utilities, from which the society at large can benefit. Education, Science, Institutions are some such public utilities, which can cause a multiplication of the resources. He realized this and so dedicated himself to the cause of philanthropy.

Honorary doctorates from Annamalai University and University of Madras and a knighthood by the British Government were some of the accolades that he received. But, after India attained independence, he gave up the title of knighthood. Independent India honored him with the Padma Bhushan in 1956. But the honours came late in his life. For on 5th April 1957, aged 47 years and on the eve of his 48th

birthday, Alagappa Chettiar breathed his last.

He had lived for less than five decades. The institutions lived on. Students continued to enter classrooms he had helped create. Researchers continued their experiments. Teachers trained new generations. Karaikudi, once far from India's major centres of higher learning, gradually became closely associated with education and research. His wealth had changed form. It was no longer held in his hands; it had become opportunity in the hands of others.

Moral of the Story

The life of Alagappa Chettiar teaches us a very simple lesson about earning and wealth. He worked a lot and earned significantly, but he did not let wealth rule him. A part of his vast personal fortune has gone into creating opportunities for those who will never know his name. In this aspect, his life message perfectly blends the Indian values of Dāna, Vidya Daan, Karma Yoga, and Lok-Kalyan. Moreover, his life example teaches that true donation goes beyond short-term charity. Sometimes, it is more important to give someone a tool to do something by themselves. For example, a college or university can provide knowledge to generations of students after its founding.

Conclusion: His Contribution and Achievements

R. M. Alagappa Chettiar was a prominent entrepreneur, educationist, and philanthropist who significantly contributed to the development of educational institutions and public enterprises. In particular, he laid the foundation for a chain of schools, colleges, and universities in arts, science, teacher education, engineering, and technical fields. In addition, his generous donation of land and wealth enabled establishing CSIR–CECRI in Karaikudi. The educational institutions under his leadership later merged to form Alagappa University. The philanthropist's legacy in science education and public welfare has been recognized and awarded in 1956 when he was honored with the Padma Bhushan. However, his true impact has been acknowledged when his foundations started educating students for many years after his death. Therefore, R. M. Alagappa Chettiar will be remembered for his major contribution to the field of education and public enterprises. Ultimately, his life teaches that wealth, when transferred to the next generations, comes with responsibility.

Ajab Tinwala & Ravi Singh

BADI DIDI: THE WOMAN WHO WALKED BASTAR'S FORESTS TO BRING GIRLS TO SCHOOL



where their mothers could not.

In 2026, the Government of India honoured her with the Padma Shri for her contribution to social work, women's empowerment, tribal upliftment and education. President Droupadi Murmu presented the award, and Dr Tati's appearance at the ceremony in traditional Bastar tribal dress drew wide attention. It was her twenty-third honour, including three at the national level. Chhattisgarh celebrated three Padma Shri recipients that year, and hers was perhaps the most telling: a recognition not of an institution or a movement but of one woman and her feet.

Yet she deflected the praise. Dr Tati has said the honour belongs to the tribal communities she serves. Coming from someone who has spent a lifetime walking beside them rather than ahead of them, this reads less as modesty than as an accurate description of how the work was done.

Where others saw danger, Dr Budhri Tati saw unfinished classrooms. For nearly four decades, she crossed the forests of southern Bastar on foot, village after village, knocking on doors in a region the rest of India knows mainly through headlines about insurgency. Her request was always the same and always difficult: let your daughter go to school.

Budhri Tati was born in Hiranar, a village in Dantewada district, Chhattisgarh, an area long affected by Naxal violence. She was not an outsider parachuting in with a programme. She belonged to the communities she set out to serve, and that belonging became her greatest asset. In a landscape where suspicion of strangers runs deep, a daughter of the soil could sit in a courtyard and be heard. Her title, "Dr", reflects respect rather than a medical degree. It was earned through practical service, not a university.

Her task was harder than it sounds. Building a school is one challenge. Convincing a family to spare a daughter from fieldwork and household chores is quite another. Dr Tati understood that such decisions cannot be ordered from above. They are changed through conversation, repeated patiently, often over many visits. Over the years she walked through more than five hundred villages, with reports citing figures of 545 to 570, speaking directly with parents, answering objections and returning when the first attempt failed. Villagers came to call her "Badi Didi", the elder sister, and in places "Bua", an affectionate word for a paternal aunt. Few outsiders are given such names. Fewer still keep them for forty years.

What makes her story remarkable is that she never treated schooling as an isolated goal. She saw how a girl's future depends on the world around her. She worked to raise awareness about the maternal and infant

mortality that haunted remote forest settlements. She taught young women to stitch, offering a route to independent income. She urged men to drink less, a gentle but pointed challenge to a problem that weighs heavily on households. Education, health and livelihood, in her view, were strands of one rope.

The work was not without risk. Accounts of her career note that she continued despite threats to her life, moving through territory where state presence was thin and the possibility of violence was real. She never framed this as courage. Her approach was simpler: go where the need is greatest, and keep going.

Asked about her impact, she gave a modest answer. Nearly 545 women, she told the press, were educated through her efforts. It is a number delivered without flourish, though behind it lies a generation of women who can read, earn and speak for themselves in villages

Nor has the award slowed her. Returning to Bastar after the ceremony, her priorities remained unchanged: reach more villages, help more women, and secure a better future for the region's children.

There is a quiet lesson in her journey. Conflict zones are often imagined as places that change only when something arrives from outside, whether policy, force or funding. Dr Tati's life suggests a different answer. Lasting change can begin with a single person who shares the language, understands the fears and is willing to return, again and again, until a family finally says yes.

Somewhere in Bastar today, a girl is sitting in a classroom because a woman once walked a long way to ask her parents for permission. That, more than any medal, is the measure of Badi Didi's life.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

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

Imagine a consumer saying, “Find me a smartphone under ₹30,000 with a good camera, strong battery and enough storage.” Instead of browsing apps, an AI agent could search, compare and, once authorised, place the order. This is Agentic Commerce where AI moves beyond recommendations to taking action on behalf of consumers and businesses. Unlike a recommendation engine that simply suggests products, an agentic system can understand requirements, evaluate choices and execute an authorised transaction. For commerce, this matters because AI could become part of the journey from customer need to purchase. The impact extends beyond shopping, potentially reshaping consumer behaviour, marketing, pricing, customer relationships and business visibility. Businesses may need to compete not only for customer attention but also to make their products visible, relevant and trustworthy to AI systems. The shift is simple: from winning customer attention to earning AI-assisted selection.

From Search to Decision

Traditional e-commerce follows a familiar journey: search, compare, choose and pay. The consumer handles each step. Agentic commerce changes the division of work. **Example:** A BAF student needs a laptop for

accounting software, data analysis and online classes within a fixed budget. The student gives these requirements to an AI agent, which searches, compares specifications and prices, and shortlists suitable options, while the student makes the final purchase decision. The value lies not in showing information, but in turning a consumer's objective into an actionable shopping process.

Why India Is Ready for Agentic Commerce

India's strong digital commerce ecosystem online marketplaces, digital payments, food delivery and travel booking has already made transactions more convenient. Agentic Commerce could take this further by connecting multiple steps of the buying journey. **Example:** A Mumbai family planning a holiday could share its budget, dates and preferences with an AI agent, which could coordinate travel, accommodation and activities. The opportunity extends to businesses too: retailers could compare suppliers and reorder inventory, restaurants could streamline procurement, and online sellers could identify replenishment needs. Agentic Commerce is therefore not just about AI shopping it could enable smarter buying and selling across India's digital economy.

The New Battle for Business Visibility

For years, brands have competed for attention through advertising, search rankings, social media, discounts, reviews and marketplace presence. Agentic Commerce introduces a new challenge: what if an AI agent narrows the choices before the consumer even sees them? Businesses may need accurate product information, competitive pricing, reliable availability, reviews and dependable delivery to remain attractive in AI-assisted purchasing. The advantage could shift from simply being visible to consumers to being relevant to the systems helping them decide. **How Brands Can Adapt** Agentic Commerce will require



businesses to rethink how they present and sell their products. Brands will need accurate product information, transparent pricing, real-time availability and reliable service so AI systems can easily understand and evaluate their offerings. For smaller businesses, this could create new routes to customers beyond advertising provided their products are discoverable, credible and easy to compare. The focus is shifting from winning attention to earning selection.

What It Means for Commerce Students

Agentic Commerce brings consumer behaviour, marketing, pricing, data analytics, supply chain and customer relationships together in one business environment. For commerce students, the key lesson is: technology does not replace commerce; it changes how commerce is conducted. Marketing students may study AI-led product discovery, finance students may analyse automated purchasing patterns, while entrepreneurs can explore services that enable AI-assisted business transactions.

The Trust Factor

When AI moves from recommending what to buy to acting on your behalf, trust becomes the foundation of the transaction. Trust in Agentic Commerce depends on reliable information, transparency, secure data and user control. The stronger the trust, the more willing consumers may be to follow

recommendations and authorise AI-led purchases. Trust is not just about believing the recommendation it is about trusting the action.

The Bigger Lesson

E-commerce changed where people shop. Mobile commerce made shopping more accessible, while social commerce brought purchasing into digital conversations. Agentic Commerce could change how purchasing decisions are executed. Consumers may increasingly state an objective while an AI agent handles the journey from discovery and comparison to transaction and follow-up. The deeper shift is clear: the buying process itself is becoming more intelligent and action-oriented.

The Take Away

Agentic Commerce is not simply changing how we shop it is changing how commerce works. For Indian businesses, success may increasingly depend on being competitive, trustworthy and discoverable to intelligent systems. For commerce students, understanding consumer behaviour, strategy, data and technology will become increasingly important. Because when AI starts making buying easier, the real game is no longer just winning the customer it is earning the choice.

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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.

LITERARY TERM OF THE WEEK

FORESHADOWING

Foreshadowing is a literary technique in which an author provides hints or clues about events that may occur later in a story. It creates anticipation and prepares readers for developments without revealing them completely.

Example: If a novelist repeatedly describes dark clouds gathering before a character makes an important decision, the weather may foreshadow trouble ahead.

Purpose: It builds suspense, connects events and encourages readers to look for hidden clues.

LANGUAGE CHALLENGE

Correct the sentence: “She is one of those students who always works hard and never gives up.”

Answer: “She is one of those students who always work hard and never give up.”

Reason: The relative pronoun “who” refers to “students,” which is plural. Therefore, the verbs should agree with the plural noun: work and give, not works and gives.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Honey never spoils. Archaeologists have found ancient honey in Egyptian tombs that remained preserved for thousands of years.
- A day on Venus is longer than a year on Venus. Venus takes about 243 Earth days to rotate once, but only about 225 Earth days to orbit the Sun.
- Bananas are berries, but strawberries are not. Botanically, bananas meet the scientific definition of a berry, while strawberries develop differently.
- Your stomach gets a new lining regularly. The stomach renews much of its protective lining every few days to prevent its own digestive acids from damaging the tissue.
- Cows have best friends. Studies suggest that cows can form social bonds and may experience less stress when they are with preferred companions.
- A cloud can weigh more than a million pounds. Despite looking light and fluffy, a large cloud can contain an enormous amount of water.
- There are more possible chess games than atoms in the observable universe. The number of possible chess positions and game sequences is extraordinarily vast.
- Sea otters hold hands while sleeping. They sometimes link their paws while floating so they do not drift apart.

GRAMMAR TIP

Who vs. Whom

Who is generally used as the subject of a sentence.

Who wrote this poem?

Who is coming to the seminar?

Whom is traditionally used as the object.

Whom did you invite?

To whom did you speak?

Easy test:

If you can answer with he/she, use who.
If you can answer with him/her, use whom.

Who called you? → She called me.
Whom did you call? → I called her.

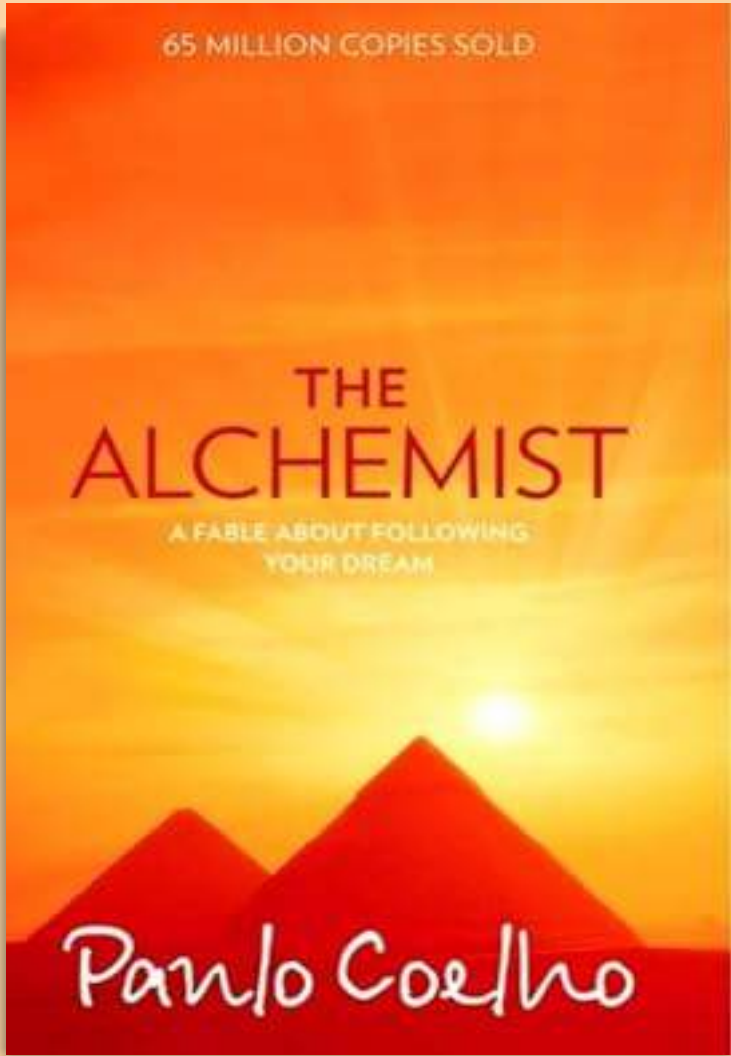
WRITER OF THE WEEK

John Milton (1608–1674)

John Milton was one of the greatest poets of the English Renaissance and a major figure of seventeenth-century English literature. His poetry is noted for its grand style, profound religious thought, classical learning, and exploration of freedom, morality and human choice. Milton was deeply influenced by the Bible and classical Greek and Roman literature. His most celebrated work, Paradise Lost, is an epic poem that retells the biblical story of the Fall of Man, focusing on Adam and Eve, Satan, temptation, disobedience and redemption.

BOOK REVIEW

The Alchemist — Paulo Coelho



The Alchemist is a philosophical novel about Santiago, a young shepherd who travels in search of a hidden treasure. Along his journey, he encounters people and experiences that transform his understanding of dreams, destiny, courage, and self-discovery.

Why read it?

The novel encourages readers to pursue their aspirations, learn from experiences, and recognise the value of the journey as much as the destination.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“A word after a word after a word is power.”

— Margaret Atwood

CREATIVE WRITING

The World Is Too Much with Us

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;

The winds that will be howling at all hours,

And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;

For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be

A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;

So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,

Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;

Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;

Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

Poetry by
- William Wordsworth

WORD OF THE WEEK

Resilience (noun)
Meaning: The ability to recover from difficulties and continue moving forward.
Example:: The resilience of the human spirit is often reflected in great literature.

IDIOM HIGHLIGHT

A blessing in disguise
Meaning: Something that initially appears to be unfortunate but ultimately produces a positive result.
Example: Missing the train seemed unfortunate, but it was a blessing in disguise because she met an old friend at the station.

FERTILISER INVENTORIES HIT TWO-YEAR HIGH
AT START OF 2026-27 RABI SEASON



from states during the rabi season is projected to be around 38 million tonnes. Urea stocks are estimated at 8.33 million tonnes, showing a significant 54.26 per cent increase over last year. Similarly, DAP stocks are projected at 3.03 million tonnes, around 9 per cent higher than the previous year.

After a rather tumultuous kharif season, India is entering the 2026–27 rabi season with a strong fertiliser inventory position. Fertiliser stocks at the beginning of the rabi season are estimated at 17.01 million tonnes, marking a comfortable two-year high and representing an increase of nearly 38 per cent compared with the same period last year.

This healthy stock position is expected to ensure adequate fertiliser availability for farmers throughout the season. The overall fertiliser demand

Meanwhile, inventories of NPKS fertilisers are estimated at 5.65 million tonnes, representing a 36 percent rise year-on-year. The improved inventory position provides a stronger supply cushion for farmers and could help reduce the risk of shortages during the crucial rabi cropping period.

AIKMS CALLS FOR UNITED MOVEMENT TO PROTECT FARMERS
AND AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

The All India Kisan Mazdoor Sabha (AIKMS) has called for a sustained and united movement to address the challenges faced by farmers and agricultural labourers across India. The appeal was made during a public meeting in Khammam, Telangana, marking the beginning of the organisation's fourth national conference.



AIKMS president Vemula-palli Venkataramaiah emphasised the need for collective action similar to the farmers' movement that led to the repeal of the three farm laws in 2021. The organisation has also raised concerns over what it describes as increasing corporatisation of the agricultural sector and its potential impact on farmers and workers.

AIKMS general secretary Ashish Mittal said the organization would continue to defend the interests and

livelihoods of farmers and agricultural labourers. The conference brought together participants from different parts of the country, including farmers, agricultural workers and tribal communities.

The Khammam event began with a rally, followed by a public meeting addressed by AIKMS leaders. Cultural performances were also organized during the programme, highlighting the broader social dimensions of the farmers' movement.

GOVERNMENT LOWERS FOODGRAIN PRODUCTION TARGET
BY 2.63 MILLION TONNES FOR 2026-27 OVER EL NINO FEARS

The foodgrain production targets have been set factoring in water availability and soil moisture and by holding state-wise consultations to adjust cropping patterns in the face of adverse conditions. The government on Tuesday set a lower foodgrain production target of 373.93 million tonnes for the 2026-27 crop year (July-June) amid El Nino weather concerns.



The overall foodgrain production target is down by 2.63 million tonnes from the actual production of 376.56 million tonnes achieved in the 2025-26 crop year. But the target set for this year is still higher than the 362 million tonne target set for the 2025-26 crop year. Of the total target set for 2026-27, the foodgrain production target for the 2026 kharif season is 196.21 million tonnes and 177.72 million tonnes for the rabi crop season.

The current opening stock exceeds

163 lakh tonnes, substantially higher than the 122 lakh tonnes available at the beginning of last year's Rabi season. On the just-completed kharif sowing season, the minister said there will be no significant drop in Kharif foodgrain production despite concerns over El Niño, and drought and floods in parts of the country.

INDIA'S PLANTATIONS TOLD TO MOVE UP
THE VALUE CHAIN

Speaking at the annual conference of the United Planters' Association of Southern India (UPASI), Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Joint Secretary Amit Kumar urged the Indian plantation sector to move beyond basic commodity trading and become a recognized global supplier of value-added products.



Kumar said the sector's future sustainability and income growth depend on inclusive partnerships across the value chain. To achieve higher realizations per hectare, he said, direct links must be built between agricultural research and growers, smallholders and commercial processors, and processors and global consumer markets through strong domestic branding. He also stressed technology adoption and eco-friendly practices, adding that sustainability must be built into corporate business models rather than

treated as an afterthought. Every kilogram of plantation produce, including tea, coffee, rubber and spices, needs higher domestic value addition to command premium prices abroad, boost export revenues and protect growers from global commodity price swings.

At the conference, UPASI also finalized its leadership transition. Anil Mathew, Executive Director of A. V. Thomas Group Companies, was elected vice-president for the 2026–27 term to lead upcoming sectoral initiatives.

VALUE-ADDED RICE PRODUCTS
OFFER NEW GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES
FOR INDIAN INDUSTRY



Value-added rice products, including convenience foods, bran oil, protein and husk-derived industrial materials, could open new growth opportunities for India's rice industry by helping businesses earn more from each tonne of grain, according to the Indian Rice Exporters' Federation (IREF).

The Bharat International Rice Conference (BIRC) 2026, scheduled for October 23–25 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, will examine these opportunities and identify promising products based on an IREF–EY assessment. On the behalf of IREF Rajeev Setia said that the next opportunity is not simply to export more tonnes of rice, but to earn more value from each tonne. A miller, an exporter and an ingredient manufacturer will need different pathways.

Rice noodles and convenience foods represent one potential growth area. According to Grand View Research estimates cited in the IREF press release, the global rice-noodle market is projected to expand from \$6.4 billion in 2024 to \$11 billion by 2030, adding approximately \$4.6 billion in annual market value.

Asia-Pacific accounted for 63.4 per cent of market revenue in 2024, providing a starting point for businesses exploring product development and market entry. The global rice-bran-oil market is forecast to grow from \$4.8 billion in 2023 to \$6.3 billion by 2030, according to Grand View Research estimates.

CISCE TO LAUNCH NATIONAL STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) is set to involve nearly 16 lakh students in a national initiative focused on understanding student mental-health concerns and developing guidance for schools. The CISCE Student Mental Health and Well-Being Conclave 2026 will follow a three-tier format involving more than 3,300 affiliated schools and around 32,000 teachers. Students from Classes VI to XII will participate in the initiative.

The first stage, School-Level Mental Health and Well-Being Dialogues, is scheduled from October 4 to 31. Schools will conduct weekly classroom discussions where students can share their views and experiences related to mental health and well-being. Feedback gathered through these discussions will move through further stages of the programme, eventually leading to a national conclave in Hyderabad from November 20 to 22.

The initiative is intended to provide students with a structured opportunity to discuss concerns while helping schools understand issues affecting their well-



being. It also focuses on strengthening mechanisms for listening to students, encouraging peer support and improving access to appropriate help. CISCE plans to use findings from the initiative to shape a mental-health charter and related guidelines for its school network. The broad participation is expected to provide inputs from students across different schools and age groups. The programme places student voices at the centre of discussions on mental health and aims to help schools better understand challenges students experience in academic and social environments.

CENTRE EXPLORES INTEGRATED SCHOOL-TO-EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK

The Ministries of Labour and Employment and Education are working on a framework aimed at helping students transition more smoothly from education and skill development to employment. According to a Business Standard report, the proposed framework could involve linking student, skilling and employment databases. The proposal includes exploring a connection between APAAR IDs and the e-Shram and National Career Service databases. The plan also proposes expanding career counselling in schools so students receive information not only about higher education but also vocational training, skills and employment opportunities. Classes 11 and 12 could receive greater emphasis under the proposed approach.

The framework seeks to connect students' education, skills and potential employment opportunities through better coordination among existing systems. Career counselling could help students understand different pathways before completing school, including vocational courses, skill programmes

and employment-related services alongside conventional academic options. The proposal is still under discussion, and its final structure and implementation details have not been announced. If adopted, the framework could provide a more connected pathway from classroom learning to skills and employment.

The initiative reflects a broader focus on strengthening the transition between education and work by bringing academic records, skilling information, career guidance and employment services closer together. It could also help connect career planning with students' education and training records, enabling them to access relevant information about opportunities as they progress through school and skill development.

ONE DEGREE, SIX SKILLS: TAMIL NADU PLANS JOB-ORIENTED TRAINING EACH SEMESTER

Tamil Nadu is preparing to introduce a “One Degree, Six Skills” programme that will give undergraduate students an opportunity to learn at least one job-oriented skill alongside their regular degree course in every semester. The initiative is planned for students studying in the state's 181 government arts and science colleges. It is expected to begin from the even semester in January 2027 and will add industry-oriented training to the existing academic curriculum. Under the programme, students are expected to complete one skill course each semester, allowing them to gain six additional skills during a typical undergraduate degree. The approach is designed to connect classroom learning with practical abilities that can be useful in employment.

The skill courses are expected to be aligned with industry requirements, with participation from industry partners in shaping the training. The programme is part of Tamil Nadu's wider focus on improving employability and strengthening skill development among young people. The initiative seeks to address the gap



between academic qualifications and workplace requirements by giving students exposure to practical, job-related learning while they complete their degrees. The approach may help students identify interests earlier and understand how skills relate to careers. By spreading training across semesters, colleges can provide exposure to practical learning while students continue their academic studies. The programme complements state skill-development efforts. Students can therefore build practical abilities alongside their main academic qualification.

IIM JAMMU TO SET UP SATELLITE CAMPUS IN LEH

The Ladakh administration and the Indian Institute of Management Jammu (IIM Jammu) have signed a memorandum of understanding to establish an IIM Jammu satellite campus in Leh, expanding access to management education and professional opportunities in the Union Territory.

The facility will offer a four-year Bachelor of Business Administration (Honours) programme with an initial intake of 60 students. The programme is scheduled to begin in October 2026. According to officials, infrastructure was established within two months of the initiative being taken up by the Ladakh administration and IIM Jammu. Around 600 candidates have reportedly expressed interest in the 60 available seats.

The initiative will allow students in Ladakh to pursue management education closer to home, potentially reducing the need to move outside the Union Territory and lowering additional costs related to travel and accommodation. The Ladakh administration is preparing facilities for students and



academic activities. Recent inspections have focused on hostel arrangements, electricity, heating, bedding and other essential infrastructure. The initiative is part of efforts to expand higher education opportunities in the region. By bringing an IIM programme to Leh, the administration and institute aim to create pathways in management, entrepreneurship and professional development for local youth.

It also seeks to strengthen access to specialised, career-oriented higher education while providing students an opportunity to study within the Union Territory.

SEVA FIRST INNOVATION CHALLENGE 2026 OPENS PLATFORM FOR STUDENT INNOVATORS



Union Education Minister Pralhad Joshi has launched the Seva First Innovation Challenge 2026 at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, inviting students and young innovators to develop practical solutions to real-world problems.

The challenge is open to students from schools, ITIs, polytechnics, colleges and universities. It is organised by the Ministry of Education, AICTE and UGC, with IISc Bengaluru serving as the nodal institute for the southern region.

The initiative covers five states and three Union Territories and focuses on five themes: Clean and Sustainable Bharat, Prosperous Farmers and Prosperous Bharat, Healthy and Inclusive Bharat, Educated and Skilled Bharat, and Secure Bharat.

- Participation is divided into three categories.**
- Junior Category: For school students from Classes 6 to 12.
 - Technical Category: For students from ITIs, polytechnics and other technical education institutions.
 - Open Category: For college and university students and other young innovators.

Registration will remain open from September 25 to October 24, 2026, with the national finale scheduled in New Delhi in December.

The challenge aims to connect innovation with community needs through problem-solving, mentorship and interaction with institutions, startups and industry partners. It seeks to help promising ideas move beyond prototypes towards practical implementation and make innovation accessible to students across different levels of education. The programme encourages participants to identify challenges, build workable solutions and explore pathways for wider adoption.

G7'S 100-MILLION-BARREL OIL RELEASE: WHAT IT CAN DO, AND WHAT IT CAN'T



Ask anyone who runs trucks what happens when diesel jumps. The owner can absorb the increase and watch the margin shrink, or pass it on and risk losing the customer. Either way the cost keeps travelling. It reaches households through delivery charges and the price of ordinary things like vegetables.

On 2 October, the G7 agreed to release 100 million barrels of oil and diesel through the International Energy Agency (IEA) over four months, with a large part of the diesel coming out in the first 20 days. Diesel prices

were near record highs, the war with Iran was keeping supply tight, and Washington had spent the week pressing its allies to act, even floating a ban on American diesel exports.

The emphasis on diesel is designed to bring relief sooner. Crude in a storage tank does nothing for a truck until it has been refined, so releasing diesel early shortens the wait. The leaders also agreed to schedule refinery maintenance so plants don't all shut at once, and to run refineries harder where they can. They further committed not to restrict energy exports to one another. That last commitment addresses a familiar risk. When fuel gets scarce, a government with angry drivers on its hands is tempted to keep supplies at home, and the talk of a US export ban this week showed how live that temptation is. But a ban in one country doesn't remove a shortage. It can move it to another market. The G7 also called on other producers to avoid bans. Supporters of the plan point to early signs of confidence. According to Bloomberg, European and US diesel futures slumped after the announcement, though Brent crude initially fell and then recovered. An analyst quoted by Al Jazeera said the release should put some downward pressure on prices, particularly diesel.

Others point to the limits. Spread evenly over four months, 100 million barrels works out to roughly 830,000 barrels a day, according to

Euronews's calculation. That is a cushion, not a fix, against a disruption of this scale. Delivery is the other open question. In March the IEA agreed a 400 million barrel release. Bloomberg reported that the agency's chief said about a third of it had still not reached the market days before this announcement, and that President Trump had criticised Europe for being too slow. Whether the new barrels move faster is yet to be seen.

Reserves also have to be rebuilt eventually. The G7 has asked the IEA to report back within 20 days, including on how to replenish stocks. The leaders said they will also meet within the IEA in the coming days to discuss additional diesel releases if needed. How the 100 million barrels will be divided among members has not been disclosed.

In the coming weeks, a few plain measures will show how it is going. How much diesel has actually left storage? Has it reached the markets that are short? Are wholesale prices coming down, and are customers seeing that at the pump?

Beyond those near-term results, the plan raises a longer question. Reserves, refining and trade have been handled together, which many see as the right approach to a supply shock. Whether that leads to steadier supply once the four months are over will depend on what governments do with the time they have bought. For a truck owner, the answer will show up in small decisions: whether to take the next load, what to charge for it, and what is left afterwards.

RELIANCE'S ₹1 LAKH CRORE BIOGAS BET IS THE RIGHT IDEA BUT THE APPLAUSE IS PREMATURE

₹1 lakh crore is enough to command attention. Speaking at Madanapalle on 2 October 2026, Anant Ambani announced that Reliance Industries plans to invest that amount in compressed biogas (CBG) plants in Andhra Pradesh. He projected more than three lakh jobs and nearly ₹60,000 crore in state revenue over the coming decades. With Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on stage, the welcome was warm. But for now, it is only a promise.

The idea deserves support. Crop residue, cattle dung and food waste can be converted into fuel for vehicles, factories and businesses, with bio-manure as a by-product. For farmers, this could create a buyer for materials that are often difficult to dispose of. It is a practical connection between agriculture and energy, and I would like to see it succeed.

Building the plants, though, is only part of the challenge. The residue must be collected, stored and transported. Each step costs money. What looks like extra income on paper may leave a farmer with very little once labour and delivery expenses are deducted. And a farmer who has paid workers to gather residue cannot afford repeated collection delays or a long wait for payment. These arrangements will decide whether supplying a biogas plant becomes a dependable business.

The questions are straightforward. What will farmers receive per tonne? Who pays for transport? If a consignment is rejected, who bears the loss? Written agreements should answer these in language farmers understand, along with how prices will be revised and how disputes will be settled. Until those terms are published, the farmer's share of this ₹1

lakh crore is unknown.

The state government has a specific job here: publish delivery dates and hold Reliance to them. People should be able to find out where the plants will be built, their capacities and when they are expected to begin operating. Progress reports should disclose actual spending, operational plants and employment created. Temporary construction jobs should be reported separately from continuing work, and environmental claims should be backed by evidence.

The accompanying agricultural plans could help. Ambani outlined support for the Indian School of Agriculture, including training through Jio in Indian languages. Proposed tools include crop monitoring, precision irrigation and price intelligence. Their value will depend on whether farmers can use them to make better decisions.

The state is right to welcome an investment that could bring work and new businesses to rural communities. Welcoming it is the easy part. Making sure it delivers is the work that remains.

A few years from now, a farmer in Rayalaseema should have a dependable buyer for crop residue, a price that covers costs and leaves a worthwhile return, and payments that arrive on time. If that becomes a routine experience across the supply network, there will be good reason to applaud.



EXPERT



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Q. What do you mean by sanskriti?

Ans. Sanskriti (संस्कृति) is a Sanskrit word that means culture, but its meaning is much deeper than the modern idea of culture. It refers to the refinement, cultivation, and ennoblement of an individual and society through values, knowledge, discipline, and righteous conduct. Sanskriti literally means "that which has been refined, perfected, or cultivated."

In the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), Sanskriti is the process of transforming human life from a natural state to a refined, ethical, and spiritually elevated state. It is not merely about customs, dress, language, or festivals; it is about developing noble qualities and living according to Dharma. Indian tradition considers Sanskriti as the foundation of civilization. While civilization (Sabhyata) represents external development such as technology,

infrastructure, and institutions, Sanskriti represents internal development the cultivation of character, wisdom, compassion, and self-discipline. A famous saying highlights this distinction: "Sabhyata tells us what we have; Sanskriti tells us what we are."

In IKS, Sanskriti is transmitted through:

- Family Traditions: The family is the first school where children learn values such as respect, honesty, compassion, and responsibility. Traditions, customs, and moral principles are passed down from one generation to the next through daily life.
- Education under the Guidance of Teachers: Teachers / Acharya/ Gurus impart not only academic knowledge but also wisdom, discipline, and ethical conduct. The Guru–Shishya tradition emphasizes character building alongside intellectual development.
- Scriptures such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, and Mahabharata: These sacred texts provide timeless teachings on Dharma, duty, morality, and spiritual growth. They guide individuals in making righteous decisions and leading meaningful lives.
- Festivals and Rituals: Festivals and rituals strengthen family and community bonds while preserving cultural heritage. They also teach gratitude, devotion, cooperation, and respect for nature and traditions.
- Arts, Music, Dance, and Literature: Indian art forms preserve cultural values, history, and spiritual wisdom through creative expression. They nurture aesthetic appreciation, emotional balance, and moral sensitivity.
- Yoga and Meditation: Yoga promotes physical health, mental clarity, and emotional stability, while meditation develops inner peace and self-awareness. Together, they help individuals achieve harmony between body, mind, and spirit.
- Daily Practices that Cultivate Discipline and Gratitude: Simple practices such as offering prayers, showing respect to elders, speaking truthfully, and expressing gratitude instill self-discipline and positive values. These habits shape a responsible and compassionate personality.

Together, these channels of transmission preserve Sanskriti by shaping individuals with strong moral values, cultural awareness, and social responsibility, thereby contributing to a harmonious and ethical society,

A society may be highly civilized in terms of technology yet lack Sanskriti if it neglects ethics and compassion.

1. Greeting Others with Namaste as a Sign of

Respect: Saying Namaste expresses humility and acknowledges the divine presence in every individual. It promotes mutual respect, courtesy, and positive social relationships.

2. Speaking Truthfully Even When It Is Difficult: Truthfulness (Satya) is considered one of the highest virtues in Indian culture. Being honest builds trust, strengthens character, and fosters integrity in personal and professional life.

3. Caring for Parents and Elders: Respecting and caring for parents and elders reflects gratitude for their love, guidance, and sacrifices. It strengthens family values and preserves intergenerational wisdom.

4. Respecting Teachers and Knowledge: Teachers are regarded as guides who illuminate the path of wisdom and learning. Honouring teachers and valuing knowledge encourages lifelong learning and moral development.

5. Conserving Water, Trees, and Animals: Indian culture teaches that nature is sacred and should be protected. Conserving natural resources and caring for all living beings promotes environmental sustainability and ecological balance.

6. Celebrating Festivals to Strengthen Family and Community Bonds: Festivals bring people together to celebrate shared traditions, values, and cultural heritage. They foster unity, cooperation, joy, and a sense of belonging within society.

7. Practicing Charity (Dāna) and Selfless Service (Sevā): Helping those in need through charity and selfless service reflects compassion and generosity. These practices promote social harmony and encourage individuals to contribute to the welfare of society.

These everyday practices reflect the essence of Sanskriti by nurturing values such as respect, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and harmony. They help individuals lead ethical lives while contributing to a caring and culturally enriched society.

Difference Between Sanskriti and Sabhyata



Importance of Sanskriti:

1. Builds Moral Character: Sanskriti instills values such as honesty, compassion, discipline, and integrity in individuals. These qualities help people make ethical decisions and lead a virtuous life.
2. Promotes Social Harmony and Unity: By encouraging mutual respect, cooperation, and tolerance, Sanskriti strengthens relationships within families and communities. It fosters peaceful coexistence and collective well-being.
3. Preserves Cultural Heritage: Sanskriti safeguards traditions, languages, customs, festivals, and ancient knowledge for future generations. It helps maintain a society's unique cultural identity and continuity.
4. Encourages Responsible Citizenship: Sanskriti teaches individuals to fulfil their duties toward society, the nation, and the environment. It inspires civic responsibility, respect for laws, and active participation in community welfare.
5. Balances Material Success with Spiritual Well-being: While encouraging hard work and prosperity, Sanskriti also emphasizes inner peace, self-control, and ethical living. This balance leads to holistic and sustainable development.
6. Helps Individuals Lead Meaningful and Purposeful Lives: Sanskriti guides people to live according to Dharma, pursue knowledge, and serve others selflessly. It gives life a deeper sense of purpose beyond personal achievements.

The importance of Sanskriti lies in its ability to develop individuals who are morally upright, socially responsible, culturally rooted, and spiritually aware. It creates a strong foundation for a harmonious, ethical, and progressive society.

So, Sanskriti is the soul of Indian culture. It is the continuous process of refining human thoughts, words, and actions in accordance with Dharma. In the Indian Knowledge System, true progress is measured not only by economic or technological achievements but also by the cultivation of wisdom, virtue, compassion, and self-realization. A society rooted in Sanskriti creates individuals who are not only educated and prosperous but also ethical, responsible, and spiritually aware.

LET GO AND MOVE FORWARD: HOW LIFE'S MOMENTS SHAPE US

Life is full of moments. Some are happy, some are painful, and some are so strong that we cannot easily forget them. Sometimes, without realizing it, we get stuck in these moments. We think about them again and again, and slowly they begin to shape who we are. These moments can affect our lives in many different ways. They may change our nature, our behaviour, our attitude, and many other things about us. A calm person may become short-tempered, and a shy person may become confident. Nothing happens to us without leaving some mark.

When something good happens, it can lift us higher in life. Success, praise, or a lucky break can give us the confidence and energy to dream bigger. But we should be careful. A good moment should inspire us, not get into our mind and turn into pride. When success goes to our head, we stop learning and stop working hard. The same thing that raised us can then pull us down. So enjoy your achievements, thank the people who helped you, and

stay humble.

In the same way, when something bad happens, it can lower our morale. We may feel tired, hopeless, or unsure about the future. This is natural, and there is nothing wrong with feeling hurt. But a bad moment does not have to be the end of the story. Sometimes pain brings out a hidden strength in us. Our spirit can rise again and push us to achieve more than we ever thought possible. Many people have started their best chapter right after their hardest one.

In the end, everything depends on you. The moment itself is not as important as how you respond to it. Two people can face the same situation, and one may break down while the other grows stronger. The difference is the choice they make. You cannot control everything that happens, but you can control how you think, what you learn, and what you do next.

You don't have to be positive all the time. That is not realistic. Everyone has days when they feel low, angry, or

confused, and that is fine. But try not to stay there for too long. Try to let go of what has already happened. The past cannot be changed, however tightly we hold on to it. Holding on only wastes the energy we need for our future.

Instead, turn your attention to the upcoming opportunities. Each day brings new chances to learn, to grow, and to start again. When a new opportunity comes, give it your full focus. Put your heart, your time, and your effort into it. Let the lessons of the past guide you, but do not let the past control you.

Life will always bring good and bad moments. What matters is that we do not get stuck in them. Stay humble in good times, stay strong in bad times, let go of what is finished, and give your best to what is coming. This is how a moment becomes a lesson, and a lesson becomes strength.



WHEN CONSTANT DISTRACTION STEALS THE SIMPLE JOYS OF EVERYDAY LIFE



Think about the last time you ate a meal without looking at your phone. Can you remember it? For most of us, the answer is no. We eat while scrolling, walk while texting, and listen to

hands, the smell, and the first sip. A walk feels longer and richer when you watch the trees and the sky instead of a screen. These moments cost nothing, yet we miss most of them because our minds are somewhere else.

people while thinking about what to say next. We call this multitasking, and we are proud of it. But it may be quietly making our days feel emptier.

The truth is that our brains are not built to do many things at once. When we think we are multitasking, we are really switching quickly between tasks. Each switch costs a little time and a little energy. We make more mistakes, forget small details, and feel tired even when we have not done much. By evening, we have touched a hundred things but finished very few.

Doing one thing at a time works differently. When you give a task your full attention, you finish it faster and better. A simple email takes five minutes instead of fifteen. A book chapter stays in your memory. A conversation feels warmer because the other person can tell you are really listening. There is also a calm feeling that comes with focus, like a noisy room becoming quiet.

This habit also changes how we enjoy small things. A cup of tea tastes better when you are only drinking tea. You notice the warmth in your hands, the smell, and the first sip. A walk feels longer and richer when you watch the trees and the sky instead of a screen. These moments cost nothing, yet we miss most of them because our minds are somewhere else.

Of course, it is not easy to start. Our phones are always buzzing, and the world seems to demand quick replies. Many of us feel guilty when we are not busy every second. But being busy is not the same as being productive, and being distracted is not the same as being connected.

You can begin in small ways. Choose one task each morning and give it your full attention for twenty minutes. Keep your phone in another room during meals. When someone speaks to you, put everything down and look at them. If your mind wanders, which it will, simply bring it back without being angry at yourself. Like any skill, focus grows with practice.

Over time, you may notice real changes. Your work becomes cleaner. Your evenings feel less rushed. You remember more of your own life, because you were actually present for it. Even your sleep may improve, since a mind that is used to focusing is also better at resting.

We often believe that a good life needs big changes, such as a new job, a new city, or a new goal. But sometimes the change we need is much smaller. It is the decision to be fully where we are, doing what we are doing, for a few minutes at a time.

So the next time you sit down to eat, to work, or to talk with someone you love, try this. Do only that one thing. You may be surprised at how much more of life you find inside it.

CONSEQUENCES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AS SKIN DISEASES
IN POOR COUNTRIES

A study published by the Global Skin Observatory explains how climate change affects human skin health all around the world. Catastrophic weather phenomena such as floods, thunderstorms, and heatwaves had an effect on skin illnesses like hyperpigmentation and rashes, which are occurring in the 136 countries of the WHO. Of the states surveyed, 42.6% of respondents agree that skin ailments became substantially impacted by climatic factors. However, there is a visible discrepancy in the data: 55.6% of low-income countries reported such changes and 52.5% of lower-middle-income countries, while high-income countries provided only 28.3% of cases of occurrence of the phenomena.



Analyzing the regions, the situation seems the worst:
A. Western Pacific: 64.7% of countries reported worsening of the situation,
B. South-East Asia and Eastern Mediterranean: this percentage, however, has the same index of 60.0%,
C. Africa: 42.9% referred to the uncertainty of the data,
D. Europe: only 16.1% stated there were changes.
Therefore, this study shows the disparity in how different economies perceive the effects of global emissions on their populations.

REUSE OF PLASTIC BAGS: REPURPOSING THE WASTE TO REPLACE
CONVENTIONAL CARBON EMITTING MATERIALS

To promote green carbon free construction, a research study was conducted by the researchers at the CSIR - National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL), India. Published in the journal Process Safety and Environmental Protection and highlighted by famous Indian news houses in 2019, the study said turning waste plastic bags into lightweight composite tiles. The researchers processed the waste plastic bags into a plastic matrix, using them as the main base material, and incorporated fly ash, a coal combustion byproduct as a filler. This allowed the experiment to utilize two distinct waste streams rather than relying solely on discarded plastic. Triphenyl phosphate (TPP) was added as a flame retardant to reduce dependency on traditional red bricks and cement. Before turning plastic bags into composite tiles, there was a twin-screw extruder which used to process the materials. The researchers changed the loading amounts of flame retardant and fly ash at 5%, 10%, 15%, and 20% to examine how these changing proportions affected the processed tiles' physical and chemical properties. The findings of the study point to the optimal formulation that was determined to be LFTP3 that reportedly achieved a tensile strength of about 9.68 MPa and minimal linear burning rate of about 4.36 millimeters per minute. The addition of fly ash aided in improving mechanical strength, chemical resistance, and flame retardancy without any major effect on water absorption. Although impressive development has taken place, testing is still performed in laboratory conditions, leaving the practical real-life applications unattended.

OPERATION SINDOOR: A MILESTONE IN DRDO'S TECHNICAL
UPGRADATIONS

India's laser weapon program upgraded rapidly after Operation Sindoor incident in May 2025. The Private Industry is also invited for collaboration by CHES, a Hyderabad-based laboratory of DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation). The growing danger of drone attacks, alarms this organisation to level up its laser weapon strength beyond 30 kW. Selected private companies must complete the work within 240 days of entering the agreement, with the government holding all Intellectual Property, IP rights. The major advantage of laser technology is efficiency and rapid execution. This system attacks at the speed of light, making the cost per shot very low, equivalent to just a few liters of petrol. This can damage drones, drone swarms and the electric sensors located within 5 km range. For massive production, DRDO is selecting the partners under the first-of-production model (FoPM). The 30 kilowatt system is integrated with the national air grid, 'Sudarshan chakra', to guard critical infrastructure and civilian areas from the sky threats. The two kilometre small variant is already started in the production phase manufactured by Adani Astra, and BEL. The 10 kilowatt gets 'Acceptance of Necessity' permission, orders for 10 to 12 units processed for the Army and Air force produced by L&T and BEL (Bharat Electronics Limited).



COMMERCE MINISTRY EXTENDS RELIEF PROGRAM TIMELINE TO
SUPPORT EXPORTERS AMID GLOBAL RISKS

The Department of Commerce has extended timelines under its RELIEF program to assist exporters facing disruption due to geopolitics and changing trade conditions globally. The extension in timelines will help exporters get sufficient time to avail benefits from and fulfill obligations under the program. There has been uncertainty amongst businesses engaged in international trade due to geopolitical risk, disruption in supply chain, change in trade policies and fluctuations in the global market. The RELIEF program helps exporters deal with these risks and facilitate continuity in exporting goods and services. The extension of timeline is an effort to relieve stress on the business community in today's changing trade environment. The step is especially significant for the exporters that operate in foreign countries and depend upon international supply chains. This extra time will help businesses manage their documentation, financial obligations and other procedural requirements without any disruption in their operations. The government has been making various efforts to enhance the export infrastructure of India in view of the evolving global scenario. This latest timeline extension will help exporters get some additional time to cope up with the uncertainties prevalent in the global environment. For exporters, the extension offers more flexibility at a time when international trade continues to face several external pressures. The government's decision highlights the importance of supporting businesses and maintaining export momentum despite global uncertainties.



DIRECTOR OF MIRZAPUR HAILS JITENDRA KUMAR'S CAST AS A
'BLESSING IN DISGUISE'

Mirzapur has been successful at the box office, and now the director Gurmmeet Singh has shared some of the details related to the cast and other aspects of the film. The biggest difference was Jitendra Kumar's casting as Bablu Pandit, who earlier was played by Vikrant Massey in the web-series. As per the director, the casting change helped to give an entirely new identity to the character and helped them to rethink him in a way that the filmmakers wanted to. Contrary to the web-series version of Bablu, the movie's Bablu had more agency and played a key role in driving the narrative. According to the director, it was a blessing in disguise. Several memorable scenes of the film were born during the shoot as Singh disclosed. The highly debated car chase between Guddu and Munna saw a lot of improvisation from the actors Ali Fazal and Divyenndu Sharma. Another notable actor and character from the movie is Mohitt Maalik, who played the character of Birju Lohar in the movie. Maalik not only had grown a beard for the movie but also had written letters.



INDIA AND JAPAN FORGE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN HEALTHCARE
AND MEDICAL TECH

India and Japan have decided to forge a deeper cooperation in the fields of science and technology as well as in the field of health care and emerging technologies. On May 6, the Minister of Science and Technology Policy of Japan, Onoda Kimi, held a meeting in New Delhi with the Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, Jitendra Singh. The meeting dealt mostly with research in health care as well as with collaboration in medical devices. An important result of the meeting was the exchange of a Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of health and medical devices between Japan's Agency for Medical Research and Development, the Indian Council of Medical Research and India's Department of Science and Technology. Also, a Letter of Intent for the cooperation in Quantum Science and Technology was exchanged. It was revealed that there are numerous opportunities for collaboration in joint research, researcher exchanges, institutional collaborations and collaboration of industry with academia. It should be noted that the attention paid by India to the development of the fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum technology, clean energy and high-level computing. Both countries agreed to strengthen engagement between researchers, institutions and industries, with the broader aim of encouraging innovation and translating scientific research into practical solutions for society.



Srushti Panvalkar, Mridalini Tripathi & Afreen Mazgaonkar

PANGHAL'S FINAL PUNCH BRINGS GOLD; LOVLINA LANDED 1ST PLACE IN ASIAN GAMES

India concluded its campaign at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games 2026 with an impressive haul of six boxing medals, including three gold and three bronze. Ankush Panghal delivered a dominant performance in the men's 80 kg category, defeating South Korea's Kim Minseong 5–0 to secure gold, while Parveen Hooda added another gold in the women's 65 kg category by overcoming Chinese Taipei's Chen Nien-chin. On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, Lovlina Borgohain also produced a memorable performance, defeating China's Bao Ziyi to win gold in the women's 75 kg category. The victories of Hooda and Lovlina also earned them direct qualification for the 2027 World Boxing Championships, which will serve as the first official qualifying tournament for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics under Boxing Federation of India rules. India's other medal-winning boxers included 20-year-old debutant Priya Ghanghas, who claimed bronze in the women's 60 kg category after facing China's Yang Chengyu, while Kapil Pokhariya and Narender Berwal secured bronze medals in the men's 90 kg category against Uzbekistan's Turabek Khabibullaev and Kazakhstan's Aibek Oralbay, respectively. Together, these performances highlighted India's growing strength and depth in international boxing.



LAKSHYA RAICHANDHANI: GEN-Z'S DOUBLE HITMAN

After Hitman Rohit Sharma, another budding Hitman of our generation came into the limelight in the bilateral Youth Test Series against Australia Under-19 named as Lakshya Raichandhani held in the Niranjan Shah Cricket Stadium (previously called Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium) located in Rajkot in Gujarat. In the Cricket Tally of Youth test history, a sum of 7 Indian batsmen have reached a double century. Meanwhile, he became the only player to achieve this memorable feat twice. He played this innings in the Youth Test match against the Under-19 cricket team of Australia, where he obtained a brilliant score of 240 runs in 256 balls (completing the overall double century in 210 balls). In July 2026, he smashed 207 runs in 313 balls (finishing his overall innings at 207 runs off 324 balls) in another Youth Test against Sri Lanka Under-19 at the Galle International Stadium in Galle, Sri Lanka. This back to back continuous stellar performance garnered him praise from famous cricketers like Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and other veterans from the cricket fraternity. If he maintains this trajectory, a senior team call-up might not be far away. Other notable contributions include Ishan Om led the bowling side with 9 wickets, captain Yashvardhan Chauhan scored 122 runs alongside 8 wickets, and Mohit Ulva scored 92 runs while taking 3 wickets.



RELYING ON RELAY: INDIA'S QUADRUPLE VICTORY AT THE ASIAN GAMES

The Indian Relay Sports won a quadruple of medals at the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya City's Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium in Japan. This list is strengthening our nation's glorifying history in the Asian games relay sports as we held five consecutive women's 4x400m gold medals (2002–2018), initial men's 4x400m victory in 1951 followed by gold in 2023, and consistent podium finishes in mixed 4x400m relays since 2018. This year's standout performances: Gold in the Women's 4x400m relay was secured by Kiran Pahal, M. R. Poovamma, Prachi Choudhary, and Vithya Ramraj; the Silver was added by the Mixed 4x400m relay team of M. R. Poovamma, Vishal T. K., Vithya Ramraj, and Manu T. S.; and two Bronze medals were claimed by the Men's 4x400m relay (Dharmveer Choudhary, Manu T. S., Jay Kumar, and Vishal T. K.) and the Mixed 4x100m relay (Gurindervir Singh, Animesh Kujur, Sneha Sathyanarayana, and Harita Bhadra). The main personal highlight from this relay team is M. R. Poovamma, who became the first Indian track athlete to win medals across four continuous Asian Games series (2014, 2018, 2022, and 2026). Additionally, Vithya Ramraj achieved a rare triple-medal haul at a single Asian Games edition (Women's 4x400m gold, Mixed 4x400m silver, individual 400m hurdles bronze). This victory exemplifies equal gender contribution, proving that when men and women contribute equally toward a shared goal, they create a transformative national impact.



HISTORIC DOUBLE: INDIA'S MEN'S AND WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAMS STRIKE GOLD AT ASIAN GAMES

The women's and men's hockey teams from India have created history in the 2026 Asian Games by clinching the gold medals and automatically qualifying for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. In the closely contested finals, the women's team managed to end its 44-year wait for the Asian Games gold as it edged out defending champions China in a 1-0 scoreline. Lalremsiami netted the only goal in the 10th minute via an unstoppable reverse stick shot. Though China had possession of the ball for most part of the game, the defense from India proved to be solid. Saves from Savita Punia and Bichu Devi were vital in ensuring that the team maintained its narrow lead. Later on, India's men's team secured its second consecutive Asian Games gold as it defeated Malaysia by a margin of 5-1. Captain Harmanpreet Singh netted two goals, while Jugraj Singh, Hardik Singh and Shilanand Lakra scored one goal each. After equalizing the score, India regained control of the game and went on scoring further goals. It is the first time that the men's and women's hockey teams of India managed to win gold medals at the same Asian Games. While the women's team ended its 44-year drought, while the men successfully defended their title. Both teams now have a direct route to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, making the double triumph an important moment for Indian hockey.



ANOTHER GOLD FOR INDIA: TEAM TRIUMPHS IN MIXED TRAP SHOOTING

India kept up its golden streak at the 2026 Asian Games when Neeru Dhanda and Kynan Chenai won a gold medal in the mixed trap shooting competition on September 30 at the Aichi General Shooting Range in Japan. Dhanda and Chennai scored 34 points in the final, beating the old record in Asia, and won by two points from Qatar, which scored 32 points. China came third with 23 points. This gold medal became one more feather in the cap for Dhanda during the ongoing Asian Games. Just a day before her latest success, she became the first Indian woman to take the Asian Games gold medal in the individual trap competition. Besides, Dhanda won a silver medal in the trap shooting team women's category along with her teammates Manisha Keer and Aashima Ahlawat. With this new gold medal in the trap mixed team shooting, Dhanda earned her third medal at the ongoing Asian Games two golds and a silver one. It should be noted that she did not have any preparation before the Asian Games because of illness. For Chennai, the victory adds another major achievement to his shooting career, while their combined performance gives India another memorable gold as its shooting campaign continues to deliver on the Asian Games stage.



SUMIT NAGAL, DHAKSHINESWAR SURESH QUALIFY FOR ASIAN GAMES MEN'S SINGLES PRE-QUARTERFINALS

Tennis players of India, Sumit Nagal and Dhakshineswar Suresh have qualified for the men's singles pre-quarterfinals of the 2026 Asian Games by emerging victorious in the second round of the tournament. Nagal showed a dominant display against Seongchan Hong of South Korea, who was the bronze medalist of the 2023 Asian Games. Despite the tight fight in the first set, Nagal was able to establish himself in the second one and won the game by scoring 6-4, 6-0. His dominance on the baseline made him win the game. Dhakshineswar Suresh had a difficult time as he had to compete against Gunawan Trismuwantara of Indonesia. He stayed calm and emerged victorious with the score of 7-5, 7-6(2). It is worth mentioning that the second set went into a tie-break but the Indian managed to close it. The Indian players have been successful in qualifying for the next round of the tournament. Next up for Nagal will be the player of Uzbekistan, Sergey Fomin in the pre-quarterfinals. The same goes for Dhakshineswar Suresh, who will look forward to the next round.



IGNOU TEACHING
RECRUITMENT 2026



The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has released the official notification for the recruitment of 43 teaching posts including Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor.

- Key Highlights**
- Organization: Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)
 - Total Vacancies: 43 Posts
 - Application Mode: Online + Hard Copy

- Educational Qualification**
- Professor candidates generally require a Ph.D. with the prescribed teaching/research experience and research publications.
 - Associate Professor candidates require a relevant Ph.D., Master's degree with the prescribed marks and teaching/research experience.
 - Assistant Professor candidates generally require a Master's degree with the prescribed marks and NET/eligible Ph.D. qualification, subject to the applicable UGC regulations.

- Important Dates**
- Notification Date: September 2026
 - Application Start Date: 20 September 2026
 - Last Date to Apply Online: 20 October 2026
 - Last Date for Hard Copy Submission: 30 October 2026

- Pay Scale:**
- Professor: Academic Pay Level 14
 - Associate Professor: Academic Pay Level 13A
 - Assistant Professor: Academic Pay Level 10

- Application Fee**
- UR/OBC/EWS: ₹500
 - SC/ST/PwBD: No Fee

- Selection Process**
- Application Screening/Shortlisting
 - Interview
 - Document Verification
 - Final Selection

- How to Apply**
- Visit the official IGNOU recruitment portal
 - Select the teaching recruitment notification
 - Complete the online application
 - Enter academic, research and experience details
 - Upload the required certificates and documents
 - Pay the applicable fee and submit the application before 20 October 2026.
 - Candidates must also send the signed hard copy with the required documents before 30 October 2026.

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

PSSSB RECRUITMENT 2026 – 70 GROUP C POSTS

The Punjab Subordinate Services Selection Board (PSSSB) has invited online applications for 70 Group C vacancies under Advertisement No. 12 of 2026. Applications are open from 25 September to 19 October 2026.

- Highlights**
- Organisation: PSSSB
 - Advertisement No.: 12 of 2026
 - Total Vacancies: 70
 - Posts: Clerk, Driver, Field Artist, Translator and Others
 - Mode: Online

- Educational Qualification**
- Eligibility varies by post. Clerk posts generally require graduation with the prescribed computer qualification. Driver, Translator, Field Artist and other positions have specific educational, technical or skill requirements. Check the detailed advertisement for exact eligibility.

- Age Limit**
- Applicants must be aged 18 to 37 years. Age relaxation applies to eligible reserved categories as per Punjab Government rules.

- Salary**
- Remuneration will be provided according to the applicable Punjab Government pay level. Clerk and other posts may offer approximately ₹19,900–₹69,100, depending on the post and pay level.
 - Application Fee
 - General/Sports: ₹1,000
 - SC/BC/EWS: ₹250
 - Ex-Servicemen and Dependents: ₹200
 - PwD: ₹500

- Selection Process**
- Written Examination → Skill/Typing Test, where applicable → Document Verification → Medical Examination, where applicable.

- Important Dates**
- Application Start: 25 September 2026
 - Last Date: 19 October 2026



- How to Apply**
- Visit the PSSSB recruitment portal
 - Register and complete the application form.
 - Upload the required documents
 - Pay the applicable fee and submit the form before 19 October 2026.

For more details candidates are asked to visit the official website

CANARA BANK APPRENTICE RECRUITMENT 2026 APPLY ONLINE FOR 3,500 GRADUATE APPRENTICE POSTS



Canara Bank has released the official notification for the recruitment of 3,500 Graduate Apprentice posts for apprenticeship training across India.

- Key Highlights**
- Organization: Canara Bank
 - Post Name: Graduate Apprentice
 - Total Vacancies: 3,500 Posts
 - Category: Apprentice Recruitment

- Training Duration: 12 Months
- Application Mode: Online

- Educational Qualification**
- Candidates should possess a Bachelor's Degree/ Graduation in any discipline from a recognised university or institution. Candidates must also fulfil the prescribed local-language requirements for the State/UT for which they apply.

- Important Dates**
- Notification Date: September 2026
 - Application Start Date: 01 October 2026
 - Last Date to Apply: 17 October 2026

- Age Limit**
- Minimum Age: 20 Years
 - Maximum Age: 28 Years

Age relaxation will be applicable to eligible reserved-category candidates as per Government rules.

- Salary**
- Graduate Apprentice: ₹16,650 per month stipend

- Selection Process**
- Merit-Based Shortlisting
 - Local Language
 - Proficiency Test
 - Document Verification
 - Medical Examination, where applicable

- How to Apply**
- Visit the official Canara Bank/NATS apprenticeship portal, complete the required apprenticeship registration, enter personal and educational details, upload the required documents and submit the application before 17 October 2026.

For more details candidates are asked to visit the official website

Deepika Singh



Why Is a Keyboard Called a “Keyboard”?

Have you ever wondered why the device we use every day to type messages, emails and documents is called a keyboard? The word comes from two simple words: “key” and “board.” A key is something that allows us to operate or activate something, while a board is a flat surface containing or supporting a set of objects.

Early mechanical typewriters had individual keys arranged on a board-like structure. When a key was pressed, it activated a mechanism that placed a letter onto paper. As technology evolved, typewriter-style layouts were adopted by computers. The familiar QWERTY arrangement became widely used, and the term “keyboard” continued even after mechanical typewriters disappeared.

Today, keyboards are found everywhere from computers and smartphones to musical instruments and specialised machines.

THE TAKEAWAY: Some of the most familiar technology words are simply descriptions inherited from earlier inventions.



The Two Ropes Challenge

You have two ropes. Each rope takes exactly one hour to burn completely, but they do not burn at a uniform speed. One half could burn in 5 minutes and the other half could take 55 minutes.

You have no clock.

Using only the two ropes and a lighter, how can you measure exactly 45 minutes? Think carefully!

30 + 15 = 45 minutes.
finish in 15 minutes.
burning from both ends, so it will
time remaining, but now it is
Rope 2 has 30 minutes of burning
of Rope 2.
At that moment, light the other end
both ends.
minutes because it is burning from
Rope 1 will finish burning in 30
end of Rope 2 at the same time.
Light both ends of Rope 1 and one
Answer



TRADITIONAL
ASSAMESE KHAR!

This Week, We're Discovering Traditional Assamese Khar!

Khar is a distinctive traditional Assamese preparation known for its mild, alkaline flavour and simple ingredients. Traditionally prepared using an alkaline extract made from dried banana peels, Khar reflects Assam’s rich culinary heritage and its tradition of creating flavourful dishes from locally available ingredients.

Ingredients:

2 cups raw papaya, peeled and chopped, 1 small piece of dried banana peel or traditional Khar preparation, 1 tablespoon mustard oil, 1–2 green chillies, 1 teaspoon grated ginger, salt to taste, and water as required.

Preparation

- Wash and peel the raw papaya and cut it into small, bite-sized pieces.
- Prepare the traditional Khar water by soaking or filtering the alkaline extract obtained from dried banana peel. If ready-made Khar is available, it can be used according to the recommended quantity.
- Heat mustard oil in a pan and lightly sauté the grated ginger and green chillies.
- Add the chopped papaya and cook gently until it becomes soft and tender.
- Add the prepared Khar water and allow the mixture to simmer on low heat. The alkaline water gives the dish its distinctive traditional flavour.
- Add salt according to taste and continue cooking until the papaya is completely tender and the flavours are well combined.
- Taste and adjust the salt and Khar according to preference. The final preparation should have a mild, subtle and slightly alkaline flavour rather than a heavily spiced taste.



Serving Tip:

Serve Khar warm with hot steamed rice as part of a traditional Assamese meal. It pairs beautifully with simple vegetable preparations, dal or fish curry. Garnish lightly with fresh coriander or green chilli for a homestyle presentation.

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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