

# Newsletter

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

### SECOND WHO GLOBAL SUMMIT ON TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

The Second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine was organized in New Delhi during 17-19 December 2025 in New Delhi. Co-hosted by the World Health Organization and Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, the 3-day event brought together policymakers, scientists, practitioners, Indigenous knowledge holders and civil society leaders from across the world to advance a shared vision of balanced, inclusive and sustainable health systems. The Summit was held under the theme "Restoring balance: The science and practice of health and well-being." Building on the momentum generated by the inaugural Summit held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, in 2023, the New Delhi edition marked a significant step forward in positioning Traditional Medicine within the global health agenda. The event featured more than 170 expert speakers across over 25 sessions, showcasing perspectives from science, policy, practice and community leadership.



[READ MORE: SECOND WHO GLOBAL SUMMIT](#)

### UNESCO ADDS DEEPAVALI TO INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE LIST

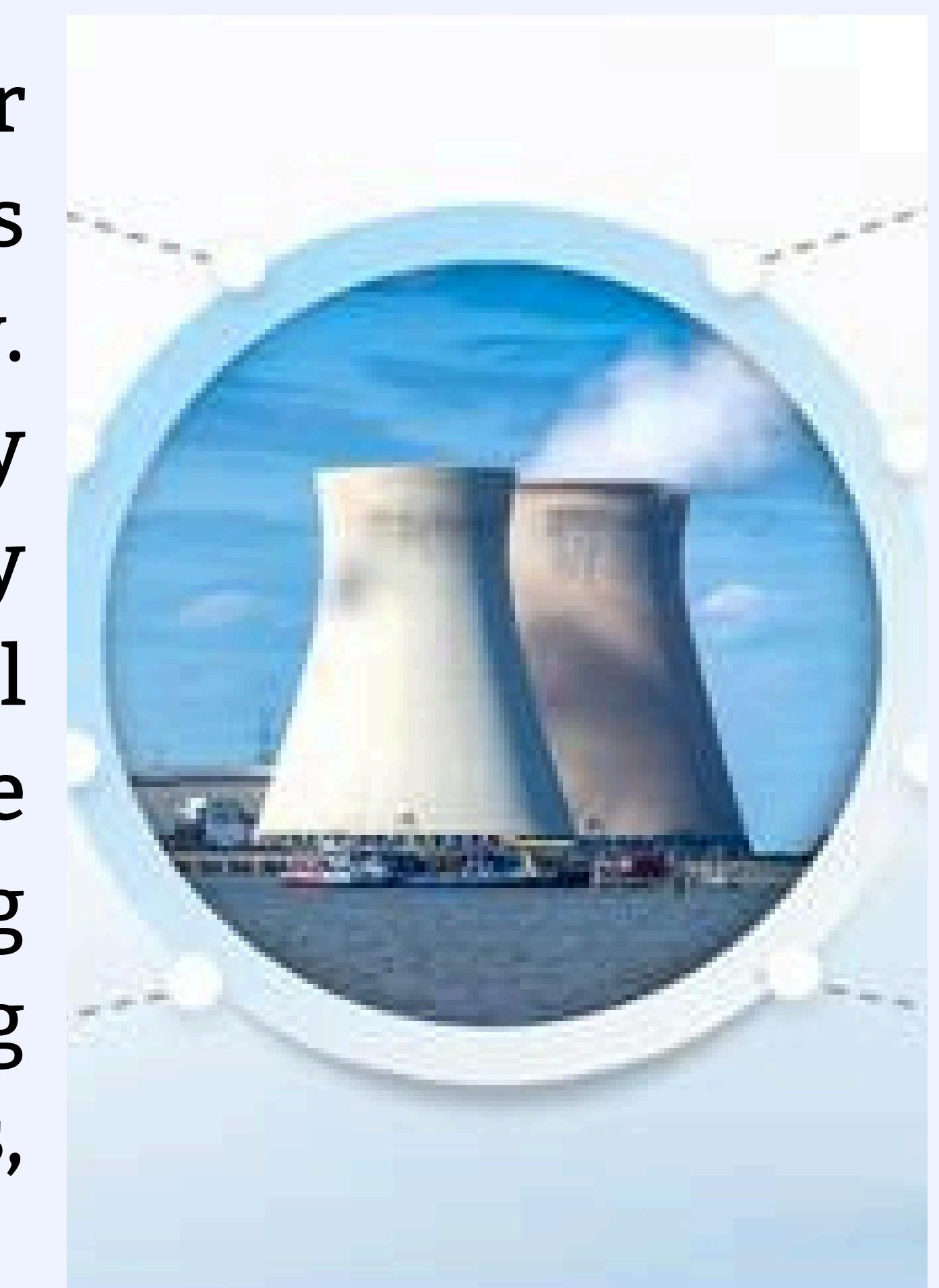


Deepavali, the festival of lights, has been inscribed on UNESCO's List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, announced at the 20<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee session at New Delhi's Red Fort from December 8-13, 2025. It is the 16<sup>th</sup> Indian element on this list. In Nepal, a Musical Bhajan evening with the lighting of lamps in the Pashupati temple premises was organised in celebration of the inscription of Deepavali in UNESCO's List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Residents of Nepal welcomed the move.

[READ MORE: UNESCO ADDS DEEPAVALI TO INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE LIST](#)

### THE SUSTAINABLE HARNESSING AND ADVANCEMENT OF NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR TRANSFORMING INDIA (SHANTI) BILL, 2025

Indian Parliament has passed the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill which consolidates and modernises India's nuclear legal framework while marking a pivotal step in the country's nuclear journey. It enables limited private participation in the nuclear sector under robust regulatory oversight and strengthens statutory regulation by granting formal statutory recognition to the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB). By reinforcing institutional governance and encouraging a more efficient and innovative nuclear ecosystem, the Bill supports India's clean-energy transition and its long-term objective of achieving 100 GW of nuclear energy capacity by 2047. Overall, the legislation lays a strong foundation for expanding clean and reliable energy, safeguarding strategic interests, and advancing India's energy independence and technological progress.



[READ MORE: SHANTI BILL, 2025](#)

## UPI RECOGNIZED AS WORLD'S LARGEST REAL-TIME PAYMENT SYSTEM BY IMF

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) report on 'Growing Retail Digital Payments (The Value of Interoperability)' had recognized India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) as the world's largest retail fast-payment system (FPS) by transaction volume. Further, as per ACI Worldwide report on 'Prime Time for Real-Time' 2024, UPI has around 49% share in the global real-time payment system transaction volume.

[READ MORE: IMF-GROWING RETAIL DIGITAL PAYMENTS \(THE VALUE OF INTEROPERABILITY\)](#)

## INDIA & OMAN INK COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT TO DEEPEN TRADE TIES

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Oman, the two friendly nations marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. The visit witnessed the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), expected to unlock new avenues for trade and overall development across multiple sectors, alongside six agreements and memoranda of understanding covering maritime cooperation, higher education, agriculture, millet cultivation, and institutional cooperation between the Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Confederation of Indian Industry, thereby significantly strengthening the strategic partnership.



The two leaders expressed satisfaction with the excellent state of bilateral relations across trade, investment, defence, security, technology, education, and people-to-people ties. The leaders also unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, reaffirmed the importance of continued cooperation in countering it, expressed concern over the humanitarian situation in Gaza, called for the safe and timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to civilians, and welcomed the signing of the first phase of the Gaza Peace Plan, reiterating their support for it.

[READ MORE: INDIA-OMAN COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT \(CEPA\)](#)

## ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT

### ADB RAISES INDIA'S GROWTH FORECAST TO 7.2% FOR CURRENT FISCAL

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has raised its growth forecast for India to 7.2%, up from 6.5%, for the financial year 2025-26, according to its Asia and Pacific Growth Outlook report. This marks an increase of 0.7 percentage points after the country registered robust growth in the July-to-September quarter and prospects for a stronger fiscal year. Meanwhile, the multilateral development bank has kept its FY 2026-27 forecast unchanged at 6.5%. ADB has projected the region's economy to expand by 5.1% this year, compared with a 4.8% forecast in September, lifted by stronger-than-expected growth in India.

[READ MORE: ASIA AND PACIFIC GROWTH OUTLOOK REPORT](#)

## INDUSTRY & SECTORAL INSIGHTS

### MICROSOFT ANNOUNCES OVER \$17.5 BILLION INVESTMENT IN INDIA



Global software powerhouse Microsoft has pledged an investment of US\$ 17.5 billion in India to help build infrastructure, skills, and sovereign capabilities for AI future in the country. Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella informed this in a social media post after meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said on social media that to support India's ambitions, Microsoft is committing its largest investment ever in Asia. He said the commitment is to help build the infrastructure, skills, and sovereign capabilities needed for India's AI-first future.

Microsoft said, in a statement, that the company plans to invest 17.5 billion US dollars in India over the next four years from 2026 to 2029, to drive AI diffusion at a population scale. The software giant said the latest investment commitment comes on top of Microsoft's earlier commitment of US\$ 3 billion announced in January this year.

[READ MORE: MICROSOFT ANNOUNCES OVER \\$17.5 BILLION INVESTMENT IN INDIA](#)

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

### MAITRI-2 STATION

India is planning to replace the existing Maitri Research Station with a newly designed Maitri-II Station in Antarctica. The new station will significantly enhance India's ability to conduct multidisciplinary scientific research in Antarctica. The new Maitri-II Station is conceived as a state-of-the-art, year-round research hub that will significantly elevate India's scientific capability in biology, earth sciences, glaciology, atmospheric sciences, climate studies and long-term environmental monitoring. The upgraded station will feature modern laboratories, advanced ice-core storage and processing systems, a dedicated biological and microbial research suite and expanded atmospheric observation facilities.



A stronger and more dependable logistic backbone will ensure uninterrupted scientific operations throughout the year. These enhancements will greatly expand the scope, precision, continuity and international relevance of India's Antarctic research, enabling the country to contribute high-quality data and cutting-edge findings to global polar science for decades to come. The projected timeline for Maitri-II to become operational is estimated as seven years with expected completion by 2032.

[READ MORE: MAITRI-2 STATION](#)

### 37 SUPERCOMPUTERS DEPLOYED UNDER NATIONAL SUPERCOMPUTING MISSION, TOTAL CAPACITY REACHES 40 PETAFLOPS



India has deployed 37 supercomputers across the country under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM), with a combined computing capacity of 40 petaflops, according to information presented in the Parliament by Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Jitin Prasada. The NSM, launched in 2015 with an outlay of about US\$ 540 million, aims to achieve self-reliance in high-performance computing by creating advanced research infrastructure and enabling domestic development of critical supercomputing components.

The supercomputers are operating at high utilisation levels, most above 81% and some above 95%. They have supported more than 13,000 researchers, including over 1,700 research scholars from 260 institutions. More than 10 million compute jobs have been completed using NSM systems, contributing to over 1,500 published research papers. Startups and MSMEs are also using the supercomputers for their projects.

[READ MORE: NATIONAL SUPERCOMPUTING MISSION](#)

### ISRO TO LAUNCH COMMUNICATION SATELLITE BLUEBIRD BLOCK-2

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) will launch a communication satellite BlueBird Block-2 on 24 December 2025. The satellite of AST SpaceMobile of the USA will be the largest commercial communications satellite to reach the Low Earth Orbit in LVM3-M6. It is part of a next generation of BlueBird Block-2 communication satellites, designed to provide space-based cellular broadband connectivity directly to standard mobile smartphones.



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[READ MORE: ISRO TO LAUNCH COMMUNICATION SATELLITE BLUEBIRD BLOCK-2](#)

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