

## International

### US President Trump threatens BRICS with 100% tariffs.

United States President Donald Trump has once again warned BRICS nations and threatened them with 100 per cent tariffs on their exports if they try to replace the US dollar as the main currency in global trade. President Trump has repeatedly said that BRICS nations must maintain the US dollar's role in global trade or face economic consequences.

For years, the BRICS group of nations have been mulling ways to reduce dependence on the American dollar.

### Pakistan decides to criminalise begging.

Pakistan government has decided to criminalise begging following multiple complaints from foreign countries as thousands of its nationals residing abroad have been caught in illegal activities and begging. This has resulted in a major global embarrassment and visa bans for travellers from the country.

Pakistan has received multiple complaints from foreign countries – especially members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Iraq and Malaysia – about the increasing cases of Pakistani nationals caught begging in their respective countries.

### Niger becomes 1st African country to eliminate onchocerciasis.

Niger becomes the first country in the African Region to eliminate onchocerciasis. Niger is recognised as the fifth country in the world, the first in Africa, to have successfully halted the transmission of the parasite *Onchocerca volvulus*. The other four countries that have reached this milestone are all located in the Americas: Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico.

Onchocerciasis, commonly known as river blindness, is a parasitic disease and is the second leading infectious cause of blindness worldwide, after trachoma. It is transmitted to humans through the bites of infective black flies, primarily found in riverine areas.

### WHO recommends potassium-enriched salt substitutes to combat hypertension

The World Health Organization (WHO) has released new guidelines recommending the switch from regular table salt to potassium-enriched salt substitutes as part of efforts to combat hypertension and related cardiovascular

diseases. The WHO's mission to lower sodium intake stems from extensive research highlighting the health risks posed by excess sodium consumption.

### World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day observed on 30 January

World Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) Day is observed annually on 30 January to raise awareness about the suffering caused by NTDs and reaffirm the commitment of governments, organizations, and communities to combat these diseases. This year, the global theme is "Unite, Act, and Eliminate NTDs", emphasizing collective action to improve the health and well-being of over 1.6 billion people affected by NTDs worldwide.

## National

### India to launch indigenous AI model at affordable cost.

The Union government has announced that India is all set to launch its own safe and secure indigenous Artificial intelligence (AI) model at an affordable cost, Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw said. He stated that compared to global AI models costing 2.5 to 3 dollars per hour usage, India's AI Model will cost less than 100 rupees per hour after 40 per cent government subsidy.

The Minister also announced that an AI safety institution will be established. He highlighted the progress of the India AI Mission which has already far surpassed its initial Graphics Processing Unit GPU targets.

### Centre approves 3,027 crores for disaster mitigation projects across states

A High-Level Committee led by Home Minister Amit Shah has sanctioned Rs 3,027.86 crore for disaster mitigation in several states. This funding includes Rs 2,022.16 crore for drought-prone districts and Rs 186.78 crore for lightning safety projects, focusing on enhancing India's disaster management capabilities. The committee considered proposals of projects on lightning safety and lightning risk mitigation in 50 heavy lightning-prone districts of 10 states and catalytic assistance to 49 districts of 12 most drought-prone States for funding from National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF).

## **World Book Fair 2025 to commence on February 1 in New Delhi.**

The New Delhi World Book Fair 2025 will commence on 1st February at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. This year, the fair's theme is 'We the People of India', commemorating 75 years of the Republic of India. The nine-day fair will be inaugurated by President Droupadi Murmu. Russia is the focus country of the fair, and over 50 countries will participate. Nearly two thousand publishers and one thousand speakers will attend the fair.

## **Tata Steel becomes 'India's 1st' to develop hydrogen transportation pipes**

Tata Steel has claimed that it is the first Indian company to develop pipes designed for transporting hydrogen, marking an important step in India's clean energy efforts. The company's hydrogen-compliant API X65 pipes were processed at Tata Steel's Khopoli plant using steel produced at its Kalanganagar facility. In 2024, Tata Steel became the first Indian steel company to manufacture hot-rolled steel for gaseous hydrogen transportation, further strengthening its position in the sector.

## **Business and Economy**

## **Digital payments rise 11.1% Y-o-Y in September 2024: RBI data**

According to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) index, digital payments across India recorded a double-digit jump of 11.1 per cent year-on-year (YoY) as of September 2024. The RBI's Digital Payments Index (RBI-DPI) for September 2024 stands at 465.33 up from 445.5 for March 2024. The increase in the RBI-DPI index was driven by growth in payment infrastructure and payment performance across the country over the period.

## **SEBI bars finfluencers from using live or recent stock market data in educational content**

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has barred financial influencers (finfluencers) from using live or recent stock market data in educational content. In a circular, SEBI stated that educators can only reference stock prices with a three-month lag to prevent real-time trading tips disguised as education. SEBI clarified that unregistered individuals cannot offer investment advice, make performance claims, or indirectly suggest future stock prices. Registered market entities are also prohibited from associating with such finfluencers.

## **CUB wins seven IBA Banking Tech awards for the second consecutive year**

City Union Bank (CUB) won seven awards at the 20th Annual Technology Conference, Expo, & Citations 2024, held in Mumbai. This marks the second consecutive year the bank has received awards in all seven categories at the event.

Karnataka Bank also won awards in six categories. The awards were: 'Best Tech Talent and Organization', 'Best IT Risk Management', 'Best Technology Bank', and 'Best Fintech and DPI Adoption' (all runner-ups); and 'Best Digital Sales, Payments and Engagement' and 'Best AI and ML Adoption' (special mention). The Indian Banks' Association (IBA) presents these awards to recognise the best technology providers in the banking industry, encouraging competition and rewarding innovation in customer service and best practices.

## **Bank of Baroda Q3 net profit rises 5.6% to ₹4,837 crore**

Bank of Baroda Ltd has reported third quarter standalone net profit rose 5.6% to ₹4,837 crore from ₹4,579 crore in the year-earlier period.

Net interest income (NII) grew 2.8% YoY to ₹11,417 crore. Global net interest margin (NIM) stood at 2.94%. Cost of deposits increased to 5.08% in the quarter as against 4.96% in the same period last year.

## **Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Q3 PAT grows 6% to ₹300 crore**

Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd. (TMB) reported a 6% rise in Q3 net profit to ₹300 crore from ₹284 crore in the year-ago period.

The net interest income stood at Rs 570 crore for Q3 FY25, as against Rs 537 crore in Q3 FY24, registering a growth rate of 6 per cent.

## **Aditya Birla Housing Finance raises ₹830 crore from IFC.**

Aditya Birla Housing Finance Ltd. (ABHFL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital had secured an investment of ₹830 crore through non-convertible debentures (NCDs) from the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

The funds raised through IFC's investment will be utilised to address critical gaps by providing housing loans to low-income and middle-income groups (LIG and MIG), with particular focus on encouraging homeownership among women.

## Sports

### Kidambi, Subramanian enter Thailand Masters quarters

Kidambi Srikanth and S. Subramanian won their respective matches to reach the men's singles' quarterfinals of the Thailand Masters BWF Super 300 tournament. Srikanth got the better of the 20-year-old Jason Gunawan from Hong Kong 21-19, 21-15 in his round of 16 contest.

Subramanian lost the opening set before sealing the issue with 9-21, 21-10, 21-17 against Aura Dwi Wardoyo from Indonesia.

### Sachin Tendulkar To Be Honoured By BCCI's Lifetime Achievement Award

Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar will be conferred with the BCCI'S Lifetime Achievement Award at the Board's annual gala. Sachin, who played 664 international games for India, holds the record for the highest number of Test and ODI runs in the history of the game. He will be the recipient of the C K Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award for the year 2024.