

International

US expands online presence reviews for H-1B and H-4 visa applicants worldwide.

The United States Department of State has expanded online presence reviews for all H-1B and H-4 visa applicants worldwide, effective as of the 15th of this month. The enhanced screening will apply to applicants of all nationalities as part of the standard visa vetting process. The latest move aims to curb misuse of the H-1B programme while continuing to allow U.S. companies to hire highly skilled foreign professionals.

Pakistan Army Chief Asim Munir awarded Saudi Arabia's Highest Civilian Honour.

Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, has been awarded Saudi Arabia's highest civilian honour, the King Abdulaziz Medal of Excellence, during an official visit to the Kingdom. The honour was conferred under a Royal Decree issued by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

France to build new aircraft carrier.

French President Emmanuel Macron has announced that France will build a new aircraft carrier with a capacity for 30 fighter jets and 2,000 sailors. The new vessel is planned to be ready in 2038, replacing the ageing Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier, which came into service in 2001. It will have a displacement of about 78,000 tons and a length of 310 meters (1,017 feet), compared to 42,000 tons and 261 meters (856 feet) for the Charles de Gaulle.

The new carrier would still be smaller than the USS Gerald Ford aircraft carrier, the largest warship in the world, which has a displacement of more than 100,000 tons and measures 1,100 feet (334 metres).

France's new aircraft carrier will be nuclear-powered and equipped with French Rafale M fighter jets.

National

Centre to set up a statutory Bureau of Port Security(BoPS).

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has convened a high-level meeting to initiate the constitution of a dedicated Bureau of Port Security (BoPS) to enhance the security of vessels and port facilities across the country. The proposed Bureau of Port Security will be established as a statutory body under Section 13 of the newly promulgated Merchant Shipping Act, 2025. It will function under the aegis of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and will be responsible for regulatory oversight and coordination related to the security of ships and port infrastructure.

The BoPS will be headed by a Director General of the rank of an IPS officer at Pay Level-15 and will be modelled on the lines of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS).

Union Minister Piyush Goyal attends World Hindu Economic Forum 2025 in Mumbai.

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal attended the World Hindu Economic Forum 2025 in Mumbai. The World Hindu Economic Forum 2025 brought together policymakers, industry leaders, entrepreneurs and thinkers from India and abroad, focusing on sustainable growth, ethical governance and innovation-driven development aligned with India's civilizational values.

INS Sindhughosh decommissioned.

INS Sindhughosh, the lead submarine of her class with the Indian Navy, has been decommissioned after 40 years of glorious service to the nation. The decommissioning ceremony took place at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai.

DRDO and Rashtriya Raksha University Sign MoU for defence and internal security.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) have signed an agreement to

foster collaboration in the areas of research, education, training, and technology support for defence and internal security.

Under the MoU, both organisations will collaborate on joint research projects, PhD and fellowship programmes and specialised training and capacity-building programmes for security forces.

Business and Economy

FTA between India and New Zealand expected to double bilateral trade in the next five years.

India and New Zealand have successfully concluded the historic, ambitious and mutually beneficial Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The FTA enhances market access and tariff preferences for Indian exports to New Zealand, while serving as a gateway to the wider Oceania and Pacific Island markets.

As part of the Agreement, New Zealand has committed to facilitating investments of 20 billion US dollars into India over the next fifteen years.

India- New Zealand FTA eliminates duty on 100% of Indian Exports.

India protects its key interests in dairy and agriculture, a huge win for labour-intensive sectors like textile and leather.

New Zealand signs Annex on Health and Traditional Medicine Services for the first time. Student Mobility and Post Study Work Visa for STEM Graduates, skilled Professionals, opens new visa pathway for 5,000 skilled occupations.

India-New Zealand's Bilateral merchandise trade has reached 1.3 billion dollars in 2024-25, while total trade in goods and services stood at approximately 2.4 billion dollars last year.

MUFG seals Rs 39,600 crore Shriram Finance deal, takes 20% stake.

The MUFG Bank, Japan's largest lender with \$2.8 trillion in assets, would subscribe to a preferential equity allotment for a 20% stock ownership in Shriram Finance with a financial commitment of Rs 39,620 crore in what would be the biggest foreign direct investment (FDI) in India's financial services.

RBI slaps Rs 62 lakh fine on Kotak Mahindra Bank.

The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 61.95 lakh on Kotak Mahindra Bank for non-compliance with norms related to basic savings bank deposit (BSBD) accounts, business correspondents, and credit information companies.

Combined Index of Eight Core Industries increases by 1.8 % in November.

The combined index of eight core industries increased by 1.8 per cent in November this year as compared to the same month last year. The production of cement, steel, fertilizer and coal recorded positive growth in November. Coal production increased by 2.1 per cent, fertilizer production by 5.6 per cent, cement production by 14.5 per cent and steel production increased by 6.1 per cent in November this year as compared to the same month last year.

However, crude oil production declined by 3.2 per cent, and natural gas production also declined by 2.5 per cent in November.

Microfinance loan stress at four-quarter low as of September 2025: Sa-Dhan.

The quality of microfinance loans has been improving since December 2024, with the ratio of delinquencies falling steadily since then and coming in at a four-quarter low in the September 2025 quarter, according to the latest Quarterly Microfinance Report by microfinance self-regulatory body Sa-Dhan. The ratio of loans outstanding more than 90 days after their due date has fallen to 3.27% in the quarter-ended September 2025 from 4% in the December 2024 quarter.

Combined AUM of NPS crossed ₹16 lakh cr. in October: PFRDA.

National Pension System (NPS) subscriber base has grown significantly, surpassing 90 million by October 2025, while its combined Assets Under Management (AUM) along with Atal Pension Yojana (APY) crossed ₹16 lakh crore, said PFRDA (Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority) Chairperson, Sivasubramanian Ramann.

IOL signs agreement with French company to manufacture two high-precision, combat-proven systems in India.

India Optel Limited (IOL), a Mini Navratna Defence Public Sector Undertaking, signed an agreement with a French company to manufacture two high-precision, combat-proven systems in India. The agreement, signed with Safran Electronics and Defense, will pave the way for local manufacturing in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Make in India.

Under the partnership, IOL will be responsible for manufacturing, final assembly, testing, quality control and full life-cycle support, ensuring the systems meet the operational needs of the Indian Army.

Nvidia-Intel deal cleared by U.S. antitrust agencies.

U.S. antitrust agencies have cleared Nvidia's investment in Intel, according to a notice posted by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission. Nvidia said in September that it would invest \$5 billion in Intel, throwing its heft behind the struggling U.S. chipmaker in a deal that could pose risks for rival manufacturers, Taiwan's TSMC and U.S.-based AMD.

Cognizant deploys 1 mn AI agents.

Cognizant has deployed over 1 million AI agents (agentic systems) between its facilities in San Francisco and Bengaluru in the last year, in an effort to boost client experiences across multiple domains.

These agentic systems would play a key role at its newly set up AI Lab and Cognizant Moment Studio in Bengaluru. The new facility is expected to break down and shrink discovery processes, comprising the whole range of brainstorming, ideation, multiple layers of researches including synthetic research through

AI personas, from months to weeks and even hours, thereby resulting in quick prototyping of solutions for Cognizant's global customers.

Sports

Tennis: Stan Wawrinka to retire after 2026.

Swiss professional tennis player Stan Wawrinka said that the 2026 season will be his last as the three-time Grand Slam singles champion aims to finish his career on the best note possible. Wawrinka won the Australian Open in 2014, the French Open a year later and the U.S. Open in 2016, at a time when Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic were dominating men's tennis.

He has 16 career ATP titles, although the last came in Geneva in 2017.

Badminton: An Se-young wins BWF World Tour Finals, wins record-extending 11th title of the season.

World No. 1 An Se-young became the first badminton player to earn over USD 1 million in prize money in a season when she beat Wang Zhi Yi 21-13, 18-21, 21-10 to claim the BWF World Tour Finals 2025. Se-young had already won US\$763,175 before the BWF World Tour Finals 2025, and the winner's cheque of USD 240,000 saw her surpass USD 1 million.

With her 11th title in 2025, An equalled Japan men's great Kento Momota's record of most titles in a calendar year in singles competition.

Badminton: Frenchman Popov makes history at World Tour Finals.

France's Christo Popov has defeated reigning champion Shi Yu Qi of China, 21-19, 21-9 to win the men's title at the World Tour Finals. With this win, Popov becomes the first French player to win the BWF World Tour Finals men's singles title.