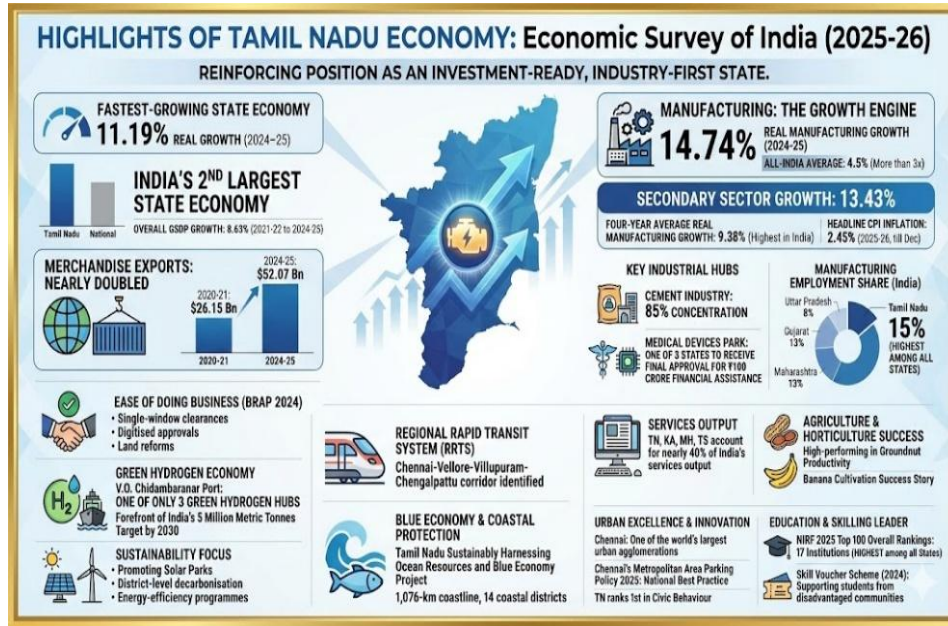


February - 06

## TAMIL NADU NEWS

### Highlights of Tamil Nadu economy



- ❖ The Economic Survey of India (2025-26) reinforces Tamil Nadu's position as an investment-ready, industry-first State.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu stands out as the fastest-growing State economy, registering 11.19% real growth in 2024-25.
- ❖ As India's second-largest State economy, Tamil Nadu is also a major contributor to national growth.
- ❖ This performance is driven primarily by the secondary sector, which grew by 13.43%.
- ❖ Within this, manufacturing has emerged as a key growth engine, recording 14.74% real growth — more than three times the all-India average of 4.5%.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu also leads every State in four-year average real manufacturing growth (2021-22 to 2024-25) at 9.38%, while its overall GSDP grew by 8.63%.
- ❖ Headline CPI inflation declined to 2.45% in 2025-26 (till December).
- ❖ The State's merchandise exports have nearly doubled from \$26.15 billion in 2020-21 to \$52.07 billion in 2024-25.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu is among the few States where 85% of the cement industry is concentrated.



- ❖ It is also one of three States to receive final approval for financial assistance of ₹100 crore to establish a Medical Devices Park under the Scheme for Promotion of Medical Devices Parks.
- ❖ According to the Survey, Tamil Nadu contributes 15% of India's manufacturing employment.
- ❖ It is the highest among all States.
- ❖ Tamilnadu is surpassing Gujarat (13%), Maharashtra (13%), and Uttar Pradesh (8%).
- ❖ Under the Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) 2024, Tamil Nadu has enhanced ease of doing business through single-window clearances, digitised approvals and land reforms, while promoting solar parks, district-level decarbonisation plans and energy-efficiency programmes.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu has secured a pivotal role in India's green hydrogen economy with the designation of the V.O. Chidambaranar Port as one of only three green hydrogen hubs under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.
- ❖ This positions the State at the forefront of India's target to produce five million metric tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030.
- ❖ The Chennai-Vellore-Villupuram-Chengalpattu corridor has also been identified as a potential Regional Rapid Transit System route.
- ❖ The Survey takes note of the Tamil Nadu Sustainably Harnessing Ocean Resources and Blue Economy Project addressing climate vulnerabilities along the State's 1,076-kilometre coastline across 14 coastal districts.
- ❖ It further notes that Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Telangana together account for nearly 40% of India's services output.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu is also identified among high-performing States in groundnut productivity, alongside Gujarat and Karnataka, due to improved varieties, multiple crop cycles and sustained policy focus on oilseeds.
- ❖ Its achievements in banana cultivation are similarly recognised as region-specific success stories in horticulture.
- ❖ On urban development, the Survey highlights Chennai to be one of the world's largest urban agglomerations.
- ❖ Chennai's Metropolitan Area Parking Policy 2025 is cited as a national best practice.
- ❖ And Tamil Nadu ranks first in Civic Behaviour in the India Today Gross Domestic Behaviour Survey.
- ❖ In higher education, 17 institutions from Tamil Nadu feature in the NIRF 2025 Top 100 Overall Rankings — the highest among all States.

- ❖ The Skill Voucher Scheme launched in 2024 by the Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department is also acknowledged for supporting students from disadvantaged communities.

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **World Seafood Congress 2026**

- ❖ India will host the World Seafood Congress (WSC) 2026 for the first time in Chennai.
- ❖ World Seafood Congress is a biennial global forum on fisheries and aquaculture.
- ❖ WSC 2026 is jointly organised by the International Association of Fish Inspectors, PDA Ventures, and the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB).
- ❖ It is co-organised by the Department of Fisheries with support from the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Ministry of Earth Sciences, and NITI Aayog.
- ❖ The congress will focus on sustainable seafood trade, fisheries technology, food security, and global collaboration.



### **Buddhist Circuit in Northeast India**

- ❖ Union Budget 2026–27 announced a new scheme to develop a Buddhist Circuit in the Northeast.
- ❖ The scheme aims to preserve and develop Buddhist temples and monasteries in the northeastern States.
- ❖ It focuses on improving tourism infrastructure and connectivity around Buddhist pilgrimage sites.

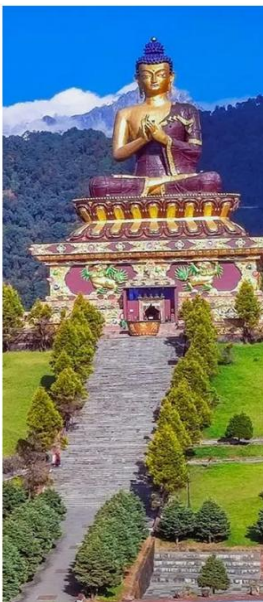
- ❖ The initiative is part of the government's plan to promote cultural heritage and regional development.

## BUDDHIST CIRCUIT: A NEW SACRED TRAIL IN THE NORTH EAST

New Buddhist Circuit scheme across  
Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Assam,  
Mizoram, Tripura and Manipur

→→  
Focus on preservation and restoration  
of Buddhist temples and monasteries

→→  
Improved pilgrim amenities across  
the identified states



## 2026 Delhi Declaration



- ❖ The 2026 Delhi Declaration was adopted during the second India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in New Delhi.
- ❖ The meeting marked 10 years since the first India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Bahrain.
- ❖ The Declaration was jointly issued by India and the League of Arab States.
- ❖ It supported the Arab Peace Initiative, 2002 for a peaceful resolution of the Israel-Palestine issue.



- ❖ It emphasised respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries such as Sudan, Libya, and Somalia.
- ❖ It condemned Houthi attacks in Yemen and supported Yemen's unity and stability.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### India-U.S. Trade Deal 2026

- ❖ India and the U.S. finalised a major trade understanding in 2026 to reduce tariffs and expand bilateral trade.
- ❖ India has agreed to import goods worth about 100 billion US dollars annually from the United States for the next five years.
- ❖ The United States has agreed to reduce tariffs on Indian goods from 50% to about 18%.
- ❖ Key imports from the United States will include energy products, aircraft and aircraft parts, technology goods, and selected agricultural products.
- ❖ India has kept sensitive sectors such as dairy, genetically modified (GM) crops, poultry, and cereals protected.
- ❖ The agreement aims to improve market access and strengthen economic and strategic ties between the two countries.

**India-US Trade Deal 2026**

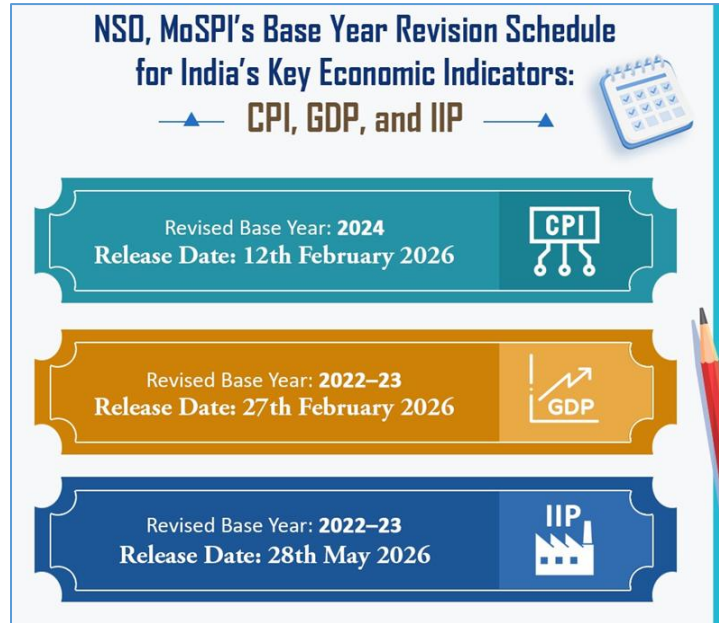
- ✓ The US will charge a reduced **Reciprocal Tariff: 25% → 18%**
- ✓ India to reduce tariffs & barriers against US to **ZERO**
- ✓ PM Modi committed to **'BUY AMERICAN'** -  
Over **\$500 Billion** of US Energy, Technology, & More!

## ECONOMY NEWS

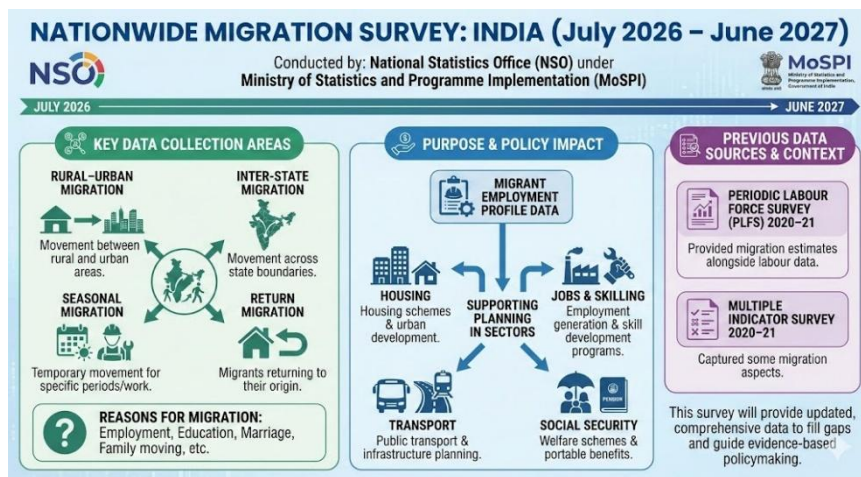
### New Consumer Price Index Series

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released details of a new Consumer Price Index (CPI) series.
- ❖ The base year of CPI has been revised from 2011-12 to 2023-24.

- ❖ CPI means an index used to measure retail inflation based on changes in prices paid by consumers.
- ❖ The weight of food and beverages has been reduced from about 46% to about 37% in the new series.
- ❖ The revision is based on the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2023–24.
- ❖ CPI is the main inflation indicator used by the RBI for monetary policy decisions.



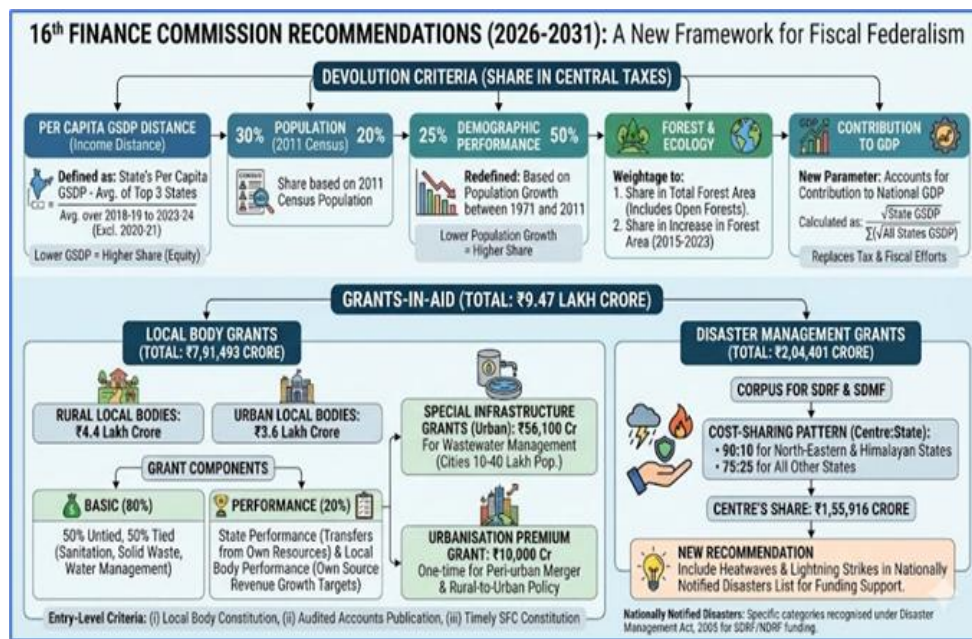
## Nationwide Migration Survey



- ❖ The National Statistics Office (NSO) will conduct a nationwide Migration Survey from July 2026 to June 2027.

- ❖ The survey will be conducted by NSO under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- ❖ The survey will collect data on rural-urban, inter-state, seasonal, and return migration, and reasons for migration.
- ❖ It will also cover the employment profile of migrants to support planning in housing, jobs, transport, and social security.
- ❖ Earlier migration data were collected through the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2020-21 and Multiple Indicator Survey 2020-21.

## 16<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission recommendations



### Per Capita GSDP Distance (Income Distance)

- ❖ The 16th FC has defined income distance as the difference between the per capita GSDP of a state and the average of the per capita GSDP of the top three large states with the highest per capita GSDP.
- ❖ Per capita GSDP has been computed as the average over the period 2018-19 and 2023-24, excluding the pandemic year of 2020-21.
- ❖ States with a lower per capita GSDP will receive a higher share on this parameter, to maintain equity among states.

### Population

- ❖ On this parameter, the share in devolution is determined based on the share in the population as per the 2011 Census.

### Demographic Performance

- ❖ The 15th FC had introduced this parameter to award states for controlling population on the basis of Total Fertility Rate (TFR).
- ❖ The 16th FC has redefined this to account for population growth between 1971 and 2011 instead of relying on change in TFR.
- ❖ States with lower population growth will have a higher share under this parameter.

#### **Forest**

- ❖ The 16th FC has assigned weightage to both the share of a state in the overall forest area, and its share in the increase in overall forest area between 2015 and 2023.
- ❖ Further, it has also considered open forests in arriving at the total forest area.
- ❖ In contrast, the 15th FC had considered only dense and moderately dense forests, and defined the parameter only in terms of share in the overall forest area.

#### **Contribution to GDP**

- ❖ The 16th FC has introduced this parameter to account for the contribution to national GDP.
- ❖ This replaces the tax and fiscal efforts parameter used by the 15th FC which rewarded states with a higher tax collection efficiency.
- ❖ Contribution to GDP by a state is calculated as the squared root of its GSDP to the sum of squared root of GSDP of all states.
- ❖ GSDP of each state has been measured as the average nominal GSDP between 2018-19 and 2023-24 (excluding the pandemic year of 2020-21).

#### **Grants-in-aid**

- ❖ The 16th FC has recommended grants worth Rs 9.47 lakh crore over the five-year period.
- ❖ These comprise grants for:
  - Urban and rural local bodies, and
  - Disaster management.
- ❖ The 16th FC has discontinued the following grants recommended by the 15th FC:
  - Revenue deficit grants,
  - Sector-specific grants, and
  - State -specific grants.

#### **Grants for local bodies**

- ❖ The 16th FC has recommended grants worth Rs 4.4 lakh crore and Rs 3.6 lakh crore for rural and urban local bodies, respectively.





- ❖ Total Local Body Grants will be ₹7,91,493 crore
- ❖ These grants are divided into basic (80%) and performance-based (20%) components.
- ❖ Special Infrastructure Grants and Urbanisation Premium Grants have also been recommended for urban local bodies.
- ❖ All local body grants will be made available upon fulfilment of three entry-level criteria:
  - Constitution of the local bodies as per the Constitution,
  - Publication of provisional and audited accounts of the local bodies in the public domain, and
  - Timely constitution of the State Finance Commission.

#### **Basic grants**

- ❖ 50% of the basic grant will be untied and the rest 50% will be tied to:
  - Sanitation and solid waste management, and/or
  - Water management.

#### **Performance grants**

- ❖ These grants for local bodies are further divided into state performance grants and local body performance grants.
- ❖ State performance grants will be made available upon meeting a minimum benchmark for transfers to local bodies from their own resources.
- ❖ Local body performance grants are linked to achievement of minimum targets specified by the Commission for own source revenue growth.

#### **Special infrastructure grants**

- ❖ This component will be tied to the development of a comprehensive wastewater management system in cities with population between 1040 lakh as per the 2011 census.
- ❖ Grants worth Rs 56,100 crore have been recommended over five years.

#### **Urbanisation premium grant**

- ❖ These will be released to states as a one-time grant for:
  - Merger of peri-urban villages into adjoining urban local body areas and
  - Formulation of a Rural to Urban Transition Policy. Rs 10,000 crore have been recommended under the urbanisation premium component.

#### **Disaster management grants**

- ❖ The Commission has recommended disaster management corpus of Rs 2,04,401 crore for State Disaster Relief and Management Funds (SDRF and SDMF).

- ❖ The cost-sharing pattern between the centre and states is recommended to be:
  - 90:10 for north-eastern and Himalayan states, and
  - 75:25 for all other states.
- ❖ Centre's share in total will be Rs 1,55,916 crore.
- ❖ It has recommended that heatwaves and lightning strikes be included in India's list of nationally notified disasters.
- ❖ Nationally Notified Disasters are specific disaster categories that are recognised under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.
- ❖ It is for the purpose of relief, response, and funding support from government disaster funds (State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF))
- ❖ Currently it includes cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, fires, floods, tsunamis, hailstorms, landslides, avalanches, cloudbursts, pest infestations, frost and cold waves.

## ENVIRONMENT NEWS

### Rare Snowfall in Saudi Arabia



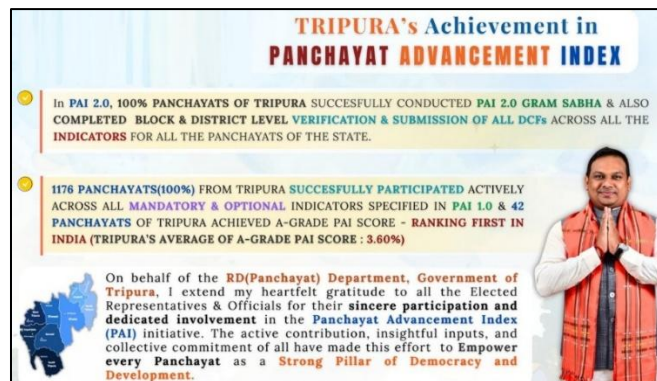
- ❖ The Al-Jawf region of Saudi Arabia recorded snowfall in its interior desert areas for the first time in recorded history in late 2025.
- ❖ The snowfall occurred around November–December 2025 after heavy rain and hail.

- ❖ The event was caused by a cold weather system moving from the Mediterranean region.
- ❖ Temperatures dropped close to 0 degrees Celsius, allowing snow to settle on desert sand.
- ❖ Snow was reported in parts of Al-Jawf, Al-Nafūd desert, and areas near the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- ❖ Northern highland regions like Tabuk receive winter snow, but snowfall in Al-Jawf interior deserts is extremely rare.

## REPORTS AND INDICES

### Panchayat Advancement Index 2.0

- ❖ Tripura secured the first position in the Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0.
- ❖ The PAI 2.0 was released by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India.
- ❖ Jugal Kishore Nagar Village Committee in Sepahijala district ranked first in India with a score of 88.44.
- ❖ South Nalchar gram panchayat ranked third (88.14), and Chesrimai gram panchayat ranked fourth (87.85).
- ❖ All 1,176 gram panchayats in Tripura achieved 100% data submission and verification for the year 2023–24.
- ❖ PAI measures the performance of gram panchayats on governance and service delivery.



## STATE NEWS

### Piloo AI Accounting App

- ❖ Andhra Pradesh launched the Piloo AI accounting and billing application.

- ❖ Pilloo AI is a voice-based accounting app designed for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).
- ❖ It allows users to create invoices, record sales, payments, and expenses using spoken commands.
- ❖ The app supports five Indian languages for easy use by small traders and entrepreneurs.
- ❖ It uses artificial intelligence (AI) to automate data entry from bills and bank statements.



### **Matabari Tourism Circuit – Tripura**



- ❖ A review meeting on the development of the Matabari Tourism Circuit in Tripura was chaired by the Union Minister of Communications and Development of North Eastern Region.



- ❖ The project aims to develop Tripura as a centre of cultural, spiritual, and eco-tourism.
- ❖ Key places included are Agartala, Neer Mahal, Sepahijala, Udaipur (Tripura Sundari Temple / Matabari), Chabimura, and Dumboor Lake.

### **Ancient Telugu Epigraphy**

- ❖ A rare early 8th-century CE Telugu inscription has been discovered at Pitikayagulla in Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The inscription is written in early Telugu script and shows the transition of Telugu from Prakrit influence to an independent language.
- ❖ It records the construction of a new embankment, known as nava katta.
- ❖ The work is attributed to Pranimilli Achari, who is believed to have been a sculptor or craftsman.
- ❖ The inscription is linked to the Renadu region, though the ruling king is not named.



## **PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS**

### **Grammy Awards 2026**

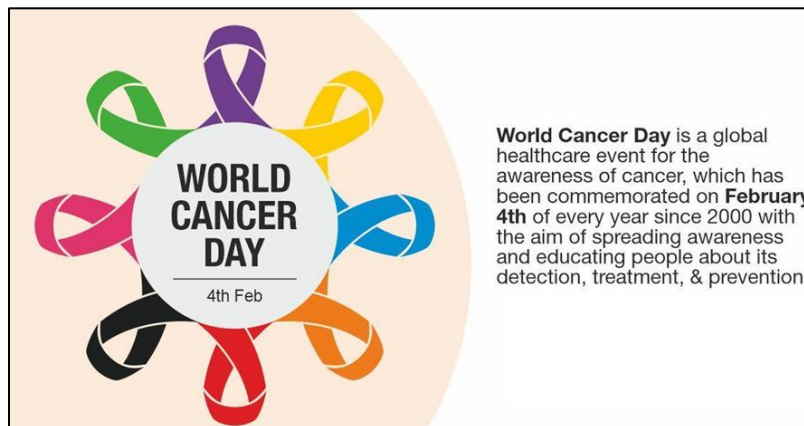
- ❖ The 68th Annual Grammy Awards were held in Los Angeles to honour outstanding achievements in the global music industry.

- ❖ The Dalai Lama won his first Grammy Award in the category of Best Audio Book, Narration and Storytelling Recording.
- ❖ Steven Spielberg won Best Music Film for Music for John Williams, completing his EGOT (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, Tony) with his first Grammy Award.
- ❖ “Golden” from K-pop Demon Hunters won Song Written for Visual Media, becoming the first K-pop song to win a Grammy Award.



## IMPORTANT DAYS

### World Cancer Day 2026 – February 04

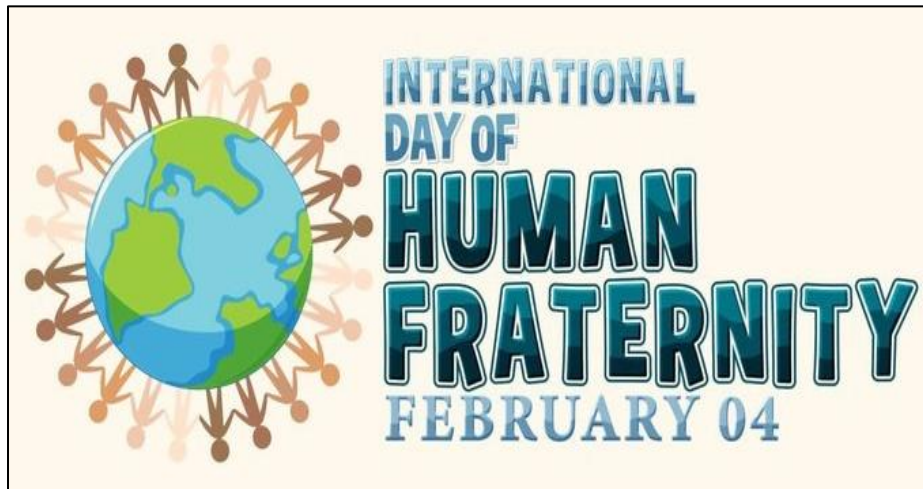


- ❖ The day was observed to raise awareness about cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment.

- ❖ It was established following the World Summit Against Cancer for the New Millennium, held in Paris in 2000.
- ❖ The day is led by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC).
- ❖ The theme for the year 2026 is “United by Unique”.

### **International Day of Human Fraternity 2026 – February 04**

- ❖ The day is observed to promote peace, unity, and mutual respect among people of different religions and cultures.
- ❖ It was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2019.
- ❖ The observance is inspired by the Document on Human Fraternity, signed in Abu Dhabi in 2019.
- ❖ The theme for the year 2026 is “Dialogue Over Division.”








## **MISCELLANEOUS NEWS**

### **QS Europe Rankings 2026**

- ❖ The QS Europe Rankings 2026 have been released, listing the top universities across Europe.
- ❖ The University of Oxford secured the first position, rising from third place in the 2025 rankings.
- ❖ ETH Zurich ranked second, retaining its position as the highest-ranked university in continental Europe.
- ❖ Imperial College London and University College London (UCL) jointly secured the third rank.

- ❖ The rankings are based on indicators such as research quality, academic reputation, employability, and international engagement.

	FEATURE	DETAILS
	Ranking Overview & Release	The QS Europe Rankings 2026 have been released, listing the top universities across Europe.
	First Position (Rank 1)	<b>University of Oxford</b>   Rose from third place in the 2025 rankings.
	Second Position (Rank 2)	<b>ETH Zurich</b>   Retains position as the highest-ranked university in continental Europe.
	Joint Third Position (Rank =3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Imperial College London</b></li> <li>• <b>University College London (UCL)</b>   Jointly secured the third rank.</li> </ul>
	Key Ranking Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research quality</li> <li>• Academic reputation</li> <li>• Employability</li> <li>• International engagement</li> </ul>

