

International

Russia, Ukraine swap 175 prisoners in major exchange

Russia and Ukraine had each swapped 175 prisoners in one of the largest exchanges since the Russian military operation started three years ago. Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky said, that releasing all prisoners of war as well as captured civilians would be an important step toward peace and could help build trust between the two countries.

Finland is world's happiest country for 8th straight year

According to the annual World Happiness Report 2025, Finland has retained its top spot as the happiest country in the world for the eighth consecutive year. India's rank had improved from 126 in 2024 to 118 in the latest World Happiness Report, 2025. Afghanistan has been ranked as the unhappiest country in the world. Following Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Lebanon ranked as the second and third unhappiest countries

The report evaluates various factors such as social support, health, freedom, generosity, perception of corruption, and GDP to determine the happiness levels of 147 countries.

Top 10 happiest countries in the world

- Finland
- Denmark
- Iceland
- Sweden
- Netherlands
- Costa Rica
- Norway
- Israel
- Luxembourg
- Mexico

World Sparrow Day observed on March 20.

World Sparrow Day is being observed worldwide on March 20, marking an annual effort to raise awareness about the rapid decline in sparrow populations. Celebrated every year on March 20, the day was first observed in 2010 across various parts of the world. This day emphasizes the effects of urbanization,

pollution, and habitat destruction on these small birds.

Sparrows play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance by controlling insect populations and supporting plant pollination.

International Happiness Day being observed globally on March 20.

International Happiness Day- IHD is being observed across the globe on March 20. The General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution in 2012, proclaimed 20 March as International Day of Happiness.

The day is observed to recognize the relevance of happiness and well-being as universal goals and aspirations in the lives of human beings around the world and the importance of their recognition in public policy objectives.

The theme of this year is- Caring and Sharing.

Atmospheric CO2 reaches 800,000-year high at 420 ppm in 2023: WMO.

According to the World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) State of the Climate report, atmospheric carbon dioxide levels have reached 420 parts per million in 2023, the highest in the last 8,00,000 years. The report said long-term global warming is currently estimated to be between 1.34 and 1.41 degrees Celsius compared to the 1850-1900 baseline.

Carbon dioxide levels in 2023 (the latest year with complete global data) were 420.0 0.1 parts per million (ppm), 2.3 ppm higher than in 2022 and 151 per cent of the pre-industrial level (1750). The WMO said 420 ppm corresponds to 3,276 gigatonnes (or 3.276 trillion tonnes) of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

The report said the past 10 years (2015-2024) were the warmest on record, with each of the last eight years setting new highs for ocean heat content.

India sends \$1 million worth machinery to Suriname.

India has sent machinery valued at one million US dollars to Suriname as a component of its development partnership aimed at fostering the growth of the nation's Passion fruit industry. Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that the initiative is to bolster the India-Suriname development partnership.

National

AFMS, NIMHANS sign MoU to boost mental health support for military personnel & families

The Armed Forces Medical Services – AFMS and the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences – NIMHANS have signed a Memorandum of Understanding – MoU to collaborate on research, training, and specialized mental health support for military personnel and their families.

The collaboration between AFMS and NIMHANS will focus on strengthening mental health services, conducting specialized training for medical personnel, and developing innovative programs to address the mental health issues faced by soldiers, sailors, airmen, their families and dependants.

MoU to be signed between India AI Mission & Bill Gates Foundation.

India AI mission and Gates Foundation will soon sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for developing AI solutions for better crops, stronger healthcare, smarter education, and climate resilience, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

The minister made these announcements after a meeting with Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Bill Gates.

AI Appu to tutor children in India

Rocket Learning, a Bengaluru-based ed-tech non-profit organisation, with support from Google.org, the philanthropic arm of Google, has introduced Appu, an AI tutor for personalised learning for children in the age group of 3 to 6 years in India.

Appu would offer multilingual conversational learning experience, starting with Hindi, while 20 other Indian languages would be supported soon including Marathi and Punjabi.

Centre approves revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission to boost growth in livestock sector

The Central government has approved the revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission to boost growth in the livestock sector. The implementation of the revised mission is being

carried out with an additional outlay of one thousand crore rupees.

The scheme is set to significantly enhance milk production and productivity, thereby increasing farmers' incomes.

The Cabinet also approved the revised National Program for Dairy Development. This initiative focuses on modernizing and expanding dairy infrastructure, ensuring the sector's sustained growth and productivity.

Business and Economy

US Federal Reserve holds interest rates steady.

US Federal Reserve has kept its benchmark interest rate unchanged in the 4.25 per cent to 4.50 per cent range. The American central bank also indicated that two quarter-point interest-rate cuts are likely later this year. The Federal Reserve sees core inflation hitting 2.7% next year, higher than December's projection of 2.5%.

It also downgraded its previous forecast for US economic growth, with the economy expected to grow at an annualized pace of 1.7% this year before reaching 1.8% growth in 2026 and 2027.

Cabinet approves UPI incentive of ₹1,500 crore to banks.

The Union cabinet has announced an incentive scheme for Unified Payments Interface (UPI) payments of less than ₹2,000 for 2024–25 with an outlay of around ₹1,500 crore. Banks will get a 0.15% incentive, one fifth of which will be incumbent on adequate performance of their infrastructure over the year. The incentive will be paid out in the case of payments to small merchants.

For payments above ₹2,000, no incentive will be offered by the government. The incentives are being offered to urge banks and merchants to broaden their UPI acceptance, as unlike with debit and credit cards, there is no merchant fee on UPI payments currently.

Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang unveils new Rubin AI chips at GTC 2025.

Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang unveiled a new line of AI superchips called Rubin during the chip company's GPU Technology Conference in San Jose. Vera Rubin, now scheduled for release in

the second half of 2026. This GPU, named after a famous astronomer, will feature 288 gigabytes of memory and comes with a custom Nvidia-designed CPU called Vera.

Huang also announced Rubin Ultra, which will follow in the second half of 2027.

Bain Capital to acquire 18% stake in Manappuram Finance for ₹4,385 crore.

Bain Capital, a global private investment firm, has entered into definitive agreements to acquire joint control in Manappuram Finance, a Kerala-based non-banking financial company through its affiliates, BC Asia Investments XXV Ltd. and BC Asia Investments XIV Ltd. (Bain Capital).

As part of the transaction, Bain Capital will be investing ₹4,385 crore to acquire an 18% stake on a fully diluted basis via preferential allotment of equity.

Hindalco to invest ₹45,000 crore in copper and aluminium upstream business.

Hindalco Industries, a leading copper and aluminium player, announces investment of ₹45,000 crore in its copper, aluminium and speciality aluminium business, said the Chairperson of Aditya Birla Group, Kumaramangalam Birla

The announcement assumes significance as the copper and aluminium company had announced to invest \$4-5 billion in aluminium and copper upstream projects, its second quarter results presentation.

L&T arm launches AI-powered railway track inspection solution.

L&T Technology Services Limited (LTTS), an engineering and technology services firm, has launched TrackEi, an AI-powered railway track inspection solution.

TrackEi leverages the NVIDIA Jetson platform for edge AI and robotics, to deliver real-time defect detection and support predictive maintenance, enhancing safety for rail networks worldwide.

Sports

Kirsty Coventry becomes first female president of IOC.

Zimbabwe's Kirsty Coventry has been elected as the 10th President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), becoming the first woman and African to ever be elected to the position. Coventry, 41, will also be the youngest ever to assume the role.

Coventry will succeed the ninth IOC President, Thomas Bach, whose 12-year tenure will officially end after June 23. The President is elected by the IOC Members by secret ballot for a term of eight years.

BCCI announces ₹58 crore reward for Team India after ICC Champions Trophy 2025 triumph.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced a cash reward of 58 crore rupees for Team India following their triumph at the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. The BCCI said this financial recognition honours the players, coaching and support staff and members of the Men's Selection Committee.