

# THE DAILY GK DOSE

## AARYAN VARSHNEY BECOMES INDIA'S 92<sup>ND</sup> GRANDMASTER

- **Decisive Victory in Armenia:** Aaryan clinched his third and final Grandmaster norm by winning the Andranik Margaryan Memorial tournament in Armenia with a round to spare. He dominated the field, finishing with 6.5/8 points—a full two points ahead of his closest competitors.
- **Self-Taught Achievement:** Aaryan was trained entirely at home by his father, a physics teacher, using self-study and software analysis—without professional coaching or traditional chess books.
- **Rapid Rise for Delhi Chess:** He is the 8th Grandmaster from Delhi, joining the ranks of players like Parimarjan Negi and Abhijeet Gupta. His rise was remarkably swift; he earned his International Master (IM) title in 2024 and secured all three GM norms within just six months across Greece, Bangladesh, and Armenia.

## SHAYA MOHSEN APPOINTED AS PM OF YEMEN

- **Succession from Foreign Minister:** Before this appointment, al-Zindani served as Yemen's Foreign Minister. He was chosen by the PLC to succeed Salem Bin Buraik, who resigned from the post and has since been moved to an advisory role for financial and economic affairs.
- **Political Context:** His appointment came amid major reshuffling within the PLC after

the removal of STC-linked members, signaling a Saudi-backed effort to consolidate power following internal conflicts and clashes in southern regions like Hadramout.

**Footnotes:** Yemen's Previous PM: Shaea al-Zindani, **Capital:** Sanaa, **Currency:** Yemeni Rial

## INDIA'S FOREX RESERVES RISE TO \$687.19 BILLION



- **Recovery from Sharp Decline:** This rise of \$392 million marks a stabilization after a massive drop of \$9.81 billion in the previous week. This recovery helps India maintain its position as one of the top global holders of foreign reserves.
- **Gold as the Primary Driver:** The increase was almost entirely fueled by a surge in the value of gold reserves, which rose by \$1.57 billion to reach a total of \$112.83 billion. This offset a decline in Foreign Currency Assets (FCA), which fell by \$1.12 billion during the same period.
- **Strong Import Cover:** Despite weekly fluctuations, the RBI noted that the current reserve levels are sufficient to cover more than 11 months of merchandise imports, providing a solid cushion against global economic volatility and ensuring the stability of the Indian Rupee.

## IMPORTANT FACTS

### IMPORTANT WORLD TRIBES

- **Eskimo-** Canada, Greenland, Alaska
- **Bushman-** Kalahari Desert
- **Pygmy-** Congo Basin
- **Masai-** Kenya & Tanzania
- **Bedouin-** Arabian Desert
- **Sami -** Scandinavia

## PARIPOORNA MEDICLAIM AYUSH BIMA LAUNCHED

- **Exclusive & Optional Coverage:** Designed to supplement existing CGHS benefits, this is an optional indemnity-based health insurance plan available to serving and retired central government employees. It offers two sum-insured options: ₹10 lakh or ₹20 lakh, covering up to six family members under a single policy.
- **Focus on AYUSH & Modern Treatments:** A standout feature is the 100% coverage for in-patient AYUSH treatments (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy). It also covers modern medical treatments up to 25% of the sum insured, which can be extended to 100% through an optional rider.
- **Affordability & Cashless Access:** To ensure affordability, the policy is exempt from GST and offers premium discounts of up to 42% via co-payment models (70:30 or 50:50).

## ITBP WIN LG CUP ICE HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP

- **Double Title Win:** ITBP achieved a clean sweep by winning both the Men's and Women's championships. The men's team defeated the Ladakh Scouts (Indian Army) with a 2–1 score in a thrilling final, while the women's team secured a dominant 7–3 victory against the Ladakh Women's Ice Hockey Foundation (LWIHF).
- **Platform for Winter Sports:** The event, attended by Ladakh's Lieutenant Governor Kavinder Gupta, served as a precursor to the 6th Khelo India Winter Games (starting January 20 in Leh). The championship highlighted Ladakh's growing infrastructure, including the newly constructed ₹51 crore indoor ice hockey rink designed for year-round training.

**Footnotes:** ITBP's DG: Shatrueet Singh, HQ: New Delhi, Estd:1962

## GAIL BUILT 694-KM GAS PIPELINE

- **Engineering Breakthrough in Narrow Corridor:** In a first for India, 96% of the 694-km pipeline was built within a restricted 3-metre-wide utility strip along Maharashtra's Samruddhi Mahamarg expressway. Typically, such high-capacity pipelines require 20–30 metres of workspace, but GAIL successfully installed the 24-inch

pipe within the width of an average footpath.

- **Overcoming the Western Ghats:** The project navigated extreme terrain, particularly near Fugale hill in the Western Ghats, where engineers faced elevation shifts of over 200 metres. They utilized a rare hybrid construction technique—combining horizontal directional drilling (HDD) with a thruster system—to pull pipeline segments through rocky slopes and dense forest.

**Footnotes:** GAIL's Chairman & MD: Sandeep Kumar Gupta, HQ: New Delhi, Estd:1984

## MEENAXI RAWAT APPOINTED AS CVO OF MRPL



- **Additional Charge Assignment:** Ms. Rawat, a 1993-batch Indian Economic Service (IES) officer, has been given the additional charge of Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) at MRPL. This appointment is for a period of six months (effective retrospectively from December 12, 2025) or until a regular incumbent is appointed.
- **Dual Responsibility in Oil Sector:** She is currently serving

as the CVO of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) in Mumbai. Notably, she was also recently assigned additional charge as CVO of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), making her a central figure in overseeing transparency and integrity across major state-run oil refiners.

**Footnotes:** MRPL's Chairman: Arun Kumar Singh, HQ: Mangalore, Estd:1988

## BIOLOGIST TOBY KIERS WINS TYLER PRIZE

- **Pioneering Fungal Research:** Dr. Kiers, a professor at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, was honored for her pioneering research showing that mycorrhizal fungi form underground “biological marketplaces,” exchanging nutrients for plant sugars.
- **Massive Climate Impact:** Her research showed that underground fungal networks absorb about 13 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> each year—nearly one-third of global fossil fuel emissions—making fungi key players in climate regulation.
- **Global Conservation Advocacy:** Alongside her award, Kiers leveraged the platform to launch the "Underground Advocates" program through her NGO, the Society for the Protection of Underground Networks (SPUN).

## WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?

18.01.2026 / SUNDAY

- **Constitution enforced: 26 Jan 1950**
- **Fundamental Rights: Part III (Articles 12–35)**
- **Fundamental Duties: Part IVA (Article 51A)**
- **Emergency provisions: Part XVIII**