

Daily Current Affairs

Date : 21 January, 2026



Index

Sr. No.	Topic
1.	World's First 'Three-Way Hybrid Pearl Millet': RHB 273
2.	Rajasthan Energy Conservation Awards
3.	IICDEM-2026: Rajasthan's Partner Countries - Croatia and Kazakhstan
4.	News in Shorts 1. Jamun, Custard Apple, and Amla Fruit Processing Incubation Center: Udaipur 2. Use of MedLEaPR Software Mandatory from February 1, 2026 3. MoU between Rajeevika and MNIT Jaipur 4. Tribal Youth Exchange Program 5. Rajasthan Industry and SME Summit: Jaipur 6. Rare Earth Elements (REEs) Reserves in Balesar 7. Savita Mali Art Innovation Award: Vijay Rahi 8. Bird Festival (Udaipur)
5.	104th SKOCH Summit, 2026
6.	United Nations Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Treaty
7.	India-UAE Relations
8.	Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC): BRICS
9.	Second Dolphin Survey
10.	Lakshadweep: Microscopic Crustacean
11.	Environment Protection Fund
12.	India's First Open Sea Cage Fish Farming Project
13.	First Responsible Nations Index, 2026

--:1:--



World's First 'Three-Way Hybrid Pearl Millet': RHB 273



Why in News?

- Recently, the Rajasthan Agricultural Research Institute (RARI) in Durgapura (Jaipur), in collaboration with ICRISAT, Hyderabad, developed the world's first three-way hybrid pearl millet, 'RHB 273'.



Key Points:

- This newly developed variety of pearl millet is not only drought-resistant but also superior to traditional varieties in terms of yield and nutritional value.
- Development:** By the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Hyderabad, and the Rajasthan Agricultural Research Institute, Durgapura (Jaipur).

--2--

Daily Current Affairs

Date : 21 January, 2026



- **Release:** RHB 273 was released on January 4, 2026, by the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, along with 184 improved varieties of 25 crops in India.
- **Three-Way Hybrid:** Unlike traditional pearl millet hybrids, which have two parents, the three-way hybrid has three parent lines, integrating desirable traits such as higher yield, drought tolerance, and better fodder quality.
- The hybrid pearl millet 'RHB 273' can be cultivated in the arid regions of Rajasthan, as well as Gujarat and Haryana, where the annual rainfall is less than 400 mm.
- RHB 273 yielded an average of 2,230 kg/ha in three years of multi-location testing at 30 locations across three states, which was approximately 13 to 27 percent higher than regional varieties.

Facts for Prelims:

- **Rajasthan's Rank in Pearl Millet Production:** First place (44.66 percent share).
- **Major Pearl Millet Varieties in Rajasthan:** RAJ – 171, RCB – 2, RCB – 911, RHB – 30
- **Center of Excellence for Millets:** Jodhpur Agricultural University.
- **Millet Research Center:** Gudamalani (Barmer)
- To promote millets in Rajasthan, the 'Rajasthan Millets Promotion Mission' was launched as part of the 11 agricultural missions announced in the first agricultural budget of the state in the State Budget 2022-23.

--3:--

Rajasthan Energy Conservation Awards

Why in News?

- Recently, Rajasthan's Energy Minister Hiralal Nagar presented the 'Rajasthan Energy Conservation Awards' at the Constitutional Club, Jaipur.



Key Points:

- These awards were given in five major categories for outstanding efforts in the field of energy conservation during the years 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25.
- Five major categories:** Industry, Individual Buildings, Urban Local Body Buildings, Government Department Offices, and Individual Category.
- A total of 30 institutions and individuals in the above 5 categories and 43 other winners were awarded.

--:4:--

Daily Current Affairs

Date : 21 January, 2026



- **Government Department Category Award:** In the District Collector category of the Government Department category, Alwar District Collector Dr. Artika Shukla was awarded the first prize for 'Promotion of Energy Efficiency in Different Districts' for the year 2022-23.
- **Government Department Category Award:** Ajmer Discom received the first prize in the commercial category for enhancing energy efficiency.
- The Energy Minister also presented induction cooktops to 10 beneficiaries of the 'Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana'.
- As of January 2026, Rajasthan is the leading state in the country with 42 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy capacity. (Source - DIPR).

Other Important Points:

Rajasthan Renewable Energy Corporation Limited (RRECL)

- **Formation:** Formed in August 2002, by the merger of the erstwhile Rajasthan Energy Development Agency (REDA) and Rajasthan State Power Corporation Limited (RSPCL).
- Registered under the Companies Act, 1956.
- The objective of RRECL is to act as a state nodal agency for promoting and developing non-conventional energy sources in the state.

Facts for Prelims:

Rajasthan Integrated Clean Energy Policy 2024:

- This policy was notified by the state government on December 4, 2024.
- **Policy Duration:** This policy is effective from the date of notification and will remain in force until March 29, 2029, or until superseded by another policy.

Objective:

--:5:--

Daily Current Affairs

Date : 21 January, 2026



- The policy aims to achieve a target of 125,000 megawatts (125 gigawatts) of renewable energy projects in the state by the year 2029-30.

Breakdown of 125 GW:

Sr. No.	Type of Generation	Target Capacity
1.	Solar	90,000 MW
2.	Wind & Hybrid	25,000 MW
3.	Hydro, Pump Storage Plant (PSP), Battery Energy Storage System	10,000 MW

- **Note:** Rajasthan aims to achieve a target of more than 54,000 megawatts of power capacity from conventional and renewable energy sources by the year 2031-32.

--6--

IICDEM-2026: Rajasthan's Partner Countries - Croatia and Kazakhstan

Why in News?

- Croatia and Kazakhstan are participating as Partner Countries of Rajasthan in the 'India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management – 2026' (IICDEM-2026).



SOCIAL MEDIA CELL



IICDEM-2026

IICDEM-2026



IICDEM-2026

**INDIA
INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON
DEMOCRACY AND
ELECTION
MANAGEMENT**



21st to 23rd
January 2026



Bharat Mandapam
New Delhi

--7--

Daily Current Affairs

Date : 21 January, 2026



Key Points:

- Through the exchange of experiences, dialogue, and collaboration with these countries, Rajasthan will develop new understanding and innovations at the international level in the fields of election management, media engagement, and voter awareness.
- **Event:** January 21-23, 2026, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- **Organizer:** Election Commission of India, under the aegis of the India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIDEM).
- **Rajasthan's Representation:** A 15-member delegation from Rajasthan, led by Chief Electoral Officer Naveen Mahajan.
- **Note:** Chief Electoral Commissioner of Rajasthan: Rajeshwar Singh.

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--8--

NEWS IN SHORTS

S. No.	News
1.	<p>Jamun, Custard Apple, and Amla Fruit Processing Incubation Center: Udaipur</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Recently, Union Minister of Food Processing Industries, Chirag Paswan, inaugurated the state's first Jamun, Custard Apple, and Amla Fruit Processing Incubation Center at Balicha Mandi in Udaipur.Objective: To process minor forest products such as custard apples, jamun, amla, and aloe vera, along with spices.This processing incubation center has been developed under the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme.
2.	<p>Use of MedLEaPR Software Mandatory from February 1, 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">In accordance with the orders issued by the Rajasthan High Court, Jodhpur, the use of MedLEaPR software for Medical Legal Cases (MLC) and Postmortem Reports (PMR) has been made mandatory in Rajasthan from February 1, 2026.MedLEaPR stands for Medico-Legal Examination and Postmortem Reporting System, a digital platform developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).Its objective is to streamline and digitize handwritten medico-legal reports (MLRs) such as injury reports, age determination, and postmortem reports, thereby improving efficiency and coordination between healthcare and law enforcement agencies.From February 1, 2026, handwritten reports will be completely banned in all police stations and hospitals in Rajasthan.

3.

MoU between Rajeevika and MNIT Jaipur

- Recently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Rajasthan Rural Livelihoods Development Council (Rajeevika) and Malaviya National Institute of Technology (MNIT), Jaipur, for the execution of various survey and study works.
- **Objective of the MoU:** To promote academic collaboration to strengthen the effective evaluation, study, and research work of various schemes and programs of Rajeevika.
- This collaboration is a significant initiative towards coordinating academic expertise and on-the-ground experiences.

4.

Tribal Youth Exchange Program

- Recently, the Governor of Rajasthan, Haribhau Bagde, interacted with tribal youth participants from Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and Jharkhand under the 'Tribal Youth Exchange Program' in Jaipur.
- The Tribal Youth Exchange Program (TYEP) is jointly organized by the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- Its main objective is to familiarize tribal youth with the rich cultural heritage of the country, expose them to various aspects of development, and foster a sense of unity among them.

5.

Rajasthan Industry and SME Summit: Jaipur

- The 'Rajasthan Industry and SME Summit' was held in Jaipur on January 20, 2026.
- This summit was jointly organized by the SME Chamber of India and the Manufacturers and Exporters Association of India.
- **Theme:** "Exploring Emerging Business, Exports, Investment and Collaboration Opportunities".
- **Objective:** To bring manufacturers, SMEs, exporters, investors, and related industries together on a single platform.

6.

Rare Earth Elements (REEs) Reserves in Balesar

- Recently, the discovery of large reserves of Rare Earth Elements (REEs), including Cerium, has been confirmed in Balesar, Jodhpur district.
- Previously, Cerium reserves were also found in Marwar Junction and Bali in Pali district.

7.

Savita Mali Art Innovation Award: Vijay Rahi

- At the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF), poet Vijay Rahi, a resident of Lalsot (Dausa), was honored with the 'Savita Mali Art Innovation Award'.
- This award is given in memory of Savita Mali, an art connoisseur and painter from Jodhpur, with the aim of honoring experienced individuals in the fields of art, literature, and related areas, as well as encouraging emerging talents.

8.

Bird Festival (Udaipur)

- **Event:** Held from January 15 to 18, 2026 at the Ramsar site Menar.
- **Edition:** 12th.
- **Organizers:** Rajasthan Tourism Department and Forest Department, Rajasthan.



104th SKOCH Summit, 2026



Why in News?

- The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), the Indian government's premier telecommunications research and development center, has been awarded the "SKOCH Award, 2025" for its Cell Broadcast Solution (CBS).



Key Points:

- The award ceremony was held under the aegis of the 104th SKOCH Summit, organized on the theme "Resourceful Developed India."
- The SKOCH Award is given to individuals, projects, and government and private institutions that have done outstanding work to improve governance and development across India.
- This award recognizes excellence in areas such as finance, technology, health, education, and grassroots initiatives.
- **Cell Broadcast Solution:** C-DOT's Cell Broadcast Solution is a disaster and emergency warning platform.
- It brings together disaster warning agencies – the India Meteorological Department (IMD) for weather, the Central Water Commission (CWC) for floods, the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) for tsunamis/marine events, the Defence Geo-Informatics Research Establishment (DGRE) for landslides, and the Forest Survey of India (FSI) for forest fires – on a single integrated platform.
- **Developed by:** Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT).

-:12:-

Features of the Cell Broadcast Solution:

1. It provides automatic integration between government emergency warning dissemination platforms and the country's telecommunication networks for rapid information dissemination to affected citizens.
2. It supports 2G, 3G, 4G, and 5G technologies.
3. It supports 21 Indian languages, improving the overall efficiency of disaster risk reduction and management activities.
4. This initiative is aligned with the United Nations' 'Early Warnings for All' (#EW4-All) initiative, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Common Alerting Protocol (CAP), and the Call to Action.

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United Nations Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Treaty



Why in News?

- On January 17, 2026, the world's first legally binding Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement/treaty to protect marine biodiversity in international waters came into force.



Key Points:

- **Introduction:** This is the first ocean treaty to ensure inclusive ocean governance.
- It is an agreement on marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, adopted under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982.

Origin:

- **2008:** Negotiations began due to growing concerns about the uncontrolled exploitation of the high seas.
- **March 2023:** The treaty was finalized.
- **September 2025:** Ratified by 60 countries (including India).
- **January 2026:** Ratified by more than 80 countries.
- **Note:** Major economies like China, Germany, Japan, France, and Brazil have ratified the treaty, and India, like the US, has signed the treaty (in 2024), but the domestic ratification process is still pending.
- **Applicability:** It applies to the high seas and international waters (beyond Exclusive Economic Zones; EEZs and areas of the sea not under the control of any single country).
- **Goal:** "30 by 30": To conserve and protect 30% of the global ocean area by 2030.

■ Pillars of the UN High Seas Treaty/BBNJ Agreement: 4

1. Marine Genetic Resources (MGR); equitable sharing of resources.
2. Capacity building and transfer of marine technology to developing countries.
3. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
4. Area-Based Management Tools (ABMT); marine area conservation

■ Key Features of BBNJ:

1. It is legally binding for more than two-thirds of the ocean surface.
2. This agreement supports Sustainable Development Goal-14 (SDG-14).
3. This is the third implementing agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (the 1994 Agreement on International Seabed Mining and the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement on straddling and highly migratory fish stocks).
4. It establishes a global network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in international waters.
5. This agreement reaffirms that no nation can claim sovereign rights over the marine biological resources of the high seas or the international seabed area.

India-UAE Relations

Why in News?

- The President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) concluded an official visit to India.

Key Points:

Main outcomes of the visit:

- **Trade Target:** Both countries agreed to double bilateral trade to over \$200 billion by 2032.
- Both countries will promote new markets through initiatives such as India Mart, Virtual Trade Corridor, and India-Africa Bridge.
- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation:** Following the implementation of the Peace Act-2005, possibilities for partnership in advanced nuclear technologies, including Small Modular Reactors and nuclear safety, will be explored.
- **Establishment of a Digital/Data Embassy:** A digital embassy is a foreign center where a country stores its critical digital data. Its purpose is to ensure digital continuity and sovereignty against cyberattacks, natural disasters, and geopolitical conflicts.
- **AI and Technology:** Cooperation will be enhanced for a supercomputing cluster under the AI India Mission.
- **Energy Supply:** A sales and purchase agreement was signed for the supply of 0.5 MTPA of LNG by ADNOC Gas to HPCL for 10 years.
- **Note:** The UAE continues to be India's third-largest trading partner and second-largest export destination.

Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC): BRICS

Why in News?

- Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recommended including the integration of BRICS Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) in the agenda of the 2026 BRICS summit to simplify cross-border trade, tourism, and payment settlements. India will host this summit later this year.

Key Points:

Background:

- **Rio de Janeiro BRICS Declaration - 2025:** This emphasized interoperability between the payment systems of member countries. India has long advocated for digital payment integration through its digital rupee, which has already been tested in offline transactions, programmable payments, and fintech wallet integration.

Objectives of the Proposed BRICS CBDC Linkage:

- Facilitating cross-border payments.
- Reducing dependence on the US dollar.
- Strengthening financial sovereignty.
- Promoting financial technology cooperation.
- It envisions a digitally connected ecosystem where the central banks of BRICS countries can seamlessly settle trade and tourism payments through their respective CBDCs.
- If approved, this would be the first formal proposal to interconnect digital currencies among BRICS members, signaling a new era of financial cooperation.

Daily Current Affairs

Date : 21 January, 2026



Technical Framework and Implementation Challenges:

- Interoperability standards
- Monitoring mechanisms, governance, and regulation
- Imbalances in settling uneven trade flows
- Cybersecurity and privacy
- Concerns regarding technological sovereignty

Central Bank Digital Currency – CBDC:

- It is a digitally issued legal tender, equivalent in value to cash and traditional bank deposits.
- It exists entirely in electronic form and is directly controlled by a country's central bank.
- Unlike cryptocurrencies, CBDCs are designed to improve payment efficiency, financial inclusion, and monetary control.

-:18:-

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

Second Dolphin Survey

Why in News?

- Under Project Dolphin, a second comprehensive dolphin survey has been launched from Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, to update population estimates and assess habitats and threats.

Key Points:

- **Introduction:** After the release of the results of the first round of census estimates at the National Wildlife Board in Gir, Gujarat in March 2025, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has launched a second comprehensive survey of river and estuarine dolphins under Project Dolphin from Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, to further the conservation of dolphins in the country.
- **Program Coordination:** By the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, in collaboration with state forest departments and partner conservation organizations WWF India, Aaranyak, and Wildlife Trust of India.

Phases:

- **First:** Survey in the Ganga River and Indus River regions from Bijnor.
- **Second:** Survey in the Brahmaputra, tributaries of the Ganga, Sundarbans, and Odisha.
- In addition to the Ganges River dolphin, the status of the Indus River dolphin and Irrawaddy dolphin will also be assessed.

Daily Current Affairs

Date : 21 January, 2026



Results of the previous nationwide survey (2021-23):

- **Number of dolphins in India:** 6327
- This includes the Ganges River dolphin found in the Ganga, Yamuna, Chambal, Gandak, Ghaghara, Kosi, Mahananda, and Brahmaputra rivers, and the relatively smaller number of Indus River dolphins found in the Beas River.
- **States with the highest number of dolphins:** Uttar Pradesh > Bihar > West Bengal > Assam

Project Dolphin:

- **Launched:** August 15, 2020
- **Nodal Ministry:** Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- **Objective:** To conserve and enhance the population of dolphins in India by addressing threats such as habitat degradation, pollution, accidental hunting, and changes in water flow.
- **Duration:** 10 years

--:20:--

Lakshadweep: Microscopic Crustacean

Why in News?

- A microscopic crustacean discovered in the Kavaratti lagoon of Lakshadweep has been formally named as a new genus and species.

- **Name:** Indiaphonte bijoy.

Key Points:

Introduction:

- **Microscopic Crustacean:** Indiaphonte bijoy is a microscopic crustacean (copepod) belonging to the family Laophontidae under the order Harpacticoida.
- These are small invertebrates that live in aquatic sediments and are not visible to the naked eye (meiofauna).
- Indiaphonte bijoy was found in the Kavaratti lagoon of Lakshadweep.
- This is a coral-rich, shallow lagoon ecosystem (Kavaratti lagoon).
- **Naming of the microscopic crustacean:** Indiaphonte (referring to India) bijoy (in honor of the renowned Indian marine scientist S. Vijay Nandan).
- It has been recognized as a new genus due to morphological characteristics distinct from known Laophontidae genera.

Microscopic Crustaceans:

- **Body:** Semi-cylindrical, dorsoventrally flattened, with a broad middle section and a tapering posterior end.
- Antennae are specialized appendages adapted for a benthic lifestyle.
- **Importance:** Indicators of ecosystem health, involved in nutrient recycling, graze on algae, and form the base of aquatic food webs.
- They are sensitive to pollution, oil spills, heavy metals, and climate change.
- They can be used in aquaculture or fisheries.
- They produce and convert omega-3 fatty acids (eicosapentaenoic acid, docosahexaenoic acid), which are essential for the growth of fish and shellfish.

Environment Protection Fund



Why in News?

- The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has recently notified the Environment (Protection) Fund Rules, 2026.



Key Points:

- **Objective:** To improve the utilization of the Environment Protection Fund.
- **Legal Status:** Constituted under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, and the funds are deposited in the Public Account of India.
- **Sources of the Fund:** It comprises fines collected under the Air Pollution Control Act, 1981, the Water Pollution Control Act, 1974, and the Environment Protection Act, 1986.
- **Allocation:** 75 percent of the funds are allocated to the states, and 25 percent remain with the Central Government.
- **Utilization of the Fund:** For establishing environmental monitoring networks, cleaning up polluted sites, and research and development in environmental technologies.
- **Monitoring:** It is managed by a Project Management Unit. Its audit is conducted by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).
- **Capacity Building of Institutions:** This fund is also used to strengthen regulatory institutions such as the Central Pollution Control Board and State Pollution Control Boards.

SCHEMES

India's First Open Sea Cage Fish Farming Project

Why in News?

- India's first open sea cage fish farming project has been launched in North Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Key Points:

Additional Information:

- **Implementing Agency:** Ministry of Earth Sciences + National Institute of Ocean Technology + Andaman and Nicobar Administration

Objectives:

- To transition towards a commercially viable model for open sea fish farming.
- To reduce pressure on traditional coastal fishing.
- To create sustainable livelihoods for local fishing communities.

Andaman Sea:

- **Location:** Marginal sea, northeastern Indian Ocean.
- **Strategic Importance:** It controls key choke points such as the 10 Degree Channel and 6 Degree Channel, which are crucial for 25% of global trade passing through the Strait of Malacca.



INDEXES AND REPORTS



First Responsible Nations Index, 2026



Why in News?

- Recently, India launched the first Responsible Nations Index (RNI), 2026, in which India secured the 11th position globally.



Key Points:

- Launch:** By the President of India on January 19, 2026.
- Introduction:** This is India's first globally based index that evaluates countries based on responsible governance rather than traditional power or GDP-centric parameters.
- Development:** Under the aegis of the World Intellectual Foundation (WIF).
- Collaboration:** In collaboration with Jawaharlal Nehru University + IIM Mumbai + Dr. Ambedkar International Center.
- Countries Included:** 154 countries.
- Evaluation Criteria:** Based on 4 pillars:
 - Ethical Governance.
 - Social Welfare and Inclusivity.
 - Environmental Responsibility and Sustainability.
 - Global Responsibility and Collaborative International Conduct.

-:24:-

Daily Current Affairs

Date : 21 January, 2026



2026 RNI Ranking:

Rank	Country
1st	Singapore
2nd	Switzerland
3rd	Denmark
4th	Cyprus
5th	Sweden

- **India's Performance:** Rank - 16 (Total Score: 0.5515), which is higher than South Korea (21), Thailand (24), and Kyrgyzstan (22).
- India is the top-ranked nation in Asia.
- **Last (154th) position:** Central African Republic (Total Score: 0.35715)
- The top 10 countries include 9 European countries.

--:25:--