

International

Austria is getting a new coalition government.

Three parties have reached a deal to form a new centrist Austrian government, that excludes the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), five months after the FPÖ won the parliamentary election in September. The conservative People's Party (ÖVP), Social Democrats (SPÖ) and liberal Neos have announced that they would present their coalition.

A first attempt to form a ruling coalition with the same three parties collapsed in January, forcing Chancellor Karl Nehammer to announce his resignation.

Kyrgyzstan to swap land with Tajikistan.

Kyrgyzstan has announced that it would exchange territories disputed with Tajikistan since the fall of the Soviet Union, ending a decades-long spat between the Central Asian neighbours. The border between the two countries has seen sporadic deadly clashes since both became independent in 1991, with the neighbours fighting over access to water and resources in the remote region.

Legendary actor Gene Hackman and wife found dead.

Two-time Oscar winner Gene Hackman and his wife Betsy Arakawa have been found dead in their home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, US. He won two Oscars - best actor for his role as Jimmy "Popeye" Doyle in The French Connection, and best supporting actor for playing Little Bill Daggett in Unforgiven.

In a career that spanned over four decades, he received two Academy Awards, two British Academy Film Awards, and four Golden Globe Awards.

Amazon launches Quantum computing chip "Ocelot".

Amazon Web Services (AWS) has launched Ocelot, its first quantum computing chip, designed to revolutionise error correction in quantum computing. Using 'cat qubits' to reduce computational errors, Ocelot could cut error correction costs by up to 90 per cent. This strengthens AWS's position in the race to develop fault-tolerant quantum computers.

Error correction remains a fundamental hurdle in quantum computing. Quantum systems are highly sensitive to external factors such as temperature fluctuations, electromagnetic interference, and vibrations, all of which introduce computational errors.

National

DRDO & Navy carried out successful trial of Naval Anti-Ship missile.

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy carried out successful flight trials of the first-of-its-kind Naval Anti-Ship missile (NASM-SR) from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur, Odisha. The trials demonstrated the missile's capability against ship targets while launched from an Indian Naval Seaking Helicopter. The trials have proven the missile's Man-in-Loop feature and scored a direct hit on a small ship target in sea-skimming mode at its maximum range. The missile uses an Indigenous Imaging Infra-Red Seeker for terminal guidance.

Tuhin Pandey appointed SEBI chief.

The Union government has appointed Finance and Revenue Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey as the new chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

The Odisha-cadre Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer would replace Madhabi Puri Buch, who completes her three-year tenure on February 28, 2025.

Zydus launches vaccine for new strain of influenza virus.

Zydus Lifesciences announced the launch of VaxiFlu-4, India's first quadrivalent influenza vaccine. A quadrivalent vaccine, by covering strains of both influenza A and influenza B, provides broader protection and significantly reduces the risk of vaccine mismatch. The vaccine has been cleared by the Central Drug Laboratory (CDL).

VaxiFlu-4 is being marketed by Zydus Vaxxicare, a division of the group focusing on preventives. The Quadrivalent Inactivated Influenza vaccine has been developed at the Vaccine Technology Centre (VTC) in Ahmedabad, which has proven capabilities in

researching, developing, and manufacturing safe and efficacious vaccines.

Business and Economy

Australia announces investment of 16 million dollars to boost commercial ties with India.

Australia has launched a roadmap to strengthen and diversify its trade and investment ties with India. To jumpstart this plan, it is investing \$16 million in the Australia-India Trade and Investment Accelerator Fund.

The Australian government also announced an additional 4 million dollars investment into its Maitri Grants programme which aims to enhance people-to-people, business-to-business, and cultural ties between the two nations.

Bank of Baroda unveils pilot to boost CBDC adoption.

Bank of Baroda under the guidance of the Reserve Bank of India, has announced the pilot launch of a new functionality for merchants built on the “Programmability” functionality of Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) – the “Merchant Loyalty/ Cashback Programme” in collaboration with a fintech company. This industry-first initiative enables small and medium merchants to independently design and launch loyalty/cashback programmes for their customers, usually designed by large brands, using Bank of Baroda’s “bob Merchant App”.

Wipro commits \$200 mn to venture arm Wipro Ventures.

Wipro Limited said it would be committing \$200 million to its venture arm, Wipro Ventures, in its latest round of funding.

This is the fourth round of funding raised by Wipro Ventures since its inception 10 years ago and is aimed at accelerating the company’s investments in early- to mid-stage startups, as per a company communicate.

Botswana gets an improved 10-year deal with miner De Beers.

Botswana government signed a new diamond sales agreement crucial to its economy with the De Beers mining company after seven years of negotiations. The deal gives the government an increasing share of diamond sales through the

Debswana company—its joint venture with De Beers, a subsidiary of Anglo American.

Botswana is the biggest producer of diamonds by value and the second biggest by volume behind Russia. Diamonds account for around 80% of Botswana's exports and a quarter of its GDP.

Unilever CEO Hein Schumacher to step down.

Unilever announced that Hein Schumacher is stepping down as the Chief Executive Officer and as a Board Director on March 1, 2025. He will be replaced by Fernando Fernandez who is currently Unilever’s Chief Financial Officer and Executive Director, effective from 1 March 2025. Before becoming the company CFO in January 2024, Fernando served as the President of Unilever’s Beauty & Wellbeing business.

CRED tool to improve score of credit card holders.

Fintech platform CRED has introduced Svalbard, a suite of credit management tools aimed at helping its members improve credit scores, manage multiple cards, access secured credit without liquidating investments and to avoid hidden charges.

VFS Global launches AI-powered Chatbot for U.K. visa applicants in 141 countries.

VFS Global has introduced AI-powered Chatbot for U.K. visa applicants in 141 countries. Developed at VFS Global AI Centres located in India, UAE and Germany, the chatbot leverages Generative AI-powered conversational capability, offering human-like, conversational support and even responding to voice and text inputs, effectively catering to a diverse audience

Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers eased.

The All-India Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL) for January this year eased to 4.61 per cent as compared to 7.52 per cent in the same month the previous year. According to the data released by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Rural Labourers (CPI-RL) eased to 4.73 per cent for January 2025 as compared to 7.37 per cent in the corresponding period of last year.

Sports

Tennis: Bhambri, Popyrin advance to Dubai Championships Men's Doubles Semifinals.

In tennis, India's Yuki Bhambri and his partner Alexei Popyrin of Australia have advanced to the Men's Doubles Semifinals of the Dubai

Championships. The unseeded, Indian-Australian duo will take on John Peers of Australia and Jamie Murray of the United Kingdom in the semifinal.

Earlier, Bhambri and Popyrin triumphed over the British pair of Julian Cash and Lloyd Glasspool in the quarterfinals.