

International

Greece elects former Parliament speaker Tassoulas as new President

Greece's parliament has elected its former speaker, Constantine Tassoulas, as the country's President, approving the conservative government's nominee for the largely ceremonial role.

Constantine Tassoulas was elected to the largely ceremonial post by the 300-member Parliament winning with 160 votes in the fourth round of voting. He takes over from Katerina Sakellariopoulou, the first woman to serve as Greece's head of state, who was not nominated for a second five-year term.

Saudi Arabia to host Arab summit on Trump's Gaza plan.

Saudi Arabia will host the leaders of four Arab countries at a summit on February 20, to discuss President Donald Trump's proposal for a U.S. takeover of Gaza. The leaders of Egypt, Jordan, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates will attend the summit, to take place ahead of an Arab League meeting in Cairo one week later on the same issue.

India, U.S. to double bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030.

India and the U.S. will work to more than double bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at a joint press conference with U.S. President Donald Trump. The two countries would work together on artificial intelligence and semiconductors and focus on establishing strong supply chains for strategic minerals. The two leaders, who also launched INDUS Innovation bridge, held wide-ranging talks focussing on broadening the bilateral partnership, including in the fields of defence, energy, space and critical technology.

The U.S. will increase its military sales to India starting this year and ultimately provide F-35 fighter jets.

U.S. total goods trade with India is estimated at \$129 billion in 2024. India's surplus with the U.S., its second-largest trading partner, reached \$45.7 billion last year.

Jordan to take in 2,000 sick Gaza children : PM

Jordan Prime Minister Jaafar Hassan has said that his country is ready to receive 2,000 sick

Gaza children for medical treatment, as the healthcare system in the coastal enclave has been devastated. PM Hassan has reaffirmed Jordan's clear and unwavering position that there should be no resettlement nor displacement of Palestinians. Jordanian King Abdullah II rejected US President Donald Trump's proposal to relocate Palestinians in the Gaza Strip during his visit to Washington.

Cook Islands, China sign comprehensive strategic partnership

The Cook Islands signed a comprehensive strategic partnership deal with China, a move expected to raise concerns in New Zealand with which it has constitutional ties. The partnership established a framework for engagement on priority areas like trade and investment, tourism, ocean science, aquaculture, agriculture, infrastructure climate resilience and disaster preparedness.

National

Mahakumbh in Prayagraj sets world record with over 50 crore devotees.

The Mahakumbh in Prayagraj has created history by becoming the first event in the world where more than 50 crore people are direct participants. Over 50 crore 4 lakh devotees have taken a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam so far, with 90 lakh devotees taking the holy dip today till 6 pm. The Uttar Pradesh government said that this participation marks the largest congregation in human history for any religious, cultural, or social event.

Nation remembers bravehearts who lost their lives in Pulwama attack on Feb 14.

The nation remembers martyrs who lost their lives in Pulwama attacks in 2019. The day marks the 6th year of horrific terror attacks in the Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir where 40 CRPF personnel were martyred. On February 14, 2019, the country suffered one of the most fatal attacks in its events – the Pulwama Terror Attack, which resulted in the deaths of 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawans and many others. It was executed by the Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist group operating from Pakistan.

Business and Economy

India's forex reserves surge by \$7.65 billion, cross \$638.26 billion mark.

According to the latest data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's foreign exchange reserves increased by over 7.65 billion dollars, reaching over 638.26 billion dollars in the week ending February 7. This marks the third consecutive week of growth in the reserves. During the last week, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, rose by over 6.42 billion dollars to 544.10 billion dollars. Additionally, gold reserves increased by over 1.3 billion dollars, totalling more than 72.20 billion dollars. Meanwhile, Special Drawing Rights decreased by 11 million dollars, reaching over 17.87 billion dollars.

RBI imposes several restrictions on New India Co-operative Bank.

The RBI imposed several restrictions on New India Co-operative Bank, including on withdrawal of funds by depositors, amid supervisory concerns. The RBI said that considering the bank's present liquidity position, the bank has been directed not to allow withdrawal of any amount from savings bank or current accounts or any other account of a depositor.

The RBI's directions came into force from the close of business yesterday and would remain in force for a period of six months and are subject to review.

India's wholesale price index eases to 2.31 percent in January 2025.

India's wholesale price index (WPI) inflation eased to 2.31 per cent in January 2025, down from 2.37 per cent in December 2024, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Even as food article prices declined, the ministry noted rising costs in the manufacturing of food products and textiles. In January 2024, WPI inflation stood at 0.27 per cent.

Maaza becomes a billion dollar brand

Maaza, a desi mango fruit-based drink owned by Coca-Cola, has touched the milestone of becoming a billion-dollar brand in 2024, its Chairman and CEO James Quincey has said. It has now become the company's "30th billion-dollar brand". Before Maaza, ThumsUp had in

2021 achieved the feat of becoming the first billion-dollar desi brand for Coca-Cola.

The Coca-Cola Company in 1993 acquired both Maaza and Thums Up from Ramesh Chauhan of Parle Bisleri when the Atlanta-headquartered company re-entered the Indian market.

Cristiano Ronaldo tops list of highest-paid athletes in 2024.

Footballer Cristiano Ronaldo remained the highest-earning athlete in 2024, according to a ranking of the top 100 compiled by Sportico. The Portuguese star has earned a whopping \$260M last year (over Rs 2,000 crore), is followed on the highest-paid list by Steph Curry at \$153.8M (approximately Rs 1,335 crore), Tyson Fury at \$147M (approximately Rs 1,276 crore), Lionel Messi at \$135M (approximately Rs 1,172 crore), LeBron James at \$133.2M (approximately Rs 1,156 crore), Neymar at \$133M (approximately Rs 1,154 crore).

Sports

38th National Games Concludes

The 38th National Games concluded in Haldwani, Uttarakhand, with a grand closing ceremony. The closing ceremony of the 38th National Games concluded with Haryana emerging as the second runner-up, securing 48 gold, 47 silver, and 58 bronze medals. Maharashtra claimed the first runner-up position, with 54 gold, 71 silver, and 76 bronze medals. The overall champions were the Services Sports Control Board, who dominated the event with 68 gold, 26 silver, and 27 bronze medals.

The Home Minister announced that the 39th National Games will be held in Meghalaya.

ICC announces prize money for 2025 Champions Trophy.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced prize money for the 2025 Champions Trophy, starting on February 19 in Pakistan. The total prize pool of this edition has been increased by an impressive 53 per cent from the 2017 edition to a total prize money of US 4.5 million Dollar.

The winners will earn US 2.24 million dollar, while the runners-up will get US 1.12 million dollar. Losing semi-finalists will receive 560,000 dollar each.

This is the first ICC event in Pakistan since 1996. The tournament will run for 19 days, with 15 matches being played in Pakistan and the UAE.