

International

US announces trade deal with Japan.

United States President Donald Trump has announced that he has struck a massive trade deal with Japan following months of negotiations. Under the agreement, the US will impose a 15 percent tariff on Japanese exports and Japan will invest \$550bn in the US. Japan will also open up to US exports of cars, rice and certain agricultural products.

India ranked 77th on Henley Passport Index 2025.

According to the Henley Passport Index 2025, the Indian passport has climbed eight places - from 85th to 77th - after dropping five spots last year, despite gaining only two destinations to its visa-free tally. The count of visa-free countries accessible to India stands at 59.

Meanwhile, Singapore's passport remains the most powerful in the world, granting visa-free access to 193 of 227 locations. Japan and S.Korea remain a close second, providing visa-free travel for 190 countries.

National

India to issue visas to Chinese tourists.

India will start issuing tourist visas to Chinese nationals after a gap of five years, the Indian Embassy in Beijing announced. This marks another step in normalising India-China ties ruptured by the military standoff at the Line of Actual Control and Galwan clashes in 2020.

Election Commission initiates process for election of Vice President.

The Election Commission has started the process of election to the office of the Vice President, following the resignation of Jagdeep Dhankhar. The process commenced after the Ministry of Home Affairs was notified of the resignation of Mr. Dhankhar.

According to the poll body, the Election Commission under Article 324 is mandated to conduct the election to the office of the Vice President. The election to the office of the Vice President is governed by The Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Act, 1952 and the rules, namely The Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Rules, 1974.

“Processing for Prosperity” theme of 4th edition of World Food India 2025.

Ministry of Food Processing Industries will organise the 4th edition of World Food India 2025 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi from 25th of September this year. The theme of the four-day event is Processing for Prosperity. The event will bring together the Stakeholders to share new ideas, innovation and best practices for the growth of the food processing sector.

India's first hornbill conservation centre to come up at Annamalai Tiger Reserve.

The Tamil Nadu government has announced the establishment of the country's first-ever Centre of Excellence for Hornbill Conservation at the Annamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR) in Coimbatore district.

Hornbills, often dubbed the "farmers of the forest" for their critical role in seed dispersal and forest regeneration, are increasingly under threat due to deforestation, habitat fragmentation, and climate change. The facility will focus on four hornbill species native to the Western Ghats - the Great Hornbill, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Malabar Grey Hornbill, and Indian Grey Hornbill.

India's press and media ecosystem expands with over 1.55 lakh publications and 908 private TV channels.

The number of publications registered with the Press Registrar General of India has increased from 1.05 lakh in 2014-15 to 1.55 lakh in 2024-25. In response to a query in the Lok Sabha, the Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, L. Murugan said the number of private satellite TV channels have also increased from 821 in 2014-15 to 908 in 2024-25.

Business and Economy

RBI's financial inclusion index shows growth across all segments in FY25.

The Reserve Bank of India's Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index) saw a 4.3% increase, reaching 67 in March 2025 from 64.2 in March 2024. This growth reflects improvements across all sub-indices, including access, usage, and quality.

The index captures information on various aspects of financial inclusion in a single value ranging between 0 and 100, where 0 represents complete financial exclusion and 100 indicates full financial inclusion.

The index comprises three broad parameters -- Access (35 per cent), Usage (45 per cent), and Quality (20 per cent), with each of these consisting of various dimensions, which are computed based on a number of indicators.

SoftBank and OpenAI's Stargate aims building small data centre by year-end.

Stargate, a major AI project by OpenAI, SoftBank, and Oracle, is scaling back plans to a smaller data centre in Ohio by year-end, amid internal disagreements. Originally backed with \$100 billion, the project aims to boost US AI capacity.

In January, U.S. President Donald Trump has hosted top tech CEOs at the White House to highlight the \$500 billion Stargate Project.

JPMorgan considers offering loans backed by clients' cryptocurrency holdings.

JPMorgan Chase is exploring plans to offer loans backed by clients' cryptocurrency holdings, including bitcoin and ether, as early as next year. The move comes as other major U.S. banks, including Bank of America and Citibank, are developing stablecoins amid a broader push for more crypto-friendly regulation in Washington.

Five states account for nearly 50% of active GST taxpayers.

An SBI Research report reveals that Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka account for nearly 50% of India's active GST taxpayers, with Uttar Pradesh leading. Among these, Uttar Pradesh tops the list, contributing 13.2 per cent of all active GST taxpayers in the country.

Net FDI in May 2025 down by 98% to \$35 mn

According to new data released by the Reserve Bank of India, net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows stood at \$35 million in May 2025, 98% lower than the \$2.2 billion seen in May 2024, and 99% lower than the \$3.9 billion in April 2025. Repatriations and disinvestment by foreign companies stood at \$5 billion in May 2025.

Net FDI is the gross amount coming into India minus the money sent abroad by foreign companies operating in India (through repatriation or disinvestment) and the investments abroad made by Indian companies (outward FDI).

PSBs write off ₹12 lakh crore since FY16, NPAs drop to 2.58%.

Union minister of state for finance Pankaj Chaudhary informed that Public sector banks (PSBs) have written off over ₹12 lakh crore worth of loans since 2015-16, even as they saw their gross non-performing asset (NPA) ratio plunged from 9.11% on March 31, 2021 to 2.58% on March 31, 2025. These loans are written off from their respective balance sheets but banks' recovery processes from defaulters continue unabated.

PSBs, however, saw a sharp decline in their gross non-performing assets (NPAs) that fell from ₹6.17 lakh crore in March 2021 to ₹2.84 lakh crore in March 2025 mainly because IBC that is empowered to remove nonpayers from the company's management and bar wilful defaulters from participating in the resolution process.

Sports

Divya Deshmukh becomes first Indian to reach FIDE Women's World Cup Final.

India's Divya Deshmukh beat China's Tan Zhongyi in Game 2 of the FIDE Women's World Cup 2025 semifinal to secure a spot in the final, in Batumi, Georgia. The 19-year-old also became the first Indian to enter the final of FIDE Women's World Cup. She outplayed her opponent with white pieces to claim a 1.5-0.5 win in the semifinal, after having drawn the first game. With this win, Deshmukh also claimed a spot in the Candidates tournament set to happen in 2026, while also securing her first Grand Master norm. Divya will take on the winner of the second semifinal played between top seed China's Lei Tingjie and India's No. 1 Koneru Humpy.

England to host next three World Test Championship Finals: ICC

England will host the next three World Test Championship finals in 2027, 2029 and 2031. The International Cricket Council announced it at its annual conference in Singapore. The matches, expected to be held in June, align with the English cricket season and favourable weather. England previously hosted the 2021 final in Southampton, the 2023 final at The Oval, and the 2025 edition at Lord's.