

International

US President urges Iran to negotiate nuclear deal.

US President Donald Trump has renewed threats against Iran over stalled nuclear talks, warning that any future strike would be far worse than previous actions. President Trump urged Tehran to quickly come to the table for a fair and equitable deal that eliminates nuclear weapons.

Japan's last pair of pandas returns to China.

Japan's last pair of pandas have returned to China, leaving Japan without the lovable bears for the first time in half a century. China first sent pandas to Japan in 1972. Beijing has long used the bears as a diplomatic tool- a sign of goodwill and an extension of the country's soft power, and it retracts them when bilateral relationships turn adversarial. While Beijing lends pandas to other countries, it maintains ownership over the animals, including new cubs.

National

Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar dies in plane crash.

Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar died in a plane crash in Maharashtra's Baramati. A Learjet 45 (VT-SSK) aircraft, operated by VSR, crash-landed at Baramati airport. There were five personnel on board, including the Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister, two more personnel and two crew members. Spanning a career of almost four decades, Ajit Pawar was Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra six times. He handled various ministries, including the Finance portfolio and presented the state budget 11 times.

AYUSHEXCIL, Zepto sign MoU.

The Ministry of Ayush oversaw a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ayush Export Promotion

Council (AYUSHEXCIL) and Zepto Limited to facilitate structured online access to Ayush medicines and wellness products across the country. The MoU aims to strengthen digital discovery while ensuring quality compliance and consumer trust in traditional healthcare products.

NITI Aayog launches Sampoonata Abhiyan 2.0 to accelerate development across Aspirational Districts & Blocks.

NITI Aayog has launched Sampoonata Abhiyan 2.0, a three-month campaign aimed at achieving saturation of critical development indicators in Aspirational Districts and Aspirational Blocks across the country. The campaign will run till the 14th of April, this year. The abhiyan seeks to build on the successful outcomes of the 2024 campaign and focuses on saturating five key performance indicators in 112 Aspirational Districts and six indicators in 513 Aspirational Blocks. These indicators cover priority areas such as health and nutrition, sanitation, education, maternal and child health, tuberculosis case detection and animal vaccination.

12th edition of Smile International Film Festival for Children and Youth begins in New Delhi.

The 12th edition of Smile International Film Festival for Children and Youth-SIFFCY, organised by Smile Foundation, has begun in New Delhi. This seven-day event has been organised in collaboration with the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. For the first time, the film festival has themes like disability inclusion, equity and diversity, and many more films have been produced by disabled children themselves.

The event is organised with the support of the embassies of Ukraine, the Netherlands, Finland, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Cyprus, Estonia, the Polish Institute, and the Italian Cultural Centre.

Government notifies Solid Waste Management Rules 2026.

The Union government has notified the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2026, which will come into effect from 1st April this year. The revised rules will integrate the principles of circular economy and extended producer responsibility, with a specific focus on efficient waste segregation and management. It added that under the SWM rules 2026, four-stream segregation of solid waste at source has been made mandatory.

The new rules will also provide for the levy of environmental compensation based on the Polluter Pays principle for non-compliance, including cases of operating without registration, false reporting, and improper solid waste management practices.

Business and Economy

India-EU trade deal: New Delhi opens way for EU banks, allowing 15 branches.

Under the recently signed India-EU trade deal, India has agreed to allow EU banks to open 15 branches over a span of four years, a significant expansion from the previously offered limits of 12 branches. India has also agreed to bind foreign direct investment (FDI) in the insurance sector at 100% in exchange for a more stable visa regime for its employees and professionals working in member countries.

At the same time, the EU's liberalized offers will allow Indian financial service providers to scale up operations in the EU, reinforcing India's financial services exports and fostering sustained, progressive growth in the sector.

Micro lenders get Rs 8,000 crore credit guarantee boost amid funding stress.

The Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) has approved an ₹8,000 crore credit guarantee scheme to support microfinance institutions, providing government backing to a sector that has been facing increased delinquencies and difficulty in raising funds.

The scheme will incentivize banks to lend to microfinance institutions, especially smaller ones. It will be implemented outside the union budget framework and announced after Cabinet clearance.

Federal Reserve keeps interest rates unchanged.

The Federal Reserve pushed the pause button on its interest rate cuts on January 28, 2026, leaving its key rate unchanged at about 3.6% after lowering it three times last year. Central bank officials upgraded their assessment of the economy to solid from moderate on the back of a strong third-quarter GDP reading and expectations for a strong fourth quarter.

IIP growth quickens to 26-month high of 7.8% in December 2025.

Growth in industrial activity accelerated to a 26-month high of 7.8% in December 2025, driven by strong performances across sectors, including manufacturing, electricity, and the consumer goods sectors.

Data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on the Index of Industrial Production showed that the index last grew faster than December's growth rate in October 2023, when it grew 11.9%.

ONGC, Reliance Industries ink MoU for sharing deepwater resources.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and privately-owned refiner Reliance Industries have entered into an agreement for the sharing of resources emanating from their deepwater exploration and production operations in India's East coast, particularly across the Krishna Godavari (KG) basin and Andaman offshore.

Sports

4th T20I: NZ beat IND by 50 runs in Visakhapatnam.

New Zealand defeated India by 50 runs at the ACA-VDCA Stadium in Visakhapatnam. Batting first, New Zealand posted a strong 215/7 in 20 overs. Timely wickets by Mitchell Santner (3/26) and Jacob Duffy (2/33), led to India collapsing to 165 all out in 18.4 overs.

India's Srishti Kiran clinches fourth consecutive ITF junior singles title.

India's 13-year-old tennis star Srishti Kiran has continued her impressive run on the ITF junior circuit, clinching her 4th consecutive ITF junior singles title. She registered 21 wins to cap a commanding performance at the ITF World Tennis Tour Juniors J30 tournament in Huamantla, Mexico, held from 19-25 January 2026.