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International

Taiwan plans \$40 billion defence boost.

Taiwan President Lai Ching-te has announced plans to propose a supplementary defence budget of 40 billion US dollars to counter Chinese military expansion. The proposed budget will be used for arms purchases, including building a Taiwan Dome, an air defence system with high-level detection and interception capabilities.

Death toll in Hong Kong high-rise fire rises to 44.

In Hong Kong, the death toll in a high-rise apartment fire at the Wang Fuk Court housing complex in Tai Po district has risen to 44. While 700 people have been evacuated to temporary shelters, 279 people are still missing. The raging fire sent up a column of flames and thick smoke as it spread quickly on bamboo scaffolding and construction netting that had been set up around the exterior of the housing complex.

Brazil's former President Jair Bolsonaro sentenced to 27 years.

Brazil's former president Jair Bolsonaro has been sentenced to 27 years and three months in prison for plotting a military coup and seeking to destroy the country's democracy. Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes ruled that the case had reached its final judgment and that no further appeals were possible. Bolsonaro will begin serving his sentence in a federal police jail cell in the capital, Brasilia.

National

India, Venezuela boost cooperation.

India and Venezuela have agreed to strengthen cooperation in key areas, including trade, health and pharmaceuticals, digital technology, agriculture, and development partnership. The fifth India-Venezuela Foreign Office Consultations

took place in New Delhi. Both sides also reaffirmed their commitment towards enhancing collaboration in multilateral forums of mutual interest.

They exchanged views on regional and international developments and agreed to coordinate closely in multilateral fora, advancing the India-Venezuela partnership.

India-Nepal joint military exercise begins in Uttarakhand.

The 19th edition of the India-Nepal bilateral military exercise, 'Suryakiran', began in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh on November 25 with an aim to strengthen battalion-level synergy in jungle warfare, counter-terrorism operations in mountainous terrain, and integrated ground-aviation operations.

The Indian contingent, consisting of 334 personnel, is being represented mainly by troops from the Assam Regiment, while the Nepal side is being represented by 334 troops from the Devi Datta Regiment.

Centre designates CISF as main security organisation for India's 250 seaports.

In a move aimed at strengthening security across all major and minor Indian seaports, the Centre has designated the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) as the new safety regulator for about 250 facilities located along the country's maritime borders. The paramilitary force has been designated as a Recognised Security Organisation (RSO) for seaports under the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) code. An RSO acts as a regulator for seaport security.

ISPS is a mandatory security regime for international shipping.

Justice Vikram Nath named NALSA Executive Chairman.

The President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu has nominated Supreme Court judge Justice Vikram Nath as the new executive chairperson of the National Legal

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Services Authority (NALSA), with the appointment taking effect from November 24. According to convention, the post of NALSA's Executive Chairman is occupied by the senior-most judge after the CJI.

In a related development, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant has nominated Justice Jitendra Kumar Maheshwari, Judge of the Supreme Court, as the new Chairman of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee (SCLSC).

Business and Economy

Gold loan boom: 3,000 new branches to open in India in 12 months.

India's gold loan market is set for a big boost with non-bank lenders planning to add about 3,000 branches in the next 12 months or so exclusively for lending against jewellery. Lenders are opening dedicated gold branches to tap the emerging opportunity, as well as extending the secured loan product to their existing outlets.

The market, dominated by state-owned banks, swelled 36% year-on-year to Rs 14.5 lakh crore at the end of September.

SBI Ventures to launch ₹2,000 crore fund for climate-tech investments.

SBI Ventures, an alternative asset management firm of the State Bank of India (SBI), plans to launch a Rs 2,000 crore fund in the first quarter of the next calendar year. The fund, called the SVL Climate Tech Fund, is the firm's third climate-focused fund, aiming to back climate technologies and AI-led green innovation startups.

Horticulture production up 4% to 369.05 mn tonne in 2024-25.

India's horticulture production rose marginally by 4 per cent to 369.05 million tonne in the crop year ended June 2025 on higher production of fruits and vegetables. The horticulture production stood at 354.74 million tonnes in the previous year.

Horticultural crops are estimated to have been covered in an area of 29.48 million hectares in the 2024-25 crop year (July-June), marginally higher than 29.08 million hectares in the previous year.

Fruit production is estimated to have increased by 5.12 per cent to 118.76 million tonnes, with bananas, mangoes, watermelons, jackfruit, mandarins, papayas, and guavas contributing significantly.

Centre appoints new executive directors in Canara Bank, Union Bank, Bank of Maharashtra, Indian Bank and PNB.

The Central government has appointed Punjab National Bank chief general managers Sunil Kumar Chugh and Amresh Prasad as executive directors in Canara Bank and Union Bank of India, respectively. The centre has also appointed Prabhat Kiran, Canara Bank's CGM, as ED in Bank of Maharashtra and Mini TM, CGM in Bank of Baroda, as ED in Indian Bank. Meanwhile, Amit Kumar Srivastava, group chief risk officer in PNB, has been elevated as ED in the same bank. All these appointments are for three years, with effect from November 24.

Google, Accel partner to back Indian AI startups.

Alphabet's Google and venture capital firm Accel will partner to fund at least 10 early-stage Indian AI startups, marking the U.S. technology giant's first such funding partnership. Accel is partnering with Google to launch an AI cohort under Atoms, its seed-stage programme.

The move comes as several U.S. tech firms like Microsoft, Amazon and OpenAI make a beeline for the world's most populous nation, seen as a critical growth market where nearly a billion users access the internet.

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Amazon pledges up to \$50 billion to expand AI, supercomputing for U.S. government.

Amazon.com would invest up to \$50 billion to expand AI and supercomputing capabilities for Amazon Web Services U.S. government customers, in one of the largest cloud infrastructure commitments targeted at the public sector.

The project, expected to break ground in 2026, will add nearly 1.3 gigawatts of artificial intelligence and high-performance computing capacity across AWS Top Secret, AWS Secret and AWS GovCloud regions by building data centers equipped with advanced compute and networking technologies.

1729 Capital gets RBI nod to raise Suryoday stake.

The RBI has granted approval to foreign portfolio investor 1729 Capital to hold a total stake of 7.14% in Suryoday Small Finance Bank. As of September 30, the FPI held a 3.81% stake in the bank. It added that if the aggregate shareholding falls below 5%, the investor will again need prior RBI approval to raise the holding to 5% or more.

Google's Larry Page becomes second-richest person in the world after Elon Musk.

According to *Forbes* 'Real Time Billionaires List, Google co-founder Larry Page has overtaken Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison as the second-richest person in the world. With a net worth of \$255 billion, Page is now only second to Elon Musk, who has a wealth of \$475.5 billion. Ellison, with \$250.7 billion in wealth, is now the third richest person in the world. Larry Page's net worth had stood at \$114 billion in 2024, which increased to \$144 billion this year and to \$255 billion now. His wealth jumped by nearly 6% in a day due to an AI-driven rally on November 24.

ICICI, Canara likely to raise Rs 7,500 crore.

Canara and ICICI are all set to hit the bond market this week to raise a cumulative ₹7,500 crore. In a recent manoeuvre, Axis Bank has mobilised ₹5,000 crore in non-convertible debentures at a coupon of 7.27% per annum payable annually. The NCDs were placed privately.

ICICI Bank plans to raise ₹4,000 crore through 15-year tier-2 bonds on November 27, comprising a ₹1,000 crore base issue with a ₹3,000 crore green shoe option at a coupon of 7.45%.

Canara Bank will hit the market on November 28 with its ₹3,500 crore additional tier 1 (AT1) bonds, managing director Satyanarayana Raju said. The base issue size is ₹1,000 crore.

Sports

Rohit Sharma appointed as Brand Ambassador for T20 World Cup 2026.

Rohit Sharma has been named the tournament ambassador for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026. The tournament is set to run from February 7 to March 8 in India and Sri Lanka. Rohit appeared in all nine of the previous editions of the T20 World Cup, starting with the inaugural edition in 2007, which India won. He led India to their second title in the 2024 edition and was their highest run-getter with 257 runs at a strike rate of 156.70.

India's bid to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games formally approved in Glasgow.

India's bid to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games was formally approved at the Commonwealth Sport's General Assembly in Glasgow. This event marks a significant step in India's ambitious plan to become a global multi-sport hub. The last time India hosted the Games was in 2010 in Delhi. This time, the event is set to be held in Ahmedabad.