

january

THE SCHOOL

A monthly current affairs magazine



USA arrested Nicolas Maduro
Trump's interest in Greenland
Henley Passport Index 2026
Gaza's Board of Peace





Trump's interest in Greenland raises worries around the world

Greenland is the biggest island globally, situated between North America and Europe. Approximately 80% of Greenland is covered in ice, with only about 57,000 residents. While Greenland manages many of its internal affairs, it is officially part of Denmark. Denmark oversees Greenland's defense and foreign relations. Trump has three reasons for wanting Greenland. First, its location is significant. It lies on an Arctic route, which aids in monitoring missiles and military activities. The United States already operates a military base there. Second, Greenland is rich in rare earth minerals. These minerals are essential for manufacturing phones, electric vehicles, and defense equipment. The third reason involves climate change. As Arctic ice melts, new sea routes are emerging, making Greenland crucial for trade and security. Denmark has made it clear that Greenland is not for sale. Both leaders and the people of Greenland have also turned down the USA's interest.



USA arrested Nicolas Maduro

On January 3, 2026, the United States arrested Nicolás Maduro, who is the president of Venezuela, along with his wife. Maduro was brought to the United States to face criminal charges. This is a rare situation because countries usually don't arrest leaders from other nations. Nicolás Maduro has been in charge of Venezuela since 2013. He became president after the previous leader, Hugo Chávez, passed away. Under his leadership, Venezuela has experienced many difficulties. These problems include money issues and a lack of food and medicine. He is also accused of treating his political opponents unfairly. Many people, both in Venezuela and around the world, have criticized his leadership. The United States claims that Maduro is in charge of a drug network. They say this group has been sending cocaine into the U.S. and using drug money to help violent criminals. Maduro denies all these accusations and says that the charges are politically motivated.



India's Fast Delivery Discussion

The Indian government has told all quick-commerce companies to stop their controversial "10-minute delivery" promise because of worries about workers' safety. This decision came after talks between the federal labor ministry and company leaders, following a recent nationwide strike, where thousands of delivery workers protested for fair pay, respect, and safer working conditions. Although the impact on customers was minimal, the protest raised important questions about the human cost of such a service in one of the fastest-growing digital economies in the world. The talks included big brands like Zomato, Blinkit, and Zepto, which let city shoppers order groceries and various items - like electronics and household goods - in just a few minutes. Even though this service is very popular with customers, it has faced criticism for putting too much pressure on gig workers and putting them in dangerous situations.



Myanmar is set to have its first election after the 2021 coup

On December 28, voters in Myanmar took part in the first phase of the country's first general election in five years. This election is being held under the watch of the military government, even though there is an ongoing civil war and many people are questioning its legitimacy. These polls are the first since the 2021 coup that removed Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government. They are taking place in three phases across 102 out of 330 townships, and the voting is happening with strict security and the use of electronic voting machines for the first time. Critics and human rights groups have said that this election is not credible because major parties are excluded, political freedoms are restricted, and Suu Kyi along with other opposition leaders are still in detention. With Myanmar still facing conflict and many people being displaced, observers believe that this process does not offer a real chance for a return to civilian rule, and that power will likely stay firmly with the military leaders.



Henley Passport Index 2026

The Henley Passport Index 2026 has announced the most powerful passports in the world, using special data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA). This index ranks 199 passports based on how many places their holders can visit without needing a visa first. For India, this is great news for travelers! The Indian passport has moved up to the 80th spot in 2026, which is an improvement from 85th in 2025. Now, Indian citizens can travel to 55 places around the world without needing a visa or can get a visa on arrival. India's ranking is similar to countries like Algeria and Niger. Even though India's rank has gone back to where it was in 2024 (80th), the number of places that don't require a visa has changed a bit because of new agreements. Recently, India has added countries like Angola and Kazakhstan to its list of easy-access destinations.

Rank	Country	Visa-Free Destinations
1.	Singapore	192
2.	Japan, South Korea	188
3.	Denmark, Luxembourg, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland	186
4.	Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway	185
5.	Hungary, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, United Arab Emirates	184
6.	Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Malta, New Zealand, Poland	183
7.	Australia, Latvia, Liechtenstein, United Kingdom	182
8.	Canada, Iceland, Lithuania	181
9.	Malaysia	180
10.	United States	179



Most Congested Cities 2026

According to the latest TomTom Traffic Index, Bengaluru has become the 2nd most congested city in the world, just after Mexico City, which is "no surprise" to its tired residents. The city has been moving up the rankings, going from 6th place in 2023 to 2nd place in 2026, with average rush-hour speeds dropping to a slow 13.9 km/h. India is the second most congested country in Asia. While Mumbai made some small improvements, Delhi's traffic congestion went up by 3.5%, causing commuters to waste over 104 hours each year in traffic, which is like being stuck for four whole days. For people living in India's largest cities, "rush hour" is not just a time; it's a part of everyday life. The 2026 mobility data shows that Indian cities are the most congested places in Asia. From Bengaluru's narrow, tech-focused streets to Delhi's wide main roads, the price of growth is counted in billions of lost hours and increasing harm to the environment.

Rank	City	Country	Congestion Level	Time Lost Per Year
1	Mexico City	Mexico	75.9%	184 Hours
2	Bengaluru	India	74.4%	168 Hours
3	Dublin	Ireland	72.9%	191 Hours
4	Łódź	Poland	72.8%	135 Hours
5	Pune	India	71.1%	152 Hours



Protests are happening all over Iran

Protests are spreading in Iran, which has been experiencing large demonstrations since late December 2025. These protests quickly spread across the nation and are taking place in all 31 provinces. This makes them some of the largest protests Iran has seen in many years. People are protesting because life has become very tough for many families. Prices are going up, and it's hard to afford daily necessities. What started in one city soon turned into a nationwide issue. The protests began in Tehran's Grand Bazaar, an important market in Iran. Shopkeepers closed their stores to express their anger. They were frustrated because Iran's currency, the rial, had lost value, causing prices of goods to rise. The Inflation has exceeded 40%, meaning prices have increased rapidly. In some cases, food prices have gone up by more than 70%, and medicines have become much more expensive. The value of the Iranian rial has also dropped against the US dollar, making imported goods more expensive. Initially, people protested due to high prices and financial struggles. Later on, many began to demand better governance, fairness, and a safer future. The government reacted harshly by deploying police and security forces. Tear gas was used, many individuals were arrested, and internet services were restricted in several areas. The protests in Iran have caught the attention of the world. The United States urged Iran's leaders to respect peaceful protests and to avoid violence. President Donald Trump stated that if peaceful protesters were violently suppressed, the United States would step in to assist them. Iranian officials dismissed foreign interference and claimed that outside forces were to blame for the unrest. The situation remains uncertain, but Iran is dealing with a very serious issue within the country.



India-EU Free Trade Agreement

India-EU Free Trade Agreement: India and the European Union have officially signed a big Free Trade Agreement after 18 years of serious discussions, debates, and some breaks. Trade experts and policymakers often call it the 'Mother of All Deals.' This agreement is one of the most ambitious and wide-ranging economic partnerships in the 21st century. By connecting the world's largest democracy with the world's biggest single market, this deal is going to change the economic and political landscape of the global economy. The India and EU Free Trade Agreement is a historic milestone for the global economy, and the size of this agreement is unprecedented. The EU is one of India's biggest trading partners, making up 25% of the global economy and home to nearly one-third of the world's population, which creates a huge base for consumer demand and innovation. While the EU is a major trade player with \$9.8 trillion in combined goods and services imports, India is quickly expanding its global presence with \$750 billion in goods imports, showing its growth as an important place for international trade and business. Together, they account for \$11 trillion of the world's \$33 trillion trade flow; even with their current share of 11-12%, their large population and growing manufacturing hub are significant. The nickname 'Mother of All Deals' comes from the huge amount of trade it includes, covering goods, services, investment protection, and digital trade, as well as getting rid of long-standing barriers that have held back growth between them. The finalized FTA is based on several key pillars aimed at creating a 'win-win' situation for both the EU and India: these include eliminating tariffs, integrating the service sector, protecting investments, reducing agri-food tariffs, and enhancing sustainability and labor standards.



India Becomes the World's First Bio-Bitumen Producer!

India is the first country to make bio-bitumen on a commercial scale

India has taken the lead in making bio-bitumen, which is a green alternative to petroleum-based bitumen used for building roads. This new idea will change agricultural waste and biomass into a useful binder, helping to reduce fossil fuel use and tackle the problem of burning leftover crops. Crude oil is a big part of using petroleum in building because asphalt is held together by Bitumen, a sticky black substance that is used in road surfaces. Instead of using biomass like crop stubble, sugarcane bagasse, or rice husk, bio-bitumen is made through methods like pyrolysis and hydroprocessing to achieve similar results with less carbon emissions.



The largest green ammonia project in the world will be held in Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh is going to host the biggest green ammonia project in the world, located in Kakinada. This is a huge \$10 billion project. The goal is to make 5 million tonnes of green ammonia every year by 2030. AM Green Ammonia, supported by the Greenko Group and global investors like the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), is developing this project. They are changing an old "grey" ammonia plant into a new "green" facility.



Tripura Gramin Bank has introduced the first solar-powered ATM in India

Tripura Gramin Bank launched the first solar-powered mobile ATM van in the country, called 'TGB On Wheels', to bring new ideas to mobile banking services. This van is made to offer continuous banking help to places that lack electricity.

The solar-powered ATM van is a mobile unit that can take care of different banking needs while on the go. TGB provides banking services around the clock, every day of the week. It is specially made for hilly and remote areas where electricity is scarce.



Army Day 2026: This City Celebrates Its First Public Parade Ever Outside the Cantonment Area

Jaipur is set to make its mark in military history on January 15, which is Army Day. Army Day has been celebrated every year since 1949 to pay tribute to General K.M. Cariappa for taking command. This year marks a big change. Instead of the usual locations like Bengaluru, Lucknow, or Pune, the 2026 Indian Army Day parade will be a public event aimed at showcasing the strength of the Indian Army right to the people of Rajasthan. The Sapta Shakti Command (South Western Command) is in charge of managing around 8 lakh civilians.



Trump withdraws from India-led ISA

In January 2026, the United States, declared its exit from the India-led International Solar Alliance (ISA) as part of a larger withdrawal from 66 international organizations considered against American interests. This decision, following a review of foreign relations, impacts the ISA's aim of securing \$1 trillion in solar investments by 2030. The ISA, initiated by India and France in 2015, is a significant global organization dedicated to promoting solar energy. The US became a member in 2021 and was one of over 125 member nations. This action is part of a broader withdrawal from 31 UN and 35 non-UN organizations, which includes other climate-related entities like the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).



Gaza's Board of Peace

President Donald Trump has announced a new group called the "Board of Peace" (BoP) to help stabilize and rebuild the Gaza Strip. This organization will act as a way to manage conflicts and govern during the time after the war. President Trump wants to give this group worldwide recognition, even though it doesn't follow the usual UN rules. It is an international temporary authority led by Donald Trump.

Bulgaria adopts euro

Bulgaria started using the Euro on January 1, 2026, making it the 21st country in the Eurozone, almost 20 years after it joined the European Union. The lev will still be around in January, but starting February 1, the euro will be the only official money. People have mixed feelings about this, with about half in favor and half against the change. The country has had a lot of political problems, having seven elections since 2021, and the Prime Minister stepped down in December 2025 after protests about corruption and the budget.



The First Person in a Wheelchair in Space

Michaela Benthaus, a German aerospace engineer, made history in December 2025 by being the first person in a wheelchair to go to space. Michaela Benthaus is an aerospace engineer from Germany. She studied mechatronics and aerospace engineering. After that, she worked with space research organizations, including the European Space Agency. He went to space on a rocket made by Blue Origin. The rocket was named New Shepard, and it took her beyond the Kármán line, which is the edge of space, about 100 kilometers above Earth.