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WEEKLY ROUNDUP

Weekly Roundup — Week 6 (Feb 2–8, 2026)

8 February 2026

SUBJECTS COVERED**ECONOMY****IR****SECURITY & DEFENCE****ENVIRONMENT****POLITY****SCIENCE & TECH****SOCIAL ISSUES****CURATED & WRITTEN BY****Bharat Choudhary**

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WEEK OVERVIEW

A high-intensity week for India's trade, defence, and diplomatic fronts. The **India-US Trade Framework 2026** committed India to \$500 billion in US purchases but set a contentious **Russian oil conditionality** — testing India's strategic autonomy. India's Ramsar wetland count crossed **98 sites** on World Wetlands Day. **DRDO validated the SFDR ramjet propulsion** for Astra Mk-3 — a breakthrough for India's beyond-visual-range missile programme. **Bharat Taxi** launched as a cooperative challenge to Ola/Uber. The **Meghalaya rat-hole mining disaster** killed 27 workers despite a 2014 NGT ban. India and the **GCC signed FTA Terms of Reference** after 20 years of stalled talks. **RBI held repo rate at 5.25%** in a neutral stance. The **FNTA agreement** gave six eastern Nagaland districts institutional autonomy without creating a new state.

ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT

India-US Trade Framework 2026 — \$500 Billion Commitment

The **India-US Trade Framework 2026** was announced following PM Modi–President Trump bilateral talks. India committed to purchasing **\$500 billion in US products over 5 years** — spanning defence hardware, energy (LNG, crude oil), semiconductors, and civil nuclear equipment.

Tariff reset:

US reciprocal tariff reduced: **25% → 18%** (conditional on India reducing barriers on US goods)

Additional **25% energy tariff** removed — conditional on India reducing Russian crude oil imports

Strategic autonomy tension:

India sources ~35–40% of crude from Russia (significantly up since 2022 post-Ukraine sanctions)

US condition: divert Russian crude purchases to US/Gulf suppliers — conflicts with India’s “strategic autonomy” and energy cost optimisation

India agreed in principle but implementation timeline kept deliberately vague

UPSC Angle — GS-2 / IR + GS-3 / Economy: India-US Comprehensive Global & Strategic Partnership; India’s import diversification; US-China trade war spillover to India; CAATSA waiver implications; India’s oil import bill (India’s single largest import item); energy security vs. geopolitical alignment.

India-GCC FTA — Terms of Reference Signed

India and the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** signed **Terms of Reference (ToR)** for a comprehensive FTA — reviving negotiations that stalled in **2006** after 20 years.

GCC Members: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman.

India-GCC trade: USD **178.56 billion** (FY25) — **15.42% of India’s global trade**; 5-year CAGR 15.3%.

Three pillars of engagement:

Energy: India’s crude imports — 35–40% from GCC nations; GCC’s LNG as India’s transition fuel

Diaspora: 10 million Indians in GCC; USD 40–45 billion annual remittances (India’s single largest remittance corridor)

Trade: Engineering goods + textiles + rice (India) vs. crude + petrochemicals + gold (GCC)

India-UAE CEPA precedent: Signed February 2022 in just 88 days — fastest FTA India ever negotiated; currently being used as template.

UPSC Angle — GS-2 / IR: CEPA vs. FTA vs. PTA distinction; GCC structure (1981); India-Gulf Cooperation; IMEC (India-Middle East-Europe Corridor) synergy with FTA; Kafala system labour concerns; India’s FTA track record.

RBI MPC — Repo Rate Held at 5.25%

The **RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** held the **repo rate at 5.25%** in its February 2026 review — second consecutive hold after a 25 bps cut in December 2025.

Key data:

FY26 GDP revised upward: **7.4%**

CPI inflation December 2025: **1.33%** (well below 4% target)

Easing cycle: cumulative **125 bps** cut from 6.50% peak (June 2024–December 2025)

Stance: **Neutral** (neither tightening nor easing bias)

Why hold despite low inflation? GDP growth is healthy (7.4%), credit growth solid (~14% YoY), global uncertainty (US tariffs, Fed pause) — MPC signalled no urgency to cut further.

Key rates (Prelims):

Rate	Value
Repo Rate	5.25%
Reverse Repo	~3.35%
MSF (Marginal Standing Facility)	5.50%
CRR	4%
SLR	18%

UPSC Angle — GS-3 / Economy: FIT (Flexible Inflation Targeting) framework; MPC composition (6 members: 3 RBI + 3 external); RBI Act Section 45ZB; monetary transmission (MCLR vs. RLLR); liquidity corridor; global monetary policy divergence.

Bharat Taxi — Cooperative Ride-Hailing

Bharat Taxi was formally launched — a **cooperative ride-hailing platform** under the **Multi-State Cooperative Societies (MSCS) Act, 2002** — offering zero commission to the company and **80% of fares to drivers**.

Key metrics at launch: 2.31 lakh registered drivers; 21.34 lakh users; operational in Delhi-NCR + Gujarat.

Comparison with Ola/Uber model:

Ola/Uber: venture-backed, commission extraction 20–30%, surge pricing, algorithmic control

Bharat Taxi: surplus redistributed to member-drivers; democratic governance by “Sarathis” (driver-members); no external shareholder pressure

Cooperative analogues: Amul (dairy), IFFCO (fertilisers), Sahakar Taxi (Maharashtra, smaller scale).

Policy context: Code on Social Security, 2020 includes “aggregator” definition and mandates welfare fund for gig/platform workers — implementation still pending in most states.

UPSC Angle — GS-3 / Economy: Platform economy and gig workers; MSCS Act 2002 vs. Companies Act; cooperative surplus distribution; Articles 43, 43B (DPSP — cooperative promotion, added by 97th Amendment 2011); Ministry of Cooperation (est. 2021).

NITI Aayog Circular Economy — ELV and E-Waste Reports

NITI Aayog released three **Circular Economy reports** on End-of-Life Vehicles (ELVs), e-waste, and Li-ion batteries at the **India Material Recycling Conference (IMRC), Jaipur**.

Key projections:

Category	2025	2030
ELVs (vehicles at end of life)	23 million	50 million
E-waste generated	6.19 MMT	14 MMT
Li-ion battery capacity	29 GWh	248 GWh (2035)

Key policy instruments:

Vehicle Scrappage Policy 2021: RVSF (Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility) + ATS (Automated Testing Station) framework

EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility): Manufacturers bear cost of product end-of-life management

6Rs framework: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Refurbish, Recover, Repair

GACERE (Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency): India member

Challenge: 85–90% of ELVs dismantled in the **informal sector** — hazardous to workers, no material recovery efficiency, no environmental compliance.

UPSC Angle — GS-3 / Environment + Economy: Circular economy principles; EPR under E-Waste Rules 2022; Battery Waste Management Rules 2022; critical mineral recovery from e-waste; India’s formal recycling capacity gap.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

DRDO SFDR Validated — Astra Mk-3 Propulsion Breakthrough

DRDO successfully validated the **SFDR (Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet)** propulsion system at **ITR (Integrated Test Range), Chandipur, Odisha** — a critical milestone for the **Astra Mk-3 Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM)**.

How SFDR works:

Uses **atmospheric oxygen** as oxidiser — no need to carry onboard oxidiser (unlike rockets)

Boron-based solid fuel — high energy density, simple storage

Achieves sustained **Mach 2–3.8 cruise** throughout flight

No onboard compressor (unlike turbojets) — air enters via intake, compressed by forward motion

Astra family evolution:

Variant	Range	Status
Astra Mk-1	110 km	Inducted IAF
Astra Mk-2	160 km	Testing phase
Astra Mk-3	340 km	SFDR-enabled (this test)

Global context: India is only the **4th nation** (after France/UK via Meteor, China via PL-15, Russia via R-77M) to validate this class of propulsion. Meteor missile (in service with Rafale) has 150+ km range; China's PL-15 reaches ~200 km.

DRDO labs involved: DRDL (Hyderabad), HEMRL (Pune), RCI (Hyderabad).

UPSC Angle — GS-3 / S&T + Security: Ramjet vs. scramjet vs. rocket distinction; IGMDP programme (1983, Dr. Kalam); MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime) — India member since 2016; Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme legacy; ADA vs. DRDO distinction; BVR missile gap in Indo-Pak + India-China context.

Kavach 4.0 — Railway Safety Commissioning Record

India set a record for **Kavach ATP (Automatic Train Protection) deployment: 472.3 km in a single day** (February 6), bringing the total commissioned network to **1,306.3 km** across 5 railway zones.

How Kavach works:

Real-time communication between Loco Unit, Station Unit, Tower Unit, and Route Relay Interlocking (RRI)

Automatically applies brakes if a signal is passed at danger (SPAD), overspeed, or collision threat detected

Uses **UHF radio + GPS** for positioning

SIL-4 certified — Safety Integrity Level 4 (highest; failure probability $<10^{-8}$ per hour)

Scale challenge: 1,306 km deployed vs. **68,000+ km total** network — coverage still $<2\%$. Full rollout estimated at **Rs 30,000–35,000 crore over 5–7 years**.

Bahanaga Bazar context: June 2, 2023 Odisha train accident (290+ deaths) — signalling failure + altered interlocking. Kavach would have prevented it.

UPSC Angle — GS-3 / S&T + Economy: RDSO (Research Designs & Standards Organisation, Lucknow) mandate; European ETCS Level 2 comparison (GSM-R, moving block signalling); Indian Railways modernisation budget; CAG reports on railway safety; Mission 100% Kavach timeline challenges.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

India Crosses 98 Ramsar Wetland Sites

On **World Wetlands Day (February 2)**, India added two new Ramsar sites, taking the total to **98 — the highest in South Asia**.

New additions:

Patna Bird Sanctuary — Etah district, Uttar Pradesh; shallow freshwater lake; migratory waterfowl

Chhari-Dhand — Kutch, Gujarat; seasonal saline wetland; flamingo breeding site; Desert Fox; Indian Wild Ass

Ramsar Convention: Signed **February 2, 1971** at Ramsar, Iran — named after the city. India acceded in **1982**. As of 2026: 172 contracting parties; 2,400+ Ramsar sites globally.

India wetland status:

98 Ramsar sites; total area: ~13.98 lakh hectares

World Wetlands Day 2026 theme: **“Wetlands and Human Wellbeing”**

India’s Ramsar sites expanded 276% since 2014 (from 26 sites)

Five major threats to Indian wetlands: Encroachment, untreated sewage/industrial effluent, invasive alien species (*Eichhornia*, *Salvinia*), sand mining, altered hydrology (dams/diversions).

UPSC Angle — GS-3 / Environment: Ramsar criteria (9 criteria; at least 1 must be met); India’s Wetlands Rules 2017; National Wetland Conservation Programme; Montreux Record (sites at risk — Loktak Lake, Keoladeo NP earlier); Wetland International vs. Ramsar Secretariat distinction.

Meghalaya Rat-Hole Mining Explosion

A **methane explosion** at an illegal rat-hole coal mine at **Thangkso/Mynsngat village, East Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya** killed at least **27 workers** — mostly migrant labourers from Assam.

Rat-hole mining defined: Narrow tunnels (~3–4 ft wide; 1 person) dug horizontally (side-cutting) or vertically (box-cut) into hillsides — no machinery, no ventilation, no structural support.

NGT ban (2014): National Green Tribunal banned rat-hole mining on grounds of:

Violation of MMDR Act 1957 (no valid mining leases)

No Environmental Clearances

Child labour

Catastrophic safety standards

Why the ban fails — Sixth Schedule conflict:

Coal found under **privately owned tribal land** in Meghalaya

Sixth Schedule (Articles 244(2), 275(1)): ADCs (Autonomous District Councils — Khasi, Garo, Jaintia Hills) have legislative powers over land and forests

MMDR Act 1957 (central law) vs. customary Sixth Schedule land ownership rights — enforcement ambiguity persists

Previous disaster: Ksan mine, December 2018 — 15 miners trapped; 140-day rescue; all confirmed dead.

Environmental damage: Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) from unregulated workings — **Lukha River pH 2.0–4.0** (strongly acidic; normal river pH 6.5–8.5).

UPSC Angle — GS-3 / Environment + GS-2 / Polity: Sixth Schedule autonomy vs. central environmental law; MMDR Act 1957 vs. Mines Act 1952; ADC powers vs. Central Pollution Control Board jurisdiction; tribal land rights; inter-state migrant worker vulnerability; NDRF rescue limitations in flooded narrow shafts.

Turtle Trails — Olive Ridley Conservation Controversy

Budget 2026-27 proposed a “**Turtle Trails**” **ecotourism initiative** for Olive Ridley nesting beaches — sparking debate between tourism revenue and conservation needs.

Olive Ridley basics:

Lepidochelys olivacea — IUCN Vulnerable; WPA Schedule I

Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary (Odisha) — world’s largest Olive Ridley rookery; 300,000–600,000 females nest in mass **arribada** (synchronised nesting event)

Eggs: 100–120 per clutch; incubation ~55–65 days; natural sex determination by sand temperature

Conservation objections to ecotourism at nesting beaches:

Light pollution: hatchlings navigate to sea using moonlight/starlight reflection; artificial lights cause disorientation → predation

Noise and vibration: false crawls (females abort nesting and return to sea), nest site abandonment

CRZ-IA violation: nesting beaches are Coastal Regulation Zone-IA — no construction/activity permitted

Bycatch: 10,000–30,000 turtles die annually in fishing nets; TED (Turtle Excluder Device) compliance only 30–40%

UPSC Angle — GS-3 / Environment: Arribada phenomenon; CRZ notifications; Wildlife Protection Act Schedule I provisions; Olive Ridley vs. Leatherback distinction; Gahirmatha Marine WLS; Operation Olivia (Odisha fishermen seasonal patrolling).

DEFENCE & SECURITY

Agni-III Ballistic Missile Test

India successfully test-fired the **Agni-III Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM)** from **ITR Chandipur, Odisha** — demonstrating the **3,000–5,000 km range** capability, covering all major cities in China and entire Pakistan.

Agni programme overview (Prelims):

Variant	Range	Type	Status
Agni-I	700–1,200 km	SRBM	Inducted
Agni-II	2,000–3,000 km	MRBM	Inducted
Agni-III	3,000–5,000 km	IRBM	Inducted ~2011–12
Agni-IV	3,500–4,000 km	IRBM	Inducted
Agni-V	5,000–8,000+ km	ICBM	Inducted 2024
Agni-VI	10,000–12,000+ km	ICBM	Development

Strategic architecture:

Supervised by **SFC (Strategic Forces Command)** — established January 2003; under CDS

Nuclear Command Authority (NCA): Political Council (PM as chair) + Executive Council (NSA as chair)

India's nuclear doctrine: **NFU (No First Use) + Minimum Credible Deterrence + Massive Retaliation** (if NFU violated)

UPSC Angle — GS-3 / Security: IGMDP (1983, Dr. Kalam); India's CTBT position (moratorium since 1998 test, non-signatory); NPT non-signatory; MTCR membership 2016; Agni-III payload 1.5 tonnes, 2-stage solid fuel, road-mobile TEL.

FNTA — Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority

The Centre signed a tripartite agreement creating the **Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA)** with the Nagaland State Government and **ENPO (Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation)** — representing **8 tribes** (Chang, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Phom, Sangtam, Tikhir, Yimchunger, Zeliang) from 6 eastern districts.

Six FNTA districts: Tuensang, Mon, Kiphire, Longleng, Noklak, Shamator.

What FNTA gives:

46 state subjects transferred (education, health, agriculture, roads, water supply)

Dedicated **financial mechanism** — direct fund flow bypassing Nagaland state government

Institutional autonomy without creating a new state (avoids Article 3 amendment)

Article 371(A) fully preserved — Nagaland's special protections (customary law, land rights, religious/social practices exempt from Parliamentary laws) remain intact.

Not a separate state: ENPO originally demanded a separate "Frontier Nagaland" state. FNTA is a middle path — asymmetric sub-state autonomy, analogous to Bodoland Territorial Council (Assam, 2003 accord).

NSCN(IM) context: The August 2015 Framework Agreement between India and NSCN(IM) remains unimplemented (NSCN demands separate Naga flag + Constitution). FNTA is a separate track dealing with the eastern districts' marginalisation grievance.

UPSC Angle — GS-2 / Polity + IR: Sixth Schedule vs. Fifth Schedule distinction; Article 371(A) special protections; India's Northeast peace track record (12+ accords since 2019: Bodo 2020, NLFT 2019, Karbi Anglong 2021); Mon district Myanmar border; NSCN(IM) Framework Agreement dynamics.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Delhi Declaration 2026 — India-Arab League Summit

India hosted the **India-Arab League Foreign Ministers Summit** in New Delhi — resulting in the **Delhi Declaration 2026**.

Arab League: 22-member organisation; HQ Cairo; founded 1945; covers Arab world from Mauritania to Oman.

Key outcomes:

Explicit Houthi condemnation — significant policy shift for India (previously avoided naming non-state actors in Arab conflicts)

Arab Peace Initiative endorsed — 2002 Saudi plan (Israel withdrawal to 1967 borders + Palestinian state → normalisation)

Rejection of Trump “Board of Peace” (alternative Gaza solution)

Affirmation of sovereignty of Sudan, Libya, Somalia

Five pillars of India-Arab engagement: Energy security, Indian diaspora (10 million+), remittances (USD 35–40 billion/year), trade (USD 150 billion+), counter-terrorism/security cooperation.

UPSC Angle — GS-2 / IR: India’s West Asia policy evolution; IMEC (India-Middle East-Europe Corridor); Gaza two-state solution; India’s two-way engagement with Israel + Arab states; Red Sea shipping disruption (Houthi attacks → Suez Canal traffic -35%); India’s energy security exposure to West Asian instability.

Bangladesh 13th Jatiya Sangsad Elections

Bangladesh scheduled its **13th Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) elections for February 12, 2026** — first polls after the August 2024 ouster of **Sheikh Hasina** (who fled to India) and the formation of the **Muhammad Yunus-led interim government**.

Context:

Hasina’s Awami League removed from power following mass student protests against quota system that escalated into calls against authoritarianism

Awami League barred from participating in elections

BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) and Jamaat-e-Islami main contestants

2,034 candidates from 51 parties + 275 independents

India’s stakes:

Bilateral trade: **USD 12 billion+** (India is Bangladesh’s largest neighbour-trade partner)

1,160 MW electricity exports to Bangladesh

Northeast connectivity: Kolkata–Agartala via Bangladesh — 560 km vs. 1,600 km via chicken’s neck

750,000–800,000 Hindu minority safety (communal violence since August 2024)

Security cooperation — northeast insurgent groups (ULFA, NDFB) using Bangladesh territory

China’s footprint: Largest import source for Bangladesh; Padma Bridge rail link; multiple SEZs under construction.

UPSC Angle — GS-2 / IR: India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement 2015; Farakka Barrage + Teesta Water Treaty (pending); Ganges Water Treaty 1996; Bangladesh as India’s development diplomacy success; SAARC; BIMSTEC; India’s neighbourhood-first policy stakes.

SOCIAL ISSUES & POLITY

PM-SETU — World Bank \$830 Million ITI Upgrade

The **World Bank approved USD 830 million** for **PM-SETU (Skill, Education, Training, and Upskilling)** to upgrade **1,000 ITIs** (Industrial Training Institutes) across India.

Structure: 200 hub ITIs + 800 spoke ITIs; connected to local industry clusters (automotive, electronics, construction, logistics).

Loan terms: 19.5-year maturity; 5-year grace period; World Bank IBRD lending rate.

Key targets:

25% women enrollment in upgraded ITIs (against current ~10%)

Mobilise **USD 680 million in private capital** through PPP

Industry-linked **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** for informal workers

Skill gap context: India's formal TVET (Technical Vocational Education and Training) system chronically underperforms. STRIVE (2018), PMKVY, and DDU-GKY had significant implementation gaps. ITIs: ~15,000 government + ~14,000 private; annual intake ~24 lakh but quality poor.

UPSC Angle — GS-2 / Social Issues + Economy: Demographic dividend and skill development; SDG 4 (Quality Education); India-World Bank borrowing relationship; IBRD vs. IDA distinction; National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC); Skill India Mission 2015; Amul/IFFCO cooperative governance model for ITIs.

★ FACTS CORNER — WEEK 6 KNOWLEDGEEDIA (FEB 2–8, 2026)
INDIA-US TRADE FRAMEWORK 2026:

Commitment: USD 500 billion US products over 5 years (defence, energy, semiconductors, nuclear)
 Tariff: reciprocal reduced 25%→18%; energy tariff 25% removed (conditional on reducing Russian crude)
 India sources ~35–40% crude from Russia; USD 1.3 trillion India-US bilateral trade target

INDIA-GCC FTA:

GCC members: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman (est. 1981; HQ Riyadh)
 India-GCC trade: USD 178.56 billion (FY25); 15.42% of India's global trade; 5-yr CAGR 15.3%
 Talks stalled since 2006; ToR signing = breakthrough after 20 years
 India-UAE CEPA: Feb 2022; fastest FTA in 88 days; current ~\$85B trade; target \$200B by 2032
 10 million Indians in GCC; USD 40–45 billion annual remittances from GCC

RAMSAR/WETLANDS:

World Wetlands Day: February 2 (Ramsar Convention signed Feb 2, 1971, Ramsar, Iran)
 India Ramsar sites: 98 (highest in South Asia); India acceded 1982
 New additions: Patna Bird Sanctuary (Etah, UP) + Chhari-Dhand (Kutch, Gujarat — flamingo, Wild Ass)
 India's total Ramsar area: ~13.98 lakh hectares; 276% expansion since 2014 (from 26 sites)
 Montreux Record: sites needing urgent attention (Loktak Lake on record)

DRDO SFDR / ASTRA MK-3:

SFDR: Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet; boron-based fuel; atmospheric oxygen oxidiser; Mach 2–3.8; 50–340 km
 Astra Mk-1: 110 km, inducted IAF; Mk-2: 160 km, testing; Mk-3: 340 km, SFDR-enabled
 India = 4th nation with SFDR capability (after France/UK Meteor, China PL-15, Russia R-77M)
 Labs: DRDL Hyderabad, HEMRL Pune, RCI Hyderabad; test site: ITR Chandipur (PXE, Balasore)
 MTCR: India member since 2016

RBI MPC FEB 2026:

Repo: 5.25% (hold); Reverse Repo: ~3.35%; MSF: 5.50%; CRR: 4%; SLR: 18%
 Cumulative cut cycle: 125 bps from 6.50% (Jun 2024 peak) to 5.25%
 FIT target: 4% CPI; band: 2–6%; MPC: 6 members (3 RBI + 3 external, nominated by Govt)
 Dec 2025 CPI: 1.33% (lowest in years); FY26 GDP: 7.4% (upward revision)
 Stance: Neutral (was Withdrawal of Accommodation earlier in cycle)

KAVACH:

Kavach ATP: SIL-4 certified; prevents SPAD, overspeeding, collision; UHF radio + GPS
 Components: Loco Unit + Station Unit + Tower Unit + RRI
 Feb 6 record: 472.3 km single-day; cumulative: 1,306.3 km; full network: 68,000+ km
 RDSO HQ: Lucknow; full rollout cost: Rs 30,000–35,000 crore over 5–7 years
 Developed by: RDSO (CORE + KERNEX + Medha vendors); started 2012; SIL-4 since 2016

BHARAT TAXI:

Act: MSCS Act 2002 (Multi-State Cooperative Societies); zero commission; 80% fare to driver
 Launch stats: 2.31 lakh drivers; 21.34 lakh users; Delhi-NCR + Gujarat

Code on Social Security 2020: defines “aggregator” (Sec 2(1)); gig worker welfare fund provisions
 Article 43B (DPSP): State shall promote cooperative societies (added by 97th Constitutional Amendment, 2011)
 Ministry of Cooperation: est. 2021; Amit Shah (first minister)

MEGHALAYA RAT-HOLE MINING:

Thangkso/Mynsngat blast, East Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya; 27 dead (mostly Assam migrants)
 NGT ban: April 2014; basis: MMDR Act 1957 + Mines Act 1952 violations, child labour, no ECs
 Sixth Schedule: Articles 244(2), 275(1); ADCs (Khasi/Garo/Jaintia Hills) – legislative authority over land
 Ksan mine Dec 2018: 15 miners trapped → all dead; 140-day rescue attempt
 Lukha River: pH 2.0–4.0 (AMD from coal mining; severe ecological damage)

FNTA:

Parties: Union Govt + Nagaland Govt + ENPO (8 tribes); signed Feb 7, 2026
 Districts: Tuensang, Mon, Kiphire, Longleng, Noklak, Shamator (6 eastern Nagaland)
 46 subjects transferred; own financial mechanism; Article 371(A) fully preserved
 Not a separate state; analogous to Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC, Assam, 2003)
 NSCN(IM) Framework Agreement (Aug 2015): still unimplemented; separate track from FNTA

AGNI-III:

Type: IRBM; range: 3,000–5,000 km; payload: 1.5 tonnes; 2-stage solid fuel; road-mobile TEL
 Inducted: ~2011–12; covers all Pakistan + major Chinese cities (Beijing ~3,500 km)
 SFC (Strategic Forces Command): est. Jan 2003; under NCA
 NCA: Political Council (PM, chair) + Executive Council (NSA, chair)
 India nuclear doctrine: NFU + Minimum Credible Deterrence + Massive Retaliation
 India: non-NPT + non-CTBT (moratorium 1998); MTCR member 2016

BANGLADESH ELECTIONS:

13th Jatiya Sangsad; Feb 12, 2026; 350 seats (300 FPTP + 50 women reserved)
 Context: Hasina ousted Aug 2024; fled to India; Muhammad Yunus Chief Adviser (Nobel 2006)
 Awami League banned; BNP + Jamaat-e-Islami main parties
 India stakes: USD 12B+ trade; 1,160 MW power exports; 750–800K Hindu minority; NE insurgent cooperation

DELHI DECLARATION 2026 (INDIA-ARAB LEAGUE):

Arab League: 22 members; est. 1945; HQ Cairo; founded by Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Yemen
 Houthi condemnation (India policy shift); Arab Peace Initiative (2002 Saudi plan) endorsed
 Red Sea: Houthi attacks → Suez Canal traffic -35%; India-Europe shipping disrupted; freight rates surged

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Yantra India Miniratna-I: OFB corporatised Oct 2021 → 7 DPSUs; revenue Rs 956 Cr H2 FY22 → Rs 3,108 Cr FY25; exports zero → Rs 321.77 crore
 DRDO 24th India-US JTG Plenary (Feb 3-4): new EW, Cyber, AI project agreements; DIU-DRDO Innovation Bridge; USD 20B defence trade context
 India-Arab League: India has 10 million+ diaspora in Arab world; oil imports 35-40% from Arab GCC states
 Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*): IUCN Vulnerable; WPA Schedule I; Gahirmatha rookery: 300K-600K females; arrivals = global largest

PM-SETU: 1,000 ITIs; USD 830M World Bank loan; 25% women target; USD 680M private capital mobilisation

Sources: PIB, The Hindu, Indian Express, DD News

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