

INTERNATIONAL

UN Chief announces 'UN80 Initiative' to boost efficiencies amid uncertainty



In response to the growing financial crisis and global uncertainty, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres launched the 'UN80 Initiative' to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness within the United Nations. This initiative aims to address the shrinking resources, streamline operations, and enhance the organization's ability to deliver on its mandates effectively.

INDIA & THE WORLD

India – New Zealand announce launch of FTA negotiations



India and New Zealand have officially launched negotiations for a “comprehensive and mutually beneficial” Free Trade Agreement (FTA), marking a significant step in their bilateral relations. This will be India’s second FTA in the Oceania region, after the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), signed in April 2022. The FTA aims to enhance supply chain integration, expand market access, and foster economic resilience and prosperity for both nations.

China's 5,000 km Radar: A Challenge for India's Defence



China has recently deployed a sophisticated Large Phased Array Radar (LPAR) system in Yunnan province, near the China-Myanmar border, significantly enhancing its surveillance capabilities over India. This development has raised concerns among Indian security agencies due to the radar's extensive range and advanced tracking features.

Key Features of China's LPAR System

- **Extended Range:** The LPAR boasts a detection range exceeding 5,000 kilometers, enabling it to monitor vast areas, including significant portions of Indian territory and the Indian Ocean region.
- **Advanced Tracking Capabilities:** Utilizing electronically controlled antennas, the radar can rapidly scan large areas and precisely track multiple targets simultaneously. This

technology is crucial for monitoring ballistic missile trajectories and other aerial activities.

- **Strategic Positioning:** Located approximately 2,000–2,200 kilometers northeast of India's Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Island—a primary site for testing missiles like the Agni-V and K-4—the radar can effectively monitor India's missile tests in real-time.

NATIONAL

Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurates First-Ever Fit India Carnival



The Fit India Carnival, a first-of-its-kind three-day fitness and wellness event, was inaugurated by Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (JLN), New Delhi, on March 16, 2025. The event aims to promote physical fitness, mental well-being, and healthy lifestyle choices among citizens. Bollywood actor Ayushmann Khurrana, wrestling

champion Sangram Singh, wellness expert Mickey Mehta, former WWE wrestler Shanky Singh, and Guinness World Record holder Rohtash Chaudhary added star power to the grand celebration.

Six New properties added to India's UNESCO Tentative List



India has recently added six new properties to its UNESCO Tentative List, bringing the total count of tentative sites in the country to 62. These sites, including Ashokan Edict Sites, Chausath Yogini Temples, and Kanger Valley National Park, were officially included in the list on March 7, 2024, as confirmed by the Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO. The announcement was shared by India at UNESCO on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter).

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Adar Poonawalla sells Magma Insurance stake to Patanjali Ayurved and DS Group for ₹4,500 Crore



In a significant move in the Indian insurance sector, Adar Poonawalla, CEO of Serum Institute of India, has sold his stake in Magma General Insurance to Baba Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurved and Dharampal Satyapal (DS) Group for ₹4,500 crore. With this acquisition, Patanjali and DS Group will hold a 98% stake in Magma Insurance, marking their strategic entry into the insurance market. This deal is expected to strengthen Magma Insurance's position and leverage Patanjali's rural reach and DS Group's financial expertise to boost the company's growth in the underpenetrated general insurance sector.

RBI wins Digital Transformation Award 2025 for Pravaah and Sarthi Initiatives



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been awarded the Digital Transformation Award 2025 by Central Banking, London, UK. This prestigious recognition is a testament to RBI's successful implementation of its digital initiatives—Pravaah and Sarthi—which were developed in-house by its IT team. These digital advancements have significantly improved RBI's internal workflow management and external regulatory processes, thereby enhancing operational efficiency and reducing reliance on paper-based submissions.

Moody's projects India's GDP growth to exceed 6.5% in FY 2025-26



Global credit rating agency Moody's Ratings has projected that India's economic growth will surpass 6.5% in the fiscal year 2025-26, up from 6.3% in FY 2024-25. The growth is expected to be driven by higher government capital expenditure, tax cuts to boost consumption, and monetary easing through interest rate cuts. However, Moody's anticipates moderate deterioration in asset quality in the banking sector due to stress in unsecured retail loans, microfinance, and small business loans.

RBI announces 'on Tap' Cohort within Regulatory Sandbox



RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra recently outlined plans for a dedicated 'on Tap' cohort within the RBI's Regulatory Sandbox. This initiative aims to encourage innovation in the financial sector related to climate change and sustainability. The RBI's Regulatory Sandbox allows fintech companies to test new products in a controlled environment. This initiative has facilitated various innovations. The new 'on Tap' cohort will specifically focus on climate change risks and sustainable finance.

RBI Framework for Self-Regulatory Organisations in India



Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced a framework for recognising self-regulatory organisations (SROs) within the account aggregator (AA) ecosystem. This initiative aims to enhance the accountability and governance of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) engaged in account aggregation. The RBI's framework outlines the structure, responsibilities, and operational guidelines for SROs designated as SRO-AAs. Account aggregators are entities that collect and consolidate financial information from various financial information providers (FIPs). They serve as intermediaries, presenting this data to financial information users (FI-Us).

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

India successfully tests Astra BVRAAM from LCA Tejas AF MK1 Prototype



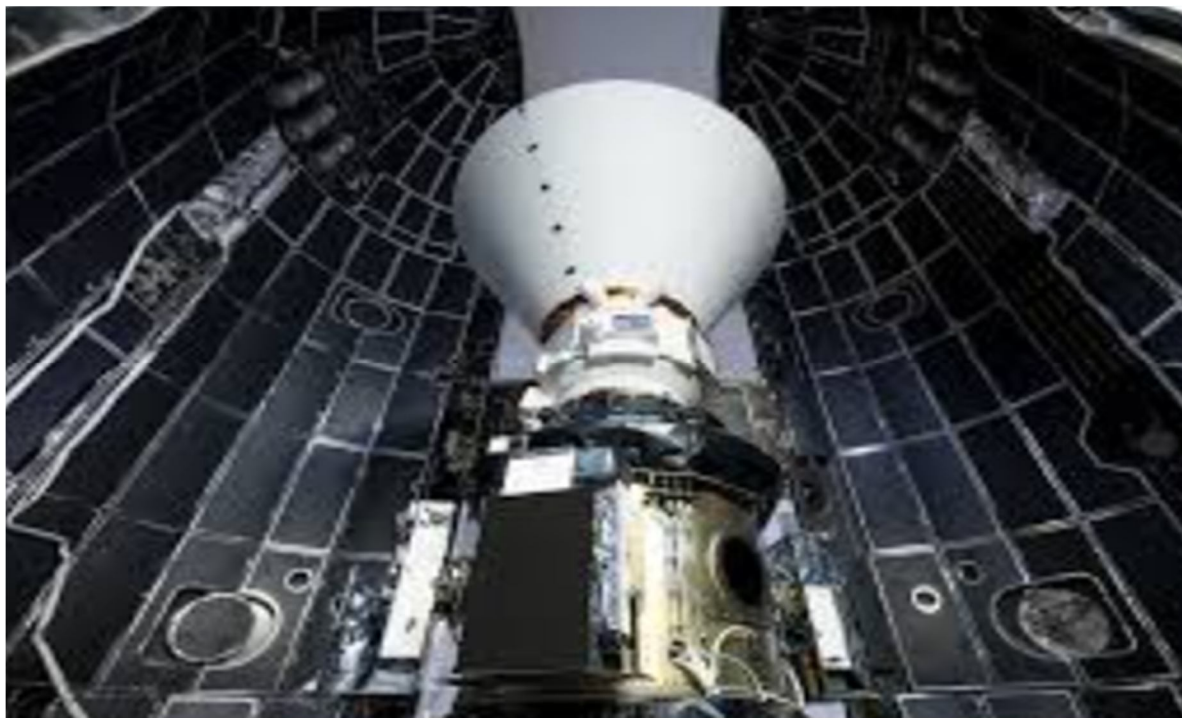
India's Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) successfully conducted the test launch of the indigenous Astra Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM) from the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas AF MK1 prototype off the Chandipur coast in Odisha. The test demonstrated the missile's accuracy and advanced capabilities, marking a major step toward strengthening India's indigenous defense systems.

Key Highlights

- **Missile Tested:** Astra BVRAAM (Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile)
- **Launch Platform:** Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas AF MK1 prototype

- **Location of Test:** Off the coast of Chandipur, Odisha
- **Developed By:** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
- **Test Result:** Direct hit on a flying target with all subsystems performing optimally
- **Range:** Over 100 kilometers
- **Purpose:** To enhance India's air defense capabilities and boost indigenous missile technology

NASA's SPHEREx Space Telescope launches to map the Universe's Cosmic Glow



NASA has successfully launched its latest space telescope, SPHEREx (Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionization, and Ices Explorer), aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Vandenberg Space Force Base, California, on March 11, 2025. The \$488 million mission aims to map the entire sky using infrared technology to study galaxy evolution, the early universe, and interstellar ice. Unlike telescopes that focus on

individual galaxies, SPHEREx will analyze the collective cosmic glow of all galaxies throughout history, providing unique insights into the universe's expansion and formation.

Space De-docking Mission



On January 16, 2025, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) achieved milestone in space exploration by successfully docking two satellites, SDX01 and SDX02. Following this, on January 30, ISRO completed a complex de-docking process. This achievement marks India's entry into an elite group of countries capable of such advanced space operations. Docking involves two spacecraft connecting in space. It requires precise alignment of speed and orientation. De-docking, while seemingly simpler, is equally complex. It requires controlled separation to prevent collisions in microgravity. Minor forces can lead to unintended drift.

SPORTS

India shines with 33 Medals at the Special Olympics World Winter Games 2025



India delivered a stellar performance at the Special Olympics World Winter Games 2025, held in Turin, Italy, by securing a total of 33 medals. The Indian contingent showcased exceptional skill and determination across various winter sports, bringing home 8 gold, 18 silver, and 7 bronze medals. The final day of the event was particularly remarkable as India added 12 more medals to its tally.

- Snowshoeing – 10 medals
- Alpine Skiing – 10 medals
- Snowboarding – 6 medals
- Short Track Speed Skating – 4 medals
- Cross Country Skiing – 2 medals
- Floorball – 1 medal

India tops Medal Tally at World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2025 in New Delhi



India finished on top of the medal tally at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2025 held in New Delhi, winning a total of 134 medals, including 45 gold, 40 silver and 49 bronze. This event marked India's first time hosting an international para-athletics event, which will now be an annual event till 2028.

MISCELLANEOUS

National Vaccination Day 2025 celebrated



National Vaccination Day, observed annually on March 16, is a significant event that underscores India's dedication to public health through immunisation. It serves as a reminder of the relentless efforts required to eliminate vaccine-preventable diseases and highlights the importance of ensuring universal vaccination coverage. As we commemorate National Vaccination Day 2025, it is crucial to reflect on India's remarkable journey in immunisation, its achievements, and the road ahead in safeguarding the health of future generations.

International Day of Action for Rivers celebrated



Every year on March 14, the world observes the International Day of Action for Rivers, a crucial but often overlooked occasion dedicated to raising awareness about the growing threats to rivers worldwide. This day highlights the urgent need to address issues such as river degradation, climate change, and the impact of human activities like dam construction and pollution. Rivers are the lifelines of ecosystems and communities, yet more than 60% of the world's rivers are disrupted by transverse barriers, such as dams

and artificial diversions. As global water bodies continue to face severe ecological challenges, this international event serves as a rallying call for collective action to protect and restore our rivers.

World Consumer Rights Day 2025 celebrated



World Consumer Rights Day is observed annually on March 15 to promote consumer rights and ensure that they are upheld globally. This day serves as an opportunity to highlight consumer-related issues, raise awareness about their rights, and advocate for fair practices in the marketplace. The observance of this day emphasizes the importance of consumer protection, ethical business practices, and sustainable consumption.

