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WHY AYUSH RECEIVED A MAJOR PUSH IN THE UNION BUDGET 2026-27

- AYUSH refers to **Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy**, India's traditional systems of medicine that coexist with modern allopathic healthcare.
- Over the last decade, the government has sought to integrate AYUSH into the public health system while also positioning it as a source of economic growth and soft power.
- Institutionally, AYUSH functions under the **Ministry of AYUSH**, established in 2014.
- The sector operates through a nationwide network of AYUSH hospitals, dispensaries, teaching institutions, research councils, and regulatory bodies.
- The **National AYUSH Mission (NAM)** is the primary vehicle for integrating AYUSH services into primary healthcare by co-locating AYUSH facilities in existing health centres.
- India also hosts Institutes of National Importance such as the All India Institute of Ayurveda, New Delhi, and the National Institute of Homoeopathy, Kolkata, along with research bodies like the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences.
- Regulatory oversight is provided by the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine and the National Commission for Homoeopathy, while drug standards are set by the Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy.

Budgetary Expansion of the AYUSH Sector

- The Union Budget 2026-27 marked a sharp increase in government spending on AYUSH.
- The total allocation rose to Rs. 4,408 crore, up from Rs. 3,992 crore in 2025-26 and Rs. 2,122 crore in 2020-21.
- This reflects a long-term policy shift to mainstream traditional medicine within India's healthcare framework.
- A major announcement was the establishment of three new All-India Institutes of Ayurveda, envisioned as centres of excellence on the lines of AIIMS.



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- These institutions will combine patient care, advanced research, and high-quality medical education, aiming to standardise Ayurvedic practice nationally.
- The Budget also proposed enhanced funding for upgrading the **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre in Jamnagar**, signalling India's ambition to lead global standard-setting for traditional medicine practices.

Strengthening Infrastructure, Research, and Supply Chains

- The **National AYUSH Mission** received a **66% hike to Rs. 1,300 crore**, focusing on modernising AYUSH hospitals and dispensaries, expanding preventive healthcare, and upgrading existing facilities.
- Additional funds were earmarked for improving AYUSH pharmacies and drug-testing laboratories to address long-standing quality and safety concerns.
- A notable innovation announced was **Bharat-VISTAAR**, a multilingual AI-based digital assistant designed to support farmers cultivating medicinal plants.
- It will provide real-time guidance on crop quality, market prices, and export certification, strengthening the medicinal plant supply chain.

India-EU Free Trade Agreement and Global Outreach

- A key driver behind the Budget push is the **India-European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**, which has opened new opportunities for AYUSH in European markets.
 - In EU countries that do not specifically regulate traditional medicine, Indian AYUSH practitioners can now offer services based on qualifications obtained in India.
 - The FTA also allows Indian companies to establish wellness centres and Ayurvedic clinics across the EU with legal certainty.
 - Importantly, it enables mutual recognition of certain laboratory test results and safety certifications, easing the export of AYUSH products.
 - The agreement also recognises India's **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library**, helping prevent biopiracy and wrongful patent claims on Indian formulations.
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INDIA'S STRATEGY TO TACKLE THE MENTAL HEALTH BURDEN

- Experts warn that India is facing a serious mental health crisis.
- The country accounts for nearly one-third of global cases of suicide, depression, and addiction, making mental health a major public health challenge.
- **High Suicide Burden Among Youth**
 - Data from the National Crime Records Bureau and the Sample Registration System under the Ministry of Home Affairs show that:
 - Suicide is among the leading causes of death for Indians aged 15–29 years.
 - Young people are particularly vulnerable due to academic pressure, unemployment, social stress, and digital addiction
- **Economic Cost of Mental Illness**
 - According to the World Health Organization (WHO):
 - India is expected to lose \$1.03 trillion between 2012 and 2030 due to mental health conditions.
 - Losses stem from reduced productivity, healthcare costs, and premature mortality.
- **Large Treatment Gap**
 - A major concern is the treatment gap: 70%–92% of people with mental disorders do not receive proper care.
 - Key reasons include: Lack of awareness; Social stigma; Severe shortage of trained mental health professionals.
- **Shortage of Mental Health Professionals**
 - As per the Indian Journal of Psychiatry:
 - India has 0.75 psychiatrists per 1,00,000 people
 - The WHO recommends at least 3 psychiatrists per 1,00,000
 - This gap severely limits access to diagnosis, counselling, and treatment.

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- **Low Budgetary Priority**
 - Although overall health spending has increased since FY2014–15, mental health has received: Only about 1% of the total health budget.
 - Limited funding has constrained infrastructure, manpower, and outreach services

Mental Health Infrastructure in India: Expanding Access Beyond Hospitals

- To meet the rising demand for mental health services, the government has integrated mental healthcare into primary healthcare under Ayushman Bharat.
 - Mental health services are now part of the Comprehensive Primary Health Care package delivered through Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (Health and Wellness Centres).
 - Over 1.73 lakh sub-health centres and primary health centres have been upgraded into Ayushman Arogya Mandirs
 - These centres provide basic mental health screening, counselling, and referrals, reducing dependence on specialised hospitals
 - **Strengthening Specialist Capacity**
 - To address the shortage of trained professionals, the government has expanded education and training infrastructure:
 - Over 20 Centres of Excellence sanctioned for postgraduate training in mental health
 - 47 postgraduate departments in mental health established nationwide
 - These initiatives aim to increase the availability of psychiatrists, psychologists, and mental health specialists, especially in underserved regions.
 - **Tele-Mental Health Support: Tele MANAS**
 - India has complemented physical infrastructure with digital outreach through Tele MANAS (Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States):
 - Tele MANAS bridges access gaps, especially for people in remote areas or those hesitant to seek in-person care.
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GLOBAL TEACHER PRIZE



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TEACHER
PRIZE
GEMS EDUCATION

- It is an **annual award** presented to an exceptional teacher who has made a significant impact on their students and community.
 - The prize aims to **highlight the importance of educators** and recognize the outstanding contributions they make to society.
 - **Eligibility and Criteria:**
 - It is **open to teachers from all countries**, working in various educational settings including public, private, and alternative schools.
 - Candidates are **evaluated based on their innovative teaching practices**, achievements in the classroom, and efforts to improve the quality of education in their community.
 - The selection process also **considers the teacher's impact on their students'** learning and their ability to overcome challenging environments.
 - **Nomination:** Teachers **can be nominated** by others or **can apply themselves**.
 - **Award:** The award comes **with a cash prize of \$1 million**, making it one of the most prestigious recognitions in the field of education.
 - It is presented by **GEMS Education and organised by the Varkey Foundation** in collaboration **with UNESCO**.
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GRAPHICS PROCESSING UNITS (GPU)



- A GPU is an **electronic circuit board** that can quickly perform **many mathematical calculations**.
 - Like a Central Processing Unit (CPU), a GPU is also a chip component in computing devices.
 - The technology was originally designed to **speed up 3-D graphics rendering**.
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- Traditional GPUs are of two types:
 - First, there are **standalone chips**, which often **come in add-on cards** for large desktop computers.
 - Second are **GPUs combined with a CPU** in the same chip package, which are often found in laptops and game consoles.
 - In both cases, the CPU controls what the GPU does.

Working of GPU:

- GPUs **work by using parallel processing**, where multiple processors handle separate parts of a single task.
- A GPU also **has its own RAM** to store the data it is processing. This RAM is designed specifically to hold the large amounts of information coming into the GPU for highly intensive graphics use cases.

Applications: It is used in areas including **high-performance computing, machine learning, Artificial Intelligence (AI), weather forecasting,** and crypto currency mining.

SHIPKI LA PASS



- It is a **high mountain pass, bordering India and China** in Himachal Pradesh.
- It serves as the **boundary post** on the frontier between **China and India**.
- It is an **offshoot of the ancient Silk Road**.
- The **old name** of Shipki La was **Pema La, or Shared Gate**, also known as **Shared Pass**.
- It was **declared the Line of Actual Control post-1962**, and later, the **Indo-Tibetan Border Police** named it Shipki La.

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- The **Sutlej River** (known as Langqen Zangbo in Tibet) **enters India through this pass**, flowing from the **Tibet** Autonomous Region.
 - The pass works as the **third frontier post of India** for carrying out **trade and commerce activities with China**.
 - The **other two passes** are the **Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand** and the **Nathula Pass in Sikkim**.
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KONDAVEEDU FORT



- Kondaveedu Fort, also known as Kondavid Fort, is located in **Andhra Pradesh**.

History:

- It was **constructed during** the period of the **Telugu Chodas**, **strengthened by the Kakatiyas** and **occupied by Prolaya Vema Reddy**, who shifted his capital from **Addanki to Kondaveedu in 1323 AD**.
 - Later it was **taken over by the Gajpathis of Orissa** and **ravaged by the Bahmani Sultans** in 1458.
 - The fort **later came under** the control of the **Vijayanagara Empire**, the **Golconda Sultanate**, the **Mughals**, the **French**, and the **British**.
 - The architecture displays a **blend of Hindu and Islamic styles**.
 - It was mainly constructed with **granite stones and lime mortar**.
 - It features two main entrances called **Kolepalli Darwaza** and **Nadella Darwaza**.
 - The fort is also known for its **ancient water conservation system** with several ponds supplying water to inhabitants.
 - Recent archaeological findings include **Buddhist stupa remains dating back to the 1st or 2nd century CE**.
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VEERANGANA DURGAVATI TIGER RESERVE



- **Location:** It is located in Madhya Pradesh.
- It encompasses areas within the Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary and

Durgavati Wildlife Sanctuary.

- **Rivers:** It straddles parts of the Narmada and Yamuna River basins.
- **Vegetation:** It mainly consists of Dry deciduous type vegetation.
- **Flora:** The chief floral elements include Teak, Saja, Dhaora, Ber, Amla, etc.
- **Fauna:** Tiger, leopard, wolf, jackal, Indian fox, striped hyena, Nilgai, Chinkara, Chital, Sambhar, Black Buck, Barking deer, Common Langur, Rhesus Macaque, etc.
 - It is one of the few remaining strongholds for the **White-Rumped and the Indian Vultures**, critically endangered raptors of India.

DALMA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



- It is located in Jharkhand.
 - It is situated around the **Dalma Hills** on the **Chottanagpur Plateau**.

- The Sanctuary gets its name from the “**Dalma mai**” a **local goddess** who is **revered and worshipped by the local people** and the people of adjoining villages of Dalma.
- The entire forest of Dalma Sanctuary falls in the **catchment of the Subarnarekha River and Dimna Lake** of Jamshedpur.
- It features two prominent **waterfalls: Sitaguldi and Dassam**.

Vegetation:

- The forests of Dalma come under the category “**Dry peninsular Sal**” and “**Northern dry mixed deciduous Forest**”.



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- Most of the Dalma forests **shed leaves in the summer** and **attain their full bloom at the onset of monsoon.**

Flora:

- **Medicinal plants** like **Ananatmula, Satawari, Sarpgandha**, are abundant in the sanctuary.

Fauna:

- Besides **elephants**, the sanctuary has a considerable population of other wildlife like **barking deer, wild boar, giant squirrel, porcupine**, pangolin, sloth bear, etc.
 - Commonly seen birds in the sanctuary are **falcons, golden orioles, Indian tree pies**, paradise fly catchers, grey hornbills, Indian peafowl, etc.
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