

International

Pope Francis dies after prolonged illness.

Pope Francis has died following a prolonged illness. He was 88. He had suffered various ailments in his 12-year papacy, with severe complications in recent weeks. Pope Francis is known as the voice for the poor who reshaped the Catholic Church. Pope Francis became the first Latin-American pontiff in 2013 and was one of the oldest popes in the church's history.

UNESCO adds 16 new Global Geoparks.

UNESCO has added 16 new sites across 11 countries to its Global Geoparks Network, which marks its 10th anniversary this year. With the new entries, the Network now comprises 229 sites across 50 countries,

The newly featured geoparks are located in China, North Korea, Ecuador, Indonesia, Italy, Norway, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Spain, the UK, and Vietnam. North Korea recorded its historic first with the inclusion of its site in the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network, while Saudi Arabia has made its debut on the list with two newly designated geoparks.

Earth Day celebrated on April 22.

Earth Day is celebrated worldwide on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. The first Earth Day celebrations were held in 1970 after the day was suggested at the UNESCO summit in 1969. The theme for this year is "Our Power, Our Planet".

National

Japan to gift Shinkansen to India for Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project.

Japan is set to gift two of its iconic Shinkansen trains to India for trial and inspection purposes. The train sets from Japan would be used to make trial runs in the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train corridor, which is currently under construction. The two train sets, one from the E5 series and one from the E3 series, will be delivered to India in early 2026 after being fitted with inspection equipment. The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Corridor, once constructed, will be India's first high-speed rail line, with a top speed of 320 km/h.

India's first prototype fast-breeder reactor to be commissioned by September 2026.

India's first prototype fast-breeder reactor in Tamil Nadu's Kalpakkam is expected to be

commissioned next year, nearly two years after it got the go-ahead from the nuclear regulator.

The commissioning of the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) will mark the second stage of India's three-stage nuclear programme that aims to recycle spent fuel to reduce the inventory of radioactive waste.

Osmania University Arts College becomes the 3rd registered trademarked building in India.

The Arts College building of Hyderabad's Osmania University (OU) has become the third structure in India to receive trademark registration for its exterior design.

Constructed in 1939, the OU Arts College building has long stood as a symbol of Hyderabad's rich architectural and educational heritage. With this trademark registration, the university now holds exclusive rights over the use of the building's image for any commercial purpose, protecting it from unauthorised replication and branding.

Designed by Belgian architect Ernst Jasper, the structure was built using Nalgonda's famed granite stone. India already has two trademarked buildings – the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel and the Bombay Stock Exchange building in Mumbai.

India's first ATM on train launched on Mumbai's Panchavati Express.

For the first time, the Indian Railways has introduced an ATM inside a train, allowing passengers on the Mumbai-Manmad Panchavati Express to withdraw cash during their journey. The Central Railway (CR) has introduced this to make travel a little more convenient for passengers who might need cash during their journey.

The ATM, provided by a private bank, is placed comfortably within an air-conditioned coach.

Business and Economy

Core sector grows 3.8% in March

The output of eight core infrastructure sectors, which account for two-fifths of India's industrial output, expanded by 3.8% annually in March—the highest in the last two months. A year ago, in March 2024, core sector output expanded by 6.3%. However, only three of the eight core industries—electricity, cement and steel reported a monthly rise in production during March.

Core sector output contributes 40.27% to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

Centre imposes 12% safeguard duty on steel imports to protect domestic industry.

The Central government has imposed a 12 per cent safeguard duty on the import of certain non-alloy and alloy steel flat products with a view to shielding the Indian steel sector. This move will provide critical relief to domestic producers, especially small and medium-scale enterprises, who have faced immense pressure from rising imports of steel. The safeguard duty will help restore market stability and reinforce the confidence of the domestic industry.

RBI permits minors above 10 years to operate bank accounts independently.

The Reserve Bank of India has permitted banks to allow minors above the age of 10 years to open and operate savings/term deposit accounts independently. The Reserve Bank of India has issued revised instructions on opening and operation in the deposit accounts of minors. The banks will have to ensure that accounts of minors, whether operated independently or through a guardian, are not allowed to be overdrawn and that these always remain in a credit balance.

SEBI extends PAN freeze to immediate kin of insider trading norm violators.

The trading windows of immediate relatives of those involved in insider trading will also be

closed, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said in a circular.

In an earlier circular dated September 23, 2024, SEBI directed stock exchanges to develop a system to restrict trading by designated persons (DP) of listed companies.

Gold imports rise 192% to \$4.47 billion in March.

India's gold imports have surged by 192.13% to \$4.47 billion in March, driven by rising prices and strong investor confidence, contributing to a widened trade deficit of \$21.54 billion. For the fiscal year 2024-25, gold imports increased by 27.27% to \$58 billion, impacting the Current Account Deficit, while silver imports decreased.

Sports

Simranpreet Kaur wins maiden senior international medal with silver in 25m pistol.

In shooting, India's Simranpreet Kaur Brar has won her maiden senior international medal with a silver in the women's 25m pistol event at the International Shooting Sport Federation, ISSF World Cup in Lima, Peru. She shot a total of 33 hits in the 10-series of five rapid-fire shots final, finishing one hit behind China's Sun Yujie.