

January - 29

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Jnanpith award-winning author Amitav Ghosh launched his latest book, Wild Fictions.
- ❖ India will host the prestigious FIDE World Cup 2025 chess tournament this year.
- ❖ The New Delhi World Book Fair 2025 is going to be organised by the National Book Trust of India under the Ministry of Education.
- ❖ Gujarat organises the 1st International Olympic Research Conference to discuss financing and innovative economic models for hosting the Olympics in India.
- ❖ To combat financial fraud, the RBI has mandated that banks use the '1600xx' number series for all transactional calls and '140xx' for promotional calls.

NATIONAL

Unused Cess Funds for Construction Workers in India

Top 3 states			
(₹ crore)	Cess Collected	Used	Share utilised (%)
Kerala	3,457	3,457	100.00
Odisha	4,302	3,636	84.52
Madhya Pradesh	5,302	4,468	84.27
Bottom 3 states			
Andhra Pradesh	3,778	582	15.4
Gujarat	5,549	1,012	18.2
Assam	2,548	609	23.9

- ❖ The welfare boards for building and other construction workers of various States have not yet used the cess worth ₹70,744.16 crore.
- ❖ The cess is collected from the employers for the welfare of the workers.
- ❖ Since the implementation of the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act in 2005, the boards have collected ₹1,17,507.22 crore.
- ❖ The Act, passed in 1996, empowers the Construction Workers' Welfare Board constituted by State governments to levy cess from employers "at such rate not exceeding 2%, but not less than 1%" of the cost of construction incurred by an employer.

- ❖ As many as 5,73,48,723 workers have registered with 36 State Welfare Boards till September 30, 2024.
- ❖ Maharashtra spent ₹13,683.18 from the cess it collected in the last 19 years.
- ❖ It is followed by both Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh that provided ₹7,921.42 and ₹7,826.66 crore to the workers.
- ❖ Maharashtra has ₹9,731.83 crore as balance available in their accounts.
- ❖ Both Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh have balance of ₹7,547.23 and ₹6,506.04 respectively with them.

INTERNATIONAL

7 new members into WEF's GPAP




- ❖ The Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP) is an initiative launched by the World Economic Forum.
- ❖ It has recently reached a significant milestone by expanding its network to include 25 countries.
- ❖ Seven new countries — Angola, Bangladesh, Gabon, Guatemala, Kenya, Senegal, and Tanzania — have joined this collaborative effort.
- ❖ The plastics sector is responsible for an estimated 1.8 billion tonnes of the greenhouse gas emissions annually.
- ❖ Every year, six million tonnes of plastic waste enter the oceans, with much more polluting land.

US and OECD Global Tax Deal

- ❖ Donald Trump issued an executive order which effectively pulled the US out of the OECD Global Tax Deal

- ❖ The Global Tax Deal was designed to ensure that multinational corporations paid a fair share of taxes in the countries where they operate.
- ❖ The European Union, Britain and other countries have adopted the 15% global corporate minimum tax
- ❖ The U.S. has a roughly 10% global minimum tax, part of Trump's landmark 2017 tax cut package.



Five Things to Know About Trump's Global Minimum Tax Order

The incoming Trump administration issued a day-one executive order on the global minimum tax agreement known as Pillar Two, which seeks to ensure multinational corporations pay at least 15 percent in income tax.

Five Things to Know

Since the relationship between the US and the OECD minimum tax deal is complex, here are the five elements most key to understanding the situation at hand:

1. The US tax code is not aligned with the tax base promoted by the OECD, and only Congress can change that.
2. The US tax code is, overall, significantly tougher than the Pillar Two agreement requires.
3. Congress has never enacted major legislation to support the agreement.
4. The agreement contains some significant downsides for the US.
5. The US could retaliate against the agreement's main enforcement mechanism if it is applied to US income—and the US may also retaliate against other discriminatory taxes by OECD members.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

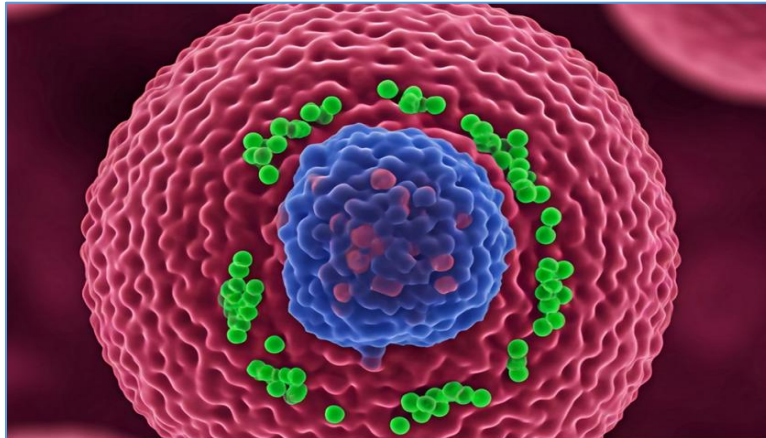
Active Cooled Scramjet Engine Test



- ❖ The DRDO recently demonstrated the scramjet combustor ground test for 120 seconds for the first time in India.
- ❖ The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has called it a crucial milestone in developing next-generation hypersonic missiles.

- ❖ Hypersonic missiles are a class of advanced weaponry that travel at speeds greater than 'Mach 5' – five times the speed of sound.
- ❖ In December 2020, the DRDO has inaugurated the advanced Hypersonic Wind Tunnel (HWT) test facility in Hyderabad.

CDSCO – Qartemi



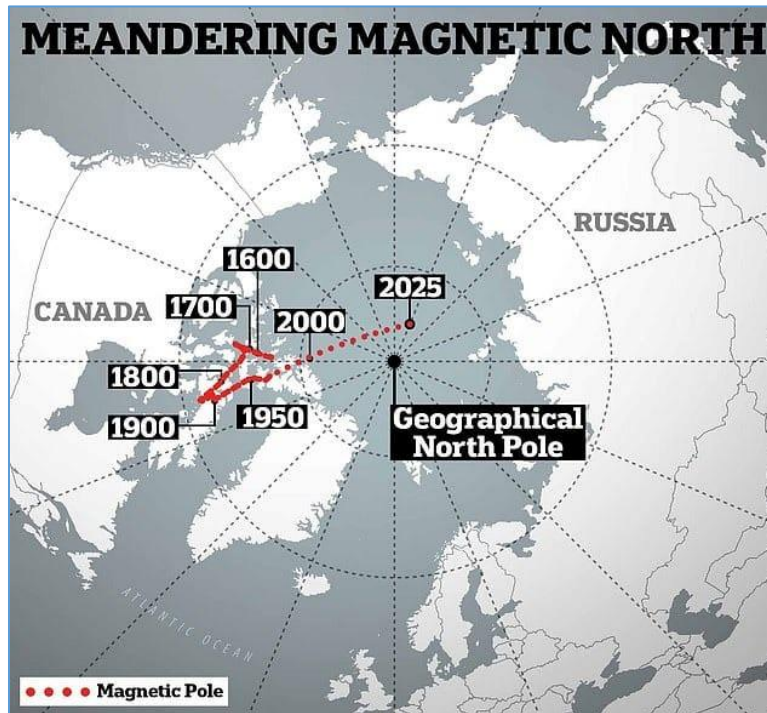
Immuneel Therapeutics launches Qartemi, India's first global CAR T-cell therapy for adult B-cell non-Hodgkin lymphoma (B-NHL). This personalized therapy offers advanced, affordable cancer treatment, addressing critical gaps in India's immunotherapy landscape. With 83.3% ORR in trials, it's redefines precision medicine and provides new hope for aggressive blood cancer patients.

- ❖ Bengaluru-based biotech startup, has launched Qartemi, a CAR-T cell therapy for patients with B-cell Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (B-NHL).
- ❖ This "living drug" has been approved for blood cancer patients in India who suffer from an advanced or relapsed stage of the disease.
- ❖ This is different from a traditional chemical drug, made from cells to have a long-lasting immune response.
- ❖ India faces around 1,20,000 new cases and over 70,000 deaths annually from leukemia, lymphoma, and multiple myeloma.

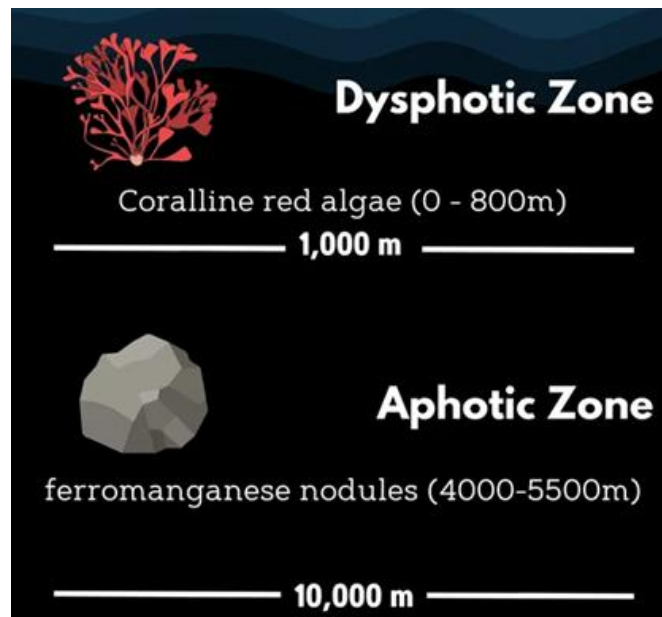
Magnetic north pole at Russia

- ❖ The pole was first discovered about 400 kilometers from Canada in the year 1831.
- ❖ However, they have drifted continuously towards Russia from then and up to date have travelled over 400 km in a hundred years.
- ❖ The speed at which the magnetic North Pole moves has been changing.

- ❖ From 1990 to 2000, the pole drifted at a rate of 55 kilometers per year.
- ❖ The speed had decreased to about 35 kilometers per year by 2015.



Dark Oxygen



- ❖ The Scientists have discovered Dark Oxygen in the depths of the Pacific Ocean, challenging long-held beliefs about how oxygen is produced on Earth.



- ❖ Until now, it was thought that oxygen was created only through photosynthesis, a process that requires sunlight.
- ❖ The phenomenon was discovered in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, a vast flat area of the ocean floor between Hawaii and Mexico.
- ❖ Oxygen production at these depths also occurs through the naturally occurring polymetallic nodules that act like natural batteries.
- ❖ They are splitting seawater (H₂O) into hydrogen and oxygen through electrolysis.

REPORTS AND INDICES

Global Firepower Index 2025

- ❖ The United States of America has reaffirmed its top position in military strength.
- ❖ It is following by, Russia and China in the second position and third respectively.
- ❖ India has emerged as a significant military power in the 4th rank.
- ❖ South Korea is ranking 5th followed by Japan at 7th, Türkiye at 8th, and Iran at 14th in the index.
- ❖ Pakistan's ranking stood at 12th place dropped from 9th position.

Rank 2025	Country	Power Index 2025	Total Military Personnel 2025 (est)
1	USA	0.0744	21,27,500
2	Russia	0.0788	35,70,000
3	China	0.0788	31,70,000
4	India	0.1184	51,37,550
5	South Korea	0.1656	38,20,000
6	UK	0.1785	11,08,860
7	France	0.1878	3,76,000
8	Japan	0.1839	3,28,150
9	Turkiye	0.1902	8,83,900
10	Italy	0.2164	2,89,000

THE World University Rankings by Subject 2025

- ❖ The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), long a powerhouse in STEM fields, has ascended to the top of the rankings in Arts and Humanities.
- ❖ Stanford University maintained its position at the forefront of Education Studies, Law, and Psychology.

- ❖ Harvard University solidified its dominance in Engineering and Life Sciences, and the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) retained its top spot in Physical Sciences.
- ❖ The University of Oxford has emerged as a leader in both Computer Science and Medical and Health.
- ❖ No Asian university has topped an individual subject ranking.
- ❖ But China, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan demonstrated strong performances across multiple disciplines.

Ranking	Top Institution	Country
Arts and Humanities	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	USA
Business and Economics	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	USA
Computer Science	University of Oxford	UK
Education Studies	Stanford University	USA
Engineering	Harvard University	USA
Law	Stanford University	USA
Life Sciences	Harvard University	USA
Medical and Health	University of Oxford	UK
Physical Sciences	California Institute of Technology	USA
Psychology	Stanford University	USA
Social Sciences	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	USA

STATES

Bison Population in Jharkhand



- ❖ The Jharkhand Forest department has initiated a study to revive the dwindling population of Bison, popularly known as Gaur, at Palamu Tiger Reserve.
- ❖ Bison has already gone extinct from across Jharkhand, excluding the PTR where merely 50-70 bison are surviving
- ❖ Domestic cattle, numbering over 1.5 lakh, occupy the bison's habitat.



- ❖ Bison is the tallest species of wild cattle found in India and largest extant bovine.
- ❖ Approximately 85% of the global population is present in India.
- ❖ They are Vulnerable in IUCN Red List.

Samman Sanjeevani' App



- ❖ Haryana launched the 'Samman Sanjeevani' app.
- ❖ The app tracks benefits under the 'Mahila Evam Kishori Samman Yojana'.
- ❖ The Sanitary napkins are distributed to BPL women and girls aged 10-45 years via Anganwadi centers and schools.
- ❖ The app ensures timely delivery, collects beneficiary data, and updates monthly benefits.

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS

55th World Economic Forum



- ❖ The 55th World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting was held with the theme "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age", at Davos, Switzerland.



- ❖ Football legend David Beckham, fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg, and architect Riken Yamamoto was awarded the prestigious Crystal Awards.
- ❖ It recognised their contributions to social, environmental, and creative progress.
- ❖ High-level representatives from six Indian states—Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Kerala participated in the event.
- ❖ WEF is a Swiss nonprofit foundation, established in 1971 and headquartered in Geneva.

SPORTS

Khelo India Winter Games 2025

- ❖ The fifth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025 concluded in Leh, Ladakh.
- ❖ The first phase was held in Ladakh from January 23 to 27 while the second will be held in Jammu and Kashmir from February 21 to 25.
- ❖ Currently, Ladakh lead the medal tally with four golds, two silvers and a bronze.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu ranked second with three gold and two silvers.

Rank	State/UT/Team	Gold medals	Silver medals	Bronze medals	Total medals
1	Ladakh	4	2	1	7
2	Tamil Nadu	3	2	0	5
3	Maharashtra	2	4	4	10
4	Telangana	2	1	2	5
5	Karnataka	1	2	1	4

IMPORTANT DAYS

Indian Newspaper Day 2025 - January 29

- ❖ The date commemorates the publication of the first Indian newspaper, Hickey's Bengal Gazette, in 1780.
- ❖ James Augustus Hickey is considered the “Father of Indian press”.
- ❖ Theme of 2025 is “Role of Print Media in the Digital Age”.
- ❖ The oldest existing newspaper in India is Mumbai Samachar (formerly Bombay Samachar) published for the first time in 1822 in Gujarati.

- ❖ The first Tamil newspaper in India was the Swadesa Mitran, which was started as a weekly in 1882 by G. Subramanya Aiyer.



MISCELLANEOUS

Umamaheshwara metal sculpture



- ❖ A Umamaheshwara metal sculpture has been found at Taggunje in Ajri village of Kundapura taluk in Udupi district of Karnataka.
- ❖ It was probably made in the 17th century in the 12th century style.
- ❖ It has writing in Kannada with script of the 17th century.
- ❖ The Umamaheshwara cult was founded by Soma Sharma of Gujarat in the 10th-11th century.

- ❖ Within no time, it became popular in the Indian sub-continent.
- ❖ It was influenced by Vajrayana Buddhism, and love is its central theme.

Wealth of billionaires Annual - Oxfam report

- ❖ The Oxfam International report, titled Takers, Not Makers, highlights the wealth extracted from India during British colonial rule
- ❖ Between 1765 and 1900, the UK drained \$64.82 trillion from India, with \$33.8 trillion going to the top 10%.
- ❖ In 1750, India contributed 25% to global industrial output, but by 1900, this fell to 2%.
- ❖ In 2024, billionaires' wealth increased by a rate three times faster than 2023.
- ❖ Over 3.5 billion people continue to live on less than \$6.85 per day.
- ❖ The richest 1% now possesses more wealth than 95% of the global population.



FORTUNE FRENZY

\$299 bn: The wealth of billionaires in Asia increased in 2024

204: New billionaires getting minted —an average of nearly four every week in 2024

41: New billionaires in Asia in 2024

\$30 mn: The richest 1% in the Global North extracted an hour from the Global South in 2023

