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Weekly  
Current Affairs  
Compilation  
for UPSC  
TNPSC KPSC

Guiding Dreams, Empowering Future  
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**EXCLUSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS BULLETIN**

# Republic Day 2026

## What is Democratic Republic Nation...?

Democracy means people choose their leaders. It sounds ideal, but people can make wise or poor choices. When poor choices dominate, weak leadership can lead to confusion and bad governance. To prevent this, even elected leaders are not free to rule as they wish. They must follow a fixed set of rules called the Constitution. When democracy works within these rules, it becomes a Democratic Republic. Today marks the historic day when India adopted this system and became a Republic.

## WHY IN NEWS...?

- Republic Day 2026 marked the 77th anniversary of the Constitution of India coming into force on 26 January 1950.
- Theme: "150 Years of Vande Mataram".
- Celebration included constitutional values, cultural expression, and public participation.
- 30 tableaux from States, Union Territories, and Ministries.
- Sub-themes: Swatantrata ka Mantra – Vande Mataram; Samridhhi ka Mantra – Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- Parade debut of Bhairav Battalion, a specialised assault infantry unit.
- Participation of a European Union military contingent for the first time outside Europe.
- On 26 January 1950, India formally became a Republic.

## Why Republic Day Matters in History ...?

### THE PURNA SWARAJ PROMISE

- In December 1929, the Indian National Congress passed the historic 'Purna Swaraj' (Complete Independence) resolution.

- The resolution was adopted at the Lahore Session of the INC.
- The session was presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru.
- The resolution demanded complete independence from British rule, rejecting Dominion status.
- The Congress declared 26 January 1930 as 'Purna Swaraj Day'.
- On this day, people across India took a pledge to refuse British authority.
- They committed themselves to the struggle for complete self-rule.
- From 1930 to 1947, 26 January was observed as Independence Day or Purna Swaraj Day throughout India.

## FROM FREEDOM TO FULL REPUBLIC :

- ▶ The constitution-making process began in December 1946.
- ▶ The Constituent Assembly first met at the Constitution Hall (now Central Hall of Parliament).
- ▶ India attained independence on 15 August 1947.
- ▶ However, India continued as a British Dominion after independence.

- ▶ King George VI remained the head of state during this period.
- ▶ A major constitutional transition occurred on 26 November 1949.
- ▶ On this date, the Constituent Assembly formally adopted the Constitution of India.
- ▶ This date is specifically mentioned in the Preamble of the Constitution.
- ▶ The Constitution came into force on 26 January 1950.
- ▶ The date was deliberately chosen to honour the Purna Swaraj Declaration of 26 January 1930.
- ▶ With the enforcement of the Constitution, the Government of India Act, 1935 was repealed.
- ▶ India formally became a Sovereign Democratic Republic.
- ▶ The President of India replaced the British Monarch as the Head of State.
- ▶ This marked the true establishment of India as a Republic.
- ▶ Later, the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976 added the words 'Socialist' and 'Secular' to the Preamble.

▶ Continued on P2



# INDIA–EUROPEAN UNION Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

## WHY IN NEWS...?

- India and the European Union concluded negotiations for a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on 28 January 2026.
- The EU became India's 22nd FTA partner.
- The agreement marks a major milestone in India–EU economic relations.
- The deal will undergo language finalisation, legal scrubbing, translation, and approval by all 27 EU Member States and the European Parliament before implementation.

## Overview

- ▶▶ India–EU FTA provides unprecedented market access for Indian goods and services.
- ▶▶ It offers major gains for labour-intensive sectors and services.
- ▶▶ Key challenges arise from EU regulations such as CBAM and EUDR acting as

non-tariff barriers.

- ▶▶ Sustainability of the agreement depends on managing asymmetries, securing fair carve-outs, and deepening strategic cooperation.

## INDIA'S COMMITMENTS

### HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ India opens market access on 92.1% of tariff lines, covering 97.5% of EU exports.
- ▶ Critical sectors such as dairy, cereals, poultry, soymeal, and select agricultural products are protected.
- ▶ Gradual liberalisation planned for automobiles, wines, and spirits to protect MSMEs and farmers.
- ▶ India opens 102 services subsectors including telecom, financial services, maritime, environmental, professional, and business services.
- ▶ Provides EU firms with a stable and predictable operating environment.

- ▶ MSME-friendly Rules of Origin with product-specific rules aligned to global value chains.
- ▶ Allows self-certification through State-ments of Origin.
- ▶ Flexibilities provided for shrimps, prawns, and downstream aluminium products.
- ▶ Balanced Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) regime compliant with TRIPS.
- ▶ Safeguards public interest, generic pharmaceuticals, and the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library.
- ▶ Balances digital trade commitments with data localisation and sovereignty concerns.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIA–EU FTA :

- ▶▶ Supports geoeconomic diversification and the China-plus-one strategy.

▶▶ Continued on P3

▶▶ From P1

## Highlights of the 77th Republic Day

- ▶▶ 131 Padma Awards: 5 Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan, 113 Padma Shri.
- ▶▶ 70 Armed Forces gallantry awards.
- ▶▶ 301 defence decorations.
- ▶▶ 982 personnel awarded Police and Service Medals.
- ▶▶ Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards: Sarvottam, Uttam, and Jeevan

Raksha Padak.

## VANDE MATARAM

- Composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.
- First published in Bangadarshan (1875).
- Included in Anandamath (1882).
- Set to music by Rabindranath Tagore.
- Declared National Song on 24 January 1950.
- Constitution does not explicitly mention National Song.

## PYQ Prelims 2021 :

- Q. What was the exact constitutional status of India on 26th January 1950?
- (a) A Democratic Republic
  - (b) A Sovereign Democratic Republic
  - (c) A Sovereign Secular Democratic Republic
  - (d) A Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic

Ans: (b)

» From P2

- » Positions India as a trusted manufacturing and services hub for the EU.
- » Creates a rules-based zone of trust amid sanctions and export controls.
- » Enhances cooperation in semiconductors, artificial intelligence, defence, and green technologies.
- » Indian manufacturing benefits from quality upgrades due to EU SPS and standards (Brussels Effect).
- » Improves global competitiveness of Indian goods in markets like the US and Japan.
- » Connects India (4th largest economy) with the EU (2nd largest economy).
- » Covers nearly 25% of global GDP and one-third of global trade.
- » Enhances India's strategic weight and technology integration.
- » Strengthens digital trade rules and supports green transition.
- » Boosts India's digital economy through data flows, AI, and green industries.

## INDIA–EU RELATIONS – BACKGROUND

- Relations began in 1962.
- Joint Political Statement signed in 1993.
- Cooperation Agreement concluded in 1994.
- Strategic Partnership established in 2004.
- Guided by 'India–EU Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025'.
- Annual summits held since Lisbon Summit in 2000.
- Regular leadership interactions at G20 and G7 sidelines.
- India–EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) operational since 2022.
- EU is India's largest goods trading partner with trade worth USD 135 billion in FY 2023–24.
- India–EU services trade stood at USD 53 billion in 2023.
- EU investments in India exceed USD 117 billion.
- Naval cooperation through Maritime Partnership Exercise with EUNAVFOR Atalanta.
- EU joined Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) in 2023.
- EU is a member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- India–EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership (CECP) launched in 2016.
- EU participates in International Solar

- Alliance and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).
- India–EU Connectivity Partnership launched in 2021.
- Co-partners in India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).
- Scientific cooperation includes India's association with CERN.
- Space cooperation includes ISRO's launch of ESA's Proba-3 mission.

## EUROPEAN UNION overview

- » Supranational political and economic union formed after World War II.
- » Aimed at peace and cooperation, especially between France and Germany.
- » European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) formed in 1951.
- » Treaties of Rome signed in 1957 creating EEC and Euratom.
- » Maastricht Treaty (1992) formally created the European Union.
- » Brexit in 2020 reduced membership from 28 to 27.
- » EU aims to create a single internal market based on four freedoms: goods, services, capital, and people.
- » Operates a Single Market and Customs Union.
- » Schengen Area allows border-free travel; includes four non-EU states.
- » 20 EU members use the euro; Bulgaria scheduled to join in 2026.

## CONCERNS RELATED TO INDIA–EU FTA :

- EU regulations may function as non-tariff barriers.
- Environmental and labour standards may amount to green protectionism.
- Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) imposes carbon tax on steel, aluminium, and chemicals.
- CBAM could increase costs of Indian steel exports by 20–35% from 2026.
- EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) bans imports linked to post-2020 deforestation.
- Affects products like coffee, rubber, and wood.
- Small farmers face challenges due to geotagging and traceability requirements.
- Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) effective from 2027.
- Requires firms to audit supply chains

for human rights and environmental compliance.

- Raises data sharing and compliance risks for Indian firms.
- EU Industrial Accelerator Act may introduce local content norms.
- Asymmetry in tariffs: 75% of Indian exports already face less than 1% EU tariff.
- India's average tariffs (10–12%) higher than EU's (3–4%).
- India required to make deeper tariff cuts.
- Competing exporters like Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Ethiopia already enjoy zero-duty access.
- India seeks parity with carve-outs provided by EU to the US.
- EU views India's Quality Control Orders (QCOs) as non-tariff barriers.

## MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN INDIA–EU TIES

- Address asymmetries by leveraging 144 services subsectors and mobility provisions.
- Attract EU manufacturing investment into Indian value chains.
- Establish Rapid Response Forum for non-tariff barriers and regulatory issues.
- Ensure equitable carve-outs and transition periods for CBAM, EUDR, and CSDDD.
- Protect sensitive sectors such as steel and aluminium.
- Go beyond trade through IMEC to strengthen supply chains.
- Use IPOI and TTC frameworks to deepen Indo-Pacific cooperation.

## PRELIMS PYQs – 2023

- Q. Consider the following statements: The 'Stability and Growth Pact' of the European Union is a treaty that
1. limits the levels of the budgetary deficit of the countries of the European Union
  2. makes the countries of the European Union to share their infrastructure facilities
  3. enables the countries of the European Union to share their technology
- How many of the above statements are correct
- (a) Only one
  - (b) Only two
  - (c) All three
  - (d) None

Ans: (a)

## Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace – 2025

### Why in News...?

The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2025 was awarded on 23 January 2026.

Awardee: Graa Machel, a Mozambican rights activist.

Reason for Award: Recognised for her outstanding and sustained contributions to peace, humanitarian action, and social development.



### About the Prize:

- Also known as the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize.
- Instituted in 1986.
- Awarded annually by the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust.
- Instituted in memory of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
- Objective of the Award:
  - To honour individuals or organisations for exceptional contributions to international peace, disarmament, and development.

### Features:

- Cash prize of ₹ 1 crore.
- Citation and a trophy.
- Considered one of India's most prestigious international peace awards.
- Core Domains Covered:
  - Peace.
  - Disarmament.
  - Development.

### Selection Criteria:

- Sustained and exceptional efforts addressing global challenges related to peace, disarmament, and development.
- Positive humanitarian impact.
- Significant contribution to the welfare of humanity.
- Significance for India:
  - Reflects India's commitment to promoting global peace and humanitarian values.
  - Reinforces India's role in recognising international leadership in peace and development.

## National Voters' Day (NVD) 2026

### WHY IN NEWS...?

- President of India led the National Voters' Day (NVD) celebrations on 25 January 2026.
- NVD marks the foundation of the Election Commission of India (ECI).
- ECI was established on 25 January 1950 under Article 324 of the Indian Constitution.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF NVD 2026

- ▶ Theme: 'Citizen at the Heart of Indian Democracy'.
- ▶ Tagline: 'My India, My Vote'.
- ▶ Theme reflects ECI's voter-centric and voter-friendly electoral reforms.
- ▶ Emphasises convenience, accessibility, and participation of voters.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF NATIONAL VOTERS' DAY

- ▶ Highlights the central role of voters in a democracy.
  - ▶ Promotes voter enrolment and electoral awareness.
  - ▶ Focuses on new, young, and first-time voters.
  - ▶ Observed nationwide through awareness programmes organised by ECI.



### 2. ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES (EVMs) :

- First tested in 1982 in Kerala.
  - Widely used from 1998 in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Delhi Assembly elections.
  - Eliminated invalid votes associated with paper ballots.
  - Reduced counting time from days to hours.
  - Environment-friendly due to reduced paper use.
- ### 4. VOTERS' EDUCATION AND ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION (SVEEP)
- Launched in 2009.
  - Flagship voter education programme of ECI.
  - Aims to address urban voter apathy and youth disengagement.
  - Uses street plays, social media campaigns, and campus ambassadors.
  - Operates on the principle: 'No Voter to be Left Behind'.

### 5. VOTER VERIFIABLE PAPER AUDIT TRAIL (VVPAT) :

- Introduced in 2013.
- Implemented following Supreme Court direction in Subramanian Swamy vs ECI.
- Allows voters to see a printed slip of their vote through a glass window for 7 seconds.
- Enhances transparency and voter confidence.

### 6. ACCESSIBLE ELECTIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES :

- 2018 declared as 'Year of Accessible Elections'.
- Braille-enabled EPICs introduced.
- Auxiliary polling stations and free transport provided for PwDs.

### 7. CVIGIL APPLICATION :

- Launched in 2018.
- Enables citizens to report Model Code of Conduct violations.
- Reports submitted via geo-tagged photos or videos.
- ECI mandates response within 100 minutes.

▶ Continued on P5

# Long Range Anti-Ship Hypersonic Glide Missile (LR AShM) :

## ■ Why in the News...?

- India will publicly debut its Long Range Anti-Ship Hypersonic Glide Missile (LR AShM)
- Debut during the 77th Republic Day Parade
- Marks India's entry into the elite hypersonic anti-ship weapons club

## ■ What is LR AShM?

- Indigenous hypersonic glide missile
- Speed: More than Mach 5
- Designed to engage high-value naval targets such as aircraft carrier battle groups
- Capable of very long-range strikes with extreme speed and manoeuvrability

## ■ Features

- Hypersonic glide vehicle separates after boost phase
- Executes unpredictable manoeuvres
- Difficult to intercept by enemy air defence systems

## ■ Developed By :

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
- Developed for the Indian Navy

## ■ Operational Role :

- Intended mainly for coastal battery deployment
- Used for maritime strike roles
- Shore-based mobile launcher capability



## ■ Strategic Aim :

- Enhance maritime deterrence in the Indian Ocean Region
- Neutralise enemy surface combatants at stand-off distances
- Strengthen Anti-Access / Area Denial (A2/AD) capabilities

## ■ PYQ Prelims (2023) :

- Q. Consider the following statements:
1. Ballistic missiles are jet-propelled at subsonic speeds throughout their flights, while cruise missiles are rocket-powered only in the initial

phase of flight.

2. Agni-V is a medium-range supersonic cruise missile, while BrahMos is a solid-fuelled intercontinental ballistic missile.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Correct Answer: (d) Neither 1 nor 2**

## ► From P4

### 8. SPECIAL INTENSIVE REVISION (SIR) 2025

- Comprehensive update of electoral rolls.
- Objective: Include all eligible voters and exclude ineligible ones.
- Covered 51 crore electors across 12 States and UTs.
- Removed deceased, shifted, and dupli-

cate entries.

### PRELIMS PYQ : 2017

- Q.1 Consider the following statements:
1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
  2. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
  3. Election Commission resolves the

disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognised political parties.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 3 only

**Ans: (d)**

# PADMA AWARDS

## 2026



### WHY IN NEWS...?

- On the eve of Republic Day 2026, the President of India approved Padma Awards for 131 recipients.
- Awards included 5 Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan, and 113 Padma Shri.

### WHAT ARE PADMA AWARDS...?

- Padma Awards, along with the Bharat Ratna, are India's highest civilian honours.
- They recognise distinguished contributions across all fields of public service and human endeavour.

### About 2026 Padma Awards :

Total Awards: 131 (5 Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan, 113 Padma Shri).

Posthumous: 16 awards given posthumously.

Women Awardees: 19 women recipients.

Foreign/NRI/PIO/OCI: 6 recipients.

Announcement: Made on Republic Day eve (25 Jan 2026); President presents awards.

### HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

- Padma Awards were instituted in 1954.
- Initially, two civilian awards existed:

Bharat Ratna and Padma Vibhushan (with three classes).

- In 1955, Padma Vibhushan classes were restructured into three separate awards in descending order of prestige.

### PADMA VIBHUSHAN

- Awarded for 'exceptional and distinguished service'.
- Second-highest civilian award after the Bharat Ratna.

### PADMA BHUSHAN

- Awarded for 'distinguished service of high order'.

### PADMA SHRI

- Awarded for 'distinguished service in any field'.

### SCOPE :

- Covers Art, Social Work, Public Affairs, Science & Engineering, Civil Service, Sports, Medicine, Literature, Education.

### ELIGIBILITY :

- Open to Indian citizens, foreigners, NRIs, PIOs, and OCIs.
- No restriction based on race, occupation, rank, or gender.

### PEOPLE'S PADMA (SINCE 2014)

- Focus on recognising 'unsung heroes'.
- Popularly known as the 'People's Padma'.

### SELECTION PROCESS :

- Governed by the Padma Awards Committee.
- Appointed annually by the Prime Minister.
- Chaired by the Cabinet Secretary.
- Members include Home Secretary, Secretary to the President, and 4–6 eminent persons.
- Recommendations approved by the Prime Minister and the President.

### ANNOUNCEMENT & CONFERMENT

- Announced on the eve of Republic Day.
- Conferred by the President in March/April.
- Awardees receive a Sanad, medallion, and replica.

### REGULATIONS :

- Generally not conferred posthumously (rare exceptions).
- Higher category award only after 5 years.
- Not a title; cannot be used as prefix/suffix.
- Maximum 120 awards per year (excluding special categories).

### ARTICLE 18 – ABOLITION OF TITLES

- Abolishes all titles to ensure social equality.
- Prohibits the State from conferring titles.

### EXCEPTIONS

- Military and academic distinctions permitted.

### Padma Vibhushan Recipients (India's 2nd highest civilian award)

- Shri Dharmendra Singh Deol (Posthumous | Art | Maharashtra)
  - Legendary Bollywood actor; iconic role in Sholay.
  - Honoured for lifetime contribution to Indian cinema.
- Shri V. S. Achuthanandhan (Posthumous | Public Affairs | Kerala)
  - Former Kerala Chief Minister; senior CPI(M) leader.
  - Known for integrity-driven governance and public service.
- Shri K. T. Thomas (Public Affairs | Kerala)
  - Former Supreme Court Judge.

– Recognised for contributions to constitutional and judicial thought.

- Ms. N. Rajam (Art | Uttar Pradesh)
  - Renowned Carnatic violinist.
  - Played a key role in popularising Carnatic music nationally and globally.
- Shri P. Narayanan (Literature & Education | Kerala)
  - Eminent scholar and author.
  - Honoured for contributions to education and literature.

### UPSC PYQ (2021)

Q. Consider the following statements in respect of Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards:

1. Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards are titles under the Article 18(1) of the Constitution of India.
2. Padma Awards, which were instituted in the year 1954, were suspended only once.
3. The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a maximum of five in a particular year.

Which of the above statements are not correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (d)

# SIKKIM SUNDARI (RHEUM NOBILE)

## WHY IN NEWS...?

- Sikkim Sundari (*Rheum nobile*) was highlighted on 27 January 2026 for its unique biology and striking appearance.

## NOMENCLATURE & CLASSIFICATION

- Common names: Sikkim Sundari, Padamchal.
- Scientific name: *Rheum nobile*.

## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

- Native to high-altitude alpine regions of the Himalayas.
- Altitudinal range: 4,000–4,800 metres above sea level.
- Found in North Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, and Myanmar.

## HABITAT DETAILS

- Commonly found in North Sikkim along trekking routes.
- Observed near alpine passes and glacial valleys.
- Grows on open alpine slopes and rock ledges.
- Found in glacial valleys and tundra-like environments.

## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Possesses tall, translucent bracts that surround the flowering spike.
- Bracts act like a natural glasshouse, trapping solar heat.
- Protects flowers from freezing winds and extreme cold.
- Shields reproductive parts from intense ultraviolet radiation.
- Gives a luminous, tower-like or pagoda-like appearance in the Himalayan landscape.

## LIFE CYCLE

- Monocarpic plant – flowers only once in its lifetime.
- Remains as a low rosette for 7–30 years.
- Stores energy during the vegetative phase.
- Produces a single dramatic flowering event.
- Develops into a tall flowering spike.
- Sets seeds after flowering.
- Plant dies after seed production.

## CULTURAL & TRADITIONAL USES

- Stems are locally consumed for their acidic taste.
- Used in preparation of 'chuka'.
- Has traditional medicinal uses.
- Used in Himalayan and Tibetan systems of medicine.

