

# THE DAILY GK DOSE

## COMEDIAN MEERA SYAL AWARDED DAMEHOOD

- Meera Syal was awarded a Damehood for her services to literature, drama, and charity, recognizing her role in popularizing British-Asian culture through shows like Goodness Gracious Me and The Kumars at No. 42.
- She made history as the first British-Asian woman to receive a Damehood for arts and culture, reflecting increased ethnic minority representation in the 2026 UK honours list.
- The honour builds on her earlier recognitions, including an MBE in 1997, a CBE in 2015, and the BAFTA Fellowship in 2023.

## CENTRE'S FISCAL DEFICIT CROSSES FY26 TARGET

- India's fiscal deficit during April–November FY26 stood at ₹9.76 lakh crore, accounting for 62.3% of the full-year Budget Estimate, higher than last year's 52.5% for the same period.
- The rise in the deficit was mainly due to a sharp 28% increase in capital expenditure to ₹6.58 lakh crore, while net tax revenue growth remained weak at 3.3% because of lower indirect

tax collections and income-tax rebates.

- Despite the higher deficit, the government may still achieve its 4.4% of GDP target, supported by a 21% surge in non-tax revenue led by a higher RBI dividend and strong contributions from public sector banks.

## SYRIA UNVEILS NEW CURRENCY SERIES



- Syria has introduced a redenominated currency by removing two zeros, converting 100 old pounds into 1 new pound to simplify transactions after years of inflation.
- The new banknotes remove images of Bashar al-Assad and Hafez al-Assad and instead feature agricultural and cultural symbols like Damask roses, wheat, olives, and fruits to reflect a new national identity.
- The new currency came into circulation on January 1, 2026, with a 90-day dual-circulation period, automatic conversion of salaries.

## IMPORTANT FACTS

बाबर के द्वारा लड़े गए प्रमुख युद्ध

**Trick ---- "पान खा घर चल"**

- पान - पानीपत का प्रथम युद्ध
- खा - खानवा का युद्ध
- घर - घाघरा का युद्ध
- चल - चन्देरी का युद्ध

## GUJARAT CM APPROVES ESTABLISHMENT OF IAIRO

- Gujarat has become the first Indian state to set up a national-level AI research institute under a state-led PPP model, with IAIRO formed as a non-profit SPV involving the Gujarat government, the Centre, and the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance from January 1, 2026.
- The institute has a ₹300 crore budget for five years, with equal funding from the state, central government, and private partners.

## IDFC FIRST BANK UNVEILS METAL CREDIT CARD

- The IDFC First Bank Gaj card is the most premium, invitation-only metal credit card in the Ashva–Mayura–Gaj trilogy, featuring a twin-elephant design.
- The card features a high-value rewards program where 1 point equals ₹1 on flights and hotels, with bonus travel rewards and welcome points that fully offset the joining fee.
- Designed for global travelers, the card offers zero forex markup, up to 45 days of interest-free international cash withdrawals, trip cancellation cover.

**Footnotes:** IDFC First Bank's CEO: V. Vaidyanathan, HQ: Mumbai, Estd: 2018

## ADDITIONAL EXCISE DUTY ON TOBACCO

- The GST Compensation Cess will be phased out and replaced by a higher 40% GST rate along with a new Additional Excise Duty, as the

government completes repayment of compensation loans to states.

- Cigarettes will see a length- and filter-based per-stick excise duty of ₹2,050–₹8,500 per 1,000 sticks.
- Pan masala will face a new Health and National Security Cess, with funds directed to public health and security.

## VRUNDA MANOHAR DESAI APPOINTED AS TC



- Vrunda Manohar Desai, a 2003-batch IRS (IT) officer, has been appointed Textile Commissioner, Mumbai, replacing Roop Rashi as part of a large bureaucratic reshuffle.
- She will serve a five-year tenure heading the Office of the Textile Commissioner,

responsible for implementing textile schemes, tracking industry trends, and advising the Ministry of Textiles on policy.

- Desai brings diverse experience from her roles in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Directorate General of Foreign Trade, and is also known as a national-level shooting gold medalist.

## SJOERD MARIJNE APPOINTED FOR IWH TEAM

- Sjoerd Marijne has been reappointed as chief coach of the Indian women's hockey team, returning after four-and-a-half years and following his success at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.
- He will lead a revamped support staff, including Matias Vila as Analytical Coach and Dr. Wayne Lombard as Scientific Advisor and Head of Athletic Performance.

## WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?

02.01-2026 / FRIDAY

- **1905 – Russian Revolution of 1905: Bloody Sunday occurs in St. Petersburg.**
- **1959 – Luna 1, the first spacecraft to reach the vicinity of the Moon, is launched by the Soviet Union.**