

International

WHO Seeks Urgent Funding for Myanmar After Devastating Earthquake

The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified the Myanmar earthquake as a top-level emergency and urgently sought 8 million US dollars to save lives and prevent disease outbreaks over the next month.

The 7.7-magnitude earthquake, which struck near Mandalay, caused extensive destruction and left more than 1,700 dead and 3,400 injured.

Iran Rejects Direct Negotiations With United States Over Nuclear Programme

Iran's president said that the Islamic Republic has rejected direct negotiations with the United States over its rapidly advancing nuclear programme.

President Masoud Pezeshkian, in his response delivered via the sultanate of Oman, left open the possibility of indirect negotiations with Washington.

However, such talks have made no progress since Trump in his first term unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers in 2018.

Indian Consulate General in Jaffna Launches Hindi Language Course at University of Vavuniya

The Consulate General of India in Jaffna has launched a Hindi language course at the University of Vavuniya, catering to growing interest in the language.

The course was inaugurated jointly by Indian Consul General Sai Murali and Vice-Chancellor Prof. Atputharajah. The initiative aims to enhance linguistic and cultural ties between India and Sri Lanka, fostering better communication and deeper cultural exchanges.

China, Japan, and South Korea Agree to Strengthen Trade Ties

China, Japan and South Korea have agreed to boost trade cooperation in a meeting held in Seoul.

The three countries agreed to closely cooperate for comprehensive and high-level talks on a trilateral free trade agreement deal to promote regional and global trade.

It is necessary to strengthen the implementation of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) to create a framework for expanding trade cooperation among the three

countries through Korea-China-Japan FTA negotiations.

Important Days

Eiffel Tower Day: 31st March

Eiffel Tower Day is celebrated on March 31st each year to commemorate the completion of the iconic Eiffel Tower in Paris, France.

The tower, designed by engineer Gustave Eiffel, was completed in 1889 and was initially intended as the entrance arch for the 1889 Exposition Universelle (World's Fair), held to mark the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution.

National

PM Modi to Flag Off First Vande Bharat Express to Kashmir from Katra on April 19

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the first Vande Bharat Express to Kashmir from Katra on April 19, marking the completion of the 272-kilometre Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link.

The much-awaited rail project, which began in 1997, faced multiple delays due to tough terrain. It includes 38 tunnels, 927 bridges, and the 1,315-meter-long Chenab Bridge, which is taller than the Eiffel Tower.

Centre Extends Armed Forces Special Powers Act in Parts of Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh & Nagaland for Six Months

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) announced the extension of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) for another six months in parts of Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland.

In Manipur, the AFSPA will continue in all districts except for those under the jurisdiction of 13 police stations in five districts – Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal, Bishnupur, and Kakching. The state has been grappling with ethnic violence since May 2023.

The law has also been extended in eight districts of Nagaland and parts of five others, while in Arunachal Pradesh, the AFSPA applies to Tirap, Changlang, Longding districts, and certain areas in Namsai district.

Nidhi Tiwari Appointed the Private Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi

The government has appointed Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer Nidhi Tiwari as the Private Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A distinguished IFS officer, Nidhi Tiwari has vast experience in diplomacy and governance. She has held key roles across multiple ministries and government departments.

Business and Economy

India-U.S. Trade Talks in New Delhi Concludes

Indian and U.S. officials concluded a series of negotiations in New Delhi, making significant progress toward a bilateral trade agreement.

The discussions were led by India's Commerce Ministry and a U.S. delegation headed by Brendan Lynch, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for South and Central Asia.

Both parties focused on reducing tariffs and easing non-tariff barriers to facilitate smoother trade relations.

The U.S. currently faces a \$45.6-billion trade deficit with India. While the U.S. maintains an average tariff rate of approximately 2.2%, India's average tariff stands at 12%.

Sports

Deepak Punia & Udit Settle for Silver Medals at Asian Wrestling Championship

In wrestling, Olympian Deepak Punia and Udit settles for silver medals at the Asian Wrestling Championships in Amman, Jordan.

While Deepak Punia won a silver medal in the men's freestyle 92kg weight category, Udit bagged a silver medal in the 61kg weight division.

Meanwhile, Dinesh, who went down to Mongolia's Munkhtur Lkhagvagerel in the 125kg semis, made the most of his chance by defeating Turkmenistan's Zyyamuhammet Saparov to bag the bronze.

India has secured a total of 10 medals – one gold, three silver and six bronze at the event.

Table Tennis: Manav Thakkar Bows Out of WTT Star Contender Event

In table tennis, India's top-ranked Manav Thakkar bowed out of the WTT Star Contender event after losing to unseeded Frenchman Thibault Poret 1-3 in the men's semifinals in Chennai.

Manav became the first Indian to reach the semifinals of a WTT Star Contender event after a win over South Korea's Lim Jong-hoon in Chennai.