

JANUARY 2026 EDITION

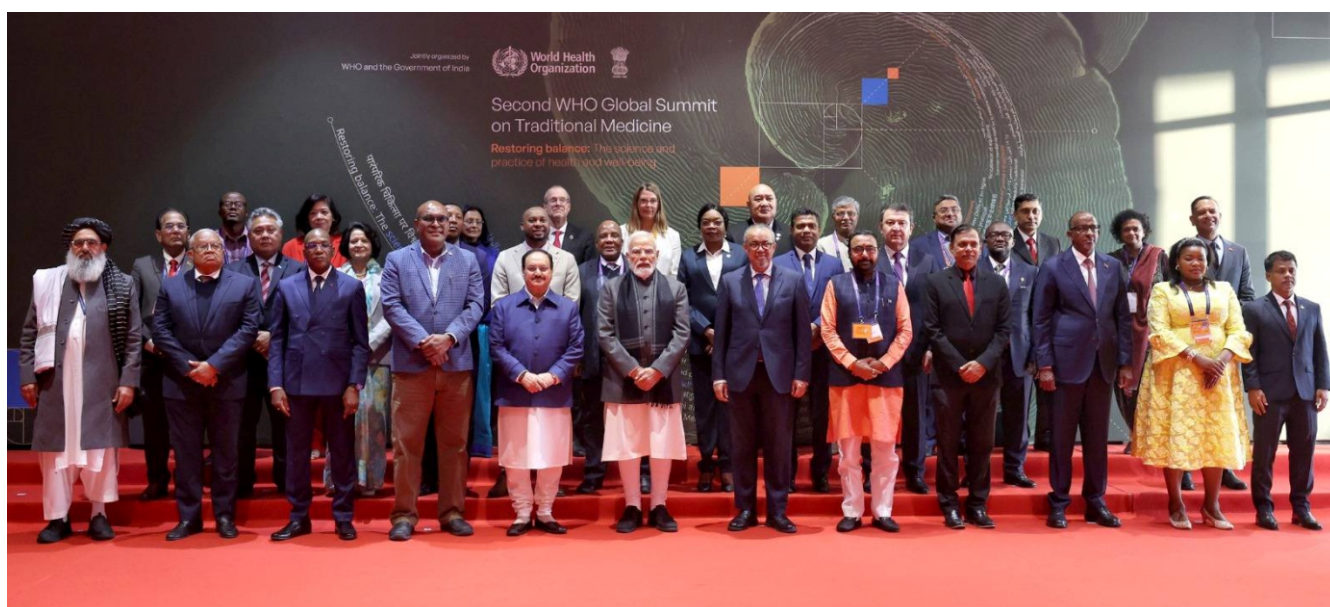
GOVERNMENT POLICY REPORT



01 HEALTH

India Hosts Landmark Second WHO Summit on Traditional Medicine

India hosted the **Second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine from 17 to 19 December 2025 in New Delhi**, reinforcing its role in advancing holistic healthcare worldwide. The three-day Summit, under the theme “Restoring Balance: The Science and Practice of Health and Well-Being,” brought together health leaders, researchers, traditional medicine practitioners, and policy representatives from over 100 countries. The event focussed on strengthening **traditional, complementary and integrative medicine (TCIM)** with a foundation in scientific evidence, sustainability, accessibility and global cooperation.



Source: <https://www.who.int/news/item/22-12-2025-who-global-summit-charts-a-bold-future-for-traditional-medicine>

Organized jointly by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Government of India, the Summit built upon the momentum generated during the first Traditional Medicine Summit in 2023. A major focus was the **implementation of the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034**, a framework designed to guide countries in safely integrating traditional medicine into mainstream healthcare systems. Sessions highlighted the need for standardized regulations, quality assurance, clinical validation, digital documentation and collaborative research ecosystems to support large-scale adoption.



Source: <https://staging.tm-summit.org/about/>

One of the most significant outcomes of the Summit was the **launch of the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Library, the world's first comprehensive digital repository dedicated to traditional medicine knowledge**. The platform hosts over 1.6 million scientific records, regulatory guidelines, research papers and Indigenous medicine documentation. The library is envisioned as a tool to support policymakers, researchers and health systems in building culturally relevant and evidence-aligned medical frameworks.

The Summit also facilitated structured international engagement, with India conducting **bilateral discussions with 16 countries on future collaboration** in traditional medicine. These dialogues covered areas such as regulatory harmonization, research partnerships, intellectual property protection, biodiversity-linked medicinal knowledge, capacity building and innovation frameworks. The cooperation highlighted the importance of long-term multilateral partnerships beyond the Summit itself.



Source: <https://www.who.int/news/item/25-09-2025-traditional-medicine-global-library-to-launch-in-2025>

KEY COMMITMENTS FROM THE SUMMIT

1

Strengthening the evidence base for traditional medicine

2

Supporting equitable access to safe and effective traditional medicine through appropriate regulatory mechanisms

3

Integrating safe and effective traditional medicine into health systems

4

Optimizing cross-sector value through data, collaboration, and empowered communities

The Summit underscored that TCIM must evolve alongside modern healthcare through **rigorous scientific benchmarking, responsible commercialization, ecosystem protection and technology-driven knowledge preservation**. Thus, India's successful hosting of the event signals a shift toward globally aligned integrative health solutions, strengthening India's contribution to building resilient, sustainable and inclusive global healthcare models.

India Scripts History as the First Asian Nation to Win the Squash World Cup Title

India achieved a **historic sporting milestone** at the **2025 Squash World Cup** by becoming the **first Asian nation to win the prestigious mixed-team title**, defeating **top-seeded Hong Kong, China 3–0 in the final** held in **Chennai**. This landmark triumph marked India's **maiden appearance at the top of the Squash World Cup podium**, elevating the country's status in a sport long dominated by Western and African powers.



Source: <https://www.olympics.com/en/news/squash-world-cup-2025-india-vs-hong-kong-china-final-match-report>

The Indian squad's victory was built on strong individual performances in the final. **Veteran Joshna Chinappa** provided an early lead with a composed win in the opening fixture, showcasing her experience and tactical acumen. **Abhay Singh**, India's top-ranked men's player, then extended the advantage with a decisive win. The title was clinched when **17-year-old Anahat Singh** delivered a commanding performance to secure the third match and seal India's historic clean sweep.



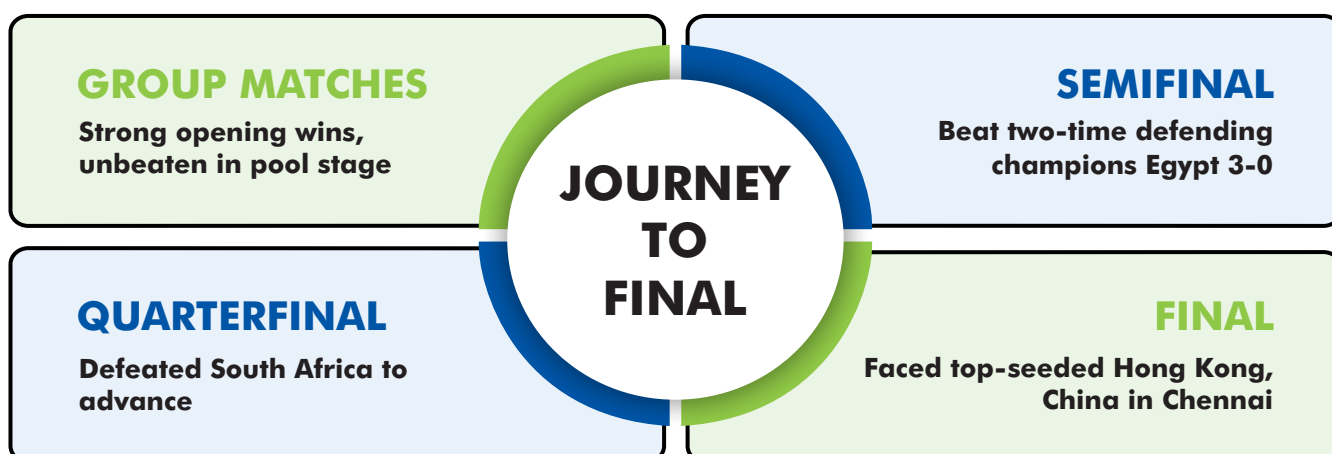
Source: <https://thebridge.in/squash/sdat-squash-world-cup-india-beat-egypt-make-first-ever-final-55452>

Earlier in the tournament, India had already made headlines by **knocking out defending champions Egypt 3-0 in the semifinals**, an achievement that marked the team's **first ever appearance in a World Cup final**. The semifinal success was built on dynamic play from national champion **Velavan Senthilkumar**, resilient matches from Anahat Singh, and clinical finishing by Abhay Singh, demonstrating depth and composure across the lineup.

The 2025 World Cup title represented a significant improvement on India's previous best, a bronze medal at the 2023 edition, and made it only the **fourth nation ever to lift the Squash World Cup trophy**, alongside Australia, England and Egypt. Indian sports fans celebrated the victory as a **defining moment** for squash in the country, highlighting the growing competitive capabilities of Indian athletes on the world stage.



Source: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/sports/india-script-history-clinch-maiden-squash-world-cup-title/>



The triumph also resonated beyond the squash court, with leaders and officials across India lauding the team's dedication, resilience and achievement. As squash looks towards its **Olympic debut at the 2028 Los Angeles Games**, India's landmark World Cup victory is poised to inspire future generations and significantly boost the sport's profile across Asia.

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Microsoft Invests Big to Drive India Toward an AI-First Economy



In a landmark move signalling its strong confidence in India's technological potential, **Microsoft has announced a historic investment of US \$17.5 billion (approximately Rs 1.5 lakh crore) in the country**—the company's **largest ever commitment in Asia**. This four-year investment, running from 2026 to 2029, aims to accelerate India's transition to an **AI-first economy** by strengthening its cloud and artificial intelligence capabilities across infrastructure, skills, and digital sovereignty. It, further, fosters innovation across multiple sectors and industries nationwide.



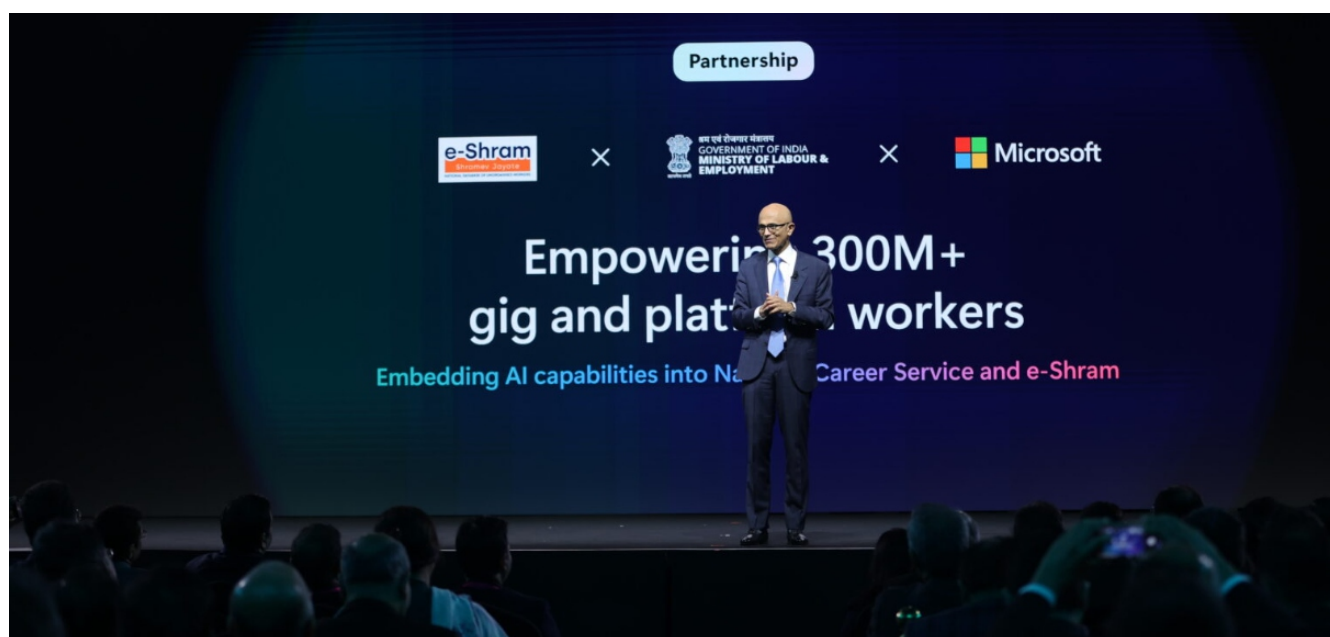
Source: <https://www.beingguru.com/microsoft-announces-17-5b-investment-in-india-to-strengthen-ai-efforts/>

The announcement came during CEO **Satya Nadella's meeting with Indian Prime Minister** in New Delhi, where both leaders emphasized the bright future of AI in India. Nadella described this investment as a strategic bet on India's vast market, talent pool, and innovation ecosystem. Further, the Prime Minister underscored **global optimism about India's leadership role in AI technology** and its potential to drive inclusive income growth and sustainable development.



Source: <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/microsoft-to-invest-rs-1-5-lakh-crore-in-india-its-largest-ever-in-asia-for-ai-1st-future-satya-nadella-after-meeting-pm-modi-9779498>

A significant portion of the funds will go toward expanding Microsoft's **cloud infrastructure**, including establishing its **largest hyperscale data center region in Hyderabad** and further enhancing facilities in Chennai and Pune. These facilities are designed to offer higher performance and resilience, enabling enterprises, startups, and government institutions to adopt AI solutions with low latency and strong security, supporting innovation across sectors and driving new technology adoption.



Source: <https://news.microsoft.com/source/asia/2025/12/09/microsoft-invests-us17-5-billion-in-india-to-drive-ai-diffusion-at-population-scale/>

Beyond infrastructure, Microsoft is **doubling its AI skilling commitment to train 20 million Indians by 2030**, thereby fuelling a new generation of AI-ready professionals and ensuring inclusive access to opportunities. Additionally, the company is integrating AI capabilities into national public platforms like **e-Shram and the National Career Service** to benefit over **310 million informal workers**, enhancing job matching, skill forecasting, and multilingual access through AI tools.

This massive investment not only reinforces **India's position as a global AI hub** but also highlights a strategic partnership between the public and private sectors. By harnessing cutting-edge technology, it aims to drive economic growth, create new job opportunities, and accelerate **digital transformation across industries nationwide**.

BENEFITS OF MICROSOFT'S INVESTMENT

1

BOOSTS ECONOMIC GROWTH

2

CREATES EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

3

ENHANCES DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

4

IMPROVES PUBLIC SERVICE EFFICIENCY

5

STRENGTHENS GLOBAL AI LEADERSHIP

04 CULTURE

UNESCO Recognizes Deepavali as Intangible Cultural Heritage



UNESCO has officially inscribed **Deepavali**, widely known as Diwali or the Festival of Lights, on its **Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**, marking a historic milestone for India's cultural diplomacy and global heritage celebration today. The recognition was formalized under the **listing ID 02312**, acknowledging the festival's deep cultural roots, community participation, and symbolic celebration of light triumphing over darkness. Deepavali now stands on a global platform as a living tradition that transcends geographical and generational boundaries.



Source: <https://www.krctimes.com/news/deepavali-enters-unescos-intangible-cultural-heritage-list/>

The UNESCO listing emphasizes Deepavali as a festival shaped by **social practices, festive expressions, knowledge systems, and shared cultural values**. Celebrated through lighting oil lamps (diyas), rangoli art, festive cleaning, exchange of sweets, prayers, and community gatherings, the festival reflects collective joy rather than a single-scripted ritual. Its transmission remains largely informal—carried forward through families, neighbourhood, and cultural participation—making it a dynamic and evolving intangible heritage.



Source: <https://asiaone.co.in/deepavali-secures-unesco-heritage-status-india-celebrates-global-recognition/>

The Ministry of Culture, Government of India, highlighted that the inscription recognizes Deepavali's **cultural diversity, inclusive spirit, and role in strengthening social harmony**. This achievement was announced during the **20th Session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee** held in New Delhi, reinforcing India's commitment to safeguarding its intangible traditions. The recognition is not limited to religious significance alone but includes the festival's emotional, artistic, and community-driven dimensions that foster unity and cultural continuity.



Source: <https://diplomacybeyond.com/20th-session-of-the-unesco-intergovernmental-committee-in-new-delhi/>

With this inscription, Deepavali becomes India's **16th element** to receive UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage tag, joining globally recognized Indian traditions that inspire **shared cultural pride deeply**. The listing acknowledges the festival's capacity to promote **human values of compassion, togetherness, gratitude, and cultural coexistence**, which resonate universally. UNESCO further noted that such recognition supports cultural preservation while encouraging global awareness of diverse cultural expressions.

IMPACT OF UNESCO LISTING

**Increased
Global
Visibility**

**Encourages
cultural
preservation**

**Promotes
intercultural
appreciation**

**Reinforces
community
harmony
worldwide**

UNESCO's recognition of Deepavali amplifies its **international visibility and cultural prestige**, offering renewed momentum for heritage safeguarding, documentation, and intercultural appreciation. The inscription encourages global communities to celebrate not just the lights of the festival but the shared ethos behind them, ensuring Deepavali continues to shine as a collective cultural legacy of humanity.

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Arunachal's Anini Recognized as India's Best Emerging Adventure Tourism Destination

Anini, a secluded hill town located in **Arunachal Pradesh's Dibang Valley**, has received the national **"Best Emerging Adventure Destination"** award during the **17th Annual Convention of the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI)** in Srinagar. This national-level recognition highlights Anini's growing stature as a compelling and sustainable adventure tourism destination in India, marking a significant achievement for the northeastern tourism landscape.

Situated deep within the Eastern Himalayas, Anini is renowned for its **untouched natural beauty**, encompassing snow-capped peaks, dense forests, winding rivers, and a serene landscape that remains largely unspoiled by mass tourism. The region offers a diverse range of adventure activities, with high-altitude treks such as the **Seven Lakes Trek**, **Aeyo Valley Trek**, **Pomo Winter Trek in Zambra Valley**, and the culturally significant **Athupopu Trek** attracting seasoned trekkers and explorers seeking authentic nature-based experiences.



Source: <https://assamtribune.com/north-east/aranachals-anini-named-indias-best-emerging-adventure-destination-by-atoai-1601763>

SIGNATURE NATURAL ASSETS BEYOND TREKKING



The award not only underscores Anini's scenic and adventurous appeal but also acknowledges the **collective efforts of the Arunachal Pradesh Tourism Department, local communities, and tourism stakeholders** in fostering an inclusive and responsible tourism model. These collaborative endeavours have helped to position Anini on the national adventure tourism map while prioritising **environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, and sustainable economic benefits for local residents**, ensuring tourism growth remains balanced and community-driven.



Source: <https://arunachalobserver.org/2024/11/06/anini-valley-most-offbeat-destination-says-arunachal-tourism-ambassador/>

Local administration and tourism officials have described the recognition as a significant milestone in the region's tourism development. The honour validates Dibang Valley's potential to draw adventure seekers without compromising its ecological integrity or traditional way of life. With improved visibility, Anini is expected to witness **responsible infrastructure development, curated adventure circuits, and heightened interest from adventure tour operators**, further strengthening its appeal.



Source: <https://www.ndtv.com/travel/anini-named-indias-best-emerging-adventure-destination-all-about-the-arunachal-village-9860212>

With its rugged terrain, rich cultural tapestry, and emphasis on **eco-sensitive travel practices**, Anini is poised to become an increasingly sought-after destination for immersive Himalayan adventure. The award reinforces its status as a model for **responsible, experiential, and low-impact tourism**, inspiring future adventure destinations to adopt sustainable frameworks while promoting India's least explored frontiers.

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