

International

Iran extends order closing airspace to commercial aircraft.

Iran has extended an order closing its airspace to commercial aircraft without explanation early today, as tensions remained high with the United States over Tehran's bloody crackdown on nationwide protests. The crackdown has killed at least 2,615 people.

SpaceX brings back NASA, JAXA and Roscosmos crew.

Elon Musk-led SpaceX successfully brought back four NASA astronauts to Earth in the first-ever medical evacuation from the International Space Station (ISS). NASA astronauts Zena Cardman and Mike Fincke, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Kimiya Yui, and Roscosmos cosmonaut Oleg Platonov have returned to Earth aboard SpaceX's Dragon capsule.

The astronauts concluded a more than five-month mission aboard the ISS, and their early departure leaves just three -NASA's Chris Williams and cosmonauts Sergey Kud-Sverchkov and Sergei Mikaev on the space station.

INSV Kaundinya arrives in Muscat.

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has welcomed the crew of the Indian Naval Sailing Vessel Kaundinya at Port Sultan Qaboos in Muscat. The arrival of the traditionally built stitched sail vessel in the Omani capital symbolises the enduring friendship between India and Oman, anchored in history, strengthened by trade and mutual respect.

The vessel reached Muscat after completing its maiden voyage from Porbandar, marking a significant moment in the shared maritime heritage of the two countries.

Major Swathi Shantha Kumar wins the UN Secretary General's Award 2025

Major Swathi Shantha Kumar, an Indian Army officer currently serving with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), has been awarded the prestigious UN Secretary-

General's Award 2025 for her contribution to gender-inclusive peacekeeping. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has announced the winners of the Secretary-General's Awards-2025 and praised Major Swathi's project, titled "Equal Partners, Lasting Peace," for strengthening UNMISS's gender-inclusive approach. The award recognises initiatives that promote gender parity and gender-responsive peacekeeping in line with the UN's mandate.

Under her initiative and command, the team successfully conducted short- and long-distance patrols, integrated reverie patrols, and dynamic air patrols to far-flung counties of the host nation.

2026 Henley Passport Index: Singapore passport again ranked the world's most powerful.

Singaporeans continue to hold the world's most powerful passport, with access to more than 190 destinations without having to obtain a visa before travel.

This puts it in the top spot in the 2026 Henley Passport Index, giving Singaporeans visa-free or visa-on-arrival entry to 192 out of 227 destinations

Japan and South Korea were placed joint second, each offering access to 188 destinations without a visa.

India's passport also saw improvement, climbing five spots to 80th position, tied with Algeria. Indian citizens can now travel to 55 countries without a prior visa, through visa-free, visa-on-arrival, or electronic travel authorisation (ETA) arrangements, up from last year's ranking at 85th.

Nepal celebrates National Agricultural Biodiversity Day.

Nepal observes National Agricultural Biodiversity Day on January 16. It's an annual observance in the Himalayan nation dedicated to recognising and promoting the importance of agricultural biodiversity. To mark the day, a festival was organised in Bhrikutimadap of Kathmandu Valley, where a rich variety of paddy was on display along with a community-based seed bank.

National

EU Council President Costa, Commission President von der Leyen to be Chief Guests at 77th Republic Day.

President of the European Council António Luís Santos da Costa and the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen will be Chief Guests at the 77th Republic Day celebrations at Kartavyapath on 26th January. At the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, both leaders will be on a three-day state visit to India from 25th January.

During the visit, the leaders will also co-chair the 16th India-EU Summit on the 27th of this month.

I&B Ministry collaborates with Netflix for project.

The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India has marked the culmination of “Inspiring Innovators-Naye Bharat Ki Nayi Pehchaan”, a skilling initiative developed in collaboration with the Netflix Fund for Creative Equity.

Implemented in partnership with Graphiti Studios, the initiative brings together India’s innovation and creative ecosystems to promote socially relevant innovation through storytelling and hands-on skilling.

BSF, ITBP and NIA get new chiefs.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to appoint Shatrujeet Singh Kapoor, former Haryana Director General of Police (DGP), as the chief of Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

He will succeed incumbent Praveen Kumar, who has been named the new chief of the Border Security Force (BSF).

Meanwhile, senior IPS officer Rakesh Aggarwal was appointed the director general of the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Army Day is celebrated on 15 January.

The Indian Army celebrated its 78th Army Day at Jaipur, Rajasthan, on 15th January 2026, in

recognition of Lieutenant General Kodandera M. Cariappa's taking over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Francis Roy Bucher, the last British Commander-in-Chief of India, on 15 January 1949.

Business and Economy

India’s total exports cross 634 billion dollars in nine months.

India’s total exports are estimated to be over 634 billion US dollars during the last nine months of this fiscal year, registering growth of 4.33 per cent. The cumulative value of merchandise exports rose by 2.44 per cent to over 330 billion US dollars during April to December 2025. The estimated value of service exports during April to December 2025 is around 304 billion US dollars.

The top five export destinations include the USA, China, UAE, Spain and Hong Kong.

India’s unemployment rate remains stable at 4.8% in December.

India’s unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above remained largely stable in December, estimated at 4.8 per cent compared to 4.7 per cent recorded in November 2025. The rural unemployment rate remained stagnant at 3.9 per cent.

The overall Labour Force Participation Rate among persons aged 15 years and above also showed an upward trend at 56.1 per cent in the last month, compared to 55.8 per cent in November 2025.

The overall Worker Population Ratio for persons of age 15 years and above rose marginally to its yearly peak of 53.4 per cent last month.

India leads globally in IPO numbers: SEBI Chairman.

SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey has said India has emerged as the world’s leading market in terms of the number of IPOs and the third largest by value, with capital markets playing a central role in funding economic growth.

Addressing the 14th AIBI Annual Convention in Mumbai, Mr Pandey highlighted that 311 IPOs raised 1.7 trillion rupees in the first nine months of the current financial year, while total equity mobilisation crossed 3.8 trillion rupees. He said India's market capitalisation-to-GDP ratio has risen sharply from 69 per cent in FY16 to over 130 per cent, reflecting deepening investor participation.

The number of investors has grown from 43 million in FY20 to 137 million, while unique mutual fund investors now exceed 59 million.

Sports

U-19 World Cup: India beat USA by 6 wickets in tournament opener.

In the ICC Men's Under-19 Cricket World Cup 2026, India beat USA by 6 wickets (using DLS method) in the opening match of the

tournament at the Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Put into bat first, the USA were bowled out for just 107 runs in 35.2 overs. In response, India chased a revised target of 96 and won the match comfortably.

Mitchell Starc named ICC men's Player of the Month for December 2025.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has named Australia's Mitchell Starc as the ICC Men's Player of the Month for December 2025. Starc was awarded the title after leading Australia's pace attack during their stellar Ashes series victory at home.

South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt has been named the ICC Women's Player of the Month. She got the award after starring in the team's series victories over Ireland in the T20I and ODI formats.