

International

UN launches USD 6 billion humanitarian appeal for Sudan

The United Nations (UN) has launched a six billion dollar humanitarian appeal to assist nearly 26 million Sudanese affected by the ongoing conflict, both inside Sudan and in neighbouring countries. Two years of conflict displaced a staggering 12 million people in Sudan and across borders. Sudan has been embroiled in a devastating conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces since mid-April 2023, resulting in nearly 30 thousand reported fatalities by the end of 2024.

Last year, humanitarian organisations received 1.8 billion dollars for Sudan, and managed to reach more than 15.6 million people across the country.

Eating vegetables cuts liver cancer risk by 65% in cirrhosis patients: study

A new study by the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research revealed that eating vegetables can reduce the risk of liver cancer by 65 per cent in patients with cirrhosis. Patients who consumed more than 240 grams of vegetables per day will have a reduction in liver cancer risk. Liver cancer is the sixth most common cancer globally.

Cirrhosis is a chronic liver disease that occurs when healthy liver tissue is replaced by scar tissue. This prevents the liver from functioning normally.

National

Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar appointed as Chief Election Commissioner

Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar has been appointed as the new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), as the tenure of the current chief Rajiv Kumar ends today. CEC Gyanesh Kumar is a former IAS officer from the 1988 batch of the Kerala cadre. He served as secretary in the ministry of parliamentary affairs.

Dr. Vivek Joshi has been appointed as the new Election Commissioner. He is an IAS officer from the 1989 batch of the Haryana cadre

Shivraj Singh Chouhan to inaugurate NAKSHA program for urban land survey on Feb 18.

Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will inaugurate the National Geospatial Knowledge-based Land Survey of Urban Habitations (NAKSHA) in 152 urban local bodies across 26 States and three Union Territories in Madhya Pradesh. The programme aims to create and update land records in urban areas to ensure accurate and reliable documentation of land ownership. The Ministry said, this initiative will empower citizens, improve ease of living, enhance urban planning, and reduce land-related disputes.

Suresh K. Reddy appointed as next Ambassador of India to Egypt

The Ministry of External Affairs stated that Suresh K. Reddy has been appointed as India's next Ambassador to Egypt. Ambassador Reddy who belongs to the 1991 batch of Indian Foreign Service (IFS) is presently serving as India's Ambassador to Brazil.

India unveils world's largest 10-tonne propellant mixer for rocket motors.

India has developed the world's largest 10-tonne propellant mixer for solid rocket motors. The mixer was designed by ISRO's Satish Dhawan Space Centre in collaboration with the Central Manufacturing Technology Institute in Bengaluru. The mixer weighs 150 tonnes and stands 8.7 meters tall, with a length of 5.4 meters and a breadth of 3.3 meters. It ensures precise and safe mixing of solid propellant ingredients, essential for rocket launch.

Equipped with remote-controlled operations, the mixer was handed over to ISRO last week, marking another milestone in India's space journey.

Centre approves continuation of integrated PM-AASHA scheme during the 15th Finance Commission Cycle

The Centre has approved the continuation of the integrated Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan – PM-AASHA Scheme during the 15th Finance Commission Cycle, up to 2025-26. With this decision, the government has also allowed the procurement of tur, urad and masur pulses under the price support scheme, equivalent to 100 per cent of the production of the state for the procurement year 2024-25. It will help in farmers' contribution to the enhancement of domestic production of pulses and to reduce the dependence on imports. The Government has also made an announcement in Budget 2025 that procurement of tur, urad and masur pulses up to 100 percent of the production of the state will be continued for another four years.

Matsya-6000: India's Fourth-Generation Deep-Ocean Submersible successfully completes wet testing

India's Fourth-Generation Deep-Ocean Submersible 'Matsya-6000' has successfully completed wet testing at the harbour, paving the way for conducting shallow-water demonstrations at depths reaching up to 500 meters by the end of 2025.

Under the government's Deep Ocean Mission initiatives, the Ministry of Earth Sciences has entrusted the National Institute of Ocean Technology with the designing and developing of Matsya-6000, as part of the Samudrayan Project. This cutting-edge submersible is engineered to accommodate three humans within its compact 2.1-meter diameter spherical hull, marking a significant milestone in India's ocean exploration capabilities.

Adani family commits ₹2,000 crore to provide quality education at affordable cost, ties up with GEMS Education

The Adani Foundation has tied up with GEMS Education, which is into private K-12 education, to establish schools across the country to

provide high quality education to students at affordable costs.

This initiative will take off with initial donation of ₹2,000 crore from the Adani family. The Foundation is the CSR arm of the Adani Group.

Madhya Pradesh unveils India's first dedicated GCC policy.

Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in the country to bring a dedicated Global Capability Centre (GCC) policy that looks to position the state as a leading hub for global innovation and collaboration.

The Madhya Pradesh GCC Policy 2025 combines incentives for capital expenditure, payroll, upskilling, and research and development with a designated nodal agency responsible for its implementation.

Business and Economy

Nirmala Sitharama launches Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs.

Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman launched the Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs in Mumbai. The scheme will facilitate loans up to 100 crore rupees to MSMEs for purchase of machinery or equipment without collateral.

She also virtually inaugurated the first 'Sachal Aaykar Seva Kendra' at Mumbai, which is designed to facilitate access to digital services, provide assistance for grievance redressal and to promote tax awareness.

Japan's economy grows more than expected.

Japan's economy grew at a better-than-expected annual rate of 2.8% in October-December, underlined by steady exports and moderate consumption. Private consumption grew at an annual rate of 0.5% during the three months through December, holding up while losing momentum. Exports jumped 4.3%, and capital investment increased 0.5%

On a quarter-to-quarter basis, the world's fourth-largest economy grew 0.7% for its third straight quarter of growth.

India's exports grow by 7.21% in April-Jan 2024-25: Commerce Ministry

India's total exports during April-January 2024-25 logged growth of 7.21 percent as compared to the same period in last fiscal. On the other hand, total imports during April-January in the current fiscal registered a growth of 8.96 percent.

Total exports during the reported period is estimated at around 683 billion US dollars while imports estimated at around 770 billion US dollars.

Standard Chartered gets RBI nod to appoint PD Singh as India CEO.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has given its approval to appoint corporate banking veteran and former JP Morgan India CEO Prabdev (PD) Singh as the CEO for Standard Chartered (StanC) in India and South Asia. Singh will start his three-year term on April 1 succeeding Zarin Daruwala who retires from the bank at the end of March, 2025.

Centre likely to raise deposit insurance limit from ₹5 lakh

The Centre is mulling over increasing Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) insurance cover above ₹5 lakh for bank depositors, said the Department of Financial Services Secretary. The move will provide better protection to bank customers' deposited money if the bank goes bankrupt.

The Reserve Bank of India owns DICGC and provides insurance coverage to depositors. The RBI's subsidiary currently protects bank deposits of up to ₹5 lakh for every bank account holder.

Maersk signs MoU with Cochin shipyard to explore ship building, repair in India.

A.P. Moller - Maersk (Maersk) and Cochin Shipyard Ltd. (CSL) have signed an MoU to explore collaboration opportunities in ship

repair, maintenance, and building activities in India. This partnership aligns with the Government of India's Vision 2047 maritime objectives and recent Union Budget 2025-26 announcements to position India among the top five global maritime hubs. The collaboration comes at a time when the global shipping industry is expected to face capacity constraints in ship repair yards around the world.

Sports

23rd National Para Athletics Championship kicks off in Chennai.

The 23rd National Para Athletics Championship has commenced at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Chennai and will run until February 20. The event has attracted 1,476 para-athletes from across India, competing in 155 events under 30 teams, making it one of the largest para-athletics gatherings in the country.

Khelo India Winter Games 2025 postponed due to lack of snow

The second and final leg of the Khelo India Winter Games 2025 has been postponed due to insufficient snowfall. The Winter Games were initially set to take place in Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir, from Saturday, 22nd of February, where Gulmarg's Kangdoori Phase 1 and Golf Course Club were to host competitions in alpine skiing, Nordic skiing, ski mountaineering, and snowboarding. The revised schedule will be announced once weather conditions become favourable for competitions.

This year, 19 teams representing states, Union Territories, and institutional outfits are competing across six disciplines.