

## International

### Iran urges West Asian nations to block use of their territory by USA for military operations.

Iran has called on countries in West Asia to prevent the United States from using military bases in their territories, saying that these bases are the root cause of the current crisis and are being used for operations against Tehran. It has been warned that such actions would amount to complicity in aggression.

According to the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, including General Assembly resolutions 2625 and 3334, no country is permitted to place its territory and facilities at the disposal of third parties for military aggression against another country.

### Iran hits Qatar's Ras Laffan Industrial City causing extensive damage.

Qatar's Ras Laffan Industrial City came under Iranian missile attacks, which escalate the diplomatic tension between two countries. QatarEnergy, which is the country's state-owned petroleum company, stated that emergency response teams were deployed immediately to contain the resulting fires, as extensive damage has been caused.

Meanwhile, Qatar's foreign ministry has ordered Iranian diplomats, military and security attaches along with their staff to leave the country.

### US offers free flights and \$2,600 exit bonus for illegal immigrants.

The US Department of Homeland Security has released posters offering to fly illegal immigrants to their home countries for free with an exit bonus of 2,600 US dollars. The initiative, called Project Homecoming, was launched in May last year, after the inauguration of US President Donald Trump's second term in office.

The DHS has advised migrants to use the Customs and Border Protection app to begin the process, allowing them to register their intent to leave the country voluntarily, submit their details, and access information about travel assistance and the financial incentive offered under the programme.

According to the DHS, over 2.2 million illegal immigrants have availed of the scheme since its launch in January 2025.

### Argentina formally withdraws from World Health Organization.

Argentina has formally withdrawn from the World Health Organization (WHO), its Foreign Minister Pablo Quirno confirmed. Argentina had communicated its decision through a formal note to the United Nations Secretary-General on March 17, 2025. In line with the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, the withdrawal has now taken effect one year after the notification.

### India's Jawed Ashraf awarded France's Legion d'honneur Commandeur Distinction.

Former ambassador and chairman of the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), Jawed Ashraf was conferred the rank of Commandeur, the third-highest distinction of France's prestigious Legion d'honneur. The rank of Commandeur is one of the highest honours in the Legion d'honneur, France's premier national award, established to recognise outstanding service and contributions.

Ashraf has held several senior diplomatic roles, serving as India's Ambassador to France, Singapore and America's division of MEA.

### India sets up Bharat Pavilion at FILMART 2026 in Hong Kong.

India has set up a Bharat Pavilion at the Hong Kong International Film and TV Market – FILMART 2026 which serves as a strategic platform for international

engagement, business exchange, and industry collaboration. The pavilion reinforces India's growing presence in the global media and entertainment landscape. The Bharat Pavilion is jointly organised by the Services Export Promotion Council under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the National Film Development Corporation under the aegis of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

## National

### Centre offers additional 10% allocation of commercial LPG to all States and UTs.

In view of the ongoing situation in West Asia, the central government has offered an additional 10 percent allocation of commercial (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) LPG to all States and Union Territories, raising it to 30 percent, subject to their support in the long-term transition from LPG to Piped Natural Gas (PNG). The centre also assured that crude availability is normal and refineries are operating at maximum capacity as the domestic LPG production has increased by 40 percent.

### Senior diplomat Vikram Doraiswami appointed as India's next ambassador to China.

Senior diplomat Vikram Doraiswami has been appointed as India's new ambassador to China. Mr Doraiswami, who is a 1992 batch Indian Foreign Service officer is currently serving as Indian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom. He will succeed Pradeep Kumar Rawat.

### Indian Army conducts Exercise Amogh Jwala at Babina Field Firing Ranges.

The Indian Army's Southern Command conducted Exercise Amogh Jwala at Babina Field Firing Ranges, located near Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh. The drill demonstrated high-

tempo mechanised operations through the integrated employment of Attack Helicopters, Fighter Aircraft, drones, counter-drone systems and advanced battlefield technologies in a multi-domain operational environment. The exercise synchronized fire and manoeuvre, real-time drone-enabled surveillance and target acquisition, precision engagement, and the seamless integration of Electronic Warfare (EW), Air Defense (AD) and night-fighting capabilities.

### GSI declares Kalinjar fort hill as National Geo-Heritage site.

The hill area around the historic Kalinjar Fort in Banda district, Uttar Pradesh has been declared a National Geo-Heritage Site by the Geological Survey of India (GSI). The recognition highlights the region's rare geological formation known as the Eparchaeon Unconformity, which records a long gap in Earth's geological history. The hill exposes nearly 2.5-billion-year-old Bundelkhand granite overlain by 1.2 billion year old Kaimur sandstone, making it an important record of Earth's evolution.

### Election Commission extends postal ballot facility to electors above 85 years and PwDs.

Ahead of the upcoming assembly polls in Assam, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, along with by-elections in six states, the Election Commission has extended the facility of postal ballot voting to electors above 85 years of age and Persons with Disabilities.

The Commission has also allowed electors engaged in essential services such as health, fire, electricity, transport and aviation to avail the postal ballot facility through designated nodal officers. Media personnel authorised for poll-day coverage have also been included in this category.

## Business and Economy

### Cabinet approves Industrial Development through BHAVYA.

The Union Cabinet approved Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA) to develop 100 plug-and-play industrial parks with an allocation of 33 thousand 660 crore rupees. The Scheme aims to develop world-class industrial infrastructure, unlocking manufacturing potential and driving the country's growth story. Industrial parks of 100 to 1000 acres will be developed with support of up to one crore rupees per acre.

### India's bio-economy reaches 195.3 billion U.S. dollars.

India has achieved a quantum rise in bioeconomy, touching the figure of 195.3 billion U.S. dollars. Union Science and Technology Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said this while addressing the 14th Foundation Day of Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) in New Delhi. The Minister said the country's bio-economy stood at 10 billion U.S. dollars in 2014, an increase of nearly 20 times in just over a decade.

The Minister said that India is steadily moving towards its target of a USD 300 billion bioeconomy by 2030.

### OpenAI to buy Python toolmaker Astral.

OpenAI will buy Python toolmaker Astral, as the ChatGPT maker seeks to strengthen its portfolio against rival Anthropic to gain more share in the artificial intelligence coding tools market. The acquisition will bring Astral's suite of developer tools into the Microsoft-backed startup's AI coding system, Codex.

### RNFI introduces cardless cash withdrawals via UPI QR with Jio Payments Bank.

RNFI Services Limited, through its fintech platform Relipay, has announced the

nationwide rollout of its UPI QR-based cash withdrawal service in partnership with Jio Payments Bank Limited.

The service enables customers to withdraw cash instantly by scanning a UPI QR code at authorised outlets within RNFI's Business Correspondent (BC) network.

### No material concerns at HDFC Bank, says RBI after Chakraborty's resignation.

The Reserve Bank of India has voiced confidence in HDFC Bank's operations and oversight. This comes after the resignation of its part-time chairman, Atanu Chakraborty, who cited personal values. The RBI stated there are no material concerns regarding the bank's conduct or governance. It stated that HDFC Bank remains well-capitalised with strong financials and a competent management team.

### Indian educator and Alakh Pandey makes Forbes World's Billionaires List 2026.

Edtech entrepreneur Alakh Pandey has made it to the Forbes World's Billionaire's List 2026. Alakh is among the 229 billionaires that India produced this year. 33-year-old Alakh is an Engineering college dropout who started teaching Physics online in 2014. Alakh Pandey and Prateek Boob co-founded the edtech firm Physicswallah in 2020, which offers courses to help students crack various exams.

Among the 229 Indian citizens on the Forbes' World's Billionaires list, richest and second richest Indians are business tycoons Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani.

Savitri Jindal, chairperson emeritus of the O.P. Jindal Group, retained her status as the third-wealthiest Indian and the country's richest woman, leading a group of 20 Indian women billionaires.

## **India achieves record auction of 200 mineral blocks in FY 2025-26.**

India's mineral sector has achieved a significant milestone in the financial year 2025-26 with the successful auction of 200 mineral blocks, the highest ever in a single year. It added that out of the 200 auctioned blocks, 123 are Mining Lease blocks and 77 are Composite Licence blocks, indicating a balanced mix of operational and exploration-focused opportunities.

## **Samsung Electronics plans to produce Tesla chips starting late 2027.**

Samsung Electronics said that it expects to start volume production of Tesla's chips at Samsung's factory in Texas in the second half of next year. The comments were made by Han Jin-man, Samsung Electronics President and Head of Foundry Business, at a shareholders' meeting.

## **Mastercard Move' to focus on SMEs, education cross-border payments.**

Mastercard, through its latest offering 'Mastercard Move', is set to focus on Small

& Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and student communities across India to facilitate safer and faster cross-border payments.

Mastercard Move is expected to be introduced soon in India to solve cross-border money movement problems.

## **Sports**

### **India to host World Indoor Athletics Championships in 2028.**

India will host the World Indoor Athletics Championships for the first time in 2028 at the state-of-the-art indoor facility at the Kalinga Stadium complex in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The International body awarded the hosting rights of the prestigious event to India at the World Athletics Council meeting in Torun, Poland.

The Championship typically has 26 events – 13 each for men and women – to be competed across three days.