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Current Affairs Today – January 9, 2026

9 January 2026

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Current Affairs Today — January 9, 2026

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WHY IN NEWS

NSO released First Advance Estimates showing India's GDP grew 7.4% in FY26. CJI Surya Kant inaugurated India's first fully paperless district court at Kalpetta, Kerala. The Trump administration issued an executive order withdrawing the USA from 66 international organisations including the International Solar Alliance. Renowned ecologist Madhav Gadgil passed away on January 7. HPCL's LC-Max Facility at Visakhapatnam and the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Bhubaneswar also remained in focus.

HPCL COMMISSIONS WORLD'S FIRST LC-MAX RESIDUE UPGRADATION FACILITY

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) commissioned the world's first and largest **Liquid Conversion–Maximum (LC-Max) Residue Upgradation Facility (RUF)** at its **Visakhapatnam Refinery** (Andhra Pradesh) on January 5, 2026.

Key facts:

Investment: ₹31,407 crore

Technology: Converts approximately **93% of low-value heavy residue** (bottom-of-barrel) into high-value fuels — petrol, diesel, LPG, and aviation turbine fuel

Significance: Reduces dependence on imported crude by maximising output from each barrel; “first of its kind” globally

The facility is part of HPCL's **Vizag Refinery Modernisation Project** to increase the refinery's capacity from 8.3 MMTPA to 15 MMTPA

UPSC relevance: GS3 — India's energy security, downstream petroleum sector, crude oil import dependence (~88%), refinery self-sufficiency.

18TH PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS CONVENTION 2026 — BHUBANESWAR

The **18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention** was held from **January 8–10, 2026** in **Bhubaneswar, Odisha** — marking the first time Odisha hosted the event.

Key facts:

Theme: “Diaspora's Contribution to Viksit Bharat” (Developed India by 2047)

Chief Guest: President of the **Republic of Trinidad and Tobago** (Christine Kangaloo)

Inaugurated by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**; presided over on concluding day by **President Droupadi Murmu**

PBD Samman Awards — highest honour given to overseas Indians for outstanding contributions

India's diaspora: **~3.2 crore people** (world's largest diaspora by absolute numbers); remittances ~\$125 billion (2024, world's largest recipient)

UPSC relevance: GS2 — Indian diaspora, soft power, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention, Ministry of External Affairs.

NAGAURI ASHWAGANDHA RECEIVES GI TAG

Nagauri Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), grown in **Nagaur district of Rajasthan**, received a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag** — recognising its unique quality characteristics tied to the region's soil and climate.

Key features:

Known for **longer and thicker roots** rich in medicinal compounds (withanolides)

Dark, bright red berries indicate superior quality and maturity

Used in Ayurvedic medicine for stress reduction, immunity, and stamina (an **adaptogen**)

Nagaur district's sandy loam soil with low moisture retention gives optimal root development

UPSC relevance: GS3 — GI tags in India, Ayurvedic exports, TRIPS Agreement (GI protection under WTO), Rajasthan's agricultural identity.

THANTHAI PERIYAR WILDLIFE SANCTUARY — TAMIL NADU

The **Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary** came under conservation focus in January 2026. It is located in the **Bargur Hills of Erode district, Tamil Nadu**, situated between the **Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve** (Tamil Nadu) and **Male Mahadeshwara Wildlife Sanctuary** (Karnataka).

Key features:

Part of the **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve** landscape — a critical tiger and elephant corridor

Named after Tamil social reformer **E. V. Ramasamy Periyar** (Thanthai Periyar)

Habitat for elephants, tigers, leopards, gaur, and species of the Eastern Ghats biosphere

The sanctuary serves as an important wildlife corridor connecting Tamil Nadu and Karnataka forest complexes

UPSC relevance: GS3 — Protected areas network, tiger/elephant corridors, Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, Tamil Nadu's biodiversity.

NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDARDS (NQAS) FRAMEWORK

The **National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS)** framework — developed by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** — evaluates and certifies public health facilities (hospitals, CHCs, PHCs) on patient safety, quality of care, and cleanliness.

Key facts:

NQAS certification indicates a public facility meets standards comparable to private hospitals

Component of the **Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (HWC)** programme

Hospitals scoring above threshold receive NQAS certification valid for 3 years

Part of India's **Quality Improvement Toolkit** along with **LaQshya** (Labour room quality), **Mera Aspataal**, and **Kayakalp** (cleanliness)

UPSC relevance: GS2 — Health governance, Ayushman Bharat, public health quality, NHM programmes.

VANDE BHARAT SLEEPER TRAIN — GUWAHATI TO HOWRAH

The **Vande Bharat Sleeper Train** began its inaugural run on the **Guwahati–Howrah route** — the first deployment of the sleeper variant of India's semi-high-speed Vande Bharat trainset.

Key facts:

Capacity: approximately **823 passengers** across AC 3-tier, AC 2-tier, and first-class coaches

Maximum speed: **160 km/h** (though operating speed varies by route)

The sleeper variant allows overnight travel on routes that the chair-car variant cannot efficiently serve

Guwahati–Howrah distance: ~997 km

UPSC relevance: GS3 — Railway modernisation, indigenous design and manufacturing, Northeast connectivity.

UP'S FIRST BRAILLE LIBRARY — LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh's first Braille library was established at **Dr Shakuntala Mishra National Rehabilitation University, Lucknow** — India's first state university exclusively for persons with disabilities.

Key facts:

Collection: over **4,000 Braille books** in Hindi and English

Serves students with visual impairments; provides accessible reading in mother tongue

Connected to the Right of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act) mandate for inclusive education

National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (NIEPVD) is headquartered in Dehradun

UPSC relevance: GS2 — Social justice, disability rights, RPwD Act 2016, Article 41 (Right to education and assistance), inclusive education.

BSNL LAUNCHES VOWIFI SERVICES NATIONWIDE

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) launched **VoWiFi (Voice over WiFi)** services nationwide — enabling voice calls and SMS over a Wi-Fi network using the same mobile number, without needing cellular coverage.

Key facts:

VoWiFi is particularly valuable in areas with poor cellular reception (remote, rural, indoor) but good WiFi

BSNL is India's state-owned telecom company under the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications**

The launch is part of BSNL's **4G/5G revival** following government investment of over ₹1.64 lakh crore (under Atmanirbhar Bharat) for domestic 4G rollout using **TCS-developed** technology

UPSC relevance: GS3 — Telecom sector, BSNL revival, Atmanirbhar Bharat, digital connectivity in rural/remote areas.

INDIA INVITED TO WEIMAR TRIANGLE SUMMIT — JAISHANKAR'S EUROPE VISIT

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited France, Germany, and Poland in January 2026 — a tour that culminated in **India being invited as the first non-EU partner to participate in a Weimar Triangle summit.**

Key facts:

Weimar Triangle: An informal diplomatic forum formed in 1991 among **France, Germany, and Poland** to strengthen European cooperation; historically focused on EU integration

India's participation marks a recognition of India's strategic significance for European security, technology partnerships, and supply chain diversification post-Russia-Ukraine war

Jaishankar held bilateral talks on defence cooperation, critical minerals, digital technology, and Indo-Pacific security

India–EU relations are guided by the **India-EU Strategic Partnership** (since 2004) and the **Trade and Technology Council (TTC)** launched in 2023

UPSC relevance: GS2 — India's foreign policy, EU-India strategic partnership, Weimar Triangle, European security architecture, India's multilateral diplomacy.

WHITE-BELLIED HERON — INDIA'S CRITICALLY ENDANGERED WATERBIRD UNDER THREAT

The **White-bellied Heron** (*Ardea insignis*), one of the world's rarest birds, came into focus in January 2026 amid concerns about threats to its last remaining habitats in Arunachal Pradesh.

Key facts:

IUCN Status: Critically Endangered — fewer than **60 individuals** estimated globally

Distribution: ~45% of the global population resides in **Bhutan**; in India, found only in **Namdapha Tiger Reserve** and **Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary**, Arunachal Pradesh

The Lohit River basin — where Kamlang WLS is located — is proposed for the **Kalai-II Hydropower Project** (1,200 MW; Anjaw district, Arunachal Pradesh; implemented by **THDCIL**)

Scientists warn that dam construction and reservoir flooding would destroy the shallow river-banks and sandbars the heron depends on for nesting and foraging

UPSC relevance: GS3 — Critically Endangered species, infrastructure vs. biodiversity conflict, IUCN Red List, hydropower in Northeast India.

H5N1 AVIAN INFLUENZA — KERALA'S KUTTANAD DUCK-FARMING BELT

H5N1 Avian Influenza broke out in the **Kuttanad region of Kerala** in January 2026, prompting culling of approximately **55,000 birds** in the affected areas.

Key facts:

H5N1 is a **highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI)** strain — zoonotic risk (can infect humans, especially poultry workers)

Kuttanad (Alappuzha district) is known as the “rice bowl of Kerala” and is a major duck-farming area; indigenous breeds **Chara** and **Chembally** were among those affected

First global detection of H5N1: **1996, China** (Guangdong province); India first reported H5N1 in domestic poultry: **2006** (Maharashtra); recurrent in Kerala since 2015

Response protocol: DART (Disease Advance Response Teams); compensation under **National Livestock Disease Control Programme (NLDCP)**; Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) surveillance

UPSC relevance: GS3 — Zoonotic diseases, One Health approach, avian influenza biosecurity, disaster management in animal husbandry.

CENSUS 2027 NOTIFICATION — INDIA'S FIRST DIGITAL CENSUS

India announced in January 2026 that the **next Census** would be conducted in **2027** — delayed from the originally scheduled 2021 cycle due to COVID-19 and logistics challenges.

Key facts:

Census 2027 will be **India's first fully digital Census** — using tablets and a mobile app for data collection (no paper schedules)

India's first **synchronous Census**: 1881 (under **W.C. Plowden**, Census Commissioner)

Conducted under the **Census Act, 1948** by the **Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India** (under MHA)

The Census records population, literacy, religion, caste (Scheduled Castes/Tribes), occupation, housing, migration, language, and disability data

Caste enumeration: The 2027 Census will reportedly include the **Other Backward Classes (OBC) caste count** — a long-pending demand

UPSC relevance: GS2 — Census as governance tool, OBC caste data, Registrar General's Office, demographic dividend, social justice implications of caste enumeration.

PANKHUDI PORTAL — WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S WELFARE VIA CSR

The **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD)** launched the **PANKHUDI portal** to facilitate **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributions** specifically for welfare programmes targeting women and children.

Key facts:

PANKHUDI: Acronym for **Partnerships for Advancement of National Key Humanitarian and Upliftment Decisions and Initiatives**

The portal connects corporate donors (through their CSR obligations under **Section 135, Companies Act 2013**) with government schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, POSHAN Abhiyan, and Mission Shakti

CSR spending mandate: Companies with net worth $\geq ₹500$ crore, OR turnover $\geq ₹1,000$ crore, OR net profit $\geq ₹5$ crore are required to spend 2% of average net profit on CSR

Administered by **MoWCD** with the National Commission for Women as stakeholder

UPSC relevance: GS2 — CSR under Companies Act, MoWCD schemes, POSHAN Abhiyan, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Mission Shakti.

NSO FIRST ADVANCE ESTIMATES — GDP GROWTH FY2025-26

The **National Statistical Office (NSO)** released the **First Advance Estimates of National Income 2025-26**:

Real GDP growth: 7.4% for FY2025-26 (vs 8.2% in FY24, 7.0% in FY23)

Nominal GDP growth: 8.0%

Real GVA (Gross Value Added): 7.3%

GDP at current prices: ~Rs 327 lakh crore

Released by: Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI)

Significance: First official growth estimate for the year; used for Budget preparation; confirms India retaining fastest-growing large economy status

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Economy — National income accounting; GDP vs GVA distinction; advance estimates vs revised estimates; India's growth drivers (investment, consumption, exports); NSO's role under MoSPI.

MADHAV GADGIL — RENOWNED ECOLOGIST PASSES AWAY

Professor Madhav Dhananjaya Gadgil (83), considered the “**Father of Modern Indian Ecology**”, passed away (January 7, 2026):

Institution: Founder, Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES), **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)**, Bengaluru

Key contribution: Chaired the **Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP)** — commonly called the **Gadgil Committee** — which recommended declaring ~64% of Western Ghats as Ecologically Sensitive Area

Other contributions: Contributed to India's first Biosphere Reserve at Nilgiri; contributed to **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**; co-creator of People's Biodiversity Registers concept

Awards: Padma Shri (1981), Padma Bhushan (2006), **UN Champion of the Earth Award (2024)** — posthumous recognition

Legacy: Pioneer in quantitative population ecology in India; documented traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) of local communities

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Environment — Western Ghats biodiversity; Biological Diversity Act 2002; Biosphere Reserves; Gadgil Committee vs Kasturirangan Committee recommendations on Western Ghats; Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

USA WITHDRAWS FROM 66 INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS — INCLUDING ISA

The **Trump administration** issued an executive order directing the **United States to withdraw from 66 international organizations:**

Total: 35 non-UN organisations + 31 UN-affiliated bodies

Key casualty for India: International Solar Alliance (ISA) — India-led coalition for promoting solar energy in tropical/subtropical countries (140+ member nations)

Other notable organisations: Various UN specialised agencies, multilateral forums

Policy basis: “America First” policy review — organisations deemed contrary to US interests

Impact on ISA: Loss of US participation reduces political and financial weight; ISA was launched by India and France at COP21 (Paris, 2015)

India’s response: India continues to champion ISA; seeks alternative partnerships

UPSC Angle: GS-2 International Relations — ISA’s mandate and founding (COP21; India + France; headquartered in Gurugram; One World, One Sun, One Grid initiative); US multilateralism under Trump; impact on climate finance and renewable energy cooperation; India’s leadership in ISA.

KALPETTA DISTRICT COURT — INDIA’S FIRST PAPERLESS COURT

Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant inaugurated **India’s first fully paperless district court** at **Kalpetta, Wayanad, Kerala** (January 9, 2026):

What it means: All court functions — filing, case management, judgments, summons, notices — conducted entirely digitally (no physical paper)

Technology: AI-based judicial assistance tools for judges and litigants; real-time case tracking

Significance: Demonstration model for courts across India; addresses case pendency (over 5 crore cases pending in Indian courts)

National Court Management Systems (NCMS): eCourts Mission Mode Project framework under which such initiatives are implemented

Context: India’s eCourts Phase III (2023–2027; Rs 7,210 crore) focuses on AI, digital filings, virtual hearings

UPSC Angle: GS-2 Governance — Judicial modernisation; eCourts Mission Mode Project; CJI's role in judicial administration; NCMS; pendency crisis in Indian courts; access to justice; GS-3 — AI applications in government.

BIO-BITUMEN — INDIA BECOMES FIRST COUNTRY TO COMMERCIALY PRODUCE

CSIR-Central Road Research Institute (CRRI) and **CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP)** achieved a landmark — making **India the first country to commercially produce bio-bitumen:**

What is bio-bitumen: A plant-based, sustainable alternative to conventional petroleum-derived bitumen (used in road construction)

Blending rate: 15% bio-bitumen mixed with conventional bitumen

Economic impact: 15% blending projected to save ~**Rs 4,500 crore** in foreign exchange per year (by reducing crude/bitumen imports)

CSIR-CRRI: Central Road Research Institute; New Delhi; India's apex road research institution

CSIR-IIP: Indian Institute of Petroleum; Dehradun; petroleum product development

Significance: Green infrastructure; import substitution; India's road sector consumes enormous quantities of bitumen (nearly 100% imported)

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Economy/S&T — Import substitution; green technology in infrastructure; CSIR's applied research mandate; road construction in India (PMGSY, NH network); energy security; bio-based materials in construction.

VBYLD 2026 — VIKSIT BHARAT YOUNG LEADERS' DIALOGUE

The **2nd edition of Viksit Bharat Young Leaders' Dialogue (VBYLD 2026)** was held at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi** (January 9–12, 2026):

Organisers: MyGov + Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

Theme: Viksit Bharat (Developed India by 2047)

Participants: Young leaders (18–35 years) from across India selected through competitions

Purpose: Connect youth to India's development vision; generate youth-led policy inputs

PM Modi's involvement: Addressed participants on Viksit Bharat's 9 pillars

Bharat Mandapam: International exhibition and convention centre, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi; opened August 2023

UPSC Angle: GS-2 Governance — Youth engagement in policy; Viksit Bharat vision (100 years of Independence 2047); MyGov platform; National Youth Policy.

RBI CANCELS REGISTRATIONS OF 35 NBFCs

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** cancelled the **Certificate of Registration (CoR)** of **35 Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)**, while **16 NBFCs voluntarily surrendered** their registrations:

Concentrated in: Delhi/NCR region

Reasons: Non-compliance with RBI norms; failure to maintain required net-owned funds; non-submission of returns; some ceased NBFC activities

RBI's power: Under Section 45-IA(6) of Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 — RBI can cancel CoR of NBFCs

NBFC types: Investment/Loan companies, MFIs, HFCs, Core Investment Companies; regulated under Chapter III-B of RBI Act 1934

Significance: RBI's ongoing supervisory cleanup of the NBFC sector post-IL&FS collapse (2018)

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Economy — NBFC regulation; RBI supervisory powers; NBFC vs bank distinction; IL&FS crisis and financial stability; Certificate of Registration requirements; Section 45-IA RBI Act.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA
HPCL LC-MAX RUF:

Full form: Liquid Conversion–Maximum Residue Upgradation Facility

Location: Visakhapatnam Refinery, Andhra Pradesh

Investment: ₹31,407 crore; commissioned: January 5, 2026

Conversion efficiency: ~93% low-value residue → high-value fuels

Global first: world's first AND largest LC-Max facility

Part of Vizag Refinery Modernisation Project (8.3 MMTPA → 15 MMTPA)

HPCL: Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited; PSU under Ministry of Petroleum

18TH PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS 2026:

Dates: January 8–10, 2026; Location: Bhubaneswar, Odisha (first time in Odisha)

Theme: Diaspora's Contribution to Viksit Bharat

Chief Guest: Christine Kangaloo, President, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Inaugurated by PM Modi; presided by President Droupadi Murmu on Jan 10

Indian diaspora: ~3.2 crore (world's largest); remittances 2024: ~\$125 billion (world's largest recipient)

NAGAURI ASHWAGANDHA:

Scientific name: *Withania somnifera*

GI tag awarded; grown in Nagaur district, Rajasthan

Known for: longer, thicker roots; dark red berries; rich in withanolides

Use: Ayurvedic adaptogen (anti-stress, immunity)

THANTHAI PERIYAR WILDLIFE SANCTUARY:

Location: Bargur Hills, Erode district, Tamil Nadu

Corridor between: Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (TN) + Male Mahadeshwara WS (Karnataka)

Part of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve landscape

Named after E. V. Ramasamy Periyar (Thanthai Periyar)

NQAS FRAMEWORK:

Full form: National Quality Assurance Standards

Ministry: Health and Family Welfare; part of Ayushman Bharat/NHM

Related schemes: Kayakalp (cleanliness), LaQshya (labour room), Mera Aspataal

VANDE BHARAT SLEEPER:

First route: Guwahati–Howrah; capacity: ~823 passengers

Coaches: AC 3-tier + 2-tier + First Class; max speed: 160 km/h

BSNL VOWIFI:

VoWiFi: Voice over WiFi (calls over Wi-Fi, same mobile number)

BSNL revival: ₹1.64 lakh crore govt investment; TCS 4G tech (Atmanirbhar Bharat)

WEIMAR TRIANGLE:

Members: France, Germany, Poland; formed 1991

Purpose: Strengthen European cooperation; originally focused on EU/NATO integration

India's participation in 2026: first non-EU partner invited to Weimar summit

India–EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC): launched 2023

WHITE-BELLIED HERON (ARDEA INSIGNIS):

IUCN: Critically Endangered; global population: <60 individuals

India habitat: Namdapha TR + Kamlang WLS, Arunachal Pradesh

~45% of global population in Bhutan

Threat: Kalai-II Hydropower Project (1,200 MW; Lohit River; Anjaw district; THDCIL)

H5N1 AVIAN INFLUENZA – KUTTANAD:

Strain: H5N1 = Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

First detected globally: 1996, Guangdong, China

India poultry outbreaks: 2006 (first); Kerala: recurrent since 2015

Kuttanad breeds affected: Chara and Chembally (duck breeds)

Culling: ~55,000 birds; response: DART teams + NLDCP compensation

CENSUS 2027:

India's first digital Census (tablets + mobile app; no paper)

Governed by: Census Act, 1948; Registrar General and Census Commissioner (under MHA)

First synchronous Census: 1881 (Commissioner: W.C. Plowden)

Will include: OBC caste count (first time since 1931)

PANKHUDI PORTAL:

Full form: Partnerships for Advancement of National Key Humanitarian and Upliftment Decisions and Initiatives

Ministry: Women and Child Development (MoWCD)

Purpose: CSR facilitation for women/children welfare schemes

CSR mandate: Sec. 135, Companies Act 2013; 2% of avg net profit for eligible companies

GDP GROWTH – NSO FIRST ADVANCE ESTIMATES FY26:

Real GDP growth FY26: 7.4% (FY25: 8.2%; FY24: 7.0%)

Nominal GDP growth: 8.0%

Real GVA: 7.3%

NSO: National Statistical Office; under MoSPI; releases First Advance Estimates in January each year

GDP vs GVA: $GDP = GVA + \text{ Taxes on products } - \text{ Subsidies on products }$

MADHAV GADGIL – ECOLOGIST:

Born: 1942; died January 7, 2026; age 83

Title: "Father of Modern Indian Ecology"

Institution: Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES), IISc Bengaluru (he founded it)

Key role: Chaired Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP / Gadgil Committee) – recommended 64% Western Ghats as Ecologically Sensitive Area

Other contributions: Biological Diversity Act 2002; Biosphere Reserve concept; People's Biodiversity Registers

Awards: Padma Shri (1981), Padma Bhushan (2006), UN Champion of the Earth Award (2024)

INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE (ISA):

Launched: COP21, Paris, 2015; by PM Modi and French President Hollande

HQ: Gurugram, Haryana, India

Members: 140+ signatory countries (mainly intertropical zone)

Mission: One World, One Sun, One Grid; mobilise \$1 trillion solar investment by 2030

Trump withdrawal impact: USA (major climate finance contributor) left ISA with 65 other organisations (executive order Jan 2026)

KALPETTA PAPERLESS COURT:

Location: Kalpetta District Court, Wayanad district, Kerala

Inaugurated: January 9, 2026; by CJI Surya Kant

India's first: Fully paperless (digital) district court

Technology: AI-assisted judicial tools; digital filing; real-time case tracking

eCourts Phase III: 2023–2027; Rs 7,210 crore; national rollout of digital court infrastructure

Pendency crisis: 5+ crore cases pending in India's subordinate courts

BIO-BITUMEN (CSIR):

Producers: CSIR-CRRI (Central Road Research Institute, Delhi) + CSIR-IIP (Indian Institute of Petroleum, Dehradun)

India: First country to commercially produce bio-bitumen

Blending: 15% bio-bitumen in conventional bitumen

Savings: ~Rs 4,500 crore/year foreign exchange (import substitution)

Bitumen usage: India builds ~15,000 km of roads annually; massive bitumen consumer

NBFC – RBI CANCELLATION:

Cancelled: 35 NBFC Certificates of Registration; 16 voluntarily surrendered

Legal basis: Section 45-IA(6) of RBI Act 1934

Concentrated: Delhi/NCR; reasons: non-compliance, inadequate net-owned funds, inactive operations

NBFC types: Investment company, Loan company, MFI, HFC, CIC (Core Investment Company)

Minimum NOF (Net Owned Funds): Rs 10 crore required to operate as NBFC

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

SAI (Sports Authority of India): established 1984, after 9th Asian Games (New Delhi 1982); under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

OPEC+ headquarters: Vienna; formed 2016 (OPEC 1960 Vienna; OPEC+ 2016 includes non-OPEC producers led by Russia)

International Year for Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026: declared by UN; rangelands cover ~50% of Earth's land surface

THDCIL: Tehri Hydro Development Corporation India Limited; implements hydropower projects in North/Northeast India

Namdapha Tiger Reserve: Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh; India's easternmost TR

VBYLD 2026: 2nd Viksit Bharat Young Leaders' Dialogue; Jan 9-12; Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi; MyGov + Ministry of Youth Affairs

Western Ghats: UNESCO World Heritage Site (2012); 6 states — Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat; biodiversity hotspot

Sources: PIB, GKToday, IUCN

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