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India ranks second globally for children who are overweight and living with obesity



- The World Obesity Atlas was released on 4 March 2026 (World Obesity Day) by the World Obesity Federation.
- India ranks second globally in childhood obesity after China.
- As per 2025 estimates, India has 15 million children aged 5–9 years and 26 million adolescents aged 10–19 years who are overweight or obese.
- Overall, India has 41 million children with high Body Mass Index (BMI), including 14 million living specifically with obesity.
- China leads with 62 million children having high BMI and 33 million with obesity, while the United States has 27 million children with high BMI and 13 million with obesity.
- Globally, over 200 million school-age children (5–19 years) with overweight or obesity are concentrated in just 10 countries, and by the end of 2025, eight countries are projected to have more than 10 million children with high BMI.

- Worldwide, 20.7% of children are overweight or obese, up from 14.6% in 2010, and by 2040, nearly 507 million children are projected to be living with overweight or obesity.
- The world is set to miss the 2025 global target to halve the rise in childhood obesity; the deadline has been extended to 2030, but most countries, including India, remain off track.
- In India, 74% of adolescents aged 11–17 do not meet recommended physical activity levels, only 35.5% of school-age children receive school meals, and 32.6% of infants aged 1–5 months experience suboptimal breastfeeding.
- Among women aged 15–49 years in India, 13.4% have high BMI and 4.2% live with Type 2 diabetes.
- Children aged 6–10 years consume sugary drinks averaging up to 50 ml per day.
- Rising childhood obesity is expected to significantly increase the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in India by 2040.
- The Federation has called for urgent government action, including taxation of sugar-sweetened beverages, restrictions on marketing unhealthy foods to children, and stronger prevention and management strategies.

First Batch Departs Under Puducherry's Dr B.R. Ambedkar Yatra Scheme



- The Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Yatra Scheme is a welfare initiative launched by the Government of Puducherry through its Adi Dravidar and Scheduled Tribes Welfare Department to promote social awareness and empowerment among Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) communities.
- The first batch of beneficiaries was flagged off by Lieutenant Governor K. Kailashnathan in the presence of Chief Minister N. Rangasamy.
- The scheme provides financial assistance of ₹40,000 per beneficiary to undertake an educational and inspirational tour to places associated with the life and legacy of B. R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution and a champion of social justice.
- The yatra includes key Ambedkar-related sites across India such as his birthplace at Mhow in Madhya Pradesh, Deekshabhoomi in Nagpur where he embraced Buddhism in 1956, Mahaparinirvan Sthal in Delhi where he passed away on 6 December 1956, and Chaitya Bhoomi in Mumbai, his cremation site.

- The objective of the scheme is to strengthen constitutional values such as equality, social justice, and empowerment by directly connecting beneficiaries with historical landmarks linked to Ambedkar's life and reform movement.
- Eligibility criteria include belonging to the SC/ST community, being a resident of Puducherry (by birth or with at least five years of continuous residence), having an annual family income not exceeding ₹2,00,000, and falling within the age group of 18 to 50 years.
- Only one person per family per year is permitted to avail the benefit, and participation under the scheme is allowed only once in a lifetime.
- The yatra is generally conducted in batches of around 50 beneficiaries with an approximate duration of eight days.

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Gujarat Govt. Approves ₹28.68 Cr. Projects To Boost Spiritual And Heritage Tourism



- The Government of Gujarat has approved projects worth ₹28.68 crore to strengthen spiritual and heritage tourism in the state, reflecting its continued focus on cultural preservation and tourism-led economic development.
- The decision aims to enhance infrastructure at major pilgrimage centres, conserve historical monuments, and improve visitor amenities to attract both domestic and international tourists.
- A major portion of the allocation—₹20.09 crore—has been sanctioned for the holistic development of the Harshad Mata Temple, focusing on improved facilities for pilgrims and better infrastructure.
- In addition, development works have been approved for Uparkot Fort in Junagadh, where the first phase of upgrades will include enhanced parking facilities, establishment of a tourist facilitation centre, and installation of two lifts to improve accessibility, especially for elderly and differently-abled visitors.

- The government has also allocated ₹3.36 crore for the restoration of the historic Gandhi Ashram, established in 1917, highlighting the importance of preserving sites linked to India's freedom movement. Furthermore, ₹1.25 crore has been approved for the grand celebration of the Dang Darbar 2026, a significant tribal cultural festival that promotes indigenous heritage and boosts regional tourism.
- These initiatives collectively aim to integrate religious tourism, heritage conservation, and cultural promotion while generating employment and strengthening the local economy.

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Axis Bank partners with Tesla to offer tailored financing solutions



- Axis Bank has entered into a strategic partnership with Tesla, becoming the preferred electric vehicle (EV) financier in India for the company's customers.
- This development is significant in the context of India's growing electric mobility ecosystem and reflects increasing collaboration between global EV manufacturers and Indian financial institutions.
- Under this arrangement, Axis Bank will provide customised auto loan solutions tailored specifically for Tesla buyers.
- A key feature of the financing model is the extended repayment tenure of up to 10 years, which reduces monthly instalments and makes premium electric vehicles more financially accessible.
- The bank will also offer a fully digital, paperless loan approval process, ensuring faster processing and seamless customer experience.

- The financing solutions will be available on a pan-India basis, covering both metropolitan cities and emerging EV markets.
- The partnership is strategically important as it aims to lower financial entry barriers associated with high-value EV purchases and accelerate the adoption of clean mobility solutions.
- It aligns with India's broader push towards electric vehicle adoption, decarbonisation, and sustainable transportation, complementing national initiatives promoting green energy and reduced carbon emissions.
- For Axis Bank, the collaboration strengthens its position in future-ready mobility finance and green lending solutions, while for Tesla, it facilitates smoother market penetration in India.

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Eminent journalist and former ambassador HK Dua passes away at 88



- H. K. Dua, eminent journalist, diplomat and former Member of Parliament, passed away at the age of 88; born on 1 July 1937.
- He was widely respected for his sharp political analysis and unwavering commitment to editorial independence in Indian journalism.
- He held the rare distinction of heading editorial operations at three major national newspapers — served as Editor of The Hindustan Times (1987–1994), Editor-in-Chief of The Indian Express (1994–1996), and Editor-in-Chief of The Tribune (2003–2009); he also worked as Editorial Advisor to The Times of India (1997–1998).
- He was nominated to the Rajya Sabha from 2009 to 2015, where he actively contributed to debates on foreign affairs and national security.

- He served as Media Advisor to former Prime Ministers Atal Bihari Vajpayee and H. D. Deve Gowda, playing an important role in media and policy communication.
- He was appointed as India's Ambassador to Denmark during 2001–2003, marking his contribution in the diplomatic domain.
- He was a member of the National Security Advisory Board and served on key parliamentary committees, including the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2008 for his distinguished service in the field of journalism and public affairs.
- He was also conferred honorary Doctor of Letters (D.Litt) degrees by Panjab University and Kurukshetra University.

IAACFE

IRDAI sets April 1 deadline for insurers to adopt Indian Accounting Standards



- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has proposed April 1 as the effective date for insurers to adopt Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS).
- The proposal will apply to all categories of insurance entities, including life insurers, general insurers, standalone health insurers and re-insurers.
- IRDAI has placed an exposure draft and a consultation paper in the public domain to invite comments from stakeholders before finalising the framework.
- The objective of the move is to enhance consistency, transparency and comparability in financial reporting across the insurance sector.
- The adoption of Ind AS is aimed at aligning India's insurance accounting framework with globally accepted accounting standards while maintaining regulatory prudence and protecting policyholder interests.

- Ind AS are accounting standards converged with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) to improve the quality and global comparability of financial statements.
- The framework has been developed after comprehensive engagement with insurance companies to ensure a smooth transition to Ind AS-based financial reporting.
- The reform is expected to strengthen financial disclosures, improve investor confidence, enhance regulatory oversight and promote better financial discipline within the insurance sector.

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Finn Allen's 33-ball century sets new T20 World Cup record



- Finn Allen scored an unbeaten 100 runs off just 33 balls in the T20 World Cup 2026 semi-final against South Africa national cricket team at Eden Gardens, Kolkata to power New Zealand national cricket team into the final with a nine-wicket win.
- His 33-ball century is the fastest in Men's T20 World Cup history, breaking the previous mark of 47 balls set by Chris Gayle (West Indies) against England in the 2016 T20 World Cup.
- Allen reached his half-century in 19 balls, the fastest fifty ever by a New Zealand batter in T20 World Cups, and completed his century in just 33 deliveries by hitting 10 fours and eight sixes.
- It was also the first century ever scored in a T20 World Cup knockout match (semi-final or final) and the fastest T20I century against a Full Member nation, surpassing previous records held by players like Rohit Sharma and David Miller.

- New Zealand chased down 170 runs set by South Africa with 43 balls to spare, with Allen and opener Tim Seifert adding a 117-run partnership.
- Allen's remarkable knock earned him the Player of the Match award and helped NZ end South Africa's unbeaten run in the tournament.
- With this win, New Zealand advanced to the T20 World Cup 2026 final.
- The innings is now ranked among the fastest T20I hundreds in the world, and expanded the benchmark for aggressive batting in major ICC tournaments.
- The Finn Allen fastest T20 World Cup hundred is the joint fastest century by a Full Member nation in T20Is which is matching Sikandar Raza's 33-ball hundred.
- Only two players have scored faster T20I centuries overall,
 - Sahil Chauhan (27 balls, Estonia)
 - Muhammad Fahad (29 balls, Turkey)
- Allen's century had a strike rate above 300, placing it among the few T20I centuries with a 300+ strike rate.

❖ Fastest centuries - Men's T20 World Cup history:



PLAYERS

- Finn Allen (New Zealand)
- Chris Gayle (West Indies)
- Chris Gayle (West Indies)
- Harry Brook (England)
- Brendon McCullum (New Zealand)

DELIVERIES (BALLS)

- 33 balls v South Africa (2026)
- 47 balls v England (2016)
- 50 balls v South Africa (2007)
- 50 balls v Pakistan (2026)
- 51 balls v Bangladesh (2012)

Reserve Bank of India Imposes Fine on Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services



- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of ₹11.50 lakh on Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services Limited (MMFSL).
- The penalty was imposed for regulatory non-compliances identified during the annual inspection with reference to the company's financial position as on 31 March 2025 (FY25).
- The penalty was levied under Section 58G(1)(b) read with Section 58B(5)(aa) of the RBI Act, 1934.
- During the inspection, the RBI observed that MMFSL had violated the Fair Practices Code by charging revised foreclosure fees on certain loan accounts without incorporating the requisite terms and conditions in the respective loan agreements.
- The central bank also noted deficiencies in the company's grievance redressal mechanism.
- Specifically, certain customer complaints were not escalated to the Internal Ombudsman within the prescribed timelines. In some instances, final decisions on complaints were communicated to customers beyond the period stipulated under RBI regulations.

- These irregularities were detected during the supervisory inspection process, following which the RBI issued a show-cause notice to MMFSL.
- After considering the company's response, the penalty was imposed.

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Kalyan Homes appoints Nivin Pauly as brand ambassador



- Kalyan Homes has appointed Nivin Pauly as its brand ambassador.
- This marks Nivin Pauly's first formal brand endorsement in his career.
- The appointment aims to strengthen the company's brand presence and customer engagement in Kerala's real estate market.
- The actor will feature in major advertising and promotional campaigns across various media platforms.
- The association aligns with the company's core values of trust, transparency, reliability, and customer-centric housing development.
- Company leadership highlighted that Nivin Pauly's family-friendly image and credibility resonate with homebuyers.
- Kalyan Homes is promoted by the promoters of Kalyan Jewellers.
- The company has around 25 completed and ongoing residential projects across Kerala.

- Kalyan Homes announced plans to launch five new residential projects in Kerala in the upcoming financial year.
- The upcoming projects will cover nearly 10 lakh square feet of development area.
- The estimated investment for the new projects is approximately ₹600 crore.
- The move reflects increasing use of celebrity endorsements by regional real estate developers for brand differentiation and expansion.

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Geological Survey Of India Celebrates Its 176th Foundation Day



- The Geological Survey of India (GSI), established on March 4, 1851, celebrated its 176th Foundation Day at its Southern Region Headquarters in Bandlaguda–Nagole, Hyderabad.
- The celebrations began with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by M. Sridhar, Former Director General of Geological Survey of India (GSI).
- Vijay V. Mugal, Additional Director General and Head of Department, GSI Southern Region, along with Deputy Directors General of the State Units of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and Regional Mission Heads, graced the occasion.
- During the celebrations, emphasis was placed on modern technologies like remote sensing, GIS mapping, drone surveys, and digital geological databases to strengthen mineral exploration and hazard assessment.
- Officials also stressed GSI's contribution to national priorities such as deep-seated mineral exploration, critical minerals for renewable energy, and sustainable resource development.
- The event reaffirmed GSI's role in supporting Atmanirbhar Bharat goals in mineral security and disaster risk reduction through scientific data and research.
- It also plays a key role in natural hazard assessment, including landslides, earthquakes, floods, and coastal hazards, providing scientific inputs for mitigation and risk reduction.

❖ Geological Survey Of India (GSI):



- Geological Survey of India (GSI) was originally established in 1851.
- It is one of the oldest scientific organisations in India and the second-oldest geological survey institution in the world.
- It was founded by Sir Thomas Oldham to identify coal deposits for the railway system and steam navigation.
- Headquartered in Kolkata, GSI operates under the Ministry of Mines with regional and state offices across India to undertake geological mapping, mineral exploration, and geoscientific research.
- The first (oldest) geological survey organisation in the world is the Geological Survey of Great Britain established in 1835.