

## International

### Thailand eases long-term visa rules to attract foreign talent, investment.

Thailand eases long-term visa rules to attract foreign talent and investment. It has also removed the five-year minimum work experience requirement for professionals to increase the global talent pool in the country. The changes, approved by Thailand's cabinet this week, include the expansion of target sectors for highly skilled professionals to a wider range of non-STEM fields, including the disaster and risk management sector.

Since 2022, Thailand's long-term visa programme has offered a 10-year residence permit, a digital work permit and personal income tax privileges, among others.

### Global Cybersecurity Outlook 2025: WEF calls for urgent action.

The World Economic Forum's Global Cybersecurity Outlook 2025, produced in collaboration with Accenture, examines the cybersecurity trends that will affect economies and societies in the year to come.

Generative AI is driving an unprecedented surge in cyber fraud, with nearly 47% of organisations identifying adversarial AI-powered attacks as their primary concern.

The report warns that the growing sophistication of AI tools enables cybercriminals to execute phishing scams, ransomware attacks, and disinformation campaigns at a scale never seen before.

As per the report, 1 in 3 CEOs had concerns about cyber espionage and loss of sensitive information/IP theft.

### QS World Future Skills Index 2025: India ranks second globally in job market preparedness.

According to the QS World Future Skills Index 2025, India emerged as the second most prepared job market globally for future in-demand skills, trailing only the United States. The index highlights India's strong potential in critical sectors such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital, and green industries. The inaugural Future Skills Index, released by London-based Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)

India ranks 25th overall across all indicators, earning recognition as a "future skills contender." Notably, the country excels in the "Future of Work" category, securing the second-highest global score (99.1), just behind the United States.

## National

### India's space startup's Pixxel, Digantara launch groundbreaking satellites.

India's Spacetech startups Pixxel and Digantara have launched their satellites aboard SpaceX's Transporter-12 rideshare mission from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

Pixxel has launched the first three satellites of its Firefly constellation. These satellites are equipped with hyperspectral imaging technology, offering a resolution of five metres and covering over 150 spectral bands.

This launch marks the first phase of Pixxel's commercial constellation, with three additional Firefly satellites scheduled to launch in Q2 2025.

Digantara launched its Space Camera for Object Tracking (SCOT) satellite. This satellite is designed for space surveillance and is capable of tracking objects as small as 5 cm in Low-Earth Orbit (LEO).

Digantara is building an end-to-end space operations infrastructure that plans to support stakeholders across a spacecraft mission's entire value chain and life cycle.

### Indonesian President to be Chief Guest of RD celebration this year

President of Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto, will be the Chief Guest at the 76th Republic Day celebrations this year. At the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Subianto will pay a state visit to India on the 25th and 26th of January.

India and Indonesia share warm and friendly ties. As a Comprehensive Strategic Partner, Indonesia is an important pillar in India's Act East Policy and the Indo-Pacific region.

### US removes 3 Indian nuclear entities from export control list

The US has lifted sanctions on three Indian entities including Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC). The other two companies are Indian Rare Earths and Indira Gandhi Atomic Research Center. The US Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) said that the sanctions, which were imposed during the Cold War era, have been removed to enhance US's foreign policy goals. This decision will support shared energy security needs and joint efforts in science and technology between India and US. Simultaneously, the US has added 11 Chinese companies to the Entity List due to activities deemed contrary to US national security and foreign policy interests

## **21st Third Eye Asian Film Festival concludes in Mumbai**

The 21st edition of the Third Eye Asian Film Festival, a cornerstone of Maharashtra's film culture, started on 10th January 2025 has concluded at Movie Max Cinemas in Mumbai. Renowned lyricist and screenwriter Javed Akhtar was felicitated with the Asian Cinema Culture Award.

The Satyajit Rai Memorial Award was given to veteran film journalist Rafiq Baghdadi Professor Anil Jhankar was given a special award for film writing in memory of Sudhir Nandgaonkar.

The film 'Gypsy' won the best film award in the Marathi films category.

Shashi Khandare won the best director award for the same film.

Actor Mangesh Arote bagged the best actor award for 'Gypsy'

Shraddha Khanolkar won the best actress award for the film 'Bhera'.

Director Anil Bhalerao of the film 'Chhabila' and Prithviraj Chavan of the film 'Cineman' were honoured with the Special Jury Award.

In the Indian Cinema category, the film 'Juiphool' was selected as the best film at this festival.

## **Centre announces setting up of 8th Pay Commission for Central government employees & pensioners.**

The union government has announced the setting up of the 8th Pay Commission for Central government employees and pensioners. Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has said that the term of the 7th Pay Commission is going to end in 2026 and the setting up of the 8th Pay Commission now will give enough time to receive recommendations of the Pay Panel. He said the appointment of the Chairman and two members of the Commission will be made soon.

## **Defence Ministry signs over ₹3,000 cr deal with Bharat Dynamics for MRSAM supply to Indian Navy**

The Defence Ministry signed a contract with Bharat Dynamics Limited for the supply of Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missiles (MRSAM) for the Indian Navy at a cost of around three thousand crore rupees. The MRSAM system will be fitted onboard multiple Indian Naval ships and is planned for integration into future naval platforms.

## **Business and Economy**

### **India ranks third in global fintech funding.**

According to Tracxn's Annual India Fintech Report, India secured the third position globally in fintech funding despite a 33% decline in YoY funding, which dropped to Rs. 16,475 crore (US\$ 1.9 billion) in 2024. The fintech sector had raised Rs. 24,279 crore (US\$ 2.8 billion) in 2023 and Rs. 48,558 crore (US\$ 5.6 billion) in 2022, underlining a significant decline over the past two years. Despite this, India remains one of the top three globally funded fintech ecosystems, only trailing the US and the UK. Bengaluru remained the leading hub for fintech funding, followed by Mumbai and Delhi.

### **IDBI Bank announces launch of IDBI Chiranjeevi-Super Senior Citizen FD**

IDBI Bank has introduced a new specialised fixed deposit scheme, 'IDBI Chiranjeevi-Super Senior Citizen FD,' targeting customers aged 80 years and above. The premium offering provides enhanced interest rates, with an additional 65 basis points above standard fixed deposit rates and 15 basis points over existing senior citizen rates.

The 555-day tenure under this scheme offers an interest rate of 8.05 per cent per annum, making it one of the most competitive options in the market for super senior citizens.

### **PUMA India teams up with PV Sindhu to strengthen badminton presence.**

Shuttler PV Sindhu recently signed a multi-year partnership with PUMA India, as a brand ambassador. Through this partnership, PUMA aims to inspire the next generation, particularly among India's youth, with badminton's popularity soaring—27.8 million Gen Z fans follow the sport, and active participation has risen by 65% in the past four years.

### **RBI announces steps to encourage cross-border transactions in Indian rupee**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced liberalised norms to encourage use of Indian Rupee and local/national currencies to settle cross border transactions. RBI has further liberalised the Fema (foreign exchange management) rules to encourage its use to settle cross-border transactions. The revised rules also encourage trade settlement in the respective local currencies

Accordingly, the Reserve Bank has signed MoUs with the central banks of the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia and the Maldives to encourage cross-border transactions in local currencies including the rupee.

### **Axis Bank Q3 net profit rises 4% to ₹6,304 crore.**

Axis Bank Ltd., for the third quarter ended 31st December 2024 reported 4% growth in net profit to ₹ 6,304 crore over the year ago period. The bank's operating profit for the quarter grew from 15% YOY to ₹10,534 crore.

The total income of the bank increased to Rs 36,926 crore in the third quarter of the current fiscal from Rs 33,516 crore in the year-ago period.

### **Sports**

#### **Australian Open 2025: Alcaraz beats Borges to reach fourth round.**

Third seeded Carlos Alcaraz has secured his passage into the fourth round of the Australian Open with a 6-2 6-4 6-7(3) 6-3 victory over Nuno Borges.

Meanwhile, defending champion Aryna Sabalenka has fought her way into the fourth round of the Australian Open with a 7-6(5), 6-4 victory over Clara Tauson.

#### **Tyson Fury announces retirement from boxing.**

British heavyweight Tyson Fury has retired from boxing again one month after losing a rematch with Ukrainian Oleksandr Usyk. Fury has announced his retirement before, however, notably on his 34th birthday in August 2022.