

The week from 12th January 2026 to 18th January 2026

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar formally unveiled the official website, theme and logo for BRICS 2026, which will be held under India's chairship. BRICS comprises eleven major emerging economies and developing nations—Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates.

China has reported a trade surplus of \$1.2 trillion in 2025, the first time it has crossed the \$1-trillion mark and the largest trade surplus ever recorded by any country. This milestone was achieved despite sweeping trade sanctions imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump. China's monthly export surplus exceeded \$100 billion on seven occasions last year.

Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado handed over her Nobel Peace Prize medal to US President Donald Trump at the White House. Trump said that Maria presented him with her Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of the work he had done, describing it as a meaningful symbol of mutual respect.

The Kerala government has officially redesignated the Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary as the Aralam Butterfly Sanctuary, making it the first sanctuary of its kind in the State. This change amended the original 1984 notification that declared the area a wildlife sanctuary, and is based on a report citing the region's rich diversity and high population of butterflies.

SpaceX successfully launched NASA's Pandora exoplanet mission aboard a Falcon 9 rocket from California in the USA. The mission aims to study the atmospheres of exoplanets and the activity of their host stars through long duration, multiwavelength observations. The mission will focus on around 20 stars and their 39 known orbiting planets, many of which were discovered by missions such as TESS.

The World Bank has increased India's GDP growth projection for the current fiscal year to 7.2%, a rise of 0.9 percentage points from its June estimate, citing strong domestic consumption and tax reforms. In its Global Economic Prospects report, the Bank also forecast that India's growth will moderate to 6.5% in 2026–27.

Indian cricket star Virat Kohli became the quickest player to reach the 28,000-run milestone across all formats of international cricket. He also became the second-highest run-scorer overall, behind Sachin Tendulkar. Kohli achieved the landmark in his 624th innings whereas Tendulkar had reached the milestone in 644 innings, while Kumar Sangakkara accomplished the feat in 666 innings.

The Department of Posts reached an important milestone on January 13, 2026, by successfully booking its first-ever online order through the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) while functioning as a Logistics Service Provider (LSP). The maiden ONDC order, placed by UdyamWell, represents a key step towards the Department's goal of offering digitally enabled, interoperable logistics services.



Compiled by
Seema Chari and
Kunal Savarkar



xpress minds