

## International

### Climate change-driven extreme heat slashes tropical bird populations by up to 38%

According to a global study conducted by Australian and European researchers, extreme heat driven by climate change has wiped out 25-38 per cent of tropical bird populations since 1950. The results of the study showed that extreme heat, more than habitat loss or rainfall changes, is the primary driver of bird declines in the tropics. Birds now face dangerously hot days up to ten times more often, leading to dehydration, nest abandonment, and reduced breeding success.

### Nepal waives climbing fees for 97 mountain peaks.

Nepal has waived climbing fees for 97 mountains, hoping to steer people to its lesser-known peaks and boost local economies.

Climbers pay for permits on Nepali peaks and the fees vary depending on the mountain's height and popularity, with heftier charges for those such as the Everest.

Nepal is home to eight of the world's 10 highest peaks and welcomes hundreds of climbers every year during the spring and autumn climbing seasons.

### National Guard takes control in Washington, DC.

A day after declaring a criminal emergency in Washington, DC. US President Donald Trump sent the National Guard to the city and took control of its police department. About 800 Guard members arrived, with officials saying the deployment could last up to 30 days or longer. 23 people were arrested on charges including homicide, gun offences, drug crimes, drink-driving, and subway fare evasion.

### Sri Lanka recognises Sabarimala pilgrimage in Kerala.

The Sri Lankan Cabinet has decided to give recognition to the annual pilgrimage by nationals to the Ayyappa shrine in Sabarimala, Kerala. Every year, over 15,000 Sri Lankan nationals visit Sabarimala.

The annual Mandala puja festival at the Ayyappa shrine in Sabarimala takes place between November and December. Thereafter, the temple opens for the Makaravilakku pilgrimage, which ends in January. The shrine closes after the pilgrimage season ends.

## National

### NITI Aayog hosts 'Mega Tinkering Day' with over 4.5 lakh students.

NITI Aayog has hosted 'Mega Tinkering Day', bringing together students from over 10 thousand Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) across all 35 states and union territories. Held virtually and simultaneously in schools nationwide, the event saw participation of over 4.5 lakh students from more than 9 thousand Atal Tinkering Labs-equipped schools.

During the event, students were engaged in a hands-on project to design and build a DIY vacuum cleaner, using everyday materials available in their labs.

### Centre approves ₹4,594 crore for four new semiconductor projects.

The Central government has approved four new semiconductor projects in Odisha, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh with an estimated cost of 4,594 crore rupees. These four proposals approved are from SiCSem, Continental Device India Private Limited (CDIL), 3D Glass Solutions Inc., and Advanced System in Package (ASIP) Technologies. With these four more approvals, the total approved projects under the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) reach 10 with cumulative investments of around Rs 1.60 lakh crore in 6 states.

### UIDAI signs agreement with Indian Statistical Institute to strengthen Aadhaar security and reliability.

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has signed an agreement with the Indian Statistical Institute for joint research and development to further enhance the robustness, security and reliability of Aadhaar operations. The agreement, effective for a period of five years, will cover areas such as fraud and anomaly detection, development of biometric liveness detection tools, improvements in biometric matching algorithms, and other priority areas.

### Indias first drone-based cloud seeding launched in Rajasthan.

Rajasthan has carried out India's first drone-based artificial rain experiment, replacing aeroplanes with unmanned aerial vehicles for cloud seeding. Around 60 drones will take part in the initiative, a joint effort between the Rajasthan agriculture department and GenX AI, a technology firm with bases in the US and Bengaluru. The drones will spray special chemicals into clouds to trigger the formation of water droplets, which could lead to rain.

## **PixxelSpace India-led consortium to establish India's first commercial earth observation satellite constellation.**

The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) has announced the selection of the PixxelSpace India-led consortium to design, build, and operate India's first fully indigenous commercial earth observation (EO) satellite constellation under the public-private partnership (PPP) model. The private consortium would invest more than ₹1,200 crore over the next five years to launch a constellation of 12 state-of-the-art EO satellites. The Bengaluru-based PixxelSpace India consortium comprises Piersight Space, Satsure Analytics India, and Dhruva Space.

## **Business and Economy**

### **RBI allows 'vostro' accounts to invest the entire surplus in government securities.**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that foreign investors can now invest surplus funds from their Vostro accounts into central government securities. This move aims to boost the internationalisation of the Indian rupee. Earlier, the RBI allowed overseas banks to open special rupee vostro accounts for trade settlements in rupees.

Vostro accounts are typically held by a domestic bank on behalf of a foreign bank in which trading partners can hold rupee-denominated balances emerging from trade transactions.

### **U.S. national debt reaches record \$37 trillion.**

The U.S. government's gross national debt has surpassed \$37 trillion, a record number that highlights the accelerating debt on America's balance sheet and increased cost pressures on taxpayers. The U.S. hit \$34 trillion in debt in January 2024, \$35 trillion in July 2024 and \$36 trillion in November 2024.

The Government Accountability Office outlines some of the impacts of rising government debt on Americans — including higher borrowing costs for things like mortgages and cars, lower wages from businesses having less money available to invest, and more expensive goods and services.

## **GIFT City, GTU join hands to boost IFSC education, fintech innovation.**

Gujarat International Finance Tec-City has inked an MoU with Gujarat Technological University (GTU) to strengthen collaboration in IFSC education, fintech innovation, and research. Under the partnership, both institutions will jointly design specialised courses, training programmes and certification modules, along with setting up a dedicated centre of excellence to focus on opportunities in GIFT IFSC and emerging trends in financial technology.

## **Banks to clear cheques within few hours from Oct 4: RBI.**

The RBI will introduce a faster cheque clearing system from October 4 for the clearance of cheques within hours of being presented to banks, reducing the current time period of up to two working days. The new system will use continuous clearing. Phase 1 starts on October 4, 2025, while phase 2 begins on January 3, 2026. Cheque Truncation System (CTS) currently processes cheques with a clearing cycle of up to two working days.

## **SBI to impose nominal charges on IMPS beyond Rs 25,000 transfer from August 15.**

State Bank of India (SBI) has revised its IMPS (Immediate Payment Service) charges, effective August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Online fund transfers exceeding Rs 25,000 will now incur nominal charges ranging from Rs 2 to Rs 10, plus GST. Salary package account holders and specific current account holders are exempt from these charges, while revised charges for corporate customers will take effect from September 8, 2025.

Transfer of funds above Rs 25,000 but less than Rs 1 lakh would attract a service charge of Rs 2; for amounts of Rs 1-2 lakh, Rs 6, and for amounts of Rs 2-5 lakh, Rs 10.

IMPS transaction charges waived for current account (Gold, Diamond, Platinum, Rhodium, Govt Departments, Autonomous/Statutory bodies etc.) for online transactions, it said.

## **RBL Bank ties up with CAMS to launch digital payment gateway.**

RBL Bank has announced a partnership with CAMSPay, the payments unit of CAMS, to launch a new digital payment gateway platform targeting Indian enterprises. The bank will serve as the merchant acquiring settlement service partner for the initiative.

The collaboration will deliver real-time settlement capabilities and secure card processing through the CAMSPay's New Payment Gateway. The platform aims to address payment challenges faced by businesses across various sectors with features like real-time analytics, automated reconciliation, and settlement services via Open APIs.

## **Paytm Payments Services gets 'in-principle' nod from RBI to operate as online payment aggregator.**

Paytm Payments Services Limited has received an in-principle nod from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as an Online Payment Aggregator under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007. The approval is subject to compliance with the RBI's Guidelines on Regulation of Payment Aggregators and Payment Gateways issued on March 17, 2020.

The authorisation applies only to online payment aggregator activities defined in the guidelines and excludes transactions outside their ambit, such as 'pay-out' transactions for merchants through the designated escrow account.

## **Hindustan Zinc becomes first Indian firm to join International Council on Mining and Metals.**

Homegrown Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL) has become the first Indian company to join the International Council on Mining and Metals. A Vedanta Group company, Hindustan Zinc's operations include silver-lead-zinc underground mines, smelters (metal production plant) and allied infrastructure across northwest India.

UK-based International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) is a collaborative group of leading mining and metals companies, created to strengthen the industry's contribution to sustainable development and catalyse strong environmental and social performance.

## **Sports**

### **Indian Olympic Association officially approves India's 2030 Commonwealth Games bid.**

The Indian Olympic Association, IOA, has formally approved India's bid to host the Commonwealth Games in 2030 in its Special General Meeting in Delhi. India will now submit its proposal for the final bid before the deadline of 31st August. The year 2030 will mark 20 years since the Commonwealth Games were hosted in New Delhi. This was the first and only time that India has hosted the Games.

### **Gulveer Singh betters own national record in the men's 3000m race in Budapest.**

India's Gulveer Singh has bettered his own national record in the non-Olympic event of men's 3000 metres race while finishing fifth at the Gyulai Istvan Memorial – Hungarian Athletics Grand Prix in Budapest. He clocked 7 minutes 34.49 seconds to eclipse his own previous national record time of 7 minutes 38.26 seconds set at the Boston University David Hemery Valentine Invitational meet in February this year.