

INDIA STATES TIMES NEWS DESK

NATIONAL

- India has reported 23,067 new COVID-19 cases and 336 more deaths in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 1,01,46,845 and the death toll to 1,47,092.
- The government will conduct a dry run of Covid-19 vaccination in two districts each of four states — Punjab, Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat — on December 28-29.
- PM Narendra Modi and President Ram Nath Kovind paid tribute to former Prime Minister late Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his 96th birth anniversary at Sadaiv Atal .
- Delhi Police on Thursday created a green corridor for an ambulance carrying a live heart from airport to AIIMS.
- FASTags will be mandatory for all vehicles in the country from January 1, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari announced.
- INS Kiltan on Thursday reached NhaRong Port in Ho Chi Minh City with 15 tonnes of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) stores for flood-affected people in Central Vietnam.
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- 100 electric vehicle (EV) battery-swapping stations will be set up in Bengaluru as part of a joint initiative by Karnataka government and private firms.
- Bombay HC granted interim bail to a 20-year-old Pune man as an "experiment to reform". The man is currently lodged at Yerawada prison since February 10 for sexually assaulting a minor boy.
- Speaking at centenary celebrations of Visva-Bharati University in West Bengal, PM Narendra Modi said that guided by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, the university presented a strong image of Indian nationalist sentiment during Independence.
- The overall air quality in Delhi improved marginally from the 'severe' category to 'very poor' on Friday morning, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board.
- Air India pilots rejected the 5% rollback in the pay cut and asked the money to rather be donated towards building the new Parliament or PM CARES Funds.

- The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers has said that carmakers are bracing for a parts shortage and possible production losses over the next 3-4 months due to a global shortage of available shipping containers.

INTERNATIONAL

- The UK and European Union have agreed on a deal on the UK's future trading and security relationship with the bloc, a week before the end of Brexit transition period.
- California has become the first US state to report over 20 lakh coronavirus cases, according to the Johns Hopkins University tracker.
- Mexico began a mass vaccination drive against coronavirus with the first shot of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine being given to 59-year-old Maria Irene Ramirez, a nurse.
- Germany reported its first case of the new coronavirus variant that emerged in the UK after a woman who flew in from London tested positive for it.
- A 20-year-old Russian beautician is fighting for life after she was attacked by 10 dogs as she walked through Ulan-Ude city.
- Germany reported its first case of the new coronavirus variant that emerged in the UK after a woman who flew in from London tested positive for it.
- UK broadcaster Channel 4 will show an alternative Christmas message which will be delivered by a digitally-altered version of Queen Elizabeth II.
- Ethiopian troops on Thursday killed 42 armed men behind an attack on a village in Benishangul-Gumuz region, a local media report said.
- Afghan women's rights activist Freshta Kohistani and her brother were shot dead by unknown gunmen on Thursday in Kapisa province.
- A British government report, released this month, named Pakistan among countries using luxury properties and precious jewellery as a guise for funnelling "dirty money" to the UK.
- Michael Jackson's 2,700-acre Neverland Ranch in California has been sold for \$22 million (₹161 crore) to billionaire investor Ron Burkle, 11 years after the popstar's death.
- Global professional services organisation Ernst & Young on Thursday announced it would be hiring 9,000 professionals in India in 2021.
- China's biggest e-commerce company Alibaba lost \$60 billion in market value in just three hours on Thursday morning after authorities launched an investigation into the company for suspected monopolistic behaviour.