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Squadron Leader Bhawana Kanth: IAF's First Woman Fighter Combat Leader

- Squadron Leader Bhawana Kanth has become the first woman officer of the Indian Air Force (IAF) to qualify as a Fighter Combat Leader (FCL). The achievement marks an important milestone in the increasing participation of women in India's combat and specialised military roles.

Fighter Combat Leader (FCL):

- The FCL qualification is an advanced professional qualification involving air-combat tactics, operational planning, combat leadership and employment of fighter aircraft. It is associated with the Tactics and Air Combat Development Establishment (TACDE), Gwalior, the IAF's premier institution for advanced tactical and air-combat training.

About Bhawana Kanth:

- Bhawana Kanth was among India's first three women fighter pilots, along with Avani Chaturvedi and Mohana Singh.
- The three were inducted into the fighter stream of the IAF in 2016 under the government's experimental scheme to induct women as fighter pilots.
- In 2019, Bhawana Kanth became the first woman fighter pilot to qualify for combat missions after completing operational training on the MiG-21 Bison.
- She was awarded the Nari Shakti Puraskar for her contribution and achievement in the field of defence.

Q. Who became the first woman officer of the IAF to qualify as a Fighter Combat Leader? **Squadron Leader Bhawana Kanth.**



**Iga Swiatek Wins Canadian Open
2026 Women's Singles Title**

- Polish tennis star Iga Swiatek defeated Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan in the final to win the women's singles title at the 2026 Canadian Open in Toronto.
- It was Swiatek's first title of the 2026 season and her first Canadian Open final appearance.

Canadian Open:

- The Canadian Open, also known as the National Bank Open, is a major professional tennis tournament and part of the WTA 1000 category. It is traditionally played on hard courts and serves as an important preparation event ahead of the US Open.

Canadian Open 2026 Champions:

Category	Winner(s)	Country
Men's singles	Ben Shelton	United States
Women's singles	Iga Swiatek	Poland
Men's doubles	Orlando Luz / Rafael Matos	Brazil / Brazil
Women's doubles	Kateřina Siniaková / Zhang Shuai	Czech Republic / China

Q. Who won the women's singles title at the 2026 Canadian Open? **Iga Swiatek of Poland.**



BHASHINI-NITI Aayog Partnership: Multilingual AI for Inclusive Governance

- The Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and NITI Aayog have signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) to advance multilingual, voice-first Artificial Intelligence (AI) for citizen-centric governance and public service delivery.
- The partnership will be implemented through the BHASHINI for Seva/Sanchalan initiative.

Key Objectives:

- Provide government information and services in citizens' preferred Indian languages.
- Promote voice-first and multilingual AI for citizens with varying levels of digital literacy.
- Integrate BHASHINI's language technologies into NITI Aayog's digital platforms, document systems and communication workflows.
- Develop sector-specific voice bots and reference applications.
- Improve translation models using specialised government terminology.
- Enable two-way communication between citizens and government.

Q. Which two organisations signed the Statement of Intent for multilingual AI-based inclusive governance? **Digital India BHASHINI Division and NITI Aayog.**



One Herb, One Standard: Government Renews MoU for Medicinal Plant Standardisation

- The Government of India has renewed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) under the Ministry of Ayush and the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- The partnership aims to establish uniform, reliable and scientifically robust quality standards for medicinal plants used across India's traditional systems of medicine.

One Herb, One Standard:

- The initiative builds on the "One Herb, One Standard" programme launched in 2022. Its objective is to ensure that the same medicinal plant has consistent identity, quality and safety parameters irrespective of the traditional medicine system in which it is used.

Systems Covered:

The standardisation framework covers medicinal plants used in:

- Ayurveda
- Siddha
- Sowa-Rigpa
- Unani
- Homoeopathy
- The renewed MoU will particularly focus on developing standards for single drugs of plant origin.

Q. What is the duration of the renewed MoU between PCIM&H and IPC? **Three years.**



Exercise Udara Shakti 2026: India–Malaysia Strengthen Air Force Interoperability

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) have commenced the bilateral Exercise Udara Shakti 2026 at Subang Air Base, Malaysia. The five-day exercise, focuses on joint training, operational learning, exchange of best practices and enhancing interoperability between the two air forces.
- Indian Rafale fighters are participating alongside Malaysian Su-30MKM and F/A-18D aircraft, enabling training involving different fighter platforms and operational concepts.

What is Interoperability?

- Interoperability refers to the ability of armed forces from different countries to operate and coordinate effectively during joint missions. It involves compatible procedures, communication, tactics, command structures and operational understanding.

Strategic Significance:

- Defence cooperation: Strengthens the growing India–Malaysia defence partnership.
- Indo-Pacific security: Enhances cooperation with a key Southeast Asian partner in the wider Indo-Pacific region.
- Operational readiness: Provides experience in operating with foreign air forces and dissimilar aircraft.
- Capacity building: SME exchanges facilitate sharing of operational experience and best practices.

Q. Which two air forces are participating in Exercise Udara Shakti 2026? **Indian Air Force and Royal Malaysian Air Force.**



Defence Ministry Signs ₹1,577 Crore Contracts for Loiter Munition Systems

- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has signed contracts worth ₹1,577 crore with Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) and NIBE Private Limited for procurement of Loiter Munition Systems for the Indian Army. The contracts were signed in New Delhi in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh.

What are Loitering Munitions?

- Loitering munitions are unmanned weapon systems that can loiter over a designated area, identify/receive a target and then strike it. They combine features of a drone/UAV and precision-guided munition.
- Unlike conventional artillery ammunition, they can remain airborne for a period before engaging a target, providing greater surveillance, target acquisition and precision-strike capability.

Why is it Important for the Indian Army?

- The procurement is aimed at enhancing the capabilities of Artillery Regiments and improving the Army's overall operational effectiveness.

Operational advantages:

- Precision strike against identified targets.
- Ability to search and loiter before engagement.
- Useful against high-value and time-sensitive targets.
- Can reduce dependence on conventional artillery for certain missions.
- Provides greater flexibility in modern, network-centric warfare.

Q. Recently, the Ministry of Defence signed ₹1,577 crore contracts for which equipment? **Loiter Munition Systems.**



SNEHA E-Book Launched for Senior Citizens' Welfare and Active Ageing

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched SNEHA – Stories of Nurturing, Engagement, Happiness and Active Ageing during the 5th meeting of the National Council for Senior Citizens (NCSrC) chaired by Union Minister Dr. Virendra Kumar in New Delhi.
- The e-book documents major programmes, initiatives and achievements of the Senior Citizen Division from October 2024 to June 2026.

Major Government Initiative: AVYAY:

- The meeting also reviewed implementation of the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY), the umbrella scheme for senior citizens. It aims to promote healthy, dignified and active ageing, provide care and shelter to vulnerable elderly persons, and strengthen social and inter-generational support systems.

Important components/initiatives:

- Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSrC) – support for senior citizen homes, continuous-care homes, mobile Medicare units and physiotherapy clinics.
- Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY) – assistive living devices for eligible senior citizens.
- Elderline (14567) – national helpline for senior citizens.
- JEEVAN App – digital platform for elderly safety, welfare, healthcare access and social inclusion.

Q. Recently, SNEHA E-Book Launched for Senior Citizens' Welfare and Active Ageing. what does SNEHA stand for? **Stories of Nurturing, Engagement, Happiness and Active Ageing.**



CCRAS-NIIMH-SEMIRI MoU for Digitisation of Medical Manuscripts

- The National Institute of Indian Medical Heritage (NIIMH) under CCRAS, Ministry of Ayush, has signed an MoU with the Sevadhi Museum & Indological Research Institute (SEMIRI), Kottayam, Kerala, to digitise and catalogue hundreds of medical manuscripts related to Ayurveda and allied traditional knowledge.

Key Highlights

- Institutions: CCRAS-NIIMH + SEMIRI.
- Location: Kumaranalloor, Kottayam, Kerala.
- SEMIRI collection: 30,000+ manuscripts, including temple records.
- Focus: Digitisation + descriptive cataloguing of medical manuscripts.
- Catalogue details: Title, author, language, script, subject, material, dimensions, folios, condition and provenance.
- Repository format: AYUSH Manuscripts Advanced Repository.
- Broader initiative: Gyan Bharatam Mission.
- Significance: Preservation of Ayurveda's textual heritage and promotion of research in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).

Gyan Bharatam Mission:

- Gyan Bharatam is a government initiative aimed at the survey, documentation, preservation, digitisation and wider dissemination of India's manuscript heritage. It seeks to make manuscripts accessible to researchers while protecting fragile physical collections.

Q. SEMIRI, recently associated with medical manuscript digitisation, is located in which state? **Kerala.**



Gallantry Awards 2026: President Approves 78 Awards

- On the eve of India's 80th Independence Day, President Droupadi Murmu approved 78 gallantry awards, including 13 posthumous awards, for personnel of the Armed Forces and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

Key Highlights

- Total gallantry awards: 78
- Posthumous: 13
- Kirti Chakra: 9, including 7 posthumous
- Shaurya Chakra: 19, including 1 posthumous
- Bar to Shaurya Chakra: 1
- Bar to Sena Medal (Gallantry): 5
- Sena Medal (Gallantry): 36, including 5 posthumous
- Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry): 3
- Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry): 5
- Occasion: 80th Independence Day, 2026.

Gallantry Awards:

- India's gallantry awards are broadly divided into wartime and peacetime categories.

Wartime Gallantry Awards:

- Param Vir Chakra (PVC) – highest military gallantry award.
- Maha Vir Chakra (MVC)
- Vir Chakra

Q. How many gallantry awards were approved by President Droupadi Murmu in 2026? **78, including 13 posthumous.**



PM Modi Announces Youth-Centric Initiatives & 'Shakti Ki Saptadhara' for Viksit Bharat

- In his 80th Independence Day address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a set of initiatives focused on youth empowerment, AI skilling and affordable access to competitive-exam preparation. He also outlined “Shakti Ki Saptadhara”, a seven-pillar framework for accelerating India's journey towards Viksit Bharat @2047.

Key Announcements:

AI Training for 1 Crore Youth:

- Government will provide AI skill training to 1 crore (10 million) youth.
- Aim: create a future-ready workforce and strengthen India's position in the global AI ecosystem.

Free Online Coaching for Competitive Exams

- Government plans to provide free online coaching for various competitive examinations.
- The initiative will leverage India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and a network of qualified teachers/educators.
- It seeks to reduce the financial burden of coaching on poor and middle-class families and improve access to quality preparation irrespective of location.

Q. 'Shakti Ki Saptadhara' , recently in news, is associated with what? **A seven-pillar framework for India's development towards Viksit Bharat @2047.**

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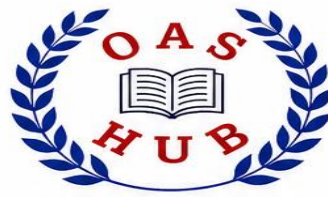
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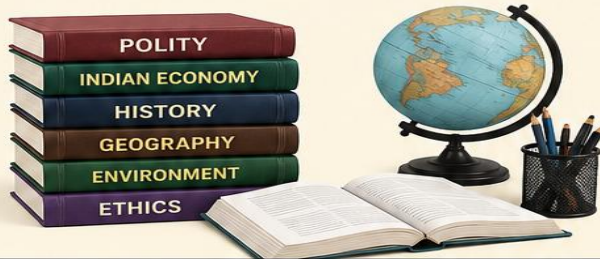
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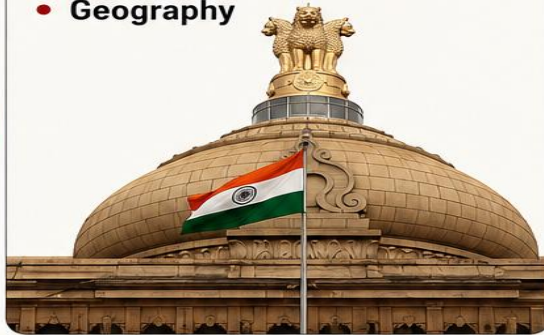
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 www.oashub.in

 oashub19

 oashub19@gmail.com

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