

International

India, Seychelles Explore Deeper Maritime and Blue Economy Cooperation

India and Seychelles explored avenues to strengthen cooperation in maritime trade, blue economy sectors and sustainable development at an Indo-Seychelles Business Roundtable held in Mumbai. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal highlighted shared maritime heritage and cooperation under India's MAHASAGAR vision. Discussions focused on ports, fisheries, renewable energy, tourism, fintech and logistics. Seychelles President Patrick Herminie attended the meet, which underscored growing economic ties and opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships in the Indian Ocean Region.

Important Days

National Opera Day: 8th February

National Opera Day is celebrated every year on February 8 to honour the rich cultural heritage of opera, an art form that blends singing, drama, music, and visual spectacle.

Originating in Italy in the late 16th century, opera derives from the Italian word opera, meaning "work" or "masterpiece."

From Jacopo Peri's Dafne to the works of Mozart and Verdi, opera has evolved into a global symbol of artistic excellence.

The day recognises iconic opera houses, honours dedicated performers, and promotes awareness of classical music and live theatre among new generations.

National

Amaravati to Become India's First Quantum Valley

Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh said Amaravati will soon emerge as India's first Quantum Valley.

He, along with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, laid the foundation stone for the Amaravati Quantum Valley project in the state capital. The Minister said the initiative aligns with the National Quantum Mission and aims to position India as a global hub for quantum research, innovation, and advanced technologies.

Pulse Self-Reliance Mission Launched to Boost Production and Exports

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the nationwide Pulse Self-Reliance Mission in Sehore district of Madhya Pradesh.

The mission focuses on cluster-based production, seed villages, setting up 1,000 pulse mills, and strengthening research-farmer linkages, reinforcing the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat in agriculture.

President Murmu Inaugurates Bastar Pandum Festival in Chhattisgarh

President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the Bastar Pandum festival at Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh, highlighting the vibrant tribal culture of the Bastar region.

She said the festival showcases the rich traditions of local communities to the nation and the world.

The festival will feature divisional-level competitions till February 9, with over 700 artists performing in various cultural disciplines.

J&K Govt Scraps Dal Lake Resettlement Plan, Shifts to Eco-Hamlet Model

The Jammu and Kashmir government has abandoned the ₹416.72-crore Dal Lake resettlement plan after achieving only 27% progress in 17 years. Instead, it has opted for an in-situ conservation model, developing 58 existing hamlets as 'eco-hamlets'. Six hamlets are already under

development, with one completed. The move follows a committee report recognising Dal Lake dwellers as integral to the lake's ecosystem, while a new conservation project now awaits final financial approval.

INS Sudarshini Concludes First Port Call at Salalah, Oman

The Indian Navy's Sail Training Ship INS Sudarshini successfully concluded her first port call at Salalah, Oman, marking an important milestone in her ten-month trans-oceanic voyage Lokayan 26.

The visit highlighted historic maritime ties between India and Oman through interactions with the Royal Navy of Oman and people-to-people engagements.

Open to the public, the ship welcomed over 600 visitors before proceeding on the next leg of her voyage, carrying forward India's rich seafaring heritage and message of global friendship.

ICMR Advances Development of Indigenous Vaccine Against Kyasanur Forest Disease

The Indian Council of Medical Research is making steady progress in developing an improved vaccine against Kyasanur Forest Disease, a regional viral illness affecting states in the Western Ghats. In collaboration with Indian Immunologicals Limited and the National Institute of Virology, ICMR has developed a fully indigenous two-dose inactivated vaccine. Following successful animal studies, Phase I human clinical trials have begun with CDSCO approval, marking a key step towards strengthening disease control efforts.

Business and Economy

Draft Rules for New Income Tax Act, 2025 Released

The Income Tax Department has released draft rules and forms under the new

Income Tax Act, 2025, aimed at simplifying provisions and reducing compliance burden.

The new Act will replace the Income Tax Act of 1961 and come into effect from April 1.

Stakeholders have been invited to submit comments on the draft Income-tax Rules, 2026, by February 22.

The draft contains 333 rules and 190 forms, after which the final rules will be notified.

SBI Q3 FY26 Net Profit Jumps 24.5% to ₹21,028 Crore

State Bank of India reported a 24.5% year-on-year rise in standalone net profit to ₹21,028 crore in Q3 FY26, driven by a 9.04% increase in net interest income.

Gross advances grew 15.17% to ₹46.8 lakh crore, while deposits rose 9.02%. Asset quality improved, with gross NPAs declining 12.3% and net NPAs falling 15.74%.

SBI Chairperson C.S. Setty said credit demand remained strong across all segments and the bank has adequate capital and liquidity headroom.

AAI Partners with Bharat Taxi to Launch Passenger-Friendly Cab Services at Airports

The Airports Authority of India has signed an MoU with Bharat Taxi, India's first cooperative-based ride-hailing platform, to introduce regulated and transparent cab services at select airports.

The partnership aims to provide reliable, surge-free transport while ensuring driver ownership and welfare.

Backed by cooperative institutions, Bharat Taxi's airport expansion aligns with national priorities such as Atmanirbhar Bharat, Sahakar se Samridhi, and Viksit Bharat 2047.

Sports

India Clinch SAFF U-19 Women's Football Title

India defeated Bangladesh 4–0 in the final to win the SAFF Under-19 Women's Championship at Pokhara Rangasala Stadium in Nepal.

Captain Julan Nongmaithem led the scoring, followed by goals from Elizabeth Lakra, Pearl Fernandes and Anwita Raghuraman.

The victory helped the Young Tigresses avenge their earlier defeat and also served as preparation for the AFC Under-17 Women's Asian Cup later this year.

India Beat USA by 29 Runs in T20 World Cup Clash

India defeated the United States by 29 runs in the third match of the T20 World Cup at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium.

Chasing 162, the USA managed 132 for 8, with Mohammed Siraj taking three wickets. Earlier, India scored 161 for 9, led by skipper Suryakumar Yadav's unbeaten 84, earning him Player of the Match.

In another match, West Indies beat Scotland by 35 runs.