

## International

### Israel Becomes First Nation to Formally Recognise Somaliland as Independent Nation

Israel became the first country to formally recognise the self-declared Republic of Somaliland as an independent and sovereign state—a decision that could reshape regional dynamics and test Somalia's longstanding opposition to secession. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel would seek immediate cooperation with Somaliland in agriculture, health, technology and the economy.

Somaliland, officially the Republic of Somaliland, is an unrecognised state in the Horn of Africa.

### Malaysia Court Convicts Ex-PM Najib Razak

Jailed former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak was convicted by the Kuala Lumpur High Court on the charges of abuse of power and money laundering in the multibillion-dollar 1Malaysia Development Berhad scandal. At least 4.5 billion dollars were stolen from 1MDB, a state fund Najib co-founded in 2009 while in office.

### Japan's Cabinet Approves Record Defence Budget Plan Exceeding 58 Billion US Dollars for Coming Year

Japan's Cabinet has approved a record defence budget plan exceeding 58 billion US dollars for the coming year. Through the budget, the country aims to fortify its strike-back capability and coastal defence with cruise missiles and unmanned arsenals as tensions rise in the region. The budget increase comes as Japan faces elevated tension from China.

## National

### ISRO, LVM3-M6 Launches Its Heaviest Satellite

ISRO has successfully launched and placed the next-generation US communication satellite BlueBird Block-2 into its intended orbit. The US satellite was onboard ISRO's heaviest vehicle, LVM3-M6, from Sriharikota.

BlueBird Block-2 weighs 6,100 kilograms (over 6 tons), making it the largest-ever commercial communications satellite to be deployed in low Earth orbit (LEO) and the heaviest payload to be launched from Indian soil.

The satellite was built by the US-based company AST SpaceMobile.

### President Murmu Confers 'Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar'

President Droupadi Murmu has conferred the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar on the occasion of Veer Bal Diwas in New Delhi. This year, 20 children from 18 States and Union Territories have been awarded for demonstrating outstanding achievements.

Veer Bal Diwas is observed every year on December 26 to commemorate the martyrdom of Sahibzada Baba Zorawar Singh ji and Baba Fateh Singh ji, the sons of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji.

### Union Home Minister Inaugurates National Counter-Terrorism Conference in New Delhi

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has inaugurated the Counter-Terrorism Conference organised by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in New Delhi. On the occasion, Mr Shah honoured nine NIA personnel with the Sewa Padak and Veerta Padak for their commendable service and contribution to counter-terror measures.

### Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana Marks 25 Years of Transforming Rural Connectivity

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) marked its 25th anniversary on December 25. Launched on 25th December 2000 to ensure all-weather connectivity to previously unconnected rural habitations, the programme has emerged as a key enabler of agricultural growth, employment generation, improved access to education and health services, and poverty alleviation.

Since its inception, over 8.25 lakh kilometres of rural roads have been sanctioned under PM Gram Sadak Yojana, with more than 7.87 lakh thousand kilometres completed.

Around 19,000 crore rupees have been allocated for the financial year 2025-26. Under Phase IV, a total road length of 62,500 kilometers will be constructed between the financial years 2024-25 and 2028-29, with an overall financial outlay of over 70,000 crores.

## **India Launches OCND: AI-Powered Weapon Against Organised Crime**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has launched the country's first national-level Organised Crime Network Database (OCND), a cutting-edge AI-powered platform designed to dismantle organised crime syndicates by integrating fragmented intelligence spread across states and agencies.

Developed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in collaboration with state police forces and the National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID), the OCND brings together FIRs, charge sheets, dossiers and other critical intelligence from across the country into a single, real-time repository. Investigating officers can now access consolidated profiles of organised criminals—something no single state police force was previously able to do.

## **India Tests K-4 Missile, With 3,500-km Range, From Nuclear-Powered Submarine**

India has tested an intermediate-range ballistic missile launched from a nuclear-capable submarine. The K-4 missile was test-fired from the nuclear-powered submarine INS Arighaat in the Bay of Bengal. The test was conducted off the coast of Vishakhapatnam. Designed to hit targets 3,500 km away, the missile provides a massive boost to the sea-based nuclear attack capability of the forces.

The K-4 submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) was commissioned into the Indian Navy on August 29, 2024.

## **Zoho-Backed VoxelGrids Builds India's First Indigenous MRI Scanner**

VoxelGrids, a Zoho-backed start-up, has developed the country's first indigenous MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scanner. The scanner, which has been deployed at the Chandrapur Cancer Care Foundation near

Nagpur, is the culmination of a 12-year mission by its founder Arjun Arunachalam and his team to domestically design and build an MRI system – a critical diagnostic tool for hospitals, which currently relies almost entirely on foreign imports.

## **Nation Remembers Shaheed Udham Singh on His 126th Birth Anniversary**

The nation is remembering Shaheed Udham Singh on his 126th Birth Anniversary on December 26. Born in 1899 on this day in the village of Punjab in undivided India, the revolutionary freedom fighter avenged the Jallianwala Bagh massacre by assassinating Michael O'Dwyer, the then Lieutenant Governor of Punjab. He was an active member of the Ghadar Party and the Hindustan Socialist Republic Association (HSRA).

## **Business and Banking**

### **Public Sector Banks Sanction ₹28k cr in MSME Loans Via New Digital Model**

Public sector banks (PSBs) have sanctioned ₹28,724 crore for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) under the government's new digital footprint-based credit assessment model during the April to October period of FY26, reflecting early traction of the new technology-driven lending framework.

According to the data, PSBs processed a total of 560,655 MSME loan applications during the seven-month period, out of which 261,281 proposals were passed and ₹23,541 crore was disbursed. The rest of the amount has been sanctioned but is yet to be disbursed.

Under the framework, banks assess loan proposals using digitally verifiable data such as goods and services tax filings, income-tax returns, bank account statements accessed through account aggregators, and other authenticated electronic records.

### **India Approves Al Hind Air, FlyExpress**

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has given initial regulatory clearance to two new carriers, Al Hind Air and FlyExpress, marking a fresh attempt to broaden competition in the country's

fast-expanding aviation market. The approvals come against the backdrop of widespread flight disruptions earlier this month, when IndiGo cancelled thousands of flights and raised concerns over its monopoly in the Indian aviation sector. IndiGo currently accounts for around 65 per cent of India's domestic market, while the Air India Group holds about 27 per cent, leaving limited room for smaller operators.

### **Private Banks Lead Small Business Lending; PSBs Lost Share in Last Two Years: Report**

According to a report by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and CRIF High Mark, private banks continue to dominate enterprise lending to small businesses in India, closely followed by public sector banks (PSBs), though the latter have seen a decline in their market share over the past two years.

As of Sep'25, private banks remain the primary lenders to enterprises, though their share shows minor volatility. Public sector banks follow closely, but their share declined from 39.3 per cent in Sep'23 to 37.8 per cent in Sep'25.

The reduced share of PSBs has largely been absorbed by NBFCs, reflecting a gradual shift in the lending landscape.

Aggregate credit exposure to small businesses reached Rs 46 lakh crore as of September 2025, registering a robust 16.2 per cent year-on-year growth.

### **Sports**

#### **PV Sindhu Elected as Chair of BWF Athletes' Commission**

Two-time Olympic medallist and former world champion PV Sindhu was elected Chair of the BWF Athletes' Commission for the 2026-2029 term. The role will now see PV Sindhu serve as a Badminton World Federation (BWF) Council Member, giving players a direct voice in the body's global governance.

#### **India Women Beat Sri Lanka by Eight Wickets to Take 3-0 Lead in T20I Series**

India beat Sri Lanka by eight wickets in the third Women's T20I to take an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series in Thiruvananthapuram. Batting first, the visitors scored 112 for the loss of seven wickets in 20 overs.

With this win, the hosts have taken an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series.

#### **Josh Tongue Becomes First England Bowler This Century to Take Five-Wicket Haul at Melbourne**

Josh Tongue scripted history after he became the first England bowler this century to claim a five-wicket haul in Men's Tests at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. His 5 for 45 helped England bowl out Australia for 152 in their first innings of the Boxing Day Test.

It was the first time an England bowler claimed a five-wicket haul in a Test at the MCG since Darren Gough and Dean Headley did so in 1998.