

## International

### Günter Blöschl wins 2025 Stockholm Water Prize.

Hydrologist Günter Blöschl, a pioneer of water engineering, has been awarded the prestigious Stockholm Water Prize 2025. Blöschl's comprehensive database and analysis have revolutionised and deepened the global understanding of flood risk reduction and water resource management.

The Stockholm Water Prize is awarded by the Stockholm Water Foundation in cooperation with the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

### South Korea: Opposition parties introduce motion to impeach Acting President Choi.

The opposition parties in South Korea have raised a motion to impeach acting President Choi Sang-mok, escalating the country's ongoing political turmoil. The Democratic Party, which holds a parliamentary majority, accused Mr. Choi of repeatedly vetoing bills and blocking the appointment of a liberal-leaning Constitutional Court judge.

Mr. Choi, also the finance minister, took over after President Yoon Suk Yeol was impeached for declaring martial law in December.

### US President signs executive order to begin dismantling Education Dept.

US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order initiating the process of shutting down the Department of Education. The order is designed to shift school policy control almost entirely to states and local boards, a move that has sparked concern among liberal education advocates. Trump criticized the department, stating that despite massive spending increases over the past four decades, it had failed to improve the education system. The Department of Education has spent over 3 trillion US dollars since its establishment in 1979.

### International Day of Forests being celebrated with theme 'Forests & Food'

International Day of Forests is being celebrated on March 21. The theme for this year is "Forests and Food"-emphasizing the vital link between healthy forests and global food security. The

United Nations declared March 21 as the International Day of Forests (IDF) in 2012.

The theme for this year "Forests and Food"-rightly emphasises that forests are not only sources of nutrition and livelihoods but also guardians of biodiversity.

### Chiranjeevi honoured with Bridge India's First Ever Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Public Service Entertainment.

Indian actor Chiranjeevi has been honoured by many esteemed Members of Parliament, Ministers & Under Secretaries, and Diplomats at the House of Commons in the UK Parliament. At the same time, he has also received the "Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Public Service through Cultural Leadership" from Bridge India, a renowned UK-based organisation focused on improving public policy. Notably, this is the first time Bridge India has presented a lifetime achievement award to an individual.

### World Down Syndrome Day observed on 21 March.

World Down Syndrome Day is being observed on 21 March each year. The theme of World Down Syndrome Day 2025 is 'Improve Our Support Systems'.

Down Syndrome is a neurodevelopment disorder that can affect a person mentally and physically. It makes communication and social interactions challenging for a person.

### India to join Earth Hour with special focus on water conservation.

India will join the world's largest grassroots environmental movement, Earth Hour, on March 22, with a special focus on water conservation. This year's event holds even greater significance as it coincides with World Water Day, encouraging millions across the country to take action for the planet.

Earth Hour, the world's biggest global lights-off event, is observed annually in March from 8:30 PM to 9:30 PM. During this hour, people across the globe switch off all non-essential lights, symbolizing their commitment to environmental conservation and climate action. Earth Hour was first launched in Sydney, Australia, in 2007 by the World Wide Fund for

Nature (WWF) in collaboration with The Sydney Morning Herald.  
The theme of World Water Day 2025 is 'Glacier Preservation'.

## National

### DAC clears procurement worth Rs 54,000 cr to enhance defence system

The union government has given the nod for the procurement of 1350 HP engines for T-90 tanks, Varunastra Torpedoes and Airborne Early Warning and Control Aircraft systems. The approval was given during the Defence Acquisition Council meeting chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. This procurement will cost over 54 thousand crore rupees.

Varunastra Torpedo is an indigenously developed ship-launched anti-submarine torpedo developed by the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory.

### India & Mongolia reaffirm commitment to strengthen Strategic Partnership.

India and Mongolia have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening their Strategic Partnership. Senior officials from both nations have conducted a comprehensive review of bilateral ties, discussing cooperation in key sectors, and planning high-level engagements to mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations. The two sides held discussions on further strengthening the bilateral Strategic Partnership and maintaining high-level engagements.

### India expands Strategic Partnerships with more than 30 nations: MoS.

The Central government has established and strengthened strategic partnerships with more than 30 countries across the Global South and North. In a written reply in Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita said, apart from strong bilateral partnerships, the government has undertaken various foreign policy initiatives to strengthen regional and international cooperation.

These include the Neighbourhood First Policy, Act East Policy, Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across

Regions (MAHASAGAR) initiative, among others.

## Business and Economy

### India's bioeconomy hits \$165B: Bio-economy report.

Speaking at the 13th Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) Foundation Day, union minister of state for Science and Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh, highlighted that there are around 10,000 biotechnology startups in India, contributing to an estimated 165 billion dollar bioeconomy. Dr Singh noted that India is being recognised globally for its remarkable progress in space and biotechnology.

Dr Singh also launched the India Bio-economy Report 2025 and Bio-Sarthi, an initiative for global mentoring for biotech startups. The India Bio-economy Report is an annual publication by the Department of Biotechnology and BIRAC that tracks the growth and performance of India's bioeconomy, mapping its size, structure, and key trends, and providing insights for policy and investment decisions.

### India ranks 2nd women-led tech startups in 2024.

Women-led tech companies globally secured \$29.6 billion in 2024, representing an 11% decline from \$33.1 billion in 2023. India 2nd after US in all-time funding for women-led tech startups, as per Tracxn.

The global tech sector has over 69,000 women-founded tech companies, which have collectively raised \$309 billion in funding to date. In 2024, women-led startups accounted for only 11.7% of total funding, hurt by macroeconomic headwinds.

### India's Lendbox, emerged as one of the fastest-growing firms in the Asia-Pacific region.

Indian company, Lendbox, has surpassed industry giants like Tata and Birla and emerged as one of the fastest-growing firms in the Asia-Pacific region. Ranked among the top 500 companies in the region, Lendbox, a peer-to-peer (P2P) non-banking financial company (NBFC), has secured the top spot in this

prestigious list compiled by Financial Times and Statista.

Apart from Lendbox, several other Indian companies are there in the list like BlueSmart at 6th position, Meesho at 72nd position, Titan Company (Tata Group) at 301st position, Aditya Birla Capital at 374th position and Havells at 396th position.

India stands out with 81 companies in the list, which highlights firms achieving significant revenue growth between 2020 and 2023.

### **RBI appoints Indranil Bhattacharyya as Executive Director.**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Indranil Bhattacharyya as Executive Director (ED). As the Executive Director, Mr. Bhattacharyya will look after the Department of Economic and Policy Research.

### **Fitch cuts global GDP growth forecast to 2.3% on U.S. trade war.**

According to a report titled "Global Economic Outlook" by Fitch ratings, cut global GDP growth forecast for 2025 to 2.3%, down 0.3 percentage points as U.S. tariff hikes are rapidly unfolding,

The global economy grew at a rate of 2.9% in 2024, and the agency had predicted it to grow by 2.6% in its December update.

### **Share of remittances to India from advanced economies surpasses that of Gulf: RBI Bulletin.**

India's remittance patterns have shifted with advanced economies like the US and UK becoming key contributors, while the Gulf nations' share decreased. By 2023-24, remittances amounted to USD 118.7 billion. Maharashtra, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu are major recipient states, reflecting changes in migration trends. The US leads with a 27.7% share, followed by UAE at 19.2%.

India's remittances have more than doubled from USD 55.6 billion in 2010-11 to USD 118.7 billion in 2023-24.

Indian migrants in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries account for around half of the total Indian migrants in the world.

### **PM Modi hails India's milestone of crossing one billion tonnes in coal production.**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the milestone of India crossing one billion tonnes of coal production. PM Modi called it a remarkable achievement and said it highlights India's commitment to energy security, economic growth and self-reliance. He added that this feat also reflects the dedication and hardwork of all those associated with the sector. Union Minister for Coal and Mines, G Kishan Reddy highlighted that with cutting-edge technologies and efficient methods, not only has India increased production but also ensured sustainable and responsible mining.

### **Sports**

#### **Anahat Singh & Veer Chotrani win PSA Challenger Squash Titles in Chennai.**

India's Anahat Singh won the women's Squash title, and Veer Chotrani won the men's title of the PSA Challenger squash in Chennai. The third-seeded Anahat Singh defeated top-seed Akanksha Salunkhe 11-6, 8-11, 11-8, 11-5 in the final.

While in the men's event, second seed Veer Chotrani defeated French player Melvil Scianimanico 3-11, 12-10, 11-6, 11-7 in the final to win his sixth PSA title.

#### **India to host 11th Asian Swimming C'ship in Gujarat.**

India will host the 11th Asian Swimming Championship at the Naranpura Sports Complex in Ahmedabad. The Swimming Federation of India announced that it has received in-principle approval from both the Gujarat government and Asia Aquatics to organize the championship. The event will take place from October 1 to 15. The championship will feature swimming, diving, artistic swimming, and water polo.

#### **IPL 2025 kicks off on March 22**

The 18th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 is set to kick off on March 22, marking the start of another season of high-octane T20 cricket. In the inaugural match, Defending Champions Kolkata Knight Riders

will face Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the iconic Eden Gardens Stadium in Kolkata. The tournament, which will see 10 teams competing across 74 matches, culminates with the final on 25th of May.

### **Sankar Subramanian beats world no. 2 Antonsen in Swiss Open.**

In badminton, India's Sankar Subramanian has stormed into the Men's Singles quarterfinals of the Swiss Open Championship in Basel, Switzerland. Subramanian, ranked 64th in the world, defeated the current World No. 2, Anders Antonsen of Denmark, 18-21, 21-12, 21-5. He will next take on Christo Popov of France in the quarterfinals.

In Women's Doubles, India's Treesa Jolly and her partner Gayatri Gopichand have also entered the quarterfinals. They secured a straight-game victory over Germany's Amelie Lehmann and Selin Hubsch, winning 21-12, 21-8.

### **India submits bid to host 2030 Commonwealth Games in Gujarat.**

India has taken a major step toward hosting global sporting events by officially submitting an expression of interest to organize the Centenary Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, in 2030. The bid, led by Commonwealth Games Association of India President PT Usha, underscores Ahmedabad's readiness to serve as an exceptional host city.