

International

US President Trump's loyalist Kash Patel elected as FBI Director.

United States President Donald Trump's loyalist Kash Patel has been elected as the 9th Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which is America's premier federal law enforcement agency. The Senate narrowly voted to confirm Mr Patel's appointment.

A former federal defender and Chief of Staff at the US Department of Defence, Kash Patel, will now serve as the Director of the FBI for the next 10 years.

India elected Vice President of the International Association of Aids to Marine Navigation.

India has been elected to the Vice Presidency of the International Association of Aids to Marine Navigation (IALA) at the ongoing first General Assembly of IALA in Singapore. The Indian delegation is being led by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Secretary, T.K. Ramachandran. The election reinforces the country's dedication to advancing maritime safety, enhancing navigational aids, and fostering international cooperation within the maritime sector.

India will host the IALA Council meeting in December this year and the IALA Conference and General Assembly in September 2027 in Mumbai.

Brazil joins Opec+ oil producers' group

Brazil, the largest oil producer in South America, has officially joined the Opec+ group of more than 20 countries that attempts to manage global oil output. The participation formalises an initial announcement in November 2023.

Brazil's membership will be limited to the Opec+ Charter of Cooperation, a permanent forum between oil-producing countries to discuss industry-related issues. The country will not participate in decisions and will not be bound by obligations such as output cuts

National

Centre extends tenure of Chief Economic Adviser Anantha Nageswaran till March 2027

The Union government has extended the tenure of Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran for two years till March 2027. Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the tenure of Mr. Nageswaran on a contract basis up to March 31, 2027. Dr. V. Anantha Nageswaran assumed charge as the Chief Economic Adviser in January 2022.

India, Sri Lanka finalize plan to train 1,500 Civil Service Officers.

India's National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) and Sri Lanka's Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA) have finalised the modalities for the implementation of their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to train 1,500 Sri Lankan civil service officers over five years.

The first training module for 40 Sri Lankan officers will be held soon. Notably, even before the MoU's signing, over 200 Sri Lankan officers had already undergone training at NCGG.

All northeast states to be linked to Delhi by rail & air by 2027: HM Amit Shah.

Home Minister Amit Shah has said that all 8 states of the North East will be connected to Delhi through rail and air connectivity by 2027. Addressing the Unity Utsav—One Voice, One Nation in New Delhi, Mr. Shah underscored that the central government has opened numerous avenues for the Northeast in every field, from tourism to technology and sports to space.

Defence Ministry signs ₹1,220 Cr deal with BEL for advanced radios.

The Defence Ministry has signed a contract worth over one thousand 220 crore rupees with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) for the

procurement of 149 Software Defined Radios for the Indian Coast Guard.

The ministry said that these state-of-the-art radios will enable secure and reliable information sharing, collaboration, and situational awareness through high-speed data and secure voice communication. It will also strengthen the ICG's capability to fulfil its core responsibilities, including maritime law enforcement, search and rescue operations, fisheries protection, and marine environment protection.

Business and Economy

S&P upgrades Kotak Mahindra Bank to 'BBB' after RBI lifts curbs.

S&P Global has upgraded Kotak Mahindra Bank's credit rating to 'BBB' from 'BBB-' after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently lifted operational curbs. The outlook on the long-term rating remains positive. The positive rating outlook on Kotak Mahindra Bank reflects that on the sovereign credit rating on India.

Thomas Cook, SOTC, LTIMindtree, others build 'India's first GenAI advisor'

Thomas Cook, SOTC Travel, Fairfax Digital Services, LTIMindtree and Voicing. AI have collaborated to build a multi-modal, multi-lingual, agentic voice-enabled, GenAI advisor 'Dhruv', touted to be India's first.

'Dhruv' would be a combination of the domain expertise of Thomas Cook and SOTC in the travel industry, the technological prowess of LTIMindtree, powered by Voicing.AI, and brought by the global innovation capabilities of Fairfax Digital Services (a Fairfax company).

Fulcrum Digital to create 10,000 AI agents from India development centre.

Fulcrum Digital, which is into enterprise Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital transformation, said it would scale up its AI ecosystem to 10,000 AI agents this year from the current 170, to power next-generation enterprise automation globally.

As part of its expansion plans, the company said it would double its workforce to 3,000

employees to continue AI innovation and growth.

Karnataka Bank launches two new products on founders' day.

Karnataka Bank celebrated its 101st founders' day on February 18, by launching two new products 'KBL Stri' and 'KBL One Family Banking Programme'. 'KBL Stri' is a savings bank account designed for women to define their own success whether they are homemakers, professionals, or entrepreneurs. 'KBL One Family Banking Programme' is a banking solution that links the family under one ID, offering tailored benefits, shared privileges and seamless access

Flipkart ventures to back five early stage Indian start-ups.

Flipkart Ventures, the investment arm of Flipkart, has chosen five early stage start-ups, Xportel, Factors.ai, Expertia.ai, Bharat Krushi Seva, and Visa2Fly, under the third cohort of its Flipkart Leap Ahead (FLA).

Through the FLA programme, these start-ups would receive equity investments up to \$5,00,000 each along with a customised mentorship designed by a global consulting firm.

Sports

Pankaj Advani wins 14th Asian Snooker Gold in Doha.

India's Pankaj Advani has won the 14th gold medal at the Asian Snooker Championship in Doha. With this latest win, he inches closer to an unprecedented achievement, winning the National, Asian, and World Snooker Championships in a single calendar year.

Advani now holds five Asian snooker titles (across 15-red, 6-reds, and team formats) alongside nine Asian billiards titles, and his two Asian Games gold medals (2006, 2010).

ICC Champions Trophy: India defeats Bangladesh by 6 wickets in Dubai

India defeated Bangladesh by six wickets in their opener Group A clash in Dubai in the ICC Men's Champions Trophy. Chasing the target of 229 runs, India made 231 for four in 46.3 overs with the help of Shubman Gill's unbeaten 101 runs. Earlier, Bangladesh posted 228 runs in 50 overs.

Mohammed Shami became the fastest Indian bowler and second quickest overall to reach 200 ODI wickets during the Champions Trophy match against Bangladesh. Shami grabbed three wickets to reach the milestone in his 104th match and better former India pacer Ajit Agarkar's record of getting to the mark in 133 matches.