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# Current Affairs

23 Dec. 2025

Ravi Deecee Honored with France's Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres Award



## 1. Ravi Deecee Honored with France's Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres Award

- **Recognition of Literary Excellence:** The award, conferred in December 2025 by the Ambassador of France to India, Thierry Mathou, recognizes Ravi Deecee's lifelong commitment to multilingualism and his transformative role in the Indian publishing landscape
- **Bridge Between French and Malayalam Literature:** As the Managing Director of DC Books, he has been instrumental in bringing world-class French literature to Kerala by publishing Malayalam translations of iconic authors like Jean-Paul Sartre, Annie Ernaux, and David Diop.
- **Global Cultural Facilitator:** Beyond publishing, the honor acknowledges his work as the co-founder of the Kerala Literature Festival (KLF)—one of Asia's largest—and his facilitation of the Vagamon Writers Residency under France's Villa Swagatam program.
- **Legacy of Three Generations:** Ravi Deecee is a third-generation publisher; the award highlights his family's long-standing dedication to using books to shape values and nurture empathy across different cultures and languages.
- **Prestigious "Knight" Status:** By receiving this "Knight" insignia, he joins an elite group of Indian cultural icons (such as Shah Rukh Khan, Aishwarya Rai,



and Nandita Das) who have been honored for their contributions to the "radiance of arts and letters" worldwide.

## 2. India Tops WADA's Global Doping List for Third Consecutive Year

- **Global Rank #1:** India recorded 260 positive doping cases (Adverse Analytical Findings) in 2024—the highest in the world and the only country to hit triple digits.
- **High Positivity Rate:** India's positivity rate of 3.6% is significantly higher than other major nations; for comparison, China conducted triple the tests but had a rate of only 0.2%.
- **Primary Offending Sports:** Three disciplines accounted for the majority of cases: Athletics (76), Weightlifting (43), and Wrestling (29).
- **Olympic Bid at Risk:** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has warned India to "get its house in order," as this record poses a major reputational risk to India's bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games.
- **Systemic Issues:** The report highlights a "medal-at-all-costs" culture, where athletes at both elite and grassroots levels (like the Khelo India games) resort to doping to secure government jobs and cash rewards.



## 3. India & New Zealand Wrap Up Free Trade Agreement Negotiations

- **Duty-Free Access for India:** New Zealand will provide 100% duty-free access for all Indian exports. This is a major win for labor-intensive sectors like textiles, leather, gems and jewelry, and engineering goods.
- **\$20 Billion Investment Commitment:** New Zealand has committed to investing \$20 billion in India over the next 15 years. This capital is earmarked for infrastructure, manufacturing (under "Make in India"), and the services sector.
- **Enhanced Student & Professional Mobility:** The pact introduces a first-of-its-kind student mobility annex, allowing Indian STEM graduates up to 3 years of post-study work visas. Additionally, a new quota of 5,000 temporary employment visas has been set for Indian professionals like IT experts, healthcare workers, and Yoga instructors.



- **Target to Double Trade:** Both nations aim to double bilateral trade to \$5 billion within the next five years (up from current levels of approx. \$2.4 billion). The agreement covers 20 chapters, including a significant annex on Financial Services and UPI interoperability.
- **Safeguards for Indian Farmers:** India has protected its sensitive agricultural sectors; there are no concessions on dairy, wheat, rice, or sugar. However, New Zealand gained limited access for high-end products like kiwifruit and wine through a seasonal quota system.

#### 4. Indian Navy Receives New ASW Shallow Water Craft 'Anjadip'

- **Third in Series:** 'Anjadip' is the third of eight specialized anti-submarine vessels being built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) to replace the aging Abhay-class corvettes.
- **Aatmanirbhar Achievement:** The ship boasts over 88% indigenous content, featuring a 30 mm Naval Surface Gun and home-grown anti-submarine rockets, aligning with the "Make in India" vision.
- **Advanced Capabilities:** At 77 meters long, these are the largest Indian warships propelled by waterjets. They are equipped with lightweight torpedoes and shallow-water sonar to detect and neutralize underwater threats in coastal zones.
- **Operational Agility:** Designed with a shallow draught of 2.7 meters, the craft is highly maneuverable in littoral (near-shore) waters, where larger warships cannot easily operate.
- **Historical Legacy:** The vessel is named after Anjadip Island (off the coast of Karwar) and is a reincarnation of the former INS Anjadip, a Petya-class corvette decommissioned in 2003.



#### 5. Sukhman Singh Triumphs at IGU 124th Amateur Championship

- **Dominant Victory:** Sukhman Singh defeated Harman Sachdeva (Haryana) in the 36-hole final with a commanding 7UP lead after 29 holes, ending the match early due to his unassailable lead.



- **World's Longest-Running Event:** The championship, organized by the Indian Golf Union (IGU), was first held in 1892, making it the oldest amateur matchplay tournament in the world.
- **Sporting Lineage:** The win is particularly significant as Sukhman is the son of Simarjeet Singh, a former India No. 1 amateur golfer. Sukhman's victory achieved a title that had famously eluded his father during his career.
- **Exceptional Season Finish:** This title capped a stellar 2025 season for Sukhman, who also won the IGU Rajasthan Amateur and finished as runner-up in the Andhra Pradesh Amateur.
- **Strategic Mastery:** Despite harsh, chilly weather in Kolkata, Sukhman relied on a "hot putter" and aggressive long game to maintain the lead, successfully navigating the grueling 36-hole matchplay format.

## 6. Kiran Ankush wins Gold in 10m Air Rifle at National Shooting Championship

- **Edged Out Elite Competition:** Kiran Jadhav secured the gold with a score of 252.1, narrowly defeating Paris 2024 Olympian Arjun Babuta, who took silver with 251.4.
- **Star-Studded Podium:** The bronze medal went to Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar (229.8), the reigning 50m Rifle 3P national champion and world record holder, highlighting the high level of competition.
- **Naval Pride:** Representing the Indian Navy, Jadhav's win continues a strong year for service athletes in national shooting events.
- **Consistent Form:** This victory follows a successful 2025 season for Jadhav, during which he also won a team gold at the Asian Shooting Championships in August alongside Rudranksh Patil and Arjun Babuta.
- **Championship Scale:** The event is part of the massive 68th NSCC, which saw a record 16,000+ shooters qualify across various categories at the MP State Shooting Academy.



## 7. Brajesh Kumar Singh Recommended as Next MD & CEO of Canara Bank



- **Current Role:** Brajesh Kumar Singh is presently serving as the Executive Director of Indian Bank, a position he has held since March 2024.
- **The Selection Process:** He emerged as the top choice after the FSIB—the headhunter for state-owned banks—interviewed a shortlist of 17 candidates for the role.
- **Succession Plan:** If approved by the government, he will succeed K. SatyanarayanaRaju, who is set to retire at the end of December 2024.
- **Vast Experience:** Singh brings over 28 years of banking experience, having previously served as the Chief General Manager at Bank of Baroda where he led Human Resource Management and Retail Assets.'
- **Final Approval Pending:** The recommendation now moves to the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), headed by Prime Minister NarendraModi, for the final formal approval.



## 8. Advocate ShubhamAwasthi Honoured with Prestigious '40 Under 40 Lawyer Award' 2025

- **National Legal Recognition:** The award was conferred during the 6th Edition of the BW Legal World 40 Under 40 Lawyers and Legal Influencers Awards 2025 held in New Delhi. This event is a premier platform for honoring the most promising legal minds under the age of 40 in India.
- **Excellence in Diverse Fields:** Awasthi was selected based on his professional expertise across several complex domains, including Constitutional Law, Media and Entertainment Law, and high-stakes dispute resolution.
- **Commitment to Public Interest:** The honor specifically recognizes his impactful Public Interest Litigations (PILs) before the Supreme Court. Notable cases include his advocacy for social justice and a recent PIL regarding helicopter safety standards in Uttarakhand.
- **Humanitarian Leadership:** Beyond the courtroom, Awasthi serves as the Deputy Secretary General – India for the London-based World Humanitarian Drive (WHD). He is set to lead the 4th Trilateral Global Summit at the UK Parliament's House of Lords in 2025.



- **Rigorous Selection Process:** His selection followed a stringent evaluation by a distinguished jury featuring former High Court judges, Additional Solicitors General (ASGs), and veteran senior advocates, ensuring the award remains a benchmark for merit and integrity.

## 9. KisanDiwas observed on 23rd December

- **123rd Birth Anniversary:** The day commemorates the birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh (born Dec 23, 1902), India's 5th Prime Minister and a legendary advocate for farmers' rights.
- **Theme for 2025:** The central focus this year is "Viksit Bharat 2047 – The Role of FPOs in Globalising Indian Agriculture," emphasizing the use of Farmer Producer Organisations and technology to scale Indian farming globally.
- **The "Champion of Peasants":** Known as the Messiah of Farmers, Singh was the architect of critical land reforms, including the Abolition of the Zamindari System and the Debt Redemption Bill of 1939.
- **National Recognition:** While Singh's legacy is decades old, the Government of India officially declared December 23 as KisanDiwas in 2001 to ensure annual national focus on agrarian issues.
- **Policy & Awards:** The day is marked by the 'KisanSammanDiwas' ceremonies where progressive farmers are awarded and the government highlights welfare schemes like PM-KISAN, which provides direct income support to landholding families.



## 10. Navy Veteran Ira 'Ike' Schab, Survivor of Pearl Harbor passed away

- **Age and Legacy:** Schab passed away peacefully at his home in Beaverton, Oregon, at 105 years old. He was one of only about a dozen remaining survivors of the attack that killed over 2,400 Americans.
- **Role During the Attack:** A 21-year-old musician (tuba player) aboard the USS Dobbin on December 7, 1941, he spent the morning in a "daisy chain" of sailors passing heavy ammunition to anti-aircraft gunners to fend off Japanese planes.



- **Post-War Career:** After the war, he became an electrical engineer and worked for General Dynamics on the Apollo space program, contributing to the mission that successfully sent astronauts to the moon.
- **Last of His Unit:** He was the final surviving member of Navy Band Unit 13. Despite rarely speaking about the war for decades, he spent his later years traveling to Hawaii for anniversaries to "honor the guys that didn't make it."



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