

ATHARVA ROBOTICS CENTER

Daily News on Innovation & Technology

21st August, 2025

SpaceX to Launch Secret X-37B Space Plane Thursday

By Don Tomslee, August 18, 2025

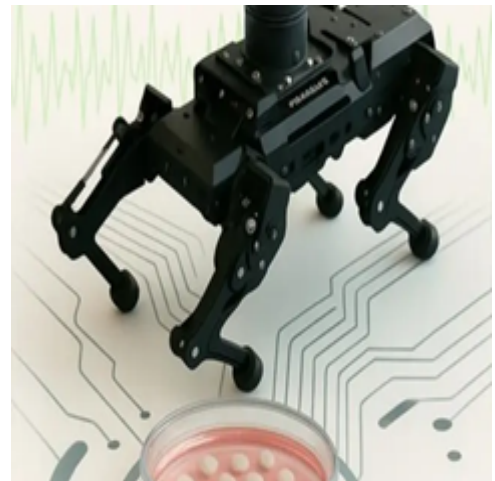
The U.S. Department of Defense's mini-shuttle heads to orbit once again Thursday night. The hunt will be on shortly, to once again recover a clandestine mission in low Earth orbit. SpaceX is set to launch a Falcon-9 rocket from launch pad LC-39A at the Kennedy Space Center Thursday night August 21st, with the classified USSF-36 mission. The U.S. Space Force has announced that this is the eighth mission for its fleet of two Orbital Test Vehicles (OTV-8). This is the automated 'mini-space shuttle' about the size of a large SUV, that launches like a rocket, and lands like a plane.



US scientists steer robot dog with graphene brain organoids in lab breakthrough

By Georgina Jedikovska, August 20, 2025

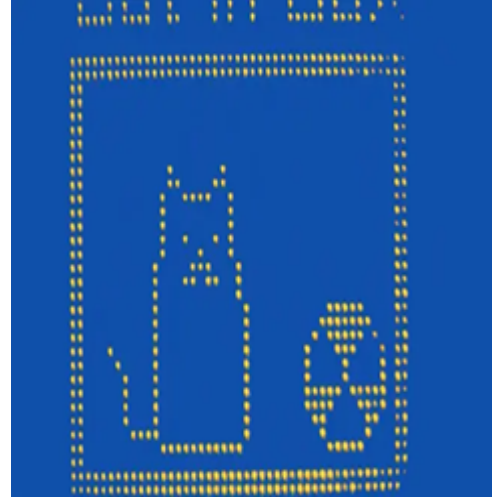
Scientists in the U.S. have used graphene and light to control a robot dog and develop new groundbreaking method that stimulates and matures lab-grown human brain organoids. The researchers from the University of California San Diego Sanford Stem Cell Institute utilized a one-atom-thick sheet of carbon to introduce a method called Graphene-Mediated Optical Stimulation (GraMOS)



[Scientists create ‘world’s smallest cat video’ to advance quantum computing](#)

By Mrigakshi Dixit, August 20, 2025

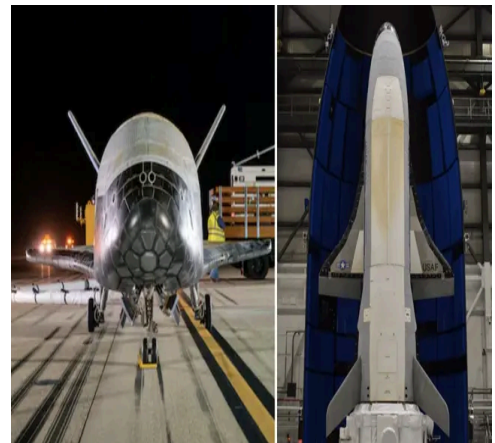
A team of physicists has created a video using just 2,024 rubidium atoms, showcasing a major advance in manipulating matter at the quantum level. It has been described as “the world’s smallest cat video” that depicts the famous Schrödinger’s cat thought experiment. The quantum cat thought experiment, proposed by physicist Erwin Schrödinger in 1929, is a paradox designed to illustrate the bizarre concept of superposition, where a particle or object can exist in multiple states simultaneously.



[US secret military space plane to embark on new mission with undisclosed goal](#)

By Prabhat Ranjan Mishra, August 20, 2025

A secret space plane is set to embark on its new mission. The X-37B orbital test vehicle of the U.S. Space Force will fly on its eighth mission on August 21, 2025. The plane is set to lift off from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The uncrewed, autonomous spacecraft is developed by Boeing. The plane is used by the U.S. military to conduct experiments in high and low Earth orbits. However, most of the plane’s functions remain secretive despite the widespread information about its presence.



[World-first dual-robot surgery in Sydney removes throat tumor, saves patient’s voice](#)

By Neetika Walter, August 20, 2025

In a big leap for robotic surgery, doctors in Australia have pulled off a world-first procedure by pairing two advanced robotic systems to remove a throat tumor while preserving the patient’s ability to speak and swallow. The landmark surgery at St Vincent’s Hospital in Sydney marks a breakthrough in precision medicine, showing how integrating robotics can achieve outcomes once thought impossible.



[Assam Rifles takes to drone technology to revamp operational capacity along Myanmar border](#)

By Sumir Karmakar, August 20, 2025

Following signing of the MoU on Monday, officials of both Assam Rifles and IIIT shared insights on the transformative potential of drone systems in modern warfare and emphasised the need for joint efforts to accelerate technology absorption within operational frameworks. Guwahati: Assam Rifles, one of the oldest paramilitary forces in the country, are trying to equip its personnel with drone technology and modern warfare in order to enhance operational capability, particularly along the treacherous border with Myanmar in the country's Northeastern region.

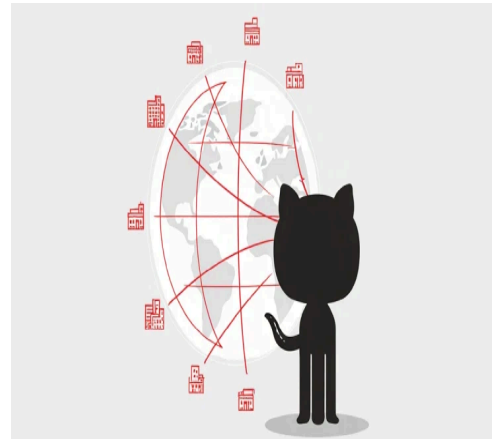


[North Korea Uses GitHub in Diplomat Cyber Attacks as IT Worker Scheme Hits 320+ Firms](#)

By Ravie Lakshmanan, August 20, 2025

North Korean threat actors have been attributed to a coordinated cyber espionage campaign targeting diplomatic missions in their southern counterpart between March and July 2025.

The activity manifested in the form of at least 19 spear-phishing emails that impersonated trusted diplomatic contacts with the goal of luring embassy staff and foreign ministry personnel with convincing meeting invites, official letters, and event invitations.



News Articles

India: Testbed or AI trailblazer?

OPENAI'S CHATGPT GO SUBSCRIPTION PLAN WILL TEMPT LOCAL USERS TO USE THE CHATBOT MORE

SUDHIR CHOWDHARY

INDIA HAS LONG been the market where global tech giants experiment with affordability. Whether it was telecom pricing, streaming subscription, or smartphone launches, the market has consistently been the playground for testing low-cost models. The same story is unfolding with artificial intelligence (AI). OpenAI's new ₹399 ChatGPT Go plan shows how affordability remains the most important lever to drive adoption in India. While it doesn't offer access to GPT-5's advanced reasoning, users stand to benefit with higher message limits, more image generations, increased file uploads and extended memory.

As per a Microsoft study, India is the fastest-growing AI adopter, with 65% of people using AI tools, double the global average and a 30% adoption rate among businesses. India is a key market for OpenAI, being second only to the US by user base.

However, OpenAI is not alone in making AI more affordable. Perplexity, through its partnership with Airtel, has made Pro access free for 390 million subscribers. Google's Gemini is being embedded across Android and core Google services. Lastly, Microsoft's Copilot is positioning itself as a productivity layer within Office and Windows.

Alongside these global players, Indian AI providers such as AI4Bharat, BharatGPT, Zoho,



WHAT'S ON OFFER

OpenAI ChatGPT		
ChatGPT Go (India-only) ₹399/month	Plus ₹1,999/month	Pro Approx. ₹19,900/month
Includes GPT-5 access, expanded usage (10x messages/images/files) and UPI billing	Mid-tier; deeper features and research capabilities	Premium tier with highest capacity and advanced features

Google Gemini Advanced	Microsoft Copilot Pro	Perplexity Pro via Airtel	Perplexity Max
Advanced tier ₹1,950/month	Pro tier ₹2,000/month	Free (via Airtel) ₹0 (normally ₹17,000/year)	Max Tier ₹17,000/month
Under Google One AI Premium; offers advanced multimodal capabilities; 2-month free trial for some users	Premium Copilot access in productivity apps; global rollout, priority compute	Airtel offers 12-month free subscription for its customers through Airtel Thanks app	Ultra-premium tier with priority model access

Krutrim AI, and Sarvam AI are rolling out language and sector-focused models. A new offering is AI Fiesta; it offers access to six premium AI models, including ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Grok, Perplexity and DeepSeek, for ₹999 per month, undercutting solo AI subscriptions.

Together, these moves reflect a shift from catering to niche early adopters to embedding AI into the fabric of daily life in Aspirational India—Tier II cities and beyond, and are driven by affordability, accessibility, and vernacular reach. "What we're really seeing with the ₹399

ChatGPT plan, Google's Gemini bundles, Microsoft Copilot Pro, and Airtel-Perplexity is not just a pricing war, it's the maturation of the AI access model," said Jacob Joseph, VP, Data Science, CleverTap.

According to him, free tiers are the 'demo booth,' paid tiers unlock capacity and premium reasoning, and now telcos and platform providers are turning AI into a bundled utility. "For Indian users, that means AI is no longer an exotic tool; it's on your phone bill, in your browser, in your productivity suite," he added.

Srividya Kannan, founder and CEO, Avaali Solutions, feels that OpenAI's move signals a fundamental shift in how global players are viewing AI democratisation for India. "This isn't just about affordability. It's about recognising that India's 1.4 billion people represent the world's largest untapped AI market. By pricing aggressively for India, it validates our market's strategic importance and accelerates mass adoption across diverse user segments," she said.

Yet availability does not equal adoption. According to Prabhu Ram,

VP—Industry Research Group, CyberMedia Research, digital literacy, specced-up value-for-money smartphones, and consistent internet access remain critical enablers for adoption. Trust also matters: concerns over privacy, accuracy and bias could slow mainstream use, while the challenge of delivering context-rich, culturally relevant AI in Indic languages is far from solved.

According to Ram, by making AI more affordable and more widely available, AI providers aim to drive adoption at scale, secure user loyalty, and crucially, generate richer interaction data to refine and fine tune their models. In a market as diverse as India, this data—spanning languages, contexts, and use cases—will potentially enable global players to build more capable, localised, and competitive AI systems.

The real opportunity lies in this pricing pressure catalysing Indian innovation. While foreign players compete on cost, Indian firms can compete on context. I.e. building AI that understands our languages, cultural nuances, and specific use cases. "The question isn't whether we can match Silicon Valley's pricing, but whether we can deliver solutions that are inherently more relevant to Indian users. This pricing war ultimately benefits our ecosystem by creating space for homegrown solutions that combine global AI capabilities with deep local understanding," Kannan summarised.

Source: The Financial Express Newspaper, 20-08-2025

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Link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r5363eWaSma_oW23X4iueERUKavSJroc/view

Oracle rides major deals with OpenAI and Nvidia

BRODY FORD
August 20

ORACLE'S LARRY ELLISON used to scoff at the idea of cloud computing, saying in 2008 that it was "complete gibberish". Now, the success of Oracle's cloud infrastructure unit is why the company's stock price has soared and made Ellison, its chairman and co-founder, the second-richest person in the world.

The AI boom has dramatically increased demand for computing and storage over the internet. Oracle, a software company that had long struggled to find its niche in this market, gained a foothold through scoring major customers. Today, it's helping power Elon Musk's xAI from a data centre in Utah, assembling a cluster of tens of thousands of AI chips for Nvidia near Singapore and recently inked what is likely the largest single cloud deal ever with OpenAI, the leading artificial intelligence company.

Oracle is on the hook for tens of billions of dollars to develop unprecedentedly large data centers amid energy and mate-



rial shortages. That includes a plan to spend more than \$1 billion a year just to power one new megasite in West Texas with gas generators rather than wait for utility connection, according to people familiar with the plans.

With all of this spending, Oracle recorded a negative annual cash flow for the first time since 1990. And questions remain about the longevity and margins of offering infrastructure to train AI models.

Oracle, founded in the 1970s, had long faded from tech prominence. On the road to its return in the AI era were internal battles to convince chief executive officer Safra

Catz to invest in the cloud, recruitment of key customers like TikTok and the rise of a brash executive named Clay Magouyrk. Bloomberg spoke with more than 30 current or former employees and customers to understand how Oracle can deliver on its towering promises. They detailed spiraling costs, accelerated timelines to satisfy OpenAI, regulatory roadblocks and the hiring of hundreds of former Amazon cloud staffers, speaking anonymously to discuss the inner workings of a famously private and litigious company. Oracle declined to comment.

—BLOOMBERG

Source: The Financial Express Newspaper, 20-08-2025
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