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Current Affairs - 26 December 2025

KEY FACTS ABOUT VITAMIN C



- Vitamin C, also known as **ascorbic acid**, is a **water-soluble vitamin**.
- **Function:**
 - It is **needed for the growth and repair of tissues** in all parts of body. It is **used to:**
 - **Form an important protein called collagen**, used to make **skin, tendons, ligaments, and blood vessels**.
 - **Heal wounds and form scar tissue**.
 - **Repair and maintain cartilage, bones, and teeth**.
 - **Aid in the absorption of iron**.
 - It is a **powerful antioxidant** that can neutralize harmful free radicals.
 - It **helps make several hormones and chemical messengers** used in the **brain** and nerves.
- The **body doesn't make vitamin C**. It comes from the diet.
- **Sources:**
 - Vitamin C comes from **fruits and vegetables**.
 - Good sources include **citrus, red and green peppers, tomatoes, broccoli, and greens**.
 - Some juices and cereals have added vitamin C.
- Vitamin C is **sensitive to heat**, so some of its **nutritional benefits can be lost during cooking**. Raw foods are more beneficial as dietary sources.
- Vitamin C is **not stored in body**, so deficiency can happen quickly.
- Sometimes, vitamin C **deficiency can lead to scurvy**.
 - Scurvy symptoms and signs can include **anemia, exhaustion, spontaneous bleeding, limb pain, swelling, and sometimes ulceration of the gums and loss of teeth**.



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Current Affairs - 26 December 2025

RASHTRIYA PRERNA STHAL



The Prime Minister recently inaugurated the Rashtra Prerna Sthal in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, dedicated to the life and ideals of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, marking his 101st birth anniversary.

- It has been developed as a landmark **national memorial** and inspirational complex of enduring national significance.
- It has been **dedicated to the life and ideals of former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.**
- It is located on the **banks of the Gomti River in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.**
- The complex also features **65-foot-high bronze statues of Syama Prasad Mookerjee and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya**, alongside the former Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- The complex is envisioned as a permanent national asset dedicated to fostering leadership values, national service, cultural consciousness, and public inspiration.
- The complex houses a **state-of-the-art museum** designed in the **shape of a lotus flower.**

QUALITY COUNCIL OF INDIA (QCI)



QUALITY COUNCIL®
OF INDIA
Creating an Ecosystem for Quality

The Quality Council of India (QCI) recently announced a comprehensive set of next-generation quality reforms aimed at strengthening India's quality ecosystem across healthcare, laboratories, MSMEs, and manufacturing sectors.

- It is a **non-profit autonomous organisation** registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860.



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Current Affairs - 26 December 2025

- It was set up in 1997 jointly by the **Government of India** and the Indian Industry, represented by the three premier industry associations, i.e.,
 - Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)
 - Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)
 - Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).
 - It is under the administrative control of the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.**
 - **Functions:**
 - It works as the **national accreditation body.**
 - It has been established to create a mechanism for **independent third-party assessment of products, services, and processes.**
 - It also **promotes the adoption of quality standards** relating to Quality Management Systems, Food Safety Management Systems, and Product Certification and Inspection Bodies **through the accreditation services provided by the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB).**
 - It plays a pivotal role at the national level in propagating, adoption, and adherence to quality standards in all important spheres of activities.
 - It **leads** a nationwide quality movement in the country through the **National Quality Campaign.**
 - **Boards/divisions under QCI:**
 - National Accreditation Board for Testing & Calibration Laboratories (NABL)
 - National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH)
 - National Accreditation Board for Education & Training (NABET)
 - National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB)
 - National Board for Quality Promotion (NBQP).
 - **Every board is functionally independent** and works within its area of expertise.
 - **The council comprises 38 members, with equal representation from the government, industries, and other stakeholders.**
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Current Affairs - 26 December 2025

TSUNAMI READY RECOGNITION PROGRAMME



Tsunami Ready Recognition Programme

India would soon have over 100 tsunami-ready villages among the

Indian Ocean region under the Tsunami Ready Recognition Programme.

- It is an **international community-based recognition** programme developed by Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO.

Aim: It aims to build **resilient communities** through awareness and preparedness strategies that will protect life, livelihoods and property from **tsunamis in different regions**.

- The main goal of the programme is to **improve coastal community preparedness** for tsunamis and to minimize the loss of life, livelihoods and property.
- This is achieved through a collaborative effort to meet a standard level of tsunami preparedness through the fulfilment of a set of established indicators.

Methodology used:

- To get this recognition, **communities must meet all 12 indicators**, which cover Assessment, Preparedness, and Response, will be recognized as 'Tsunami Ready' by the UNESCO/IOC.
- Tsunami-ready village is certified to the ones that have high awareness about tsunami, hazard preparedness and mapping, public display of evacuation maps, **24-hour warning systems**, participation in mock drills among others.
- The recognition is **renewable every four years**.



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Current Affairs - 26 December 2025

KIMBERLY PROCESS



Recently, the Kimberley Process (KP) Plenary has selected India to assume the chairpersonship of the Kimberley Process from 1 January 2026.

- It is a **tripartite initiative** involving **governments**, the **international diamond industry** and **civil society**.
- **Aim:** It is aimed at preventing the trade in “conflict diamonds”.
- Conflict diamonds are rough **diamonds used by rebel groups** or their allies to finance conflicts that undermine legitimate governments, (As defined in United Nations Security Council resolutions).
- **Governance:** Each year, the **Vice-Chair becomes the Chair the next year**. Chair and Vice-Chair are appointed by **Plenary consensus**.
- **Participants:** It currently has **60 participants representing 86 countries**, with the European Union counting as a single participant.
 - This will be the **third time India has been entrusted with the chair of the Kimberley Process**.

What is Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS)?

- It is the mechanism the KP uses to **prevent the trade of conflict diamonds**.
- It was launched in 2003, which is enforced individually by KP Participant countries to ensure that rough diamonds in the legitimate supply chain are KP-compliant.
- Since 2003, India has been actively participating in the KPCS process.
 - **Department of Commerce** is the **nodal Department**
 - **Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC)** is designated as the KPCS Importing and Exporting Authority in India.
 - GJEPC is **responsible for issuing KP Certificates** and is also the custodian of KP Certificates received in the country.



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Current Affairs - 26 December 2025

CAMELLIA SINENSIS



Recently, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) issued a clarification that a beverage qualifies to be called tea only if it is derived from the plant *Camellia sinensis*.

- **Camellia sinensis** belongs to the family **Theaceae**, commonly known as the **tea plant**.
- It is **the source of various types of tea** including green tea, black tea, and oolong tea.
- It is a **shrub or evergreen tree** up to 16 m in height.
- It is widely **cultivated in mountain slopes**.
- **Required Climatic Conditions Camellia sinensis:**
 - **Temperature:** Range of **15°C–23°C** (optimal growth)
 - **Climate:** Warm and humid climate.
 - **Rainfall:** Annual rainfall of **150–300 cm**, evenly distributed
 - **Soil:** Slightly acidic, **calcium-free soil** with porous sub-soil
 - **Terrain:** Sloping terrain to ensure proper drainage
- **Reproduction:** *Camellia* species **flowers are complete, bisexual**, i.e., with functional male (androecium) and female (gynoecium), including stamens, carpels and ovary.
- **Global Distribution:** Cultivated in **Subtropical and warm temperate zones** of South-east Asia
- It is mainly grown in Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Japan, Korea and Malaysia.

Types of Tea Produced in India

Green tea: Oxidation is prevented by quickly heating (steaming or pan-frying) the leaves after plucking to keep them green.

Oolong Tea: **Partially oxidized**, falling between green and black teas in flavour and colour.

Black tea: It is **fully oxidized before drying**, resulting in its characteristic dark colour and strong taste.

White tea: Minimal processing, often just withered and dried, preserves its delicate nature.



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Current Affairs - 26 December 2025

FOUR NEW REGIONAL AIRLINES, OLD TURBULENCE: WHY SUCCESS IS UNCERTAIN

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has issued no-objection certificates (NOCs) to two new regional airlines—**Al Hind Air** and **FlyExpress**—bringing the total number of proposed regional carriers to four. Two others, **Air Kerala** and **Shankh Air**, received NOCs last year but are yet to secure Air Operator Certificates (AOCs) and begin flights.

While the government is keen to expand domestic aviation in one of the world's fastest-growing markets, the regional airline segment remains high-risk, with a history of more failures than successes.

Duopoly Worries After IndiGo Disruption

- The announcement of new regional airlines comes weeks after a major operational disruption at IndiGo, which renewed concerns about India's airline duopoly.
- Together, IndiGo and the Air India group command over 90% of the domestic market, heightening risks from over-concentration.
- In this context, the NoC is being read as a signal to encourage competition, though experts urge caution.
- **New Entrants Unlikely to Shift Market Shares**
 - While fresh regional players are a positive signal, experts doubt they will significantly dent the dominance of the two majors.
 - The tougher question is whether these startups can survive India's unforgiving aviation economics.
- **The New Regional Players**
 - **Al Hind Air:** Backed by the Kerala-based Al Hind Group; plans a regional commuter model using ATR-72 turboprops.
 - **FlyExpress:** Plans yet to be detailed publicly.
 - **Air Kerala:** Envisions an ultra-low-cost carrier (ULCC) connecting tier-2 and tier-3 cities to major hubs with turboprops; despite an NOC last year, it has



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Current Affairs - 26 December 2025

struggled to induct aircraft—required for an AOC from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

- **Shankh Air:** Promoted by UP-based entrepreneur; aims to operate regional routes within and beyond Uttar Pradesh from the upcoming Noida International Airport, with operations planned in the coming months.

Why Regional Airlines Struggle in India?

- Despite a few successes—**Star Air**, **Fly91**, and government-owned **Alliance Air**—India's regional aviation space has seen many collapses.
 - Past failures include **Paramount Airways**, **Air Pegasus**, **TruJet**, **Zoom Air**, **Air Carnival**, **Air Costa**, **Air Mantra**, and **Air Odisha**.
 - More recently, **Fly Big** suspended operations in October.
 - **Structural Challenges in the Market**
 - India is a tough aviation market, especially for small carriers.
 - High price sensitivity, thin profit margins, high debt, and dollar-denominated costs (fuel, leasing, maintenance) favour large airlines with scale, efficient fleets, and deep pockets.
 - Most regional airlines lack the financial resilience to withstand shocks.
 - **Demand Constraints at Smaller Airports**
 - Regional routes often suffer from limited and seasonal demand, while most passenger traffic remains concentrated at major hubs.
 - This makes load factors volatile and route planning risky for small carriers.
 - **Financing and Revenue Limitations**
 - Without backing from a major airline group, regional carriers struggle to access finance and debt, as lenders perceive higher risk.
 - Short-haul routes also face stiff competition from trains and road transport, and offer fewer opportunities for ancillary revenues like belly cargo.
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Current Affairs - 26 December 2025

VALMIKI TIGER RESERVE



- **Location:** It is located at the **India-Nepal border** in the northern part of the West Champaran District of
- It forms the **easternmost limit of the Himalayan Terai forests** in India and is the **only tiger reserve of Bihar**.
- It comprises the **Valmiki National Park** and the **Valmiki Wild Sanctuary**.
- It is situated in the **Gangetic Plains bio-geographic zone** of the country, the forest has a combination of **Bhabar and Terai tracts**.

Bordered by: It is surrounded by the **Royal Chitwan National Park of Nepal** in the north and the **river Gandak** on the western side, with the Himalayan mountains as a backdrop.

Drainage: The rivers **Gandak, Pandai, Manor, Harha, Masan, and Bhapsa** flow through various parts of the reserve.

Vegetation: The reserve boasts a variety of vegetation types, including **tropical wet deciduous forests, grasslands, savannas, and riverine forests**.

Flora: Sal trees dominate the forests, but the region also features species like teak, bamboo, semal, and khair.

Fauna: Tiger, leopard, fishing cat, leopard cat, sambar, hog deer, spotted deer, black buck, gaur, sloth bear, langur, rhesus monkey, etc.
