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EASE OF VEHICLE OWNERSHIP INDEX (EVOI), 2026



Andhra Pradesh recently emerged as the country's best-performing state in facilitating vehicle ownership transfers, topping the first Ease of Vehicle Ownership Index (EVOI) with a score of 5.91 out of 10.

- It is published by **org in partnership with Consumer VOICE.**
- The index **ranks 15 States and Union Territories** on **how easily a citizen or dealer** can **buy, sell, and transfer a pre-owned vehicle.**
- The EVOI scores each state on **six pillars**: **policy and regulatory framework, digital infrastructure,** process **efficiency**, transparency and accountability, **institutional ecosystem** and **dealer suppor**t, and **cost and affordability**.
- The pillar scores are combined using a weighted geometric mean, so strength in one area cannot hide weakness in another.
- The findings draw on a **pan-India survey of over 1,000 buyers and sellers**, **interviews with dealers, RTO agents,** and sector experts, and a review of central and state motor vehicle rules.

EVOI 2026 Highlights:

- It is the **first edition** of the index.
- **Andhra Pradesh scored 5.91 out of 10, followed by Kerala at 5.74**.
- **Uttar Pradesh came last** at 2.47, just behind Bihar at 2.51 and West Bengal at 2.56.
- No state scored above 6.0, highlighting widespread administrative challenges.
- Together, the **15 state**s account for over **85% of India's organised used-car market.**

Cross And Climb

BOOKER PRIZE



Recently, UK author M. John Harrison won the Booker Prize 2026 for his enigmatic novel "The End of Everything".

- It is the world's **leading literary award** for a single **work of fiction.**
- It aims to **promote the finest in fiction** by rewarding the best novel of the year written in English.
- **History:** It was **founded in the UK in 1969**, the Booker Prize **initially rewarded Commonwealth writers** and now spans the globe: it is open to anyone regardless of origin.
- **Eligibility for Booker Prize:**
    - The Booker Prize **awards any novel originally** written in **English and published in the UK and Ireland** in the year of the prize, regardless of the nationality of their author.
    - The novel must be an **original work in English** (not a translation)
    - It must be published by a registered UK or Irish imprint; self-published novels are not eligible.
- **Prize Money:** The winner receives **£50,000** and each of the **shortlisted authors will be given £2,500.**
- **Booker Prize Laureates from India and Indian-Origin Writers**
    - **VS Naipaul** for Free State
    - **Salman Rushdie** for Midnight's Children
    - **Arundhati Roy** for The God of Small Things
    - **Kiran Desai** for The Inheritance of Loss (2006),
    - **Aravind Adiga** for The White Tiger (2008)

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PHYSICAL AI



- Physical AI refers to artificial intelligence (AI) systems **that operate in and interact** with the **physical world,** rather than existing only in software or digital environments.
- This involves the combination of **AI models with sensors, actuators, and other control systems** that allow models to act upon real-world environments.
- Physical AI **perceives, reasons, and acts in the physical world** through systems like robots, industrial machines, and autonomous vehicles.
- It involves **physics, motion, timing, safety, uncertainty**, and real-world feedback.
- **Physical AI examples include:**
  - A robot that picks and places parts
  - An **autonomous forklift** navigating a warehouse
  - A **humanoid robot** executing multi-step tasks in changing environments
- **Working of Physical AI:**
  - Physical AI works by **combining perception, planning, control, and feedback** so machines can act in the real world.
  - It extends **current generative AI** with an **understanding of spatial relationships** and the physical behaviour of the world by taking in multimodal inputs such as images, videos, text, speech, or real-world sensor data and converting them into insights or actions that an autonomous machine can then execute.

EXERCISE VAJRA-SAT



- It is the national **tabletop exercise on Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) serotype SAT-1**.

Cross And Climb

- **Theme:** It was held under the **theme "Detect Early, Confirm Fast, Contain Together,"**
- **Participants:** It brought together **83 participants from 25 States, three Union Territories** and key national institutions.
- **Organised by:** The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD), in coordination with the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research–National Institute of Veterinary Epidemiology and Disease Informatics (**ICAR-NIVEDI), Bengaluru.

Key Facts about Foot-and-Mouth Disease

- It is a **highly contagious viral infection** that affects **cloven-hoofed animals such as cattle, buffaloes, sheep and goats.**
- **Cause:** It is caused by an **Aphthovirus of the family Picornaviridae.**
- **Transmission:** It is transmitted through **infected animals** and **contaminated materials**
- **Treatment:** Vaccination is the only effective preventive measure against FMD.

NYOMA AIRBASE



Russian-origin heavy-lift transport aircraft (IL-76) of the IAF successfully landed at the Nyoma airbase in eastern Ladakh recently, achieving what the force described as the highest touchdown for the plane anywhere in the world.

- Officially known as the **Mudh-Nyoma Advanced Landing Ground (ALG)**, **Nyoma Airbase** is located on the **banks of the Indus River** adjacent to Nyoma village in **Ladakh**.
- It is the **world's highest fighter-capable airbase.**
- The facility can support operations involving **fighter aircraft, helicopters,** and **transport planes.**
- It was the **fourth such air force base in Ladak** The **three others** are located in **Leh, Kargil, and Thoise.**

Cross And Climb

TEN YEARS OF DEMONETISATION: WHY CASH STILL REIGNS SUPREME IN INDIA

November 8, 2026 marked ten years since PM Modi's dramatic televised announcement demonetising ₹500 and ₹1,000 notes, aimed at curbing black money, counterfeit currency, and pushing India toward a cashless economy.

A decade later, RBI data reveals a striking paradox: despite a massive digital payments boom, currency held by the public has more than doubled since demonetisation — raising questions about whether the note ban achieved its core objective.

The Big Announcement and Immediate Impact

- On November 8, 2016, at 8 PM, PM Modi declared existing ₹500 and ₹1,000 notes invalid from midnight — denominations that made up ~86% of currency in circulation.
- The sudden cash crunch disrupted shops, businesses, and households nationwide; people queued for hours at banks and ATMs.
- **GDP growth declined** by nearly 1.5 percentage points; many small businesses shut down due to liquidity shortages.

The Long-Term Currency Trend

- Currency with the public stood at **₹17.97 lakh crore** (November 4, 2016), crashed to ₹7.8 lakh crore by January 2017, but has since surged to **₹42.55 lakh crore** (as of October 15, 2026) — a 137% increase over pre-demonetisation levels.
- Currency with the public = Currency in Circulation (CIC) minus cash held by banks.
- In calendar year 2026 alone (till October 16), cash with the public rose by ₹5.26 lakh crore (14.1%).
- A sharp spike occurred in 2020-21, driven by pandemic-induced cash hoarding for groceries and medical expenses during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Currency-to-GDP Ratio: A Mixed Signal

- The **CIC-to-GDP ratio rose** from 8.7% (2016-17) to 14.4% (2020-21), before settling at 12.1% in FY26 — nearly identical to March 2016's 12.1%.
- **Global Comparison**: Japan (16%+), China (10.2%), US (7.3%) — India's ratio is higher than the US and China but lower than Japan.
- A higher ratio indicates greater cash dependence; a lower ratio typically reflects stronger digitalisation and better monetary policy transmission.

Cash vs Digital: Coexistence, Not Replacement

- Despite RBI and government efforts toward a "less-cash society", cash usage has not declined — it has grown alongside digital payments.
- Total digital payments (FY2025-26): ₹3,251.04 lakh crore (covering RTGS, retail transfers, cards, and prepaid instruments).
- Card and wallet transactions (FY2025-26): ~151,611 lakh transactions worth ₹30.31 lakh crore.
    - Credit cards: ₹23.62 lakh crore (60,238 lakh transactions) — dominant by value.
    - Debit cards: ₹4.45 lakh crore (12,802 lakh transactions).
    - Wallets: ₹2.23 lakh crore, but highest transaction volume (78,571 lakh) — used for frequent, low-value payments.
- Comparison with FY2015-16: just 1,003.87 crore card transactions worth ₹29.39 lakh crore (debit cards dominant then).
- By value share in FY26: Credit cards (78%), Debit cards (14.7%), Wallets (7.4%).
- By volume share: Wallets (51.8%), Credit cards (39.7%), Debit cards (8.4%).

Conclusion

A decade on, demonetisation's cashless dream remains unrealised — cash and digital payments now coexist rather than compete.

India's economy has formalised and digitised significantly, yet physical currency continues circulating robustly, proving that convenience, trust, and habit still make cash resilient in a rapidly digitalising nation.

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COP31 - CLIMATE OVERSHOOT, CARBON BUDGET AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

- The 2015 Paris Agreement aims to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels while pursuing efforts to restrict it to 1.5°C.
- Climate overshoot refers to a situation in which global temperatures temporarily exceed the 1.5°C threshold before potentially returning to that level by the end of the century through large-scale carbon dioxide removal.
- The concept has gained prominence in climate negotiations. However, it raises concerns about whether future carbon-removal technologies and mitigation measures can realistically reverse the effects of excessive emissions.
- The central argument is that the possibility of returning to 1.5°C should not become an excuse for delaying immediate emissions reductions.

Developed Countries and Unfulfilled Climate Obligations

- Major Concerns include the following:
    - **Continued fossil-fuel dependence**: Fossil fuels accounted for approximately 83% of primary energy consumption in the United States and 73% in the European Union in 2025.
    - **Expansion of fossil-fuel projects**: Countries including the US, Norway, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Australia have continued approving oil and gas exploration or extraction projects.
    - **Inadequate climate finance**: Although developed countries reported mobilising approximately $137 billion in climate finance in 2024, its estimated actual value was only $33–45 billion. Around 65% of public finance was provided as loans.
    - **Declining adaptation finance**: Adaptation finance fell to $26 billion in 2023, against an estimated annual requirement of $310-365 billion by 2035.

Way Forward: Returning to the Basics of Climate Action

- Experts argue that COP31 must prioritise measurable climate commitments rather than relying on emerging narratives and future technological possibilities.

- Key priorities include:
  - **Immediate emissions reduction**: Developed countries should undertake deep and sustained domestic emissions reductions and achieve net-zero well before 2050.
  - **Net-negative emissions**: Countries with historically high emissions should pursue net-negative emissions within their own borders rather than relying excessively on developing countries' forests and land.
  - **Predictable climate finance**: Developing countries require grant-based public finance rather than loans or uncertain private investment commitments.
  - **Technology transfer**: International negotiations must address intellectual property barriers that make clean technologies expensive for developing countries.
  - **Carbon-budget accountability**: Countries should discuss the remaining global carbon budget and their respective historical contributions to emissions.

AGNIPATH SCHEME - BALANCING MILITARY MODERNISATION WITH TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND OPERATIONAL READINESS

Agnipath Scheme: **Original objectives:**

- **Reduced average age**: Rapid turnover of personnel to create a younger armed force.
- **Lower pension expenditure**: Only 25% of Agniveers would be absorbed into regular service, thereby limiting long-term pension liabilities.
- **Civilian reintegration**: The remaining 75% would enter civilian life with savings, skills and preferential employment opportunities.

- **Recent modification:**
  - The Cabinet has approved an **additional two-year** engagement for 75% of Agniveers after their initial four-year tenure.
  - This means a substantial proportion may now serve for **six years** before leaving or entering regular service.

- **Concerns:**
    - The extension may require recalculating the scheme's impact on the average age profile and pension expenditure.
    - Agniveers leaving after six years may face greater difficulties in **civilian employment**, particularly if promised employment preferences and support remain inadequate.
    - The Chief of Defence Staff (**CDS**) has suggested that wider opportunities within the armed forces reduce the need for reserved vacancies in police and paramilitary forces. However, regular absorption remains uncertain.

Way Forward:

- **Independent assessment**: Submit a comprehensive evaluation of Agnipath's impact on force structure, military competence and financial savings to Parliament's Standing Committee on Defence.
- **Trade-specific retention**: Determine retention requirements according to the operational and technical needs of individual services and trades.
- **Transparent selection**: Publish six-year engagement and regular absorption criteria well in advance.
- **Career progression:** Ensure 2nd-engagement Agniveers have access to professional courses, training, promotion opportunities and appropriate remuneration.
- **Pension clarity:** Clearly define how initial engagement and subsequent regular service will count towards qualifying service and pension benefits.
- **Technical capacity building**: Provide specialised training and adequate service duration to retain critical technical expertise.

Conclusion:

- Agnipath was conceived as a military reform, not merely a recruitment arrangement.
- Its success must therefore be evaluated against its ability to strengthen institutional capabilities, operational readiness and professional expertise.