

International

Serbian PM Milos Vucevic resigns.

Serbian Prime Minister Milos Vucevic announced that he was resigning, following months of mass demonstrations over the fatal collapse of a train station roof in November of last year. At least 15 people were killed in the northern city of Novi Sad in that accident. Vucevic's resignation came a day after Serbian students and farmers staged a daylong blockage of a major traffic intersection in Belgrade. The Prime Minister had been in office for less than a year.

US President Trump announces Microsoft in talks to acquire TikTok.

US President Donald Trump had announced that Microsoft is in talks to acquire the popular video-sharing app TikTok. He expressed his desire for a bidding war over the sale of the platform, saying that multiple contenders are interested. Trump added he wants the United States to have a 50% ownership position in a joint venture.

Denmark to strengthen Arctic defence amid US interests in Greenland.

Denmark has unveiled plans to bolster its military presence in the Arctic amid rising concerns over the US interest in acquiring Greenland, a Danish-owned territory. Danish Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen announced that the government will allocate 2 billion dollars to boost the defence of Greenland, Arctic Sea and Northern Atlantic. The plan will include deployment of three new Arctic naval vessels and two long-range drones, increased surveillance and crisis training for the residents.

Pakistan outlaws disinformation with three-year jail term.

Pakistan criminalised online disinformation, passing legislation that enshrines punishments of up to three years in prison, a decision journalists say is designed to crack down on dissent. The law targets anyone who "intentionally disseminates" information online that they have "reason to believe to be false or fake and likely to cause or create a sense of fear, panic or disorder or unrest".

Georgia achieves WHO malaria-free certification.

Georgia has officially been certified as malaria-free by the World Health Organization (WHO). With this certification, Georgia joins 45 other countries and one territory that have reached this milestone, underscoring the global progress towards malaria elimination.

Turkey now remains the only country in the WHO European Region yet to be certified as malaria-free.

National

ISRO Marks 100th launch As GSLV-F15 carrying Navigation Satellite NVS-02 lifts off.

ISRO successfully launched their GSLV-F15 rocket carrying navigation satellite NVS-02 at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, marking the Indian space agency's 100th mission. GSLV-F15 is the 17th flight of India's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) and the 11th flight with the Indigenous cryostage. It is the 8th operational flight of GSLV with an indigenous Cryogenic stage.

The key applications of the satellite would be terrestrial, aerial and maritime navigation, precision agriculture, fleet management, location based services in mobile devices, orbit determination for satellites, Internet-of-Things (IoT) based applications, emergency and timing services.

BJP emerges richest party with ₹7,113-cr fund balance: ECI data.

The BJP, which claims itself as the biggest political party in the world, has a whopping cash and bank balance of ₹7,113.80 crore against the principal opposition Congress party's ₹857.15 crore as on March 31, 2024, according to figures provided to the Election Commission.

The BJP spent as much as ₹1,754.06 crore during 2023-24 when Lok Sabha elections were announced, a whopping 60% rise than ₹1,092 crore spent in 2022-23. The ruling party has also shown having received other contributions to the tune of Rs 2,042.75 crore during the year, againsts Rs 648.42 crore in the previous year 2022-23.

JPC on Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 adopts its draft report.

The Joint Committee of Parliament on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 adopted its draft report. Chairman of the 31-member panel, Jagdambika Pal, said the Committee has adopted amendments to 14 clauses related to the Bill. He added that the report of the Committee will be submitted to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 aims to bring significant reforms, including digitisation of records, stricter audits, increased transparency and legal mechanisms to reclaim illegally occupied Waqf properties. The Bill is aimed at reforming the management and regulation of Waqf properties across the country.

Business and Economy

India, Oman agree to amend tax treaty to promote greater cooperation.

India and Oman have agreed to amend the DTAA to align it with international standards on cross-border taxation, simplifying procedures, and promoting greater cooperation in tax matters. A protocol to amend the India-Oman Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) was signed during the visit of Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal to Muscat.

They have also decided to expedite the discussions for an early signing of a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA),

MobiKwik, Cred join hands with RBI to fully launch CBDC (e₹) for Android

One Mobikwik Systems Ltd. and Cred have recently initiated their individual e-rupee pilot programs in partnership with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This collaboration marks their distinction as the pioneering fintech platforms to join hands with the RBI for the implementation of the central bank digital currency (CBDC). Yes Bank has been selected as the primary sponsor bank to facilitate the issuance of the CBDC for both of these third-party application providers.

With this move, Cred and Mobikwik became the first fintech platforms to partner with the RBI on the central bank digital currency.

Three Indians on Forbes 50 Over 50 list

Three Indian women have been honoured on the Forbes 50 Over 50 Global list, including a founder, an activist, and a Bengaluru-based billionaire. The Forbes 50 Over 50 list honours those trailblazers who prove that age is just a number. The Forbes 50 Over 50 Global list, published for the first time ever, included the names of three Indian women. They are: Urmila Asher, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, and Sheela Patel.

At 80, Urmila Asher, affectionately known as Gujju Ben, launched Gujju Ben na Nasta, a food business rooted in her Gujarati culinary expertise.

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw is a trailblazer in the biopharmaceutical industry and one of India's most successful self-made women.

Sheela Patel is a renowned activist and academic dedicated to advocating for the rights of slum dwellers and creating equitable urban spaces.

Federal Bank Q3 PAT slides 5% to ₹955 crore.

Federal Bank Ltd for the third quarter ended December 31, 2024 had reported 5% drop in net profit at ₹955.44 crore as compared with ₹1,007 crore in the year ago period. Net Interest Income (NII) of the bank for the quarter grew 14.5% Year on Year (YoY) to ₹2,431.34 crore.

Sports

New Zealand's Amelia Kerr named ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced New Zealand's Amelia Kerr as the winner of the prestigious Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy for ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year. Amelia Kerr became the first Kiwi to receive the honour following an exceptional 2024 where she led the White Ferns to their maiden ICC Women's T20 World Cup title.

Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah was honoured with the prestigious Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year 2024, recognising his exceptional performances across all formats.

England defeats India in 3rd T20I.

England defeated India by 26 runs in the third T20 International match at Niranjan Shah Stadium in Rajkot, Gujarat. Chasing a target of 172 runs set by England, India managed to score only 145 for the loss of 9 wickets in their stipulated 20 overs. Earlier, after being put into bat, England posted a total of 171 for 9 in 20 overs.

Gukesh D claims sole lead in Tata Steel Chess Tournament.

In the Tata Steel Chess Tournament, World Chess Champion Gukesh Dommaraju has

emerged as the sole leader in the Masters standings after securing a Round 9 victory in Wijk aan Zee, the Netherlands. Gukesh defeated compatriot Leon Luke Mendonca with the white pieces in a 43-move game, bringing his tally to 6.5 points and claiming the top spot.