

International

Pakistan train hijack: 346 hostages rescued

In Pakistan, the standoff between the fighters of the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and the Pakistani military after the massive attack on the Jaffar Express passenger train in Bolan district has reportedly finally ended after more than 24 hours. The rescue operation had concluded on Wednesday and that all 33 attackers were killed.

Pakistan's military says at least 346 hostages have been freed from a passenger train that was hijacked by separatist fighters in Balochistan province in the country's southwest.

Portuguese PM Luis Montenegro loses confidence vote.

Portuguese Prime Minister Luis Montenegro lost a confidence vote, forcing his government to resign after less than a year in office. The government, a two-party alliance led by the Social Democratic party (PSD) and in power for less than a year, had just 80 seats in the current 230-seat legislature.

President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa is expected to dissolve the Parliament and call snap elections, which he previously suggested could take place either on May 11 or on May 18.

Turing award goes to Andrew Barto and Richard Sutton of Artificial Intelligence.

The Association for Computing Machinery, the world's largest society of computing professionals, has announced that Dr. Andrew Barto and Dr. Richard Sutton had won this year's Turing Award for their work on reinforcement learning. Andrew Barto and Richard Sutton developed reinforcement learning, a technique vital to chatbots like ChatGPT.

The Turing Award, which was introduced in 1966, is often called the Nobel Prize of computing. The two scientists will share the \$1 million prize that comes with the award.

Jayshree Vencatesan becomes first Indian to win Ramsar award.

Jayshree Vencatesan, co-founder of Chennai-based Care Earth Trust, has become the first Indian to be honored with the Ramsar award for 'Wetland Wise Use', a globally recognised

accolade celebrating contributions to the sustainable management of wetlands.

She is one of the 12 women changemakers in the world of wetlands as announced by the Ramsar secretariat in Geneva on the eve of International Women's Day. There were three groupings, Jayashree was recognised under 'wise use of wetlands' category.

Jayashree is known for her decades-long dedication to preserving India's wetlands, particularly the Pallikaranai Marsh in Chennai.

Former Philippine President arrested for deadly anti-drugs crackdown

Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte was arrested on a warrant from the International Criminal Court, accusing him of crimes against humanity over the deadly anti-drug crackdowns he oversaw while in office. The ICC has been investigating mass killings in crackdowns overseen by Mr Duterte when he served as mayor of the southern Philippine city of Davao and later as the President. Estimates of the death toll from the crackdown under former President Duterte range from more than six thousand, as reported by the national police, to as many as thirty thousand, according to human rights groups.

NASA launches missions to study sun, universe's beginning.

NASA's SphereX space telescope was successfully launched into space from California. SphereX lifted off on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket and will explore the origins of the universe. SPHEREx, the space agency's newest telescope, will map the entire sky while collecting data on more than 450 million galaxies and over 100 million stars.

Riding with SPHEREx aboard the Falcon 9 were four small satellites that make up the agency's PUNCH (Polarimeter to Unify the Corona and Heliosphere) mission, which will study how the Sun's outer atmosphere becomes the solar wind.

Mumbai ranked 14th Best Food City In The World

Time Out recently released its rankings for the world's 20 best cities for food for this year. Mumbai occupies the 14th position. Last year, it was ranked 8th globally. Locals were asked to

rate their city's food scene on 18 different criteria, "including quality, affordability and attributes from 'family-friendly' to 'experimental'.

Top 10 Best Food Cities In The World For 2025

1. New Orleans, USA
2. Bangkok, Thailand
3. Medellin, Colombia
4. Cape Town, South Africa
5. Madrid, Spain
6. Mexico City, Mexico
7. Lagos, Nigeria
8. Shanghai, China
9. Paris, France
10. Tokyo, Japan

National

India, Mauritius decide to elevate ties to Enhanced Strategic Partnership.

India and Mauritius elevated their ties to an 'enhanced strategic partnership' and inked eight pacts to boost cooperation in several sectors, including maritime security, and promote trade in local currencies. The decision was taken during delegation-level talks held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mauritius Prime Minister Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam at Port Louis, Mauritius. Following the talks, Mr Modi announced India's new vision for the Global South, naming it "MAHASAGAR" or "Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions."

Apart from this, eight MoUs were exchanged in areas including financial crime prevention, SMEs, public service capacity building, maritime security, and local currency trade.

Over 1.63 lakhs post offices provide banking facilities says Communications Minister.

The Centre has said that around one lakh 65 thousand post offices are operational in the country. Of which around 16 thousand post offices are functioning in urban areas and more than one lakh 49 thousand post offices are functioning in rural areas. Minister of State for Communications Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar said that over one lakh 63 thousand post offices have been enabled to provide banking and other digital services under the India Post Payments Bank.

Finance Minister announces ₹500-crore corpus for strife-torn Manipur.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced a corpus of ₹500 crore to establish a contingency fund in strife-torn Manipur. This allocation was made during her response to the Discussion on Supplementary Demands for Grant (SDG) Second Batch 2024-25, Demands for Excess Grants for 2021-22, the Manipur Budget 2025-26, and SDG (Manipur) 2024-25 in the Lok Sabha.

The northeastern state has undergone considerable damage in the nearly two years since ethnic conflict broke out between the Meitei and the Kuki-Zo communities.

Textbooks to be digitised for all 22 scheduled languages & English.

Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan said this year, the budget has provided for the implementation of the Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Yojana, which will see textbooks digitised for all 22 scheduled languages, as well as English. Mr Pradhan said, in the National Education Policy, no language has been imposed. NEP is meant for mother tongue-based education. He said that multilingualism is the need of the moment.

Business and Economy

Industrial Production rises by 5 % in January 2025.

India's industrial production growth, measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) rose to 5 percent in January as compared to 3.2 percent in December, according to the data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

Among the three major components of IIP, manufacturing grew 5.5 percent in January, mining activity increased by 4.4 percent, and electricity generation grew by 2.4 percent.

India's retail inflation drops to 7 month low in Feb 2025.

India's retail inflation eased to a seven-month low of 3.61 percent in February from 4.31 percent in January, as the rate of increase in food prices slowed to 3.75 percent as compared to 6.02 percent in the previous month. Inflation in rural areas stood at 3.79 percent compared to 3.32 percent in urban regions.

The RBI aims to keep inflation within a range of 2 to 6 percent, with a medium-term target of 4 percent.

RBI to issue new series of 100 & 200 denomination notes.

The Reserve Bank of India announced that it will soon issue 100- and 200-rupees denomination banknotes in the Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series. The RBI said that the design of these notes will be identical in all respects to the existing 100- and 200-rupees banknotes in the Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series. Meanwhile, the central bank clarified that all 100 and 200 rupees banknotes issued by the Reserve Bank in the past will continue to be legal tender.

Global fintech investment falls to a seven-year low.

Global fintech investments have fallen to a seven-year low of \$95.6 billion in 2024, reported KPMG. The Americas accounted for \$63.8 billion in fintech funding in the year, including \$50.7 billion in the U.S., while India had the single largest share in the ASPAC (Asian and Pacific Council) region at \$4.1 billion.

As per the report, the calendar 2024 was another difficult year for fintech, with just \$95.6 billion of investment globally across 4,639 deals. Both global fintech investment and the number of deals fell to levels not seen since 2017.

Five Indian airports recognised as 'World's Best' at Annual Awards.

Five Indian airports namely Kannur International Airport, Chandigarh Airport, Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, and Indira Gandhi International Airport have been recognised as among the world's best in the Asia-Pacific region for the 2024 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Awards.

For airports serving under two million passengers per year, Kannur International Airport was ranked among Pattimura International Airport (Indonesia) and Zhangjiakou Ningyuan Airport (China). Kannur Airport leads in sustainability initiatives as well.

For airports serving two to five million passengers per year, Chandigarh Airport was ahead of fellow winners.

For airports serving five to 25 million passengers per year, Rajiv Gandhi International Airport was among fellow honourees.

For airports serving over 40 million passengers per year, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport and Indira Gandhi International Airport were felicitated.

Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru and Mangaluru International Airport, both of which are in Karnataka, were recognised as among the best airport for arrivals globally.

Atul Goel assumes charge as Chief Executive of IBA.

Atul Kumar Goel has assumed charge as the Chief Executive (CE) of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA). Goel was MD and CEO of Punjab National Bank (PNB) from February 2022 to December 2024. He was the Chairman of IBA for two terms – 2021-22 and 2022-23. He has three decades of banking experience in four Banks -- Allahabad Bank (now Indian Bank), Union Bank of India (as Executive Director), UCO Bank (MD & CEO) and PNB (MD & CEO).

IndusInd Bank stock crashes 27% amid expectation of lower net worth on accounting discrepancy.

IndusInd Bank (IIB) stock slipped 27%, at the NSE, to ₹656.80 on March 11, a day after the bank flagged an adverse impact on its net worth due to a discrepancy on accounting for derivatives holdings. IIB estimated the impact to be at 2.35% of the bank's net worth.

The bank found out the discrepancy in an internal audit.

Sports

Abid Ali, former India Test bowler and fielder dies aged 83.

Syed Abid Ali, who represented India in 29 Tests from 1967 to 1974, has died in California aged 83. Abid Ali also played five ODIs between 1974 and 1975, which also happened to be India's first five ODIs. He finished with 47 wickets from his 29 Tests, including career-best

figures of 6 for 55 in his debut innings against Australia in Adelaide.

He was renowned for his high standards of fielding and lightning-fast running between the wickets.

India bags four medals including two gold at Special Olympics World Winter

India has made a positive start to its campaign at the 12th Special Olympics World Winter 2025, bagging four medals including two gold and as many silver on the first day at Turin in Italy. Samir Yadav and Bharti grabbed a gold medal each in the Snowboarding (Novice Giant Slalom) final at Bardonecchia while Hem

Chand and Harshita Thakur took home a silver each in their respective divisions at the same event.

A 49-member contingent, comprising 30 athletes and 19 support staff, is representing India at the tournament.

Second phase of 5th Khelo India Winter Games concludes.

The second phase of the four-day 5th Khelo India Winter Games at the picturesque Gulmarg in North Kashmir's Baramulla district concluded. The four-day games commenced on March 9, with hundreds of athletes from across the country participating in various events.