

THE DAILY GK DOSE

KUSUNPUR TO BECOME ODISHA'S FIRST SMART VILLAGE

- **Location and Scale:** Kusunpur is located in the Rajnagar block of the Kendrapara district, a coastal region highly vulnerable to Bay of Bengal cyclones. The village consists of approximately 130 families with a total population of around 700 people.
- **CSIR Mission Mode Project:** The initiative is led by the CSIR-Central Building Research Institute (CBRI), Roorkee, in collaboration with 13 other specialized CSIR laboratories (such as IMMT Bhubaneswar and CEERI).
- **"Lab to Land" Technology Transfer:** The project is a collaborative effort involving 14 CSIR laboratories across India. A key focus is the "Lab to Land" approach, where scientific teams (such as those from CSIR-IHBT, Palampur) have already begun distributing high-quality seeds and nutritionally enriched products to villagers.

ASIA'S LARGEST TULIP GARDEN INAUGURATED IN SRINAGAR

- **Asia's Largest Record-Breaking Display:** Spanning approximately 30 hectares (74 acres) at the foothills of the Zabarwan Range, the garden is officially recognized by the World Book of Records (London) as the largest of its kind in Asia.
- **Early Bloom & Extended Variety:** Due to an unusually warm February, the garden opened nearly 10 days ahead of schedule. In addition to the

massive tulip display, the 2026 show features nearly one lakh other bulbous flowers, such as daffodils, hyacinths, muscari, and ranunculus, to create a more diverse and continuous "sheet of flowers" effect across the seven terraces.

- **New Visitor Facilities:** For the first time, the Floriculture Department has introduced online ticket booking to manage the heavy footfall (which surpassed 8.25 lakh visitors last year).

INDIA PARTICIPATES IN SEA DRAGON NAVAL EXERCISE 2026



- **Multi-National Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW):** Hosted at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, the exercise brings together five key Indo-Pacific partners: the USA, India, Australia, Japan, and New Zealand. It focuses on advanced "submarine hunting" drills, progressing from tracking simulated targets to detecting and monitoring a live submarine in deep-water environments.
- **The "Dragon Belt" Competition:** The exercise features a competitive format where participating aircrews are graded on their speed, tracking accuracy, and seamless coordination.

IMPORTANT FACTS

- *India's highest waterfall is Jog Falls*
- *India's national bird is the Indian Peafowl*
- *Kaziranga National Park is in Assam*
- *The Olympic Games symbol has 5 rings*
- *SBI is headquartered in Mumbai*
- *The Red Fort was built by Shah Jahan*
- *UNESCO is based in Paris*
- *Pratibha Patil was India's first female President*
- *Vigyan Bhavan is in New Delhi*

MAHARASHTRA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PASSED 'FREEDOM OF RELIGION BILL, 2026'

- **Stringent Penalties:** The Bill prescribes a jail term of up to 7 years and a fine of ₹1 lakh for unlawful conversions carried out through coercion, fraud, inducement, or marriage. For offences involving minors, women, or persons from SC/ST communities, the fine increases to ₹5 lakh. Repeat offenders can face up to 10 years in prison.
- **Mandatory Advance Notice:** Individuals intending to convert, as well as the person organizing the conversion ceremony, must provide a 60-day prior notice to the District Magistrate. Failure to do so, or failing to submit a post-conversion declaration within 21 days, can render the conversion null and void.

ARUN MAMMEN RE ELECTED AS THE ATMA CHAIRMAN

- **Continuation of Leadership:** Arun Mammen, the Vice Chairman and Managing Director of MRF Ltd, has been re-elected as the Chairman of ATMA. This marks his second consecutive term leading the apex body of the Indian tyre industry, having first taken over the role during ATMA's Golden Jubilee year in 2025.
- **New Vice Chairman:** Rajarshi Moitra, the Managing Director of Bridgestone India Pvt Ltd, has been appointed as the new Vice Chairman. Moitra succeeds Hiroshi Yoshizane, reflecting the association's strategy of involving both major domestic and international tyre manufacturers in its leadership structure.
- **Change in Executive Leadership:** Along with the chairman's re-election, Sanjay Chatterjee (previously Assistant Director General) has been elevated to the post of Director General of ATMA. He will take over on April 1, 2026, following the retirement of long-serving Director General Rajiv Budhraja on March 31.

UNIQLO APPOINTS JASPRIT BUMRAH AS BRAND AMBASSADOR FOR INDIA

- **LifeWear Philosophy:** The partnership is centered on Uniqlo's "LifeWear" philosophy,

which focuses on creating simple, high-quality, and functional clothing designed to improve everyday life.

- **AIRism Campaign:** The association kicked off with a major campaign for the AIRism Oversized T-shirt. A 30-second campaign film was released showing Bumrah in relaxed, everyday moments off the field, drawing a parallel between his consistent excellence as a fast bowler and the effortless comfort of the AIRism range.
- **Strategic Market Expansion:** This move is part of Uniqlo's strategy to deepen its engagement with the Indian market and reach a wider audience beyond metropolitan centers.

HIMACHAL GOVERNMENT SIGNS MOU WITH DAIRY BOARD TO BOOST DAIRY SECTOR



- **Infrastructure Expansion & "Him" Brand:** A major centerpiece of this deal is the construction of a ₹250 crore fully automated milk processing plant at Dhagwar (Kangra district).
- **Digital Transformation (ERP):** The third MoU focuses on implementing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

software within Milkfed (HP State Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation).

- **Enhanced Procurement Incentives (Dugdh Protsahan Yojana):** To encourage local production, the government has introduced a direct incentive of ₹3 per litre for farmers who transport their milk personally to procurement centers.

INDIAN ANIMATED FILM CHYIMI WINS BEST DIRECTOR AWARD

- **Policeman-Director Profile:** The film was directed by Dr. Partha Sarathi Mahanta, a senior IPS officer currently serving as the Inspector General of Police (IGP) in Assam and the Commissioner of Police, Guwahati. His achievement highlights a unique blend of public service and creative excellence.
- **Global Recognition for Regional Stories:** CHYIMI is an Assamese-language animated short. The award recognizes its artistic direction and its ability to present a narrative rooted in local Assamese culture.
- **NYSAF and International Exposure:** The New York Short Animation Festival (NYSAF) is a prestigious platform for innovative storytelling. Through the festival's partnership with Cine Universitario UACJ in Mexico, CHYIMI will also receive special screenings in Mexico, further expanding the international footprint of Indian regional animation.

WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?

18.03.2026 / WEDNESDAY

- **1965: Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Leonov performed the first spacewalk in history**
- **He floated freely in space, connected only by a 5.35-meter tether.**
- **He spent about 12 minutes outside the spacecraft.**