

The week from 29th December 2025 to 04th January 2026

China inaugurated the 22.13 km Tianshan Shengli Tunnel in Xinjiang, the world's longest expressway tunnel. Part of the G0711 Urumqi Yuli Expressway, it cuts travel time across the Tianshan Mountains from seven hours to about 20 minutes, boosting regional connectivity, trade, and tourism.

India has become the world's fourth-largest economy, surpassing Japan with a nominal GDP of \$4.18 trillion. Growth stayed strong as real GDP expanded 8.2% in Q2 of FY 2025–26, the fastest in six quarters, driven by solid domestic demand, industry and services. Reforms, credit growth, low inflation, and easy financial conditions prompted the RBI to lift its full-year growth outlook to 7.3%.

Indian grandmasters Koneru Humpy & Arjun Erigaisi claimed bronze medals at the FIDE World Rapid Chess Championships 2025 in Doha. Humpy finished 3rd in the women's event, missing a 3rd title on tie-breaks, while Erigaisi took bronze in the Open section. Strong showings by R. Vaishali, D. Gukesh, Nihal Sarin and R. Praggnanandhaa underlined India's rising global chess stature.

Renowned Hindi poet-author and 2024 Jnanpith Award winner Vinod Kumar Shukla passed away in Raipur aged 88. The first writer from Chhattisgarh to receive India's highest literary honour, Shukla was known for works like 'Naukar Ki Kameez' and 'Deewar Mein Ek Khidki Rehti Thi'.

The United States launched large-scale military strikes on Venezuela on 03rd January, 2026, triggering explosions and power outages across Caracas. President Donald Trump announced that Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife were captured and flown out of the country, heightening political uncertainty. Venezuela declared a state of emergency in response.

After over 30 years, Gujarat has once again become a tiger-bearing state, as the National Tiger Conservation Authority confirmed a tiger sighting in Ratanmahal Wildlife Sanctuary, Dahod. Gujarat will join the 2026 tiger census, becoming the only state where lions, tigers and leopards live together.

Denmark's state-run postal service, PostNord, delivered its last physical letter on Tuesday, concluding more than 400 years of traditional mail delivery. Denmark has become the first country to formally determine that letter delivery is no longer essential or economically viable in the digital era. In 2024, PostNord handled over 90% fewer letters than it did in 2000.

Israel has formally recognized Somaliland as an independent, sovereign nation, the first to do so. Tied to the Abraham Accords, the move was praised by Somaliland's President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi, who highlighted plans for cooperation in agriculture, health, technology and economic growth. Somalia, the African Union and Egypt condemned the decision, arguing it undermines regional stability and threatens Somalia's territorial integrity.



Compiled by  
Seema Chari and  
Kunal Savarkar



xpress minds