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Current Affairs Today – January 6, 2026

6 January 2026

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WHY IN NEWS

India and Pakistan exchanged their 35th consecutive annual list of nuclear installations under the 1988 Agreement — a diplomatic ritual that has persisted even through war scares and diplomatic freezes. PM Modi inaugurated the “Light and the Lotus” Sacred Piprahwa Relics exhibition, reuniting 6th-century BCE Buddhist artefacts for the first time in 127 years. Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan released 184 new crop varieties as India claimed the world’s top position in rice production.

INDIA-PAKISTAN NUCLEAR INSTALLATIONS LIST EXCHANGE — 35TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

On **January 1, 2026**, India and Pakistan exchanged their annual list of **nuclear installations and facilities** — the 35th consecutive such exchange since 1992.

Legal basis: The **Agreement on Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities** (signed December 31, 1988; entered into force January 27, 1991).

Mechanism: Every year on January 1, both countries simultaneously hand over through diplomatic channels a list of their nuclear installations. Under the agreement, neither country can attack the facilities on the other’s list.

Simultaneous prisoner exchange: Alongside the nuclear list, India and Pakistan also exchanged lists of **257 Indian nationals** in Pakistani custody (199 fishermen + 58 civilians) and Pakistani nationals in Indian custody — under the **Consular Access Pact** (signed May 21, 2008).

UPSC Angle: GS-2 International Relations — bilateral confidence-building measures (CBMs); India-Pakistan nuclear CBMs; Indus Waters Treaty; Simla Agreement (1972); Lahore Declaration (1999).

SACRED PIPRAHWA RELICS — “THE LIGHT AND THE LOTUS”

PM Modi inaugurated the exhibition “**The Light and the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One**” at **Rai Pithora Cultural Complex, New Delhi** (January 3, 2026):

Organized by: Ministry of Culture under **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**

Artefacts: Over **80 artifacts** spanning the 6th century BCE to the present

Historic significance: First reunification of relics after **127 years** — they were last united in **1898** when W.C. Peppe discovered the sacred relics at **Piprahwa** (UP) — identified as **Kapilavastu**, birthplace of Siddhartha Gautama

Private partnership: Godrej Industries Group facilitated the repatriation under PPP model

The Piprahwa connection: Piprahwa in Siddharthnagar district, Uttar Pradesh, contains one of the most significant Buddhist archaeological sites in India — excavations revealed stone caskets with Brahmi inscriptions identifying them as containing the **sariras (mortal remains)** of the Buddha, distributed among 8 kingdoms after his parinirvana (~483 BCE).

UPSC Angle: GS-1 Art & Culture/History — Buddhism; Piprahwa excavation; Kapilavastu; Buddhist relics diplomacy; India's soft power through Buddhist heritage.

184 NEW CROP VARIETIES RELEASED; INDIA BECOMES WORLD'S LARGEST RICE PRODUCER

Agriculture Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** released **184 new crop varieties** across 25 crops (January 4, 2026):

Breakdown: 122 cereals, 24 cotton, 13 oilseeds, 11 fodder crops, 6 pulses, 6 sugarcane

Developed by: ICAR (60 varieties) + Agricultural universities (62) + Private sector (62)

India's rice production milestone: India became the **world's largest rice producer** in FY 2024-25 with **150.18 million tonnes (MT)** — surpassing China's **145.28 MT**

Productivity growth: Foodgrain productivity grew from 1,930 kg/ha (2010-11) to **2,578 kg/ha (2024-25)** — a 33% improvement

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Agriculture — ICAR mandate; crop improvement varieties; India's rice economy; green revolution legacy and next steps.

DSIR 42ND FOUNDATION DAY — DEEP-TECH STARTUP SUPPORT

DSIR (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research) celebrated its 42nd Foundation Day (January 4, 2026):

Removed **3-year mandatory existence condition** for deep-tech startups to access IRDPP

Maximum assistance: Rs 1 crore per startup

Launched **4 initiatives:** DSIR Guidelines, **PRISM Network**, Creative India 2025, Disaster Management Plan

PRISM: Promoting Innovations in Individuals, Startups and MSMEs — DSIR's flagship startup support scheme

UPSC Angle: GS-3 S&T — DSIR mandate; startup ecosystem; innovation policy; India’s R&D institutional framework.

PAKISTAN TESTS TAIMOOR AIR-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILE

Pakistan Air Force (PAF) successfully tested the **Taimoor** cruise missile:

Type: Air-launched, subsonic, turbojet-propelled cruise missile

Range: Up to **600 km**

Features: Stealth design elements; precision guidance system

Significance: Pakistan’s indigenously-developed long-range precision strike capability; adds asymmetric deterrence against India’s air defenses

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Security — India-Pakistan deterrence dynamics; cruise missile technology; Pakistan’s indigenous weapons development; MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime).

SALAL HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT — CHENAB RIVER DISPUTE

Salal Hydroelectric Project context:

Location: Reasi district, Jammu & Kashmir; on the **Chenab River**

Capacity: **690 MW** (run-of-river)

Operator: NHPC (National Hydroelectric Power Corporation)

Indus Waters Treaty connection: One of India’s permitted hydropower projects on western rivers (Chenab, Jhelum, Indus) — India can use these rivers for run-of-river hydro without storage

Dispute history: Pakistan has raised objections to Salal design; arbitration proceedings initiated; exemplifies ongoing IWT implementation disputes

UPSC Angle: GS-2 International Relations — Indus Waters Treaty 1960 (World Bank-mediated); run-of-river projects; India’s rights on western rivers; NHPC; J&K hydro capacity.

BACTRIAN CAMEL — CRITICALLY ENDANGERED IN NUBRA VALLEY

Bactrian camels (*Camelus bactrianus*) of India’s **Nubra Valley, Ladakh**:

IUCN status: **Critically Endangered** (wild population ~1,400 worldwide)

Wild population in India: Only ~300 in Nubra Valley — the only location in India

Double hump: Distinguishing feature (dromedary/one-humped camel = *Camelus dromedarius*; Bactrian/two-humped = *Camelus bactrianus*)

Habitat: Cold desert; Himalayan Trans-Himalayan ecosystem

Threat: Habitat loss, hybridisation with domesticated Bactrian camels, climate change

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Biodiversity — Trans-Himalayan species; Schedule I WPA; India’s cold desert biodiversity; Ladakh as biodiversity hotspot; Snow Leopard, Tibetan wolf, wild yak in same range.

MISSION MAUSAM — 3D-PRINTED WEATHER STATIONS

3D-Printed Automatic Weather Stations under **Mission Mausam:**

Developer: Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune

First batch deployment: February 2026 in **Delhi**; later expansion to Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai

Parameters measured: Temperature, wind speed, humidity, rainfall (real-time)

Production: 50 initial units; 80 more planned

Certified by: IMD’s Surface Laboratory and **BIS** (Bureau of Indian Standards)

Mission Mausam budget: Rs 2,000 crore (2024–2026)

IITM Pune: India’s premier meteorological research institute; developed India’s monsoon prediction models

UPSC Angle: GS-3 S&T/Disaster Management — weather monitoring infrastructure; Mission Mausam goals; monsoon prediction; IMD capabilities; climate change adaptation.

NATIONAL SIDDHA DAY — JANUARY 6

9th National Siddha Day observed January 6, 2026:

Theme: “Siddha for Global Health”

Marks birth anniversary of **Sage Agathiyar (Agastya)** — father of Siddha medicine

Inaugurated January 3 by **VP C.P. Radhakrishnan** at Kalaivanar Arangam, Chennai

Siddha medicine: One of the oldest medical systems; Tamil Nadu heritage; uses herbal, mineral, animal products; emphasises balance of 5 elements

UPSC Angle: GS-1 Cultural Heritage; GS-2 Health — AYUSH systems; Siddha medicine and Tamil cultural identity; integration into national health policy.

TAMIL NADU ASSURED PENSION SCHEME (TAPS) — OPS VS NPS DEBATE

Tamil Nadu CM **M.K. Stalin** announced the **Tamil Nadu Assured Pension Scheme (TAPS)** for state government employees:

Pension guarantee: 50% of last drawn pay as pension (matching Old Pension Scheme benefit)

Employee contribution: 10% of basic pay + DA (unlike OPS which had zero employee contribution)

Government contribution: 14% of basic pay + DA (same as NPS)

One-time corpus creation: ₹13,000 crore from the state government; additional **₹11,000 crore annual** outgo

Family pension: 60% of the employee's pension to family after death

Beneficiaries: ~4.5 lakh state government employees; excludes those who have already retired

OPS vs NPS vs TAPS:

Feature	OPS	NPS	TAPS
Employee contribution	None	10%	10%
Pension assured	Yes (50% of last pay)	No (market-linked)	Yes (50% of last pay)
Fiscal risk	High (unfunded liability)	Low	Medium (partially funded)
Market exposure	None	Yes	No

UPSC Angle: GS-2 Governance/Polity — federalism in social security; OPS vs NPS debate; fiscal sustainability of pension reforms; States adopting OPS-hybrid models: Rajasthan (OPS), HP (OPS), Jharkhand (OPS), Chhattisgarh (OPS), Tamil Nadu (TAPS).

INDIA'S FIRST TROPICAL TROUT FARM (RAS TECHNOLOGY)

India's first **Tropical Trout Farm** using **Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS)** technology was inaugurated at **Kandukur Mandal, Ranga Reddy district, Telangana**:

Species: Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) — typically a cold-water fish (10–15°C optimal), now cultivated in tropical conditions (25–30°C) using RAS

RAS technology: Filtered, temperature-controlled water that is recirculated — 95%+ water reuse; enables cultivation of cold-water species in warm regions

Economic significance: Trout commands premium market price (₹800–1,200/kg); import substitution; opens inland aquaculture to new species

PM Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY): ₹20,050 crore scheme (2020–2025); promotes RAS adoption for high-value aquaculture

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Agriculture/Economy — Blue economy; aquaculture technology; PMMSY; RAS vs traditional pond culture; species diversification in fisheries.

DLI SCHEME — SEMICON INDIA FABLESS CHIP DESIGN

The **Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme** under **Semicon India** programme (MeitY) milestone:

Purpose: Financial support for semiconductor chip design — India's weakest link in the chip supply chain (India has chip design talent but no fabrication fabs)

Incentives: Up to **50% of eligible expenditure** as reimbursement for chip design; **6% of net sales** for 5 years after commercialisation; **100% deployment cost** for chip design infrastructure

Target: 20 domestic companies developing chip designs; 85,000 skilled chip designers in India by 2025

Broader Semicon India: ₹76,000 crore package; also covers: semiconductor fab incentives (Tata Electronics + PSMC 28nm fab in Gujarat; HCL-Foxconn OSAT in Uttar Pradesh; Kaynes OSAT in Gujarat; Tata OSAT in Assam)

India's chip design advantage: ~20% of global chip design workforce is Indian; companies like Qualcomm, Intel, Texas Instruments have major India design centres

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Economy/S&T — Semiconductor supply chain; India's chip ecosystem; Atmanirbhar Bharat in electronics; OSAT vs fab vs design differences.

PERSONS IN NEWS

Justice A Muhamed Mustaque — Appointed **24th Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court**; oath administered by Governor Om Prakash Mathur at Gangtok; background: Kerala High Court judge since 2014; Acting CJ Kerala HC (July–September 2024); predecessor Justice Biswanath Somadder retired December 14, 2025.

UPSC RELEVANCE

India-Pakistan nuclear installations agreement (December 31, 1988; effective January 27, 1991; 35th exchange in 2026); Consular Access Pact (May 21, 2008); Piprahwa/Kapilavastu (Siddharthnagar, UP; Buddha's birthplace; W.C. Peppe 1898); Salal HEP (690 MW; Chenab; Reasi; NHPC; run-of-river; Indus Waters Treaty); Taimoor (Pakistan; subsonic; 600 km; air-launched; stealth); DSIR (42nd FD; IRDPP; PRISM; Rs 1 crore); India rice production (150.18 MT; world #1 in FY 2024-25; China 145.28 MT); 184 crop varieties (25 crops; ICAR 60; agri universities 62; private 62); Bactrian camel (*Camelus bactrianus*; Critically Endangered; Nubra Valley; ~1,400 wild globally); Mission Mausam (Rs 2,000 crore; IITM Pune; 3D-printed AWS; BIS certified); National Siddha Day (January 6; Sage Agathiyar; 9th edition; theme "Siddha for Global Health"); TAPS (Tamil Nadu Assured Pension Scheme; 50% last pay; 10% employee contribution; ₹13,000 crore one-time corpus); RAS aquaculture (Recirculating Aquaculture System; Rainbow Trout; Ranga Reddy, Telangana; first tropical trout farm); DLI Scheme (Design Linked Incentive; Semicon India; MeitY; 50% expenditure reimbursement; 85,000 chip designers target); Justice A Muhamed Mustaque (24th CJ Sikkim HC)

MAINS GS-2:

India-Pakistan CBMs — what keeps the nuclear list exchange going even through diplomatic crises? | India's Buddhist heritage diplomacy — how soft power complements hard power in South and Southeast Asia | OPS vs NPS debate — should states revert to defined-benefit pensions?

MAINS GS-3:

India as world's largest rice producer — ecological cost vs food security achievement | DSIR and deep-tech startup ecosystem — is R&D commercialisation infrastructure adequate? | Semiconductor supply chain and India's chip design strength | Blue economy and aquaculture technology diversification

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA
INDIA-PAKISTAN NUCLEAR CBMS:

Agreement: December 31, 1988; effective January 27, 1991

Exchange: January 1 annually; 35th exchange in 2026

Other nuclear CBM: Agreement on Advance Notice of Military Exercises (1991); Hotline Agreement (1988)

Consular Access Pact: May 21, 2008; lists detained nationals exchanged simultaneously

PIPRAHWA BUDDHIST RELICS:

Location: Piprahwa village, Siddharthnagar district, Uttar Pradesh

Identification: Kapilavastu — birthplace of Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha)

Discovery: W.C. Peppe, 1898 — stone caskets with Brahmi inscriptions

Buddha's life: Born ~563 BCE in Lumbini (Nepal; ~25 km from Piprahwa); attained Enlightenment at Bodhi Gaya; first sermon at Sarnath; parinirvana at Kushinagar

“Light and the Lotus” exhibition: 80+ artifacts; 6th century BCE to present; 127 years since reunification

INDIA'S RICE PRODUCTION:

FY 2024-25: 150.18 MT (world's largest rice producer; first time surpassing China at 145.28 MT)

India also: world's largest rice exporter (~40% of global rice trade)

Major producing states: West Bengal, UP, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Telangana

PM-KUSUM, PM-PRANAM, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana: relevant schemes for sustainable rice farming

SALAL HEP:

Capacity: 690 MW (run-of-river)

River: Chenab (western river under IWT 1960)

Location: Reasi district, J&K

Operator: NHPC Limited (Navratna PSU; Ministry of Power)

Indus Waters Treaty 1960: India can build run-of-river hydro on western rivers (Chenab, Jhelum, Indus); Pakistan can challenge design at Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) or Court of Arbitration

BACTRIAN CAMEL IN INDIA:

Scientific name: *Camelus bactrianus* (two-humped)

IUCN: Critically Endangered (wild); ~1,400 wild globally

Indian location: Nubra Valley, Ladakh (~300 individuals)

WPA: Schedule I (highest protection)

Distinction: Bactrian (two hump) vs Dromedary (one hump = *Camelus dromedarius*; deserts of Rajasthan)

MISSION MAUSAM:

Budget: Rs 2,000 crore (2024-2026)

Implementing body: IMD + IITM Pune

Goal: 100% population coverage for 72-hour weather forecasts by 2026

3D-printed AWS: cheaper, faster to manufacture; BIS-certified; measure temp/wind/humidity/rainfall

IITM Pune: National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF) at Noida is parallel body

TAMIL NADU ASSURED PENSION SCHEME (TAPS):

Announced by: CM M.K. Stalin (DMK government)

Pension guarantee: 50% of last drawn pay (same as OPS benefit)

Employee contribution: 10% of basic pay + DA (unlike OPS: zero contribution)

Government: 14% contribution + ₹13,000 crore one-time corpus + ₹11,000 crore annual

Family pension: 60% of employee pension

States on OPS: Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh (reverted to OPS)

NPS: National Pension System; market-linked; launched 2004; mandatory for central govt employees from 2004

RAS / TROPICAL TROUT AQUACULTURE:

India's first tropical trout farm: Kandukur Mandal, Ranga Reddy district, Telangana

Species: Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*); cold-water fish adapted via RAS

RAS: Recirculating Aquaculture System; 95%+ water reuse; temperature-controlled

Market price: ₹800–1,200/kg (premium fish)

PMMSY: PM Matsya Sampada Yojana; ₹20,050 crore; 2020–2025

DLI SCHEME (SEMICON INDIA):

Full form: Design Linked Incentive Scheme

Ministry: MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology)

Incentive: 50% eligible expenditure reimbursement + 6% net sales for 5 years

Target: 20 domestic companies; 85,000 chip designers by 2025

Broader Semicon India package: ₹76,000 crore; covers fab + OSAT + design

Key projects: Tata-PSMC fab (28nm; Gujarat); HCL-Foxconn OSAT (UP); Tata OSAT (Assam)

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

DSIR: Department of Scientific and Industrial Research; under MoST; est. 1984 (42nd Foundation Day = 2026); manages PRISM, SIRO, IRDPP

AYUSH exports: USD 688.89 million in FY 2024-25 (6.11% growth from USD 649.2 million FY 2023-24);

AYUSHEXCIL = Export Promotion Council for AYUSH

India-Oman CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement) and India-NZ FTA: both include AYUSH/traditional medicine recognition

Taimoor: Pakistan's first indigenously-claimed long-range cruise missile; subsonic; 600 km; turbojet propulsion; stealth features; tested by PAF January 2026

Sources: AffairsCloud, PIB, Ministry of External Affairs, ICAR, NHPC

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