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# Current Affairs Today – January 24, 2026

24 January 2026

**SUBJECTS COVERED****SOCIAL ISSUES****POLITY****ECONOMY****CURATED & WRITTEN BY****Bharat Choudhary**

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# Current Affairs Today — January 24, 2026

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## WHY IN NEWS

January 24, 2026 marked two concurrent international/national observances: National Girl Child Day (India, observed annually on January 24) spotlighting progress under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and the UN International Day of Education, bringing focus to India's National Education Policy 2020 implementation and the learning outcome challenge revealed in ASER reports.

## NATIONAL GIRL CHILD DAY 2026 — PROGRESS AND PERSISTENT GAPS

**National Girl Child Day (NGCD)** is observed every year on **January 24** in India, initiated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in **2008** under the UPA government.

**Objective:** To raise awareness about the inequalities faced by girl children in India, promote girls' education and rights, and eliminate gender-based discrimination including sex-selective practices.

### Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) — Key Data:

**Launched:** January 22, 2015, by PM Narendra Modi at **Panipat, Haryana**

**Ministry:** Jointly implemented by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Ministry of Education

**Initial coverage:** 100 gender-critical districts with very low Child Sex Ratio (CSR)

**Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) improvement:** From **918 girls per 1,000 boys** (2014–15 baseline) to approximately **934 girls per 1,000 boys** (as reported in recent data) — a significant improvement though below the natural ratio of 952

**Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC-PNDT) Act, 1994:** The legal backbone against sex determination; BBBP strengthens its enforcement

### 2026 Observance:

Theme: "Empowered Girl, Prosperous Nation" (reflecting India's aspiration to harness gender equity as a development driver)

Events: Rally, awareness campaigns at schools and Anganwadi centres; launch of schemes for girl children in states

### Key Achievements under BBBP:

Rising SRB across most previously low-performing districts

- Increased birth registration of girl children
- Better enrolment of girls in primary and upper-primary schools
- Awareness campaigns reducing son-preference bias

### Challenges Remaining:

- Child marriage remains a concern in Rajasthan, Bihar, West Bengal, Assam
- Dropout rate for girls at secondary level (Class 9–12) remains higher than boys
- Violence against women and girls — POCSO cases continue to be reported
- Digital divide: Girls’ access to digital devices and internet for education is lower than boys, worsening post-COVID learning gaps

### ★ FACTS CORNER — NATIONAL GIRL CHILD DAY

**NGCD established:** 2008 (Ministry of WCD)

**Date:** January 24 annually

**BBBP launched:** January 22, 2015, Panipat, Haryana (by PM Modi)

**BBBP ministries:** WCD + Health & Family Welfare + Education

**SRB baseline (2014–15):** 918 girls per 1,000 boys

**SRB improvement:** ~934 girls per 1,000 boys (recent data)

**Natural SRB:** ~952 girls per 1,000 boys

**PC-PNDT Act:** 1994 — bans sex determination tests

**Beti Bachao:** “Save the Daughter” | **Beti Padhao:** “Educate the Daughter”

**Sukanya Samridhi Yojana:** Linked savings scheme for girl child education and marriage

#### OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): 1989 — India ratified 1992

Article 15(3): State can make special provisions for women and children

Article 21A: Right to free and compulsory education (inserted by 86th Constitutional Amendment, 2002)

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION 2026 — LEARNING OUTCOMES SPOTLIGHT

The **United Nations International Day of Education** is observed annually on **January 24**, established by the UN General Assembly in **2018** (resolution 72/222) to celebrate education’s role in peace and sustainable development.

**2026 Theme:** “AI in Education: Preserving Human Agency” — reflecting the growing integration of artificial intelligence in classrooms and the need to ensure technology serves learning outcomes rather than replacing critical thinking and teacher-student relationships.

## India's NEP 2020 — Status of Implementation:

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, approved by the Union Cabinet in July 2020, represents the most comprehensive overhaul of India's education policy since 1986. Key pillars:

**5+3+3+4 structure:** Replacing the 10+2 system with Foundational (3-8 years), Preparatory (8-11), Middle (11-14), and Secondary (14-18) stages

**Foundational literacy and numeracy:** NIPUN Bharat (National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy) — target: Grade 3 foundational literacy by 2026-27

**Mother tongue instruction:** Teaching in home language up to Grade 5 (preferably Grade 8)

**Multiple Entry/Exit in Higher Education:** Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) — students can exit and re-enter degree programmes

**PM SHRI Schools:** 14,500+ PM Schools for Rising India — model NEP implementation schools

**PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development):** New national assessment body under NEP

## ASER 2024 — Learning Outcome Challenge:

The **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)** by **Pratham** tracks learning outcomes among rural children. Key findings from recent ASER:

Despite near-universal enrolment in primary school, a significant proportion of Class 5 children cannot read a Class 2-level text

Arithmetic learning levels have improved but remain below grade-level in many states

The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant learning loss (2020–22) that has not been fully recovered

ASER 2024 noted improved school attendance post-pandemic but persistent learning gaps, especially in government schools

## NIPUN Bharat Mission (2021):

Launched July 5, 2021 under Ministry of Education

Target: Ensure that every child by the end of Grade 3 (by 2026–27) can read with comprehension and perform basic arithmetic

Covers Classes 1-3 (ages 3-9)

Implemented through trained teachers, structured pedagogy, and assessment tools

## ★ FACTS CORNER — INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION & NEP 2020

**International Day of Education:** January 24 (UN UNGA resolution 72/222, 2018)

**2026 Theme:** “AI in Education: Preserving Human Agency”

**NEP 2020:** Approved July 29, 2020 (replaces NPE 1986)

**5+3+3+4 structure:** Foundational (3-8) + Preparatory (8-11) + Middle (11-14) + Secondary (14-18)

**NIPUN Bharat:** Launched July 5, 2021; target Grade 3 foundational literacy by 2026–27

**Academic Bank of Credits (ABC):** Multiple entry/exit in higher education

**PM SHRI Schools:** 14,500+ model NEP schools

**PARAKH:** New national assessment authority under NEP

**ASER:** Annual Status of Education Report by **Pratham** (NGO)

**RTE Act 2009:** Free compulsory education for 6–14 years (Article 21A)

### OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

**GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio):** India’s primary GER is near 100%; dropout at secondary level remains a challenge

**Right to Education (RTE):** 25% reservation in private schools for EWS/disadvantaged children

**National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2023:** Developed under NEP to guide school curriculum; child-centric, activity-based approach

**Gender Parity Index (GPI):** India has achieved GPI > 1.0 at primary level (more girls enrolled than boys); gap widens at secondary

## PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS CONTINUE

With the Union Budget 2026–27 scheduled for **February 1, 2026**, Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** continued pre-budget consultations with various stakeholder groups — including economists, industry bodies, trade unions, agricultural experts, and social sector representatives.

### Key demands from stakeholders:

Tax relief for middle-income earners

Higher allocation for agriculture and rural development

Continuity of PLI (Production Linked Incentive) schemes for manufacturing

Increased education and health spending

The Budget would be FM Sitharaman’s record **8th consecutive Budget presentation**.

## PERSONS IN NEWS

### **Ilyas Pasha — Former Indian Football Player Passes Away**

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**Ilyas Pasha**, a former Indian football defender and AIFF official, passed away on January 24, 2026. He represented India in international football and contributed to the development of the sport in the country.

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Sources: PIB, The Hindu, ASER Centre

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