

TODAY's QUOTE

A new milestone for aviation

“Congratulations to the people of Andhra Pradesh, especially Uttarandhra, on the successful validation flight of the Bhogapuram Greenfield International Airport. Today marks a new milestone for aviation in the state, strengthening regional connectivity and giving a major boost to Uttarandhra as the region prepares to take off

— N. Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh

BIZZ BUZZ

HANS

MONDAY TO SATURDAY

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BUSINESS DAILY

Bajaj export to Venezuela less than 1% of total

New Delhi: Bajaj Auto on Sunday said its exports to Venezuela accounts for less than 1 per cent of its total overseas shipments. The South American country has plunged into a crisis after the US captured its President, Nicolas Maduro, on Saturday. “We do export to Venezuela. Pulsar and Boxer are very popular, but these exports are less than 1 per cent of our total exports,” Rakesh Shamra, Executive Director, Bajaj Auto, said



HPCL residue upgradation facility boosting energy security

Bharat's journey toward achieving energy security has reached an important milestone with the successful commissioning of HPCLs Residue Upgradation Facility at the Visakh Refinery in Andhra Pradesh, Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Sunday



An ultra-modern airport set to dot aviation map of India

Bhogapuram International Airport, a greenfield project in North Andhra, which saw several trials and tribulations, is finally getting ready to take off as a futuristic airport with the GMR Group announcing its preparedness to launch commercial operations from June, 2026

Geopolitical cues likely to trigger a spike in volatility

Centre sanctions 24 chip design projects in big push to semicon industry

Evolve with times

I am seeing so many businesses around me closing down. And it's not due to government policy problems. They are killed by failing to adapt to a changing market need. People want to preserve the status quo- addicted to skills and procedures that gave them money earlier

Sandeep Mall
@SandeepMall, MD, LNM Auto

Be comfortable with uncertainty

Business is like starting to run a marathon when you're out of shape and having to get in shape while running, without rest, or knowing how far away the finish line is, or if there is one at all

Alex Hormozi
@AlexHormozi, Founder, Acquisition.com

Another way to enter

Stop buying into the hype that you must invent something new. Success in entrepreneurship isn't that complicated. Pick a good business model with favorable odds, low risk and moderate rewards. Don't innovate. Just operate a little bit better than the competition

Vala Afshar
@sweatystartup, Founder, Sweatystartup

GMR Airport at Bhogapuram completes successful maiden validation flight

To be made operational by mid-2026, Centre for developing a major MRO hub

- AP TAKES FLIGHT
- Crucial step in the process of acquiring an aerodrome licence
 - Scheduled for completion in December, 2026
 - To make Bhogapuram a major aviation hub with world class MRO



Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu after arriving in first commercial validation flight from New Delhi to Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram in Vizianagaram district

IN a big leap forward to propel economic prosperity in the proposed Visakhapatnam Economic Region (VER), GMR Aero-led GMR Visakhapatnam International Airport Limited (GVIAL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of GMR Airports Limited (GAL), on Sunday successfully conducted the first commercial validation flight at the upcoming Bhogapuram Airport.

This is a major milestone towards making VER as envisioned by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu with the support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu. The Minister along with the senior officials from Civil Aviation Ministry, Airports Authority of India (AAI), Directorate-General of Civil Aviation

(DGCA) and GMR Group arrived in the Air India flight from New Delhi. As the flight touched down the sprawling runway capable of handling widebody aircraft, there were loud cheers among the select crowd present at the airport. The airport is named as Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport.

The successful flight validates the airport's airside infrastructure, navigational aids, runway systems, and operational readiness, in line with the regulatory requirements laid down by the DGCA. The maiden commercial flight validation is a crucial step in the process of acquiring an aerodrome licence and a critical prerequisite before the commencement of commercial flight operations.

The airport first phase is developed at a cost of Rs4,592 crore by awarding the EPC contract to L&T. Though it is scheduled for completion in December, 2026, due to pressure from the State Government, the project proponent agreed to advance it by six months.

Later Rammohan Naidu told the media that their aim is to make Bhogapuram a major aviation hub with a world-class Maintenance, Repair and Operations (MRO) facility and an aero city. He said they are on a massive expansion of the existing fleet and creating the required infrastructure, stating that the present fleet of 843 aircraft is being increased by 80 this year and 106 next year. He said under UDAAN tier two and three

towns and cities are also getting connected. The size of the fleet is now not much compared to China and the United States, who each have around 4,000 aircraft.

In his remarks, Rammohan Naidu, said, "Today marks a historic milestone in the development journey of Andhra Pradesh. Visakhapatnam is set to become the economic capital of the East." He said the Bhogapuram Airport will serve as a powerful engine of growth—creating employment opportunities, catalysing regional industries, and significantly enhancing connectivity for people and businesses alike. The airport, he said, will strengthen trade, boost exports, and unlock the immense tourism potential of Andhra Pradesh.

With world-class infrastructure, this project will accelerate economic development, attract investment, and place the region firmly on the global aviation and commerce map, he stated.

The Minister thanked all the stakeholders for their commitment and timely execution of this nationally important project, which aligns with the Government of India's vision of building modern, inclusive, and growth-oriented aviation infrastructure that benefits every citizen.

AP emerges as India's top investment destination

AMARAVATI

ANDHRA Pradesh has emerged as India's top investment destination, capturing 25.3 per cent of all proposed investments in the first nine months of current fiscal (FY26), according to a Bank of Baroda report.

The state now leads peers such as Odisha (13.1 per cent) and Maharashtra (12.8 per cent), signalling a shift in industrial momentum toward the eastern and southern corridors.

The report notes that over half (51.2 per cent) of India's total proposed capital investment is concentrated in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Maharashtra. Nationwide, investment announcements reached Rs 26.6 lakh crore in the period, up 11.5 per cent year-on-year.

"There are clear signs of a pick-up in investment intentions in the country this year," the report said, adding

this was on the back of a very positive policy package of the government which has focussed on capex, lowering of income tax rates and GST 2.0.

This, it said, has countered to an extent the impact of the higher tariffs imposed by the USA on Indian exports. Further, there has been a tendency for interest rates to also come down which were to spur investment activity.

"The investment environment does appear to be positive in the present financial year," the report said.

Of all the investments, power is the dominant sector with a share of 22.6 per cent with renewables leading the pack. Metals have a share of 17.3 per cent which is a positive sign from the point of view of capital formation as they go into several projects ranging from roads and automobiles to housing.

Business Chairman, Airports, GMR Group GBS Raju, said, "The Bhogapuram International Airport is a reflection of GMR Group's long-standing commitment to creating world-class national assets that catalyse economic growth and regional

development." He said for over two decades, the group has played a pioneering role in building and operating some of India's most iconic airports, transforming aviation infrastructure through scale, sustainability and passenger-centric design.



CBDT chief asks officials to be ready for transition to new I-T Act

NEW DELHI: CBDT Chairman Ravi Agrawal has asked the Income Tax Department to be ready and active for the new direct tax law that will be implemented this year from April 1, saying he expects tax officials to work with clarity and purpose.

In his customary year communication to the staffers of the department, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) chief said new rules, procedures and forms were under formulation for this transition.

The CBDT is the administrative body for the I-T Department.

The new I-T Act will replace the over six-decade-old current Income Tax Act of 1961.

Calling 2026 a year of "special significance" for the department, the head of the direct taxes administration in the country urged the officials for their "readiness, understanding of the law and shared confidence in its implementation".

"This year carries special significance. With the Income Tax Act 2025 notified and scheduled to take effect on 1 April, 2026, we prepare for the shift to the Income Tax Act 2025.

US-Venezuelan conflict not to impact India's trade: GTRI

NEW DELHI

THE US-Venezuela conflict will have a negligible impact on India's trade with the South American country, think tank GTRI said on Sunday.

On January 4, American forces carried out a large military operation in Venezuela, capturing President Nicolas Maduro and his wife and taking them to the US to face various charges, including narco-terrorism and drug trafficking.

"India faces negligible impact, as trade with Venezuela has collapsed under sanctions, with crude imports down 81.3 per cent in FY2025 and overall bilateral trade remaining marginal," the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

For India, he said, the

India's exports to Venezuela were modest at \$95.3 million, led by pharmaceuticals worth \$41.4 million



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- Ajay Srivastava, GTRI Founder

Venezuelan disturbance is unlikely to have any material economic or energy impact.

Although India was a major buyer of Venezuelan crude in the 2000s and 2010s, bilateral engagement has weakened sharply since 2019 due to US sanctions, which forced India to cut oil imports and scale back commercial activity to avoid sec-

ondary sanctions, he added.

As a result, Srivastava said India's trade with Venezuela is now small and declining.

In FY2025, India's total imports from Venezuela were just \$364.5 million, of which crude oil accounted for \$255.3 million, an 81.3 per cent drop from \$1.4 billion in crude imports in FY2024.

India becomes largest rice producer, surpasses China

NEW DELHI: India has become the world's largest rice producer, beating China, with a total output of 150.18 million tonnes, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Sunday, as he released 184 new varieties of 25 crops.

These new high-yielding seed varieties would boost crop production and enhance farmers' income, he said, while directing the ministry officials to ensure that these new varieties reach farmers quickly.

The minister unveiled 184 improved varieties of 25 field crops developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research at an event held in the national capital, according to an official statement.

Addressing the event, Chouhan said the country has achieved great success in the development of high-yielding seeds.

DGCA bans use of power banks for charging devices during flights

The move comes after several incidents worldwide in which lithium batteries overheated or caught fire on board aircraft

NEW DELHI

THE Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Sunday clarified that passengers are not allowed to use power banks to charge mobile phones or any other electronic devices during flights, citing serious safety concerns linked to lithium batteries.

In a statement, the aviation regulator said power banks cannot be used for charging gadgets at any time during a flight, including through aircraft seat power outlets.

The move comes after several incidents worldwide in which lithium batteries overheated or caught fire on board aircraft.

The Director General of Civil Aviation had earlier, in November, issued a Dangerous Goods Advisory Circular



that allowed power banks and spare lithium batteries only in hand baggage. These items are strictly prohibited from being stored in overhead compartments, as fires in overhead bins are difficult to detect and control.

According to the advisory, the increasing use of lithium batteries in rechargeable devices has led to a sharp rise in passengers carrying power banks and spare batteries during air travel. The DGCA warned that such devices can act as ignition sources and may trigger fires on board, posing a serious risk to flight safety.

The regulator explained that lithium batteries kept in overhead stowage bins or inside carry-on bags may remain hidden from view, making it harder for passengers or crew members to notice early signs of smoke or fire. This can delay emergency response and increase the danger during a flight.

The DGCA has directed all airlines to review their existing safety risk assessments related to lithium batteries carried by passengers. Airlines have been asked to strictly enforce stronger safety measures to prevent battery-related fire incidents.

The aviation watchdog has also stressed the importance of improved training for cabin crew so they can quickly identify signs of fire and take appropriate action.

Iconic sweetmeat chain KC Das eyes UK comeback

KOLKATA

ICONIC sweetmeat chain KC Das is eyeing a return to the United Kingdom after more than five decades, encouraged by the proposed India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and rising demand for authentic Indian food brands overseas.

Dhiman Das, executive director of the legendary confectionery brand and a fifth-generation descendant of Nobin Chandra Das, the inventor of the rosogolla, said there is "huge scope" for Indian food businesses and restaurants in the UK market, particularly as the pact is expected to ease regulatory and tariff barriers for food exports.

BIZZ Talk INTERVIEW

Businesses are increasingly prioritising assurance due to changes in regulations

Traditional insurance is largely reactive. It transfers risk to a third party and pays out only after a defined loss event such as an accident, fire or breach. Assurance, on the other hand is proactive. It focuses on reducing the likelihood of risk and improving outcomes while operations are running, said Neeraj Verma, CEO & Co-founder of Across Assist in an exclusive interaction with Bizz Buzz

NEERAJ VERMA

Full interview on Page 5

X to remove illegal content, permanently ban offending users

The Indian government has found vulgar, obscene and other unlawful content being uploaded on X that are in violation of local laws

NEW DELHI

MICROBLOGGING site X will act against illegal content by removing it, permanently suspending accounts that uploaded the material and working with local governments as required, the Elon Musk-owned social media platform said on Sunday. The statement from the Global Government Affairs account of X was issued hours after it said people using the platform's AI service, Grok, to create illegal content will face the same consequences as those uploading illegal content.

"Anyone using Grok to make illegal content will suffer the same consequences as if they upload illegal content," Musk said on X in response to a post on "inappropriate images".

Global government affairs



at X reiterated Musk's stance on illegal content.

"We take action against illegal content on X, including Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), by removing it, permanently suspending accounts, and working with local governments and law enforcement as necessary.

"Anyone using or prompting Grok to make illegal content will suffer the same consequences as if they upload illegal content," Global Government Affairs on X said.

The Global Government Affairs handle also shared a link for X rules, which allows shar-

ing of "consensually produced and distributed adult nudity or sexual behaviour, provided it's properly labelled and not prominently displayed".

The Indian government has found vulgar, obscene and other unlawful content being uploaded on X that are in violation of local laws.

The statement from Musk and Global Government Affairs follows the direction from the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), issued on January 2, to immediately remove all vulgar, obscene and unlawful content, especially generated by AI app Grok, or

We take action against illegal content on X, including Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), by removing it, permanently suspending accounts, and working with local governments and law enforcement as necessary

- Global government affairs at X

face action under the law.

MeitY has directed X to take action against offending content, users and accounts.

The ministry asked the US-based social media firm to submit a detailed action taken report (ATR) within 72 hours from the date when the order was issued.

The government has re-

ceived from time to time, including through public discourse and representations from various parliamentary stakeholders, that certain categories of content circulating on X may not be in compliance with applicable laws relating to decency and obscenity, the order said.

Earlier, Rajya Sabha member Priyanka Chaturvedi had written to the Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw seeking urgent intervention on increasing incidents of the AI app Grok being misused to create vulgar photos of women and post them on social media.

The order said that "Grok AI" service, developed by X, is being misused by users to create fake accounts to host, generate, publish or share obscene images or videos of women in a derogatory or vulgar manner to indecently denigrate them.