

# THE PALA CIVIL TIMES



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## AI Impact Summit 2026 begins today, Modi to inaugurate an India AI Expo



The Artificial Intelligence (AI) Impact Summit, hosted in New Delhi from February 16 to 20 at Bharat Mandapam—the venue of the 2023 G20 Summit—marks the first global AI summit in the Global South, following events in the UK, South Korea, and France. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the India AI Impact Expo 2026 on Monday, featuring pavilions from 13 countries. Expected attendees include global tech leaders like Sundar Pichai (Google) and Sam Altman (OpenAI), alongside heads of state from about 20 countries such as Brazil, France, Switzerland, Spain, Mauritius, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan, Bolivia, Guyana, Seychelles, and others, plus crown princes from Liechtenstein and UAE, former UK PMs Tony Blair and Rishi Sunak, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and ministerial delegations from over 45 countries.

The summit features over 3,000 speakers across 500 sessions, more than 300 exhibitions and live AI demonstrations structured around three themes—People, Planet, and Progress—and aims to attract over 2.5 lakh visitors. Key events include an all-woman hackathon on Tuesday, bilateral talks (e.g., Modi-Macron on February 17, Modi-Lula da Silva), a leaders' summit, Tech-CEOs event, and Brazil-hosted session on February 20. India emphasizes a human-centric approach for equitable AI access and fair rule-making, championing developing economies' voices without heavy regulation, to drive economic benefits globally.

### LHS 1903: a strange system

Astronomers using the European Space Agency's Cheops space telescope have discovered a planetary system around the red dwarf star LHS 1903, located 117 light-years from Earth.

This small, dim star is about 50% as massive and 5% as luminous as the Sun. The system features four planets: two rocky super-Earths (two to ten times Earth's mass) and two gaseous mini-Neptunes (larger than Earth but smaller than Neptune). Notably, the innermost planet is rocky, followed by two gaseous ones, with the outermost—expected to be gaseous under standard formation models—turning out rocky instead.

This unusual configuration challenges current planet formation theories, which predict planets form simultaneously in a gas-dust disk around a star. Researchers propose the planets formed sequentially, with inner siblings depleting gas needed for the fourth planet's atmosphere, or that it once had a gaseous envelope lost in a catastrophe, leaving its rocky core. The fourth planet's 60°C surface temperature raises its potential habitability. The discovery highlights gaps in our understanding of diverse planetary architectures, particularly around red dwarfs.



## Day after PM's touchdown, Assam govt. seeks more emergency landing facilities



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Moran Bypass Emergency Landing Facility (ELF) in Dibrugarh district, Assam. An Indian Air Force (IAF) C-130J aircraft carrying the PM successfully touched down on this 4.2-km highway airstrip, marking its operational debut.

### Assam Government's Request

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced that Assam has requested four to five additional ELFs from the Centre. These facilities will serve dual purposes: military operations by the Indian Air Force and rapid supply of relief materials during frequent floods in the state.

### Strategic and Operational Significance

Located 70-200 km from India's borders with China and Myanmar, the Moran ELF enhances national security in the Northeast. CM Sarma emphasized that the presence of the Prime Minister and Air Chief Marshal at the site sends a strong message of India's readiness to counter threats.

### Related Infrastructure Development

A complementary project is the 33.7-km four-lane corridor connecting Gohpur and Numaligarh, approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs at an estimated cost of ₹18,662 crore. It includes India's first road-cum-rail tunnel beneath the Brahmaputra river—57 metres deep—and the world's second after the Germany-Denmark tunnel.

## Displaced Kashmiri Pandits celebrate Herath as Muslims recall past bonds

Herath is the local Kashmiri name for Shivaratri. Kashmiri Pandits, both displaced and those remaining in Kashmir, celebrated the festival with fervour. Unlike other parts of India, Pandits uniquely prepare mutton and fish dishes during Herath.

**Historical Brotherhood Between Communities** - Historically, Herath fostered strong bonds between Muslims and Hindus in Kashmir. Pandit families shared dried walnuts with Muslim neighbours on Herath. Muslims reciprocated with 'nadru' (lotus stem) during Nowruz. These food exchanges symbolized shared culture and coexistence beyond religious lines, as recalled by Shia cleric Masroor Ansari.

### Current Situation Post-Militancy

The practice of sharing walnuts with Muslim neighbours has become rare today. This shift followed mass migration of Pandits after militancy erupted in the Kashmir Valley in the 1990s. The 36-year-old conflict has subsumed many shared Hindu-Muslim traditions.

### Nostalgic Recollections

Older generations cherish memories of past harmony. Social media users shared stories, like former J&K Minister Haseeb Drabu distributing soaked walnuts to non-Kashmiris to highlight Pandit distinctiveness. Photojournalist Javed Dar recalled enjoying a Pandit Herath feast after 32 years, reminiscing about friend Lalit Kumar Raina.

### Celebrations in Present-Day Kashmir

Pandits who stayed thronged Srinagar temples including Hanuman Temple, Sharika Devi Temple, and Sankaracharya Temple for prayers.



## EAM S Jaishankar, G4 partners push for UN reform at Munich Security Conference



Foreign Ministers from the G4 nations—India, Brazil, Germany, and Japan—met on February 25 on the sidelines of the 80th UN General Assembly session in New York. Attendees included Brazil's Mauro Vieira, Germany's Johann Wadephul, India's Dr. S. Jaishankar, and Japan's Iwaya Takeshi. They assessed progress on UN Security Council (UNSC) reform and stressed enhancing developing countries' roles, especially those contributing to global peace and security, in both permanent and non-permanent seats.

The ministers highlighted the urgent need for UNSC reform to reflect modern geopolitics, boosting its representativeness, legitimacy, effectiveness, and efficiency amid global instability. They advocated expanding membership in both categories, backed by most UN members, and better representation for underrepresented regions like Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Supporting the Common African Position (Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration), they committed to engaging the wider UN membership during the 80th session for comprehensive UN reform. This meeting signals coordinated momentum to make the UNSC more inclusive and responsive.

*Model question : The recent G4 ministerial meeting during the 80th UNGA session reaffirmed demands for UNSC reform to enhance representation of developing nations and underrepresented regions. Critically examine the significance of such collective diplomatic efforts in making the UN Security Council more representative and effective in addressing contemporary geopolitical challenges.*

## India-US security ties on upward trajectory, says US Commander

Admiral Samuel J Paparo Jr, Commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command, highlighted the rapidly strengthening India-US security ties during an interaction with reporters. He attributed this "steeply upward trajectory" to rising security threats and evolving technology landscapes. Paparo commended India's tactical skill and restraint in Operation Sindoor, following the Pahalgam terror attack, expressing hope for joint efforts to prevent such incidents. He stressed constant vigilance and a robust deterrent posture, noting agreements like Apache helicopters, GE-414 engines, P81 aircraft, and MH60 Romeo helicopters, alongside exercises such as Tiger Triumph, Malabar, Yudh Abhyas, and Cope India.

Paparo praised India as a major security contributor to the Indian Ocean region, emphasizing cooperation in maritime domain awareness—especially undersea—and ongoing exercises. He outlined lessons from Operation Sindoor, pointing to complex long-range kill chains involving sensors, communication, propulsion, warheads, and seekers, where geography matters less in the 21st century due to commoditized space technologies. Future focus includes undersea sensing, information sharing, exercises, and platforms. On India's potential fifth-generation fighter procurement, he called it a sovereign choice, underscoring mutual respect in the partnership. This dialogue signals deepening strategic alignment for regional stability and technological edge.



# ECONOMICS

## The UAE-India corridor is sparking a growth story

India and the UAE signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in February 2022 to boost their economic ties. This free trade deal set an ambitious goal of reaching \$100 billion in non-oil bilateral trade by 2030. Remarkably, they hit this target five years early, prompting leaders to announce a new aim of \$200 billion by 2032 in January 2026. Last year (2025), non-oil trade surged nearly 20% year-over-year to reach \$65 billion, showing rapid momentum beyond just energy exports.

UAE Investments in India - UAE sovereign funds and companies have committed substantial funds to India's booming sectors like infrastructure, banking, energy, healthcare, and renewables.

- Total since 2000 exceeds \$22 billion, with recent surges in non-oil areas.

### Indian Investments in UAE

Indian companies are scaling up operations in the UAE, leveraging its business-friendly environment and strategic location as a global trade hub.

- Cumulative investments surpass \$16 billion, targeting manufacturing, energy, and services.

### The next chapter

India's global moment is here. As the world's fourth-largest economy, with GDP at around \$4 trillion, it is powered by entrepreneurial energy, manufacturing ambition, and digital infrastructure that are genuinely world-class. In conversations with Indian business leaders, there is one theme that is coming through consistently: the appetite to scale internationally has never been stronger. The question is no longer whether Indian enterprise will go global, but how effectively the right corridors can accelerate that journey. This is also part of a wider realignment. The recent Delhi Declaration between India and Arab Foreign Ministers outlined an ambitious programme of cooperation across politics, economy, energy, technology, and security through 2028. The India-UAE corridor is at the vanguard of that broader convergence.

The UAE and India are demonstrating what becomes possible when two countries align policy, capital, and execution around a shared vision. The first \$100 billion came faster than anyone expected. The next chapter will be defined not by the numbers alone, but by how deeply their economies integrate - and how far that integration reaches.

## India adds more than 50,000 MW of power generation capacity

### India's Power Production Trends

- Capacity Addition (FY up to Jan 31): 52,537 MW total from all sources; >11% growth over previous FY-end installed capacity.
- Record Breaker: Highest ever single-year addition; surpasses prior record of 34,054 MW (FY 2024-25).
- Renewables Share: 39,657 MW (34,955 MW solar; 4,613 MW wind).
- Total Capacity Now: 520,510.95 MW.
- Breakdown:
  - Fossil fuels: ~48% (248,541.62 MW).
  - Renewables: ~50.5% (263,189.33 MW).
  - Nuclear: ~1.6% (8,780 MW).

India has achieved a remarkable milestone in its power sector during the ongoing financial year up to January 31, adding 52,537 megawatts (MW) of electricity generation capacity from all sources combined, as reported by the Union Power Ministry. This addition represents more than 11% growth over the country's total installed capacity at the end of the previous financial year. Notably, it surpasses the previous record of 34,054 MW set during FY 2024-25, marking the highest-ever single-year capacity expansion.

Of this total, 39,657 MW comes from renewable energy sources, including 34,955 MW from solar power and 4,613 MW from wind power. With these additions, India's overall power generation capacity now stands at 520,510.95 MW. Approximately 48% or 248,541.62 MW relies on fossil fuels, while renewables account for about 50.5% or 263,189.33 MW, and nuclear power contributes around 1.6% or 8,780 MW. This rapid expansion underscores the government's push towards energy security and a balanced energy mix, highlighting significant progress in scaling renewable infrastructure to meet rising demand.

# SCIENCE

## AI reads brain MRIs in seconds

University of Michigan researchers have developed Prima, an AI system that analyzes brain MRI scans in seconds to detect over 50 neurological conditions with up to 97.5% accuracy, outperforming other advanced AI models. Trained on over 200,000 MRI studies, 5.6 million sequences, patient histories, and imaging reasons from decades of digitized data at U-M Health, Prima integrates clinical context like a radiologist. Tested on 30,000+ studies, it prioritizes urgent cases such as brain hemorrhages or strokes, auto-alerting specialists like stroke neurologists or neurosurgeons for rapid response.

This innovation addresses surging global MRI demand straining overburdened health systems, where neuroradiology shortages cause delays and errors—sometimes days for results in rural or high-volume settings. Prima's real-time, vision-language model processing enhances workflows, reduces physician burden, and improves outcomes without sacrificing accuracy. Unlike prior narrow AI tools for specific tasks like lesion detection, Prima's broad applicability as a "co-pilot" for imaging could extend to mammograms, X-rays, or ultrasounds, supporting equitable access amid workforce gaps. Senior author Todd Hollon emphasizes its scalable potential to transform diagnostics in diverse healthcare environments.



## 4 new astronauts arrive at ISS to replace NASA's tired crew

The International Space Station (ISS) has returned to full operational strength following the arrival of four new astronauts—comprising US, French, and Russian personnel—delivered by SpaceX on Saturday from Cape Canaveral. This launch occurred just one day after liftoff, promptly replacing crew members who had departed early due to health concerns last month.

The context stems from a medical evacuation of one astronaut from a four-person SpaceX crew launched last summer, marking NASA's first such incident in 65 years of human spaceflight. Described as a serious health issue, it reduced the ISS crew to three—one American and two Russians—forcing NASA to suspend spacewalks and curtail research activities. The swift replacement restores normal operations, underscoring the critical need for rapid crew turnover to maintain continuous station functionality amid unforeseen health challenges.

## Launch vehicle debris with ISRO logo, National Emblem found on Maldives island

Parts of an ISRO rocket marked with the agency's logo and India's National Emblem washed up on a remote, empty island near L. Kunahandhoo in the Maldives on February 12, 2026. Experts think it's the payload fairing—a protective cover—from ISRO's biggest rocket, LVM3, which has two solid boosters, a liquid middle stage, and a cryogenic top stage. This comes after similar pieces appeared in Sri Lanka's Trincomalee on December 28, 2025. It may link to the LVM3-M6 mission on December 19, 2025 (which launched a U.S. satellite for AST SpaceMobile) or the November 2 CMS-03 satellite launch.

ISRO hasn't confirmed yet, but ocean currents carried the fairing—dropped over water after satellite release—far from launch.

**PRELIMS CORNER :**

Q) The balance of payments of a country is a systematic record of: (2013)

- a) all import and transactions of a during a given period normally a year
- b) goods exported from a country during a year
- c) economic transaction between the government of one country to another
- d) capital movements from one country to another

2) Consider the following statements: (2013)

- 1. Inflation benefits the debtors.
  - 2. Inflation benefits the bond-holders.
- 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

**Turning Point  
Kallumala Samaram**



In early 20th-century Kerala, caste oppression permeated daily life, including strict sartorial restrictions on Dalit and Bahujan communities. Lower castes faced bans on stitched garments, with clothing limited to knee-length. Dalit women endured particular humiliation: they were prohibited from covering their breasts or wearing upper-body cloth and forced to don "kallumalas"—necklaces of stones or glass—as visible markers of their "untouchable" status. Gold or silver ornaments were reserved for upper castes; middle castes could wear bronze or brass, while Dalits were confined to iron or stone. These codes normalized hierarchy, respectability, and morality, embedding caste discrimination into everyday practices.

This oppressive system faced bold resistance in December 1915 through the Kallumala Samaram, led by social reformer Ayyankali. On December 21, 1915, Ayyankali organized a gathering of Pulaya, Paraya, and other Dalit women in a circus tent owned by Dalit woman Ramabai in Kollam. Hundreds of women symbolically and literally cast off their stone necklaces, defying caste markers in a powerful act of collective rebellion. This event marked a historic milestone in South India's anti-caste movement, challenging entrenched norms and asserting dignity.

The defiance provoked immediate backlash: upper-caste men unleashed caste violence against the gathering. Dalits responded by filing a court case, which they won, setting a legal precedent. The Kallumala Samaram not only overturned sartorial prohibitions but galvanized broader struggles against caste oppression, highlighting women's pivotal role and Ayyankali's leadership in fostering social justice.

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# Prelims Corner: Explanations

1) Answer is option a

The Balance of Payments (BoP) is a systematic record of all economic transactions between the residents of a country and the rest of the world over a specific period, typically a year. These transactions include:

1) Current Account:

- Exports and imports of goods and services.
- Income from investments and wages.
- Transfer payments like remittances.

2) Capital Account:

- Transfers of capital and non-produced assets.

3) Financial Account:

- Investments and financial flows like foreign direct investment investments, and (FDI),
- portfolio changes in foreign exchange reserves.

While the BoP includes broader categories beyond just imports and exports, option a captures the essence of recording all external transactions, including imports and exports.

## Economic Survey 2025-2026 trends

1. India's total exports reached a record USD 825.3 billion in Financial Year 2025, registering 6.1 per cent year-on-year growth, primarily driven by services exports.
2. Services exports hit an all-time high of USD 387.6 billion in Financial Year 2025, growing by 13.6 per cent and reinforcing India's role as a global hub for technology and business services.
3. India's Current Account Deficit remained moderate, supported by strong net inflows from services exports and remittances offsetting the merchandise trade deficit; in Quarter 2 of Financial Year 2026, it stood at 1.3 per cent of Gross Domestic Product.
4. India was the world's largest recipient of remittances, with inflows of USD 135.4 billion in Financial Year 2025, enhancing external account stability; the share from advanced economies rose due to skilled workers.
5. India's foreign exchange reserves rose to USD 701.4 billion as of January 16, 2026, providing about 11 months of import cover and exceeding 94 per cent of external debt coverage for resilience against volatility.

2) Answer is option a

During inflation, the value of money decreases over time, which reduces the real value of debt.

Debtors repay their loans in "cheaper" money, meaning the purchasing power of the money repaid is less than when it was borrowed.

Hence, inflation benefits debtors.

*Imagine you borrow \$100 when apples cost \$1 each. That \$100 could buy 100 apples. Then inflation hits: apple prices double to \$2 each. You repay the \$100 loan as agreed. But now, that same \$100 only buys 50 apples.*

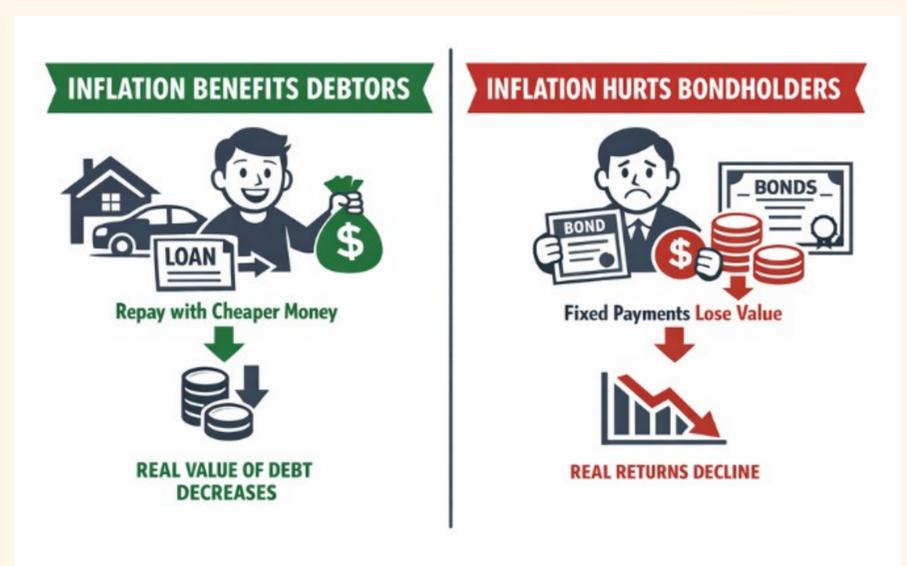
*You win! The lender gets back money with half the buying power. Inflation makes your debt "cheaper" to repay while your wages/income likely rise with prices.*

2) Inflation Benefits Bondholders: This statement is incorrect: Inflation erodes the real value of fixed-income investments like bonds.

Bondholders receive fixed interest payments and principal amounts, which purchasing power during inflation.

Thus, inflation negatively impacts bondholders.

*You buy a \$100 bond paying fixed 5% interest (\$5/year). Inflation rises to 7%. Your real return:  $5\% - 7\% = -2\%$ . The \$5 interest & \$100 principal lose buying power yearly. Fixed payments can't keep up with rising prices.*



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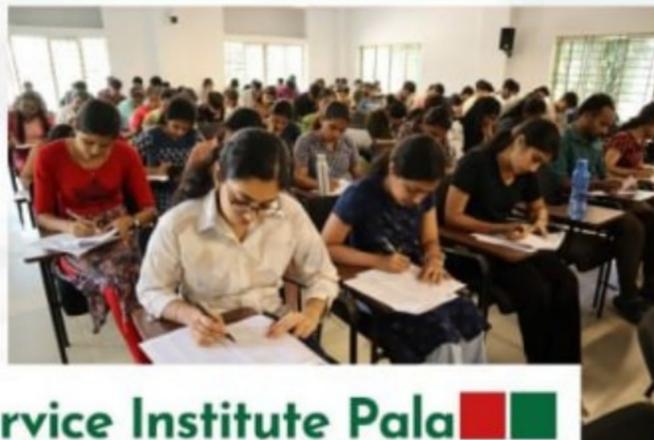
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