

International

EU and Mercosur sign landmark free trade agreement.

The European Union and South American bloc Mercosur have signed a long-pending free trade agreement in Asuncion, Paraguay, creating one of the world's largest trade zones.

The deal will eliminate over 90 per cent of tariffs between both sides, though some cuts will be phased in over 10 to 15 years.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen termed it a geopolitical victory.

The agreement now awaits approval by the European Parliament and ratification by Mercosur nations.

Trump announces import tariffs on European countries over Greenland dispute.

US President Donald Trump has announced a 10 per cent import tariff on goods from eight European countries starting in February, citing their opposition to US control of Greenland. The levy will apply to Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands and Finland, and may rise to 25 per cent from June if no agreement is reached.

Trump claimed Greenland is critical for global security and defence interests, warning of growing geopolitical risks involving China and Russia.

Trump announces Board of Peace to oversee second phase of Gaza plan.

US President Donald Trump has announced a new Board of Peace to lead the second phase of his 20-Point Peace Plan aimed at ending the Gaza conflict. The board will oversee governance, reconstruction, funding and long-term stability efforts.

Trump will serve as Chairman, with members including senior US officials, international leaders and global finance heads.

The move has drawn criticism from human rights experts amid ongoing ceasefire tensions in Gaza.

WEF Survey: South Asia leads global growth outlook, India key driver.

South Asia remains the fastest-growing emerging region, with India anchoring the outlook, according to the World Economic Forum's Chief Economists' Outlook released ahead of the Davos meeting.

The report highlights India's continued reforms, rising AI adoption and strong investments from US technology firms. While the global outlook has improved slightly, uncertainty persists due to debt, trade tensions and rapid AI deployment, with economists expecting growth momentum to remain strongest in South and East Asia.

India builds third Bailey bridge in Sri Lanka under Operation Sagar Bandhu.

Under Operation Sagar Bandhu, Indian Army Engineers have successfully constructed the third Bailey bridge in Sri Lanka on the B-429 highway.

The 120-foot bridge reconnects the Kandy and Nuwara Eliya districts, restoring a vital route disrupted for over a month due to Cyclone Ditwah.

This follows earlier bridges built in Jaffna and Kandy, highlighting India's continued humanitarian assistance, engineering expertise and strong cooperation with Sri Lanka during disaster recovery efforts.

Australia's Finke river confirmed as world's oldest river system.

Recent geological studies have reaffirmed that Australia's Finke river is likely the world's oldest continuously surviving river system, originating around 300 to 400 million years ago.

Known as Larapinta to the Indigenous Arrernte people, the river predates the age of dinosaurs.

Stretching about 640 kilometres across the Northern Territory and South Australia, its course passes through some of Earth's oldest rock formations, preserving valuable records of geological and climatic history.

India and Germany sign pact to boost telecom and digital cooperation.

India and Germany have signed a Joint Declaration of Intent on Telecommunications Cooperation to strengthen collaboration in the telecom and ICT sectors.

The agreement was concluded during German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's visit to India and reflects growing strategic ties between the two countries.

The pact provides a structured framework for cooperation in emerging technologies, policy and regulation, industry partnerships, and international coordination, supporting innovation and inclusive digital transformation.

National

India and Japan Coast Guards conduct joint HNS response drill in Mumbai.

The Indian Coast Guard and Japan Coast Guard conducted a joint Hazardous and Noxious Substances response drill in Mumbai, strengthening maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. The exercise was held onboard ICGS Samudra Prahari with participation from both nations' pollution response teams. Japan Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Yoshio Seguchi met senior Indian Coast Guard officials during his visit, highlighting enhanced interoperability, training and cooperation in maritime safety and environmental protection.

Centre agrees to shift border fence in Punjab, relief for farmers.

The Centre has agreed in principle to shift the border security fence in Punjab closer to the International Border, easing restrictions on farmers in the border belt.

The move will clear the way for unhindered cultivation of thousands of acres of farmland that currently falls beyond the fencing, bringing major relief for farmers in Punjab's border belt. Punjab shares a 532-kilometre-long border with Pakistan.

At present, hundreds of farmers tilling their thousands of acres of land on the border, have to cross the fence for a limited time period under the strict supervision of the Border Security Force (BSF) for security reasons.

India launches second nationwide Dolphin population survey.

The government has begun the second range-wide estimation of riverine and estuarine dolphins under Project Dolphin, starting from Bijnor in Uttar Pradesh.

Conducted in two phases, the survey will cover the Ganga main stem, Indus River, Brahmaputra, Ganga tributaries, Sundarbans and Odisha.

The exercise will assess populations of Gangetic, Indus River and Irrawaddy dolphins, along with habitat conditions and threats, to strengthen conservation planning across the country.

MSME Ministry approves establishment of MSME Technology Centres at Pandoga & Parwanoo, Himachal Pradesh.

The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has approved the establishment of MSME Technology Centres at Pandoga in Una district and Parwanoo in Solan district of Himachal Pradesh.

Each centre will be set up at a cost of about ₹10 crore.

Included among 13 new centres nationwide, these facilities will provide modern technical support, promote industrial investment, generate employment and offer skill training to youth, boosting industrial growth and self-employment opportunities in the state.

Business and Economy

PSU Banks urge RBI to include state bonds in OMO purchases.

Public sector banks have urged the Reserve Bank of India to include state development loans in open market operation purchases amid widening yield spreads.

Ten-year SDL spreads over government bonds have risen sharply due to heavy state bond supply.

While RBI's OMOs have stabilised G-sec yields, their focus on central securities has widened SDL spreads. Experts, however, say RBI's limited success with SDL-focused OMOs in 2020 may reduce the chances of such inclusion again.

Sports

UP Warriorz defeat Mumbai Indians by 22 runs in WPL.

UP Warriorz defeated Mumbai Indians by 22 runs in a Women's Premier League match at the DY Patil Sports Academy in Navi Mumbai.

Batting first after Mumbai opted to bowl, UP Warriorz posted a competitive 187 for eight in 20 overs.

In reply, the Mumbai Indians fell short, managing 165 for six in their allotted overs, handing UP Warriorz a convincing victory.