

## International

### South Korea bans phones in school classrooms nationwide.

South Korea has passed a bill banning the use of mobile phones and smart devices during class hours in schools, becoming the latest country to restrict phone use among children and teens. The law, which comes into effect from the next school year in March 2026, is the result of a bipartisan effort to curb smartphone addiction, as more research points to its harmful effects. Lawmakers, parents, and teachers argue that smartphone use is affecting students' academic performance and taking away time they could have spent studying.

### SpaceX conducts 10th successful Starship test launch from Texas.

Elon Musk-owned SpaceX has successfully launched its 10th Starship flight test from Starbase, Texas, marking a significant step toward developing the world's first fully reusable rocket. The two-stage vehicle lifted off after weather delays. For the first time, SpaceX demonstrated payload deployment using Starlink simulators. The flight met all major objectives, providing vital data for future missions, including NASA's Artemis III Moon landing planned for 2027.

### Oman to launch revamped Golden Visa Programme on August 31.

Oman will roll out its revamped Golden Visa programme on August 31 as part of efforts to strengthen its position as a global investment hub. The initiative aligns with Vision 2040 goals to diversify the economy and reduce reliance on oil revenues. The updated programme offers renewable residency permits of five or ten years for foreign investors, entrepreneurs, retirees, and skilled professionals, allowing them and their families to live, work, and study in Oman without a local sponsor.

### Deforestation linked to over 500,000 heat-related deaths in tropics.

According to a new study in Nature Climate Change, deforestation has caused more than 5,00,000 deaths in tropical regions over the past 20 years due to heat-related illnesses. The research found that land clearance in the

Amazon, Congo, and Southeast Asia raised local temperatures by reducing shade, rainfall, and increasing fire risk. Between 2001 and 2020, 345 million people were exposed to this warming, with 2.6 million facing heat increases of 3°C.

The study attributes 28,330 annual deaths to this localised heat rise, with Southeast Asia most affected, followed by tropical Africa and Latin America.

## National

### Union cabinet approves restructuring of PM SVANidhi scheme.

The Union Cabinet has approved the restructuring of Prime Minister Street Vendor's Atma Nirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme. It also gave approval for the extension of the lending period beyond 31st December 2024. The lending period has now been extended until 31st March 2030. The total outlay for the scheme is 7 thousand 332 crore rupees.

The key features of the restructured scheme include enhanced loan amounts across the first and second tranches, provision of UPI-linked RuPay Credit Card for beneficiaries who have repaid the second loan, and digital cashback incentives for retail and wholesale transactions. The first tranche loan has been increased to 15 thousand rupees from 10 thousand rupees, and the second tranche loans have increased up to 25 thousand rupees from 20 thousand rupees, while the third tranche remains unchanged at 50 thousand rupees.

The scheme's coverage is being expanded beyond statutory towns to census towns and peri-urban areas in a graded manner.

The restructured scheme aims to benefit one crore 15 lakh beneficiaries, including 50 lakh new beneficiaries.

### UIDAI asks schools across the country to complete Aadhaar biometric updates of children.

The Unique Identification Authority of India-UIDAI has asked schools across the country to ensure timely Aadhaar Mandatory Biometric Updates-MBU for children in the age group of 5 to 15 years. UIDAI CEO Bhuvnesh Kumar has also written to all the Chief Secretaries of States and Union Territories regarding this and requested them to support in conducting targeted MBU camps.

## **Defence ministry signs MoU with QCI.**

The Defence Ministry has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Quality Council of India to strengthen the delivery of pension, healthcare, resettlement, and welfare services for over 63 lakh veterans and their dependents. Under the MoU, QCI will support the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW) in digital evaluations, impact assessments, and evidence-based policy recommendations. DESW will facilitate data access and stakeholder coordination with State Governments, Zila Sainik Boards, Armed Forces Headquarters, and empanelled hospitals.

## **OpenAI launches India-first learning accelerator.**

OpenAI has launched an 'India-first' Learning Accelerator initiative, thus marking a major commitment to the country's education sector. The program includes a research grant of Rs 4.5 crore (approximately \$500,000) to IIT-Madras and the distribution of 500,000 free ChatGPT licenses to educators and students. The initiative includes a collaboration with leading institutions, including IIT-Madras, the Ministry of Education, and the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

## **Business and Economy**

### **25% additional levy on Indian exports to US comes into effect from August 27.**

The levy of an additional 25 per cent on Indian exports to the United States came into effect on August 27. US President Donald Trump had earlier announced a 25 percent tariff on Indian imports after a deal between the two countries was not reached before the 1st of August deadline.

An additional 25 per cent levy was threatened when Trump accused India of buying Russian oil, raising the overall levy to 50 per cent.

### **TikTok owner ByteDance sets valuation at over \$330 billion as revenue grows.**

ByteDance, the owner of short-video app TikTok, is set to launch a new employee share buyback that will value the Chinese technology

giant at more than \$330 billion, driven by continued revenue growth.

The company plans to offer current employees \$200.41 per share in the repurchase programme, up 5.5% from \$189.90 each it offered them about six months ago, which valued ByteDance at roughly \$315 billion.

## **Rajiv Ranjan appointed Vice-President & Chief Risk Officer at NDB for 5-year term.**

Dr. Rajiv Ranjan, Executive Director at the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and a former member of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), has been appointed as the Vice-President and Chief Risk Officer of the New Development Bank (NDB), formerly known as the BRICS Bank. The appointment is for a five-year term.

## **Sports**

### **Union Cabinet approves bid submission for Commonwealth Games 2030.**

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for submission of a bid for the Commonwealth Games CWG 2030. It also gave its approval to sign the Host Collaboration Agreement HCA along with the required Guarantees from concerned Ministries, Departments, and Authorities, and sanction of the required grant-in-aid to the Gujarat Government, in case the bid gets accepted. Athletes from 72 countries will participate in the Commonwealth Games.

### **India leads in Asian Shooting Championship with 29 Golds and over 50 medals.**

India has crossed the 50-medal mark and is leading the medal tally at the ongoing 16th Asian Shooting Championship in Shymkent, Kazakhstan. In the women's trap event, Neeru Dhanda won gold with 43 hits. Neeru and Aashima also helped India win team gold with Preeti Rajak, finishing ahead of China and Kuwait. India's junior women swept the 25m pistol podium as Payal Khatri took gold.