

International

Canada ends fast-track visa programme for students from 14 countries.

In a significant development having far-reaching implications for Indian students, Canada has announced the discontinuation of its Student Direct Stream (SDS) visa programme.

The SDS is a key pathway for international students seeking permits for studies.

The SDS programme was launched in 2018 by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). It was designed to fast-track study permit applications for students from 14 countries. These nations include India, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

Qatar to suspend its role as a mediator between Israel and Hamas

Qatar has announced that it will suspend its role as mediator between Israel and Hamas, citing concerns that both parties are no longer negotiating in good faith.

Qatar's withdrawal marks a potential setback for peace efforts in the region. The nation, despite its small size, wields considerable diplomatic influence and has been instrumental in various high-stakes international negotiations, including those with Iran, the Taliban, and Russia. It also hosts a major US military air base, underscoring its strategic importance as a key American ally in West Asia.

Russian President signs a treaty establishing comprehensive strategic partnership with North Korea

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a treaty establishing a comprehensive strategic partnership with North Korea.

Under the terms of the agreement, Russia and North Korea are committed to developing a sustained partnership based on mutual respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, equality, and other principles of international law that support friendly relations and cooperation among nations.

The treaty also includes provisions for immediate military and other forms of assistance if either nation faces an armed

attack, as stipulated by Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

National

Seven Indian institutions make it to top 100 of QS World University Rankings- Asia 2025.

Seven Indian institutions have secured a place in the Top 100 of the QS World University Rankings: Asia 2025. India is home to two universities in the top 50 and seven in the top 100, with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi leading at the 44th place.

IIT Bombay is ranked 48th, while IIT Madras, IIT Kharagpur, IIT Kanpur, and the University of Delhi are the other Indian institutes in the Top 100.

Institutions such as IIT Guwahati, IIT Roorkee, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Chandigarh University, UPES, and Vellore Institute of Technology are in the top 150.

Indian musicians Ricky Kej, Anoushka Shankar earn nominations for 67th Grammy Awards

Prominent Indian musicians Ricky Kej and Anoushka Shankar have earned Grammy nominations for the 67th Grammy Awards. Ricky Kej, a three-time Grammy winner, received his fourth Grammy nomination for his album Break of Dawn in the Best New Age, Ambient, or Chant Album category.

Anoushka Shankar, the renowned sitarist and composer, was also nominated in the same category for her album Chapter II: How Dark It Is Before Dawn, a reflection of her distinctive fusion of traditional and contemporary sounds.

Business and Economy

FM Nirmala Sitharaman launches National MSME Cluster Outreach Programme

Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, launched the National MSME Cluster Outreach Programme in Bengaluru.

It was jointly organized by the Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

The Finance Minister inaugurated six new SIDBI branches in Karnataka at Tumakuru,

Raichur, Shivamogga, Kalaburagi, Mangaluru, and Vijayapura. These branches aim to increase SIDBI's financial assistance to MSMEs.

Sports

Harmanpreet Singh wins FIH Player of the Year

Indian Men's Hockey Team captain Harmanpreet Singh and former goalkeeper PR Sreejesh won the FIH Player of the Year and Goalkeeper of the Year titles for the year 2024. Both Harmanpreet and Sreejesh received recognition during the 49th FIH Statutory Congress in Oman.

The winners were selected through a voting process involving an expert panel, national hockey associations, fans, and media.

Pankaj Advani wins IBSF World Billiards Championship 150-up title

India's Pankaj Advani won the IBSF World Billiards Championship 150-up format title. He defeated England's Robert Hall in the final clash of the tournament at Doha in Qatar.

India wins two silver, one bronze on day 1 of World University Shooting Championship

India won two silver and one bronze medals on the first day of the World University Shooting Championship at Dr. Karni Singh Range in New Delhi.

In Men's 10-meter air pistol, Akash Bhardwaj won the silver medal.

Pavel of the Czech Republic bagged the gold medal and Philipp Wagner of Poland got the bronze medal.

India's Palak won the silver medal in the Women's 10-meter air pistol with a score of 239.1.

Arshdeep Kaur got the bronze medal. The gold medal was won by Heng Yu Lue of Taipei.

Indian athletes bag three Bronze medals at Senior Asian Judo Open in Hong Kong

In Judo, Indian athletes won three bronze medals at the Senior Asian Judo Open in Hong Kong.

In the women's 48 kg category, India's Angel Yadav triumphed over Lau Wan Lok.

In the men's 60 kg category, India's Jatin defeated Habib Hasan of Kuwait to claim bronze. While Sourabh won his bronze in the men's 73 kg event, beating Bilegt Erdenetsogt of the USA.

Syndrela Das clinches U-15 Girl's Singles title at WTT Youth Contender in Italy

In Table Tennis, India's Syndrela Das has clinched the Under 15 Girl's Singles title at the WTT Youth Contender in Lignano Sabbiadoro, Italy.

She defeated compatriot Divyanshi Bhowmick.

Anahat Singh clinches women's single title at New South Wales Open

In Squash, India's Anahat Singh clinched the women's singles title at the New South Wales (NSW) Open in Sydney, Australia.

She defeated Helen Tang of Hong Kong 3-1 in the summit clash.

This marks Anahat's seventh PSA Challenger Tour title of her career.