

International

A statue of noted Tamil poet and philosopher Thiruvalluvar unveiled in the Philippines.

As part of the celebrations to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and the Philippines, a statue of noted Tamil poet and philosopher Thiruvalluvar has been unveiled in the Philippines. An official statement said that Indian Ambassador Harsh Kumar Jain unveiled the statue and attended the Indo-Philippine Cultural and Educational Exchange Summit at the Gullas College of Medicine in Cebu.

Gulfood 2025, one of the world's largest food and beverage trade exhibitions, commences.

Spanning 24 halls and 1.3 million square feet, Gulfood 2025, one of the world's largest food and beverage trade exhibitions, has commenced at the Dubai World Trade Centre, featuring over 5,500 exhibitors from 129 countries. The event highlights more than one million products, reinforcing Dubai's role as a global food trade hub. India has a significant presence at the event, with 370 companies participating, including 122 under six key industry associations and 248 independent exhibitors.

National

The state visit of the Amir of Qatar to India

As per a statement by the Ministry of External Affairs, India, two agreements and five MoUs have been signed during the state visit of the Amir of Qatar. The first agreement is on the establishment of a bilateral strategic partnership. A revised double taxation avoidance agreement was also signed. Both sides have also signed MoUs on economic partnership, cooperation in the area of archives and documentation, and youth affairs and sports. Trade today between India and Qatar is about 14 billion dollars annually.

Mausam Bhawan Open-Air Art Wall Museum Inaugurated

To mark the 150th anniversary of the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), Minister for

Earth Sciences Dr Jitendra Singh on February 18, inaugurated the Mausam Bhawan Open-Air Art Wall Museum in New Delhi. The artworks on the boundary wall of Mausam Bhawan beautifully display and celebrate the history of meteorology in India.

PMFBY to continue till 2025-26

The Union Cabinet approved the continuation of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana and restructured the Weather-Based Crop Insurance Scheme till 2025-26 with a total budget of over 69 thousand 515 crore rupees. The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) completed nine years on February 18, 2025. The scheme launched in 2016, aims to provide financial support to farmers suffering crop loss and damage arising out of natural calamities.

The birth anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj observed

The Nation observed the 395th birth anniversary of the great Maratha Warrior-King Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on February 19. Born on this day in 1630 at the Shivneri Fort in Pune district in Maharashtra, Chhatrapati Shivaji laid the foundation of the Maratha Empire and challenged the Mughal rule. He is widely admired for his progressive leadership, military acumen, bravery, wisdom, and relentless pursuit of Swarajya.

The country's first vertical bifacial solar plant inaugurated

Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs and Power Manohar Lal, inaugurated the country's first vertical bifacial solar plant on a metro viaduct in New Delhi on February 18. The Minister presided over the 5th International Conference on Green Metro Systems. The primary aim of the conference was to bring together metro stakeholders throughout the country in developing world-class green urban rail systems and making India a global leader in low-carbon transit.

Digital Brand Identity Manual released

To bring uniformity across government websites and digital platforms, the government released the Digital Brand Identity Manual on February 18. The Digital Brand Identity Manual is a comprehensive guide tailored to meet the unique needs of the government in establishing a harmonious visual identity across its digital platforms. This is aimed at ensuring digital harmonisation by creating better recall value for the citizens and facilitating simplified citizen interactions for easy discovery of content and services. This manual serves as a blueprint for aligning the different digital platforms of the Indian government, consisting of websites, web apps, mobile apps, and social media, under a unified brand language.

Business/Economy

Urban unemployment rate at 6.4 per cent in the October-December quarter

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said the labour Force Participation Rate in urban areas among persons aged 15 years and above has increased to 50.4 per cent in the October – December quarter of 2024. It was 49.9 per cent during the October – December quarter in 2023. The unemployment rate for people aged 15 years and above in urban areas dipped to 6.4 per cent in the October-December quarter. The unemployment rate in the December quarter of the current Financial Year was 6.5 per cent.

India's GDP growth for Q3 FY25 at 6.2% to 6.3% as per SBI

The Economic Department of State Bank of India (SBI) has pegged India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth for Q3 FY25 at 6.2% to 6.3%. "Presuming no major revisions announced in the erstwhile Q1 and Q2 figures by the National Statistical Office (NSO), we estimate the FY25 full-year GDP at 6.3%," it said.

LIC rolls out a Smart Pension Plan

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has rolled out a Smart Pension Plan offering a range of annuity options for single as well as joint life

types of annuities. The minimum purchase price is ₹1 lakh with incentives for higher purchase prices. The plan is for those aged 18 years and above, while the maximum age at entry varies from 65-100 years depending upon the annuity option, LIC said in a release on February 18.

Infosys and Lufthansa Group announce a strategic, long-term collaboration

Infosys, a digital services and consulting firm, announced a strategic, long-term collaboration with Lufthansa Group (LHG), a global aviation group, and Lufthansa Systems GmbH (LSY), a leading airline IT provider, to accelerate digital transformation and drive innovation in the aviation industry. As part of the engagement, LSY and Infosys will establish a dedicated Global Capability Centre (GCC) in Bengaluru.

Sports

The 34th edition of the ITTF-ATTU Asian Cup table tennis tournament begins

The 34th edition of the ITTF-ATTU Asian Cup table tennis tournament began in Shenzhen, China, on February 19. The event features men's and women's singles competitions, with 32 players in each category. The top four semi-finalists in both events will qualify for the ITTF World Cup 2025, scheduled for April. India's men's team is led by world No. 42 Sharath Kamal, a five-time Olympian and reigning Commonwealth Games singles champion. The squad also includes world No. 60 Manav Thakkar and world No. 70 Harmeet Desai. The Indian women's team features Paris 2024 Olympian Sreeja Akula, Ayhika Mukherjee, and Yashaswini Ghorpade. The tournament will conclude on February 23.

ICC Champions Trophy 2025 begins

The ninth edition of the ICC Champions Trophy started on February 19, with defending champions Pakistan taking on New Zealand in their opening match in Karachi. Pakistan lifted the last edition of the cricket Trophy in 2017, beating India in the final.