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WEEKLY — Current Affairs

NATIONAL NEWS

Hyderabad's 16-Year-Old Vishwanath Karthikey Becomes Youngest Indian to Conquer 7 Summits

Hyderabad teenager Padakanti Vishwanath Karthikey has made history by becoming the youngest Indian—and the second youngest globally—to complete the prestigious Seven Summits challenge. At just 16 years, six months, and 27 days old, he achieved this remarkable feat by summiting Mount Everest on May 27, 2025, which was the final peak in his journey. Vishwanath's mountaineering journey began in 2020 with a trek to Mount Rudugaira, which, despite being unsuccessful, ignited his passion for climbing.

Foot notes:

- **Training and Preparation:** Vishwanath trained for five months at the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering and worked under mentors Bharath Thammineni and Lt. Romil Barthwal, an Indian Army veteran. He demonstrated remarkable discipline, strength, and humility throughout his journey.
- **Overcoming Challenges:** Vishwanath faced setbacks, including an unsuccessful attempt to scale Mount Elbrus at 13 due to a teammate's health issues. However, he persevered and continued to push himself, conquering peaks like Everest Base Camp, Nangkartshang Peak, and Friendship Peak.
- **Academic Balance:** Despite his mountaineering pursuits, Vishwanath excelled academically, scoring 92% in his Inter First Year exams. He credits his parents, Padakanti Rajendra Prasad and Laxmi, for their unwavering support and encouragement.

Flipkart secures NBFC license from RBI

Flipkart, the Walmart-owned e-commerce giant, has secured a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) license from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), marking a significant milestone in its expansion into financial services. The license, granted in March 2025 to Flipkart Finance Private Limited, empowers the company to offer loans directly to customers and sellers on its platform, eliminating the need for intermediary financial institutions. This development positions Flipkart as the first major Indian e-commerce platform to receive such authorization from the RBI, allowing it to extend credit from its own financial resources.

Foot notes:

- **First Indian E-commerce Player with Direct Lending:** Flipkart is the first major Indian e-commerce company to receive an NBFC license, enabling it to offer direct lending services. Previously, e-commerce platforms primarily offered loans through partnerships with banks and other NBFCs.
- **Issued to Flipkart Finance Private Limited:** The license was granted to Flipkart Finance Private Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Flipkart, by the RBI on March 13, 2025.
- **Enhanced Profitability and Control:** With the NBFC license, Flipkart can now retain the full margin on loans issued, which was previously shared with partner banks. This move

is expected to significantly boost the company's profitability and provide greater control over its credit offerings and customer experience.

- Strategic Expansion into Fintech: This development marks a major stride in Flipkart's ambition to become a full-stack fintech player.

PM Modi Inaugurates World's Highest Railway Arch Bridge in Jammu & Kashmir

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Chenab Railway Bridge in Jammu and Kashmir, marking a significant milestone in India's infrastructure development. Standing at 359 meters above the Chenab River, the bridge surpasses the height of the Eiffel Tower, making it the world's highest railway arch bridge. This engineering marvel is a crucial component of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project, which aims to connect the Kashmir Valley with the rest of India by rail. Constructed at a cost of 1,486 crore, the bridge spans 1,315 meters and is designed to withstand extreme conditions, including earthquakes and high wind speeds.

Foot notes:

- World's Highest Railway Arch Bridge: The Chenab Rail Bridge stands at an astonishing height of 359 meters above the Chenab River, making it the world's highest railway arch bridge.
- Part of USBRL Project: The bridge is a crucial link in the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project, a long-standing initiative aimed at providing all-weather, seamless rail connectivity between the Kashmir Valley and the rest of India.
- Engineering Marvel in Challenging Terrain: Constructed in a highly seismic zone with complex geological conditions and extreme weather, the bridge is designed to withstand high wind speeds (up to 266 km/h) and earthquakes (up to magnitude 8).
- Boost to Connectivity and Economy: The bridge significantly reduces travel time between Katra and Srinagar (to approximately 3 hours with the new Vande Bharat services also flagged off), fostering greater connectivity.

India Secures Presidency of IAS for 2025–2028 Term

India has achieved a historic milestone by securing the presidency of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) for the 2025–2028 term. In a landmark election held on June 3, 2025, in Brussels, V. Srinivas, Secretary of the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), was elected president, garnering 87 out of 141 votes, defeating Austria's candidate who received 54 votes. India has been an institutional member of the IIAS since 1998, actively contributing to its mission of promoting good governance, innovation, and evidence-based policy reforms globally.

Foot notes:

- Historic First: This is the first time in the nearly 100-year history of the IIAS that India will hold the presidential post, marking a significant milestone for the country's global administrative leadership.

- Recognition of India's Governance Reforms: The win is seen as a strong endorsement of India's administrative evolution and its reform-oriented governance, particularly the "Maximum Governance, Minimum Government" approach promoted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration.
- V. Srinivas to Lead: V. Srinivas, Secretary of India's Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), contested and won the presidency with a decisive mandate, reflecting the international community's trust in India's expertise.
- Shaping Global Discourse: India's presidency will provide a platform to shape global discourse on public administration reforms, with a focus on areas like sustainable development, digital governance.

Faizan Zaki won Scripps National Spelling Bee 2025

Faizan Zaki, a 13-year-old from Allen, Texas, emerged as the champion of the 2025 Scripps National Spelling Bee, held on May 29 at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland. He clinched the title by correctly spelling the French-derived word "éclaircissement," meaning "enlightenment" or "clarification," in the 21st round of the competition. The 2025 competition featured 243 spellers from across the United States and several other countries, including Canada, Puerto Rico, Nigeria, and Kuwait. Zaki's win continued the trend of Indian-American excellence in the Bee, with the top three positions being dominated by Indian-American participants.

Foot notes:

- Champion Spelled 'éclaircissement': Faizan Zaki, a 13-year-old seventh-grader from Allen, Texas, won the championship title by correctly spelling "éclaircissement," which means "the clearing up of something obscure: enlightenment".
- Fourth-Time Participant: This was Faizan's fourth time participating in the Scripps National Spelling Bee. He finished second in 2024, tied for 21st place in 2023, and 370th place in 2019, making him the fifth speller in Bee history to win after coming in second place the year before.
- Roots in Hyderabad: Faizan has roots in Hyderabad, India, and his parents, Zaki Anwar and Arshia Quadri, say he developed a love for words at a young age, reading by the age of 2.
- Prize and Recognition: Faizan received a \$50,000 cash prize, a commemorative medal, and the Scripps Cup. He also gets a \$2,500 cash prize and reference library from Merriam-Webster, \$400 of reference works from Encyclopædia Britannica, and \$1,000 Scholastic Dollars for his school.

Deutsche Bank appoints Stefan Schaffer as CEO of India GCC

Deutsche Bank has appointed Stefan Schaffer as the new Chief Executive Officer of its India Global Capability Centre (GCC). This strategic move underscores the bank's commitment to enhancing its global operations through its Indian workforce. Schaffer brings nearly three

decades of experience in IT and banking, having previously led Deutsche Bank's technology centre in Bucharest and served as Head of the Central CIO for Technology, Data & Innovation at the bank's Private Bank division.

Foot notes:

- **Dual Roles:** Schaffer will also serve as the Global Chief Information Officer (CIO) for Corporate Functions and Head of Global Technology Centres, highlighting Deutsche Bank's focus on innovation and commitment to India.
- **Experience:** Schaffer joined Deutsche Bank in 2020 and has held senior leadership roles, including Head of Bucharest Technology Center and Shared Applications and Services vertical. He's known for driving reusability, simplification, and standardization.
- **India Operations:** Deutsche India, established in 2005, operates in four major cities - Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, and Jaipur - with over 20,000 employees supporting the bank's global operations in finance, risk, technology, and operations.
- **Significance:** This appointment reinforces India's growing importance in Deutsche Bank's global strategy, demonstrating the bank's commitment to technology-driven transformation and leadership localization.

About Deutsche Bank:

Founded: 1870

Headquarters: Germany

India Launches DHRUVA Policy for Digital Address Infrastructure

The Government of India has introduced the DHRUVA policy (Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address) to establish a standardized digital address infrastructure nationwide. Launched by the Department of Posts in May 2025, DHRUVA aims to create a geo-coded, interoperable, and consent-based system for managing address data, enhancing service delivery across sectors like governance, logistics, and emergency services. DHRUVA introduces the concept of Address-as-a-Service (AaaS), allowing users to securely manage and share their address information, with full control over consent and privacy.

Foot notes:

- **Standardized Digital Addresses:** DHRUVA aims to create a standardized, geo-coded, and digital address infrastructure, serving as Address-as-a-Service (AaaS) for secure and efficient data sharing.
- **Significance:** The policy will support better planning, disaster response, and targeted public delivery. It will also streamline KYC, banking, subsidy delivery, and rural service reach, improving last-mile delivery efficiency and transparency in logistics and e-commerce.
- **Implementation:** The Department of Posts has invited feedback from stakeholders, ministries, and the public to refine the policy framework, with suggestions accepted until July 31, 2025.

Nationwide Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan launched

The Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan (VKSA-2025), launched on May 29, 2025, is a nationwide campaign aimed at transforming Indian agriculture through direct farmer engagement and scientific support. Spearheaded by Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the initiative seeks to bridge the gap between agricultural research and field-level implementation by deploying over 16,000 scientists across 2,170 teams to visit villages and provide tailored guidance on crop selection, seed varieties, fertilizer usage, and sustainable practices like natural farming .

Foot notes:

- **Nationwide Reach:** The campaign targets over 1.5 crore farmers across India, with a potential reach of 5 crore farmers across all districts, through technology dissemination, capacity building, and grassroots engagement.
- **Key Features:** The campaign promotes lab-to-land transfer of innovations through training, scientist-farmer interaction, and demonstrations, integrating fisheries and agriculture to enhance livelihood security and rural development.
- **Technological Advancements:** A novel fish vaccine, "CIFA Argu VAX-I," was launched during the campaign, developed by ICAR-CIFA to prevent parasitic infections in aquaculture, reducing economic losses and enhancing fish health management.

India Finishes 2nd at Asian Athletics Championships 2025

India delivered a remarkable performance at the Asian Athletics Championships 2025, finishing in 2nd place overall. The Indian contingent showcased strong talent across various track and field events, securing numerous medals. Athletes impressed with gold medals in sprinting, long-distance running, and field events like javelin and long jump. This achievement marks a significant improvement from previous editions and reflects the country's growing investment in athletics.

Foot notes:

- **Strong Medal Haul:** India secured a total of 24 medals (8 Gold, 10 Silver, 6 Bronze), marking one of their best performances in the championships held outside India.
- **Top Individual Golds:** Key gold medalists included Gulveer Singh (double gold in Men's 5000m and 10,000m), Avinash Sable (Men's 3000m Steeplechase), and Jyothi Yarraji (Women's 100m Hurdles).
- **Relay Dominance:** Both the Mixed 4x400m Relay and Women's 4x400m Relay teams won gold, showcasing India's strength in team events.
- **Emerging Talent:** The championships saw impressive performances and national records from young athletes like Animesh Kujur (Men's 200m bronze, national record) and Pooja Singh (Women's High Jump gold), indicating a bright future

India to Conduct Population Census 2027 in Two Phases with Caste Enumeration

India is set to conduct its Population Census 2027 in two distinct phases, marking a significant step in national data collection. This will be the first census after a gap of more than a decade, as the 2021 census was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the key highlights of the 2027 census is the inclusion of caste enumeration, which has been a long-standing demand by various social and political groups. The two-phase approach will help ensure more comprehensive and accurate data collection across urban and rural areas.

Foot notes:

- The census will be conducted in two distinct phases: Phase I: House Listing Operations, Phase II: Population Enumeration.
- Caste Enumeration (First Since 1931): For the first time since 1931, the census will officially include caste enumeration for all individuals, not just Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).
- Digital Census: The 2027 Census will be India's first digital census, leveraging mobile applications for data collection and a central portal for management. There may also be an option for citizens to self-enumerate online.
- Reference Dates: The reference date for the majority of the country will be March 1, 2027. However, for snow-bound areas like Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, the reference date will be October 1, 2026.
- Implications for Policy and Delimitation: The data from this census, especially the caste enumeration, is expected to have significant implications for:
- Informed Policy-Making: Providing granular socio-economic data to design targeted welfare schemes and social justice programs.

Indian achieved a cargo movement of 145.5 million tonnes on inland waterways in FY 2024-25

India's inland water transport (IWT) sector achieved a record cargo movement of 145.5 million tonnes in the fiscal year 2024–25. This marks a substantial increase from 18.10 million tonnes in FY 2013–14, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20.86% over the past decade. The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) attributes this growth to strategic investments, policy reforms, and the implementation of digital tools. The number of operational waterways increased from 24 to 29, enhancing connectivity and transportation efficiency.

Foot notes:

- Record-Breaking Volume: India moved an unprecedented 145.5 MMT of cargo on its inland waterways in FY 2024-25, demonstrating substantial growth compared to previous years (e.g., 18.1 MMT in FY 2013-14).
- Infrastructure Expansion: This achievement is attributed to significant infrastructure development. The number of National Waterways has increased from 5 to 111 (under the 2016 Act), with operational length growing to nearly 4,900 km.

- **Key Commodities:** Over 68% of the total cargo moved consisted of five major commodities: coal, iron ore, iron ore fines, sand, and fly ash, indicating IWT's importance for bulk cargo movement.

IOCL to Set Up India's Largest Green Hydrogen Plant

Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) is advancing India's clean energy transition by establishing the nation's largest green hydrogen plant at its Panipat Refinery & Petrochemical Complex in Haryana. This facility is designed to produce 10,000 tonnes of green hydrogen annually, utilizing electrolysis powered entirely by renewable energy sources. The green hydrogen generated will replace fossil-derived hydrogen in refinery operations, significantly reducing carbon emissions and aligning with IOCL's decarbonization strategy.

Foot notes:

- **Location and Capacity:** IOCL is establishing India's largest green hydrogen plant at its Panipat Refinery and Petrochemical Complex in Haryana. The plant is designed to produce 10,000 tonnes per annum (TPA) of green hydrogen.
- **Replacement of Fossil Hydrogen:** The green hydrogen produced at this facility will replace the fossil-derived hydrogen currently used in the refinery's operations, leading to a substantial reduction in carbon emissions. This aligns with IOCL's decarbonization roadmap.
- **Commissioning Timeline:** The project is slated for commissioning by December 2027, indicating a relatively swift timeline for a project of this scale.
- **Alignment with National Mission:** This initiative is fully aligned with the National Green Hydrogen Mission envisioned by the Indian government, which aims to position India as a global hub for green hydrogen production and utilization.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Miss Indonesia Monica Kezia Sembiring Won Talent Finale at Miss World 2025

Miss Indonesia 2024, Monica Kezia Sembiring, has achieved a significant milestone by winning the Talent Finale at the 72nd Miss World Festival. The event took place on May 22, 2025, at the Shilpakala Vedika auditorium in Hyderabad, India. This victory not only highlights her artistic talent but also secures her a fast-track position into the Top 10 of the Asia & Oceania continental group, bringing her closer to the Miss World crown.

Foot notes:

- **Talent Finale Win:** Monica Kezia Sembiring won the Talent Finale of Miss World 2025, held at Shilpakala Vedika in Hyderabad, with her original piano composition titled "Your Golden Hour".
- **Performance Highlights:** Her piano performance combined Indian and Indonesian melodies, showcasing her musical prowess and earning her a spot in the Top 10 of the Asia & Oceania continental group.

- Fast-Track Spot: Monica's win earned her a fast-track spot into the Top 10 of her continental group, bringing her closer to the Miss World crown.
- Global Competition: The 72nd Miss World festival features contestants from 108 countries and territories, with the final scheduled for May 31 at the HITEX Exhibition Centre in Telangana.

Luís Montenegro Reappointed as Portugal's Prime Minister

Luís Montenegro has been reappointed as the Prime Minister of Portugal following the country's general elections held on May 18, 2025. His center-right Democratic Alliance (AD) secured 91 seats in the 230-seat parliament, emerging as the largest party but still short of an outright majority. The far-right Chega party made significant gains, becoming the main opposition with 60 seats, while the Socialist Party (PS) fell to third place with 58 seats. President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa formally invited Montenegro to form a government on May 29, 2025.

Foot notes:

- Election Results: Montenegro's Democratic Alliance (AD) secured 91 seats, while the far-right Chega party emerged as the second-largest force with 60 seats, and the Socialist Party (PS) secured 58 seats.
- Minority Government: Montenegro will lead a minority government under the 25th Portuguese administration, focusing on economic growth, reforming public services, and transforming the national health system.
- Rejection of Constitutional Reform: Montenegro has ruled out immediate constitutional reforms, despite demands from Chega, opting for a pragmatic approach to governance under the minority setup.
- Political Cooperation: Both the Socialist Party (PS) and Chega have assured that they will not oppose the government's program, with Ventura from Chega stating they won't support a motion to reject the program.

Thailand's Opal Suchata Won 72nd Miss World Title

Opal Suchata Chuangsri from Thailand has been crowned Miss World 2025, making history as the first Thai woman to win the prestigious title. The 72nd edition of the Miss World pageant took place on May 31, 2025, at the HITEX Convention Centre in Hyderabad, India, where Opal was crowned by the outgoing titleholder, Krystyna Pyszková of the Czech Republic. The pageant featured contestants from 108 countries, with Hasset Dereje Admassu of Ethiopia named first runner-up, followed by Maja Klajda of Poland and Aurélie Joachim of Martinique.

Foot notes:

- First Thai Winner: Opal Suchata from Thailand has made history by becoming the first representative of her country to win the Miss World title, crowned on May 31, 2025, in Hyderabad, India.

- **Multimedia Achievement:** Opal not only won the main title but also excelled in the contest's multimedia component, topping the contestant app leaderboard with over 2.3 million views.
- **Background and Interests:** Opal is a student of International Relations with interests in Psychology and Anthropology. She's passionate about supporting breast cancer awareness and has volunteered for related organizations.
- **Global Platform:** As Miss World, Opal aims to use her platform for creating positive change, inspired by her personal motto, "To know that one life has breathed easier because you have lived, this is to have succeeded."

Karol Nawrocki Elected President of Poland

Karol Nawrocki, a 42-year-old historian from Gdańsk, was elected President of Poland in June 2025, narrowly defeating liberal Warsaw Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski with 50.89% of the vote. Despite lacking prior political experience, Nawrocki's campaign, backed by the conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party and endorsed by former U.S. President Donald Trump, resonated with voters seeking a nationalist and socially conservative agenda. His victory is expected to challenge the centrist, pro-European government led by Prime Minister Donald Tusk, potentially leading to political gridlock.

Foot notes:

- **Right-Wing Historian:** Nawrocki, 42, is a previously little-known figure on the national political stage, affiliated with the conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party, which lost power 18 months ago.
- **Power Dynamics:** Although the Polish presidency is largely ceremonial, Nawrocki will wield significant power with his veto authority, potentially clashing with Prime Minister Donald Tusk's pro-European Union agenda.
- **Divergent Views on EU:** Nawrocki supports traditional Catholic values and Polish sovereignty within the EU, opposing further ceding of national powers to the bloc, whereas Trzaskowski backed deeper EU integration and partnerships with Germany and France.

Lee Jae-myung Elected President of South Korea

Lee Jae-myung was elected President of South Korea in June 2025, securing 49.4% of the vote in a snap election following the impeachment of former President Yoon Suk Yeol. A member of the Democratic Party, Lee's victory marked a significant political shift, ending months of turmoil triggered by Yoon's brief imposition of martial law. In his inaugural address, Lee emphasized the need to address overlapping crises in the economy, national security, and democracy, and expressed a commitment to reform South Korea's over-centralized development model. He also signaled a willingness to engage in dialogue with North Korea to promote peace on the peninsula.

Foot notes:

- **Decisive Victory:** Lee Jae-myung won the presidential election with 49.42% of the vote, securing 17,287,513 votes, while his closest rival, Kim Moon-soo, received 41.15% of the vote.
- **Shift in Power:** This election marks a significant regime change in South Korea, symbolizing voter response to past controversies and signaling a new political direction, with a growing demand for government accountability, transparency, and reform.
- **Economic Revival:** Lee's top priorities include reviving the economy, which has been vulnerable to US President Donald Trump's tariffs, and improving everyday livelihoods, such as affordable housing and rewarding jobs.

Citi names Bank of America veteran Zhang as new China country head

Citigroup has appointed Wenjie Zhang as its new Country Officer and Head of Banking for China, effective July 2025, pending regulatory approval. Zhang will also serve as President and Executive Director of Citibank (China) Co., Ltd. Based in Shanghai, Zhang will report to Marc Luet, Citi's Head of Japan, Asia North, and Australia and Banking. He will act as Citi's lead representative in mainland China, overseeing operations, strengthening regulatory relationships, and enhancing risk controls.

Foot notes:

- **Experienced Leadership:** Wenjie Zhang brings 30 years of extensive experience in corporate and institutional banking, having previously served as President of China and Shanghai Branch Manager for Bank of America China.
- **Strategic Market Importance:** Citi views China as one of its largest global markets, with a long-standing presence dating back to 1902. This appointment underscores Citi's continued commitment to its corporate and institutional clients in China and supporting their cross-border banking needs.
- **Enhancing Growth:** Zhang's "depth and breadth of experience and on-ground expertise and knowledge" are expected to enhance Citi's growth in China, especially in supporting clients' cross-border banking requirements.

Kiran Pandit appointed Spokesperson of Nepal Rastra Bank

Mr. Kiran Pandit, Executive Director of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), has been appointed as the bank's official spokesperson, effective from Jestha 21, 2082 BS (June 4, 2025). Mr. Pandit joined NRB in 2062 BS and has accumulated extensive experience across various departments, including Bank Supervision, Regulation of Banks and Financial Institutions, Financial Inclusion, and Consumer Protection. He is currently serving in the Payment Systems Department. His appointment as spokesperson is expected to enhance the bank's communication strategies and public engagement.

Foot notes:

- **Extensive Experience:** Pandit brings a wealth of experience, having joined the central bank in 2062 BS and worked in various key departments including Bank Supervision,

Regulation of Banks and Financial Institutions, Financial Inclusion, and Consumer Protection.

- **Key Communication Role:** As spokesperson, Pandit will be the primary point of contact for media and the public regarding the NRB's policies, decisions, and financial updates, ensuring transparency and clear communication.
- **Continuity in Leadership:** His appointment comes as the central bank's newly appointed Governor, Bishwanath Poudel, is setting up his core team and changing responsibilities of high officials, including the spokesperson.

STATE NEWS

Lavender Festival 2025 Concludes in Bhaderwah

The 3rd Lavender Festival concluded on June 2, 2025, in Bhaderwah, Jammu & Kashmir, celebrating the region's transformation into India's lavender capital under the CSIR-Aroma Mission. Organized by the CSIR–Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM), the two-day event featured field visits to lavender farms, live distillation demonstrations, and exhibitions showcasing value-added products like essential oils and cosmetics. Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh, who inaugurated the festival, praised the "Purple Revolution" for empowering over 5,000 farmers and fostering rural entrepreneurship.

Foot notes:

- **Economic Impact:** The festival showcased the economic potential of lavender cultivation, generating 10.5 crore in revenue from lavender oil and dried flowers, benefiting rural communities in Bhaderwah, Jammu, and Kashmir.
- **Rural Empowerment:** The event highlighted the role of lavender farming in empowering rural farmers and entrepreneurs, with over 5,000 farmers engaged and 3,000+ families cultivating lavender across 750+ hectares.
- **Sustainable Agriculture:** The festival promoted sustainable agriculture practices in remote Himalayan regions, demonstrating the potential for self-employment and rural economic growth through lavender cultivation.
- **Industry Growth:** The festival marked a milestone in the CSIR-Aroma Mission, with 50+ distillation units set up across Jammu and Kashmir, and over 9,000 individuals trained in lavender farming and processing, driving India's vision for self-reliance in essential oils.

AIIMS Delhi, IIT Delhi to establish Center of Excellence for AI in healthcare

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi and the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a Centre of Excellence for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare (AI-CoE). This initiative is supported by a 330 crore grant from the Ministry of Education under the "Make AI in India, Make AI Work for India" program. The AI-CoE aims to develop AI-driven solutions to support key national health programs, focusing on enhancing healthcare access and delivery across

India. The center will function as a Section 8 company (non-profit organization), serving as the executing body for the grant.

Foot notes:

- Purpose of the Center: The AI-CoE aims to develop cutting-edge AI-driven solutions to support key national health programs, enhance healthcare delivery, improve accessibility, and upskill healthcare providers.
- Focus Areas: The center will concentrate on developing AI-based tools for crucial areas like early disease detection, chronic disease management, enhancing diagnostic accuracy, and improving patient care. This includes addressing issues related to cancer, tuberculosis, blindness, and maternal & child health.
- Collaboration of Expertise: This partnership leverages IIT Delhi's strengths in computer science, data analytics, and AI modeling with AIIMS Delhi's expertise in clinical insights, real-world health data, and public health systems, creating a powerful synergy for innovation.
- Indigenous Solutions for National Impact: The initiative emphasizes developing indigenous AI solutions that are affordable and scalable, with the goal of revolutionizing the national public health system and benefiting every citizen, particularly those in underserved communities.

BANKING NEWS

K. Prathapa Reddy assumed charge as Chairman of Telangana Grameena Bank

K. Prathapa Reddy has officially assumed charge as the Chairman of Telangana Grameena Bank (TGB), succeeding Y. Sobha. With over two decades of experience at the State Bank of India (SBI), Reddy brings a wealth of expertise in agriculture, financial inclusion, retail, commercial, and rural banking. Prior to this appointment, he served as the Chairman of Andhra Pradesh Grameena Vikas Bank (APGVB), which has since been merged into TGB as part of the "One State, One RRB" policy aimed at streamlining regional rural banking operations.

Foot notes:

- Similar Role: Interestingly, K. Prathapa Reddy has also been appointed as Chairman of Andhra Pradesh Grameena Vikas Bank (APGVB), indicating his capabilities are recognized across regions.
- Contribution to Social Causes: As Chairman of APGVB, Reddy contributed 65 lakh towards flood relief in Telangana, highlighting his commitment to social responsibility.
- Banking Experience: With his vast experience, Reddy is poised to drive Telangana Grameena Bank's growth, focusing on rural development and financial inclusion.
- Leadership: His leadership will likely play a significant role in shaping the bank's future strategies and initiatives, building on his expertise in the banking sector.

Asheesh Pandey appointed as MD & CEO for Union Bank of India

Asheesh Pandey has been recommended by the Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) for the role of Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Union Bank of India. Currently serving as Executive Director at Bank of Maharashtra, Pandey brings extensive experience in the banking sector. His appointment is set to succeed A Manimekhalai, whose tenure concludes next month. The FSIB's recommendation follows interviews with 23 candidates conducted between May 27 and May 30, 2025. Final confirmation of his appointment awaits approval from the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Foot notes:

- **Appointment:** The Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) has recommended Asheesh Pandey as the new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Union Bank of India.
- **Current Role:** Pandey currently serves as Executive Director at Bank of Maharashtra and will succeed A Manimekhalai, whose tenure as MD & CEO of Union Bank of India ends in June 2025.
- **Selection Process:** The FSIB conducted interviews with 23 candidates from May 27 to May 30, 2025, and selected Pandey based on his performance, experience, and suitability for the role.
- **Background:** Pandey has held critical roles in retail and corporate banking, digital banking initiatives, and institutional restructuring, with a proven track record in driving innovation and inclusive banking.

Kalyan Kumar appointed as MD & CEO for Central Bank of India

Kalyan Kumar has been appointed as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Central Bank of India. His appointment marks a significant leadership change in one of India's oldest public sector banks. Kalyan Kumar brings with him extensive experience in the banking and financial sector. He is expected to focus on strengthening the bank's digital capabilities and improving asset quality. The appointment aligns with the government's broader efforts to enhance the performance of public sector banks.

Foot notes:

- **Appointment:** Kalyan Kumar, currently Executive Director at Punjab National Bank, has been recommended as the new MD & CEO of Central Bank of India by the Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB).
- **Tenure:** He will succeed M V Rao, whose term concludes in July 2025, pending approval from the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.
- **Selection Process:** FSIB conducted interviews of 23 candidates from May 27 to May 30, 2025, and selected Kumar based on his performance, experience, and suitability for the role.
- **Significance:** This appointment aims to ensure leadership continuity and stability in public sector banks, promoting merit-based selections and strengthening governance.

- Impact: Kumar's leadership is expected to drive financial inclusion, credit expansion, and support for MSMEs, influencing policy implementation, customer services, and digitization efforts at Central Bank of India.

About Central Bank of India:

Founded: 1911

Headquarters: Mumbai

SPORTS NEWS

Mona Agarwal Won Silver At Para Shooting World Cup

Indian para shooter Mona Agarwal secured a silver medal at the 2025 World Shooting Para Sport (WSPS) World Cup held in Changwon, South Korea. Competing in the women's 10m air rifle SH1 category, she achieved a commendable score of 246.6 in the final. This performance placed her just behind South Korea's Yunri Lee, who clinched the gold with a score of 249.0, while another Korean shooter, Miyoung Kim, took bronze with 225.9. The Changwon World Cup, featuring 192 athletes from 26 nations, marked the first major para shooting event since the Paris 2024 Paralympics.

Foot notes:

- **Mona's Performance:** Mona demonstrated exceptional skill in the qualification rounds, scoring 315.4 points, while Aadithya contributed 307.5 points, totaling 622.9 points.
- **India's Medal Haul:** This silver medal was part of India's successful day, with the country bagging a total of four medals, including two silvers and two bronzes.
- **Previous Achievements:** Mona had previously won gold in the individual Women's 10m Air Rifle (SH1) event at the same World Cup, showcasing her impressive skills.
- **Career Highlights:** Mona's journey in para-shooting began in 2021, and she has made a significant impact, earning her first World Cup gold medal in 2024 and securing a Paralympic quota.

Rohit Sharma Becomes First Indian Batter to Smash 300 Sixes

Rohit Sharma has etched his name in Indian Premier League (IPL) history by becoming the first Indian batter to hit 300 sixes in the tournament. This milestone was achieved during the IPL 2025 Eliminator match against the Gujarat Titans at the Mullanpur Stadium, where Sharma delivered a commanding 81-run innings off 50 balls, featuring four sixes and nine fours. The landmark 300th six came when Sharma launched a delivery from Rashid Khan over the boundary, marking a significant moment in his illustrious career. With this feat, he joins an elite club, becoming only the second player in IPL history to reach this milestone, following Chris Gayle, who leads with 357 sixes.

Foot notes:

- **Record-Breaking Feat:** Rohit Sharma is the second player in IPL history to hit 300 sixes, after Chris Gayle, who has 357 sixes in 142 matches.

- IPL Career: Rohit has played 271 matches in the IPL, showcasing his consistency and skill as a batter.
- Current Form: In the ongoing IPL 2025 season, Rohit has scored 368 runs in 14 innings for the Mumbai Indians at an average of 30.67.
- Rohit has also become the second Indian player, after Virat Kohli, to reach 12,000 runs in the shortest format of the game, showcasing his incredible batting prowess.

India-England Test Series Renamed Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy

The historic Test cricket rivalry between India and England has been renamed the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy, honoring two of the sport's most iconic figures: James Anderson and Sachin Tendulkar. This change, jointly announced by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), replaces the previous titles—the Pataudi Trophy (in England) and the Anthony de Mello Trophy (in India). The upcoming five-match Test series between India and England, commencing on June 20 at Headingley, Leeds, will be the first contested under this new title.

Foot notes:

- Honoring Icons: The renaming is a tribute to England's prolific fast bowler James Anderson, who recently retired, and India's batting maestro Sachin Tendulkar. Both players have made monumental contributions to Test cricket, embodying longevity, excellence, and sportsmanship.
- Unveiling at WTC Final: The new trophy is expected to be jointly unveiled by Sachin Tendulkar and James Anderson themselves at Lord's on June 11, 2025, during the World Test Championship (WTC) final, adding a symbolic touch to the new era.
- Aligning with Global Trends: This move follows a growing trend in Test cricket to name bilateral series after legendary players, such as the Border-Gavaskar Trophy (India vs. Australia) and the recently introduced Crowe-Thorpe Trophy (England vs. New Zealand).

Deepak & Naman clinched two golds in Thailand Open International Boxing Tournament

Indian boxers Deepak and Naman Tanwar delivered stellar performances at the 4th Thailand Open International Boxing Tournament 2025, each clinching gold in their respective weight categories. Deepak secured the 75kg title with a dominant 5:0 victory over Uzbekistan's Abdurakhimov Javokhir, while Naman triumphed in the 90kg final, defeating China's Han Xuezheng 4:1. Their victories contributed to India's impressive haul of eight medals at the tournament, which included one silver and five bronze medals. In the women's 80+kg final, Kiran narrowly missed gold, settling for silver after a close 2:3 loss to Kazakhstan's Yeldana Talipova.

Foot notes:

- Double Gold for India: Deepak and Naman Tanwar secured two gold medals for India in the men's 75kg and 90kg categories, respectively, at the 4th Thailand Open International Boxing Tournament.

Impressive Wins: Deepak dominated Uzbekistan's Abdurakhimov Javokhir 5:0 in the 75kg final, while Naman Tanwar outboxed China's Han Xuezhen 4:1 in the 90kg final, showcasing their skill and strategy.

- **Strong Performance by Indian Women:** Indian women boxers also had a notable performance, with five bronze medals won by Tamanna (51kg), Priya (57kg), Sanju (60kg), Saneh (70kg), and Lalfakmawii Ralte (80kg), and a silver medal won by Kiran in the women's 80+kg category.
- **Controversy Over Disqualification:** Indian boxer Anshul Gill faced disqualification in the 90+kg category despite winning his semifinal bout, due to a complaint by the Uzbekistan coach over a post-bout gesture, denying him a medal.

D Gukesh Defeats Magnus Carlsen in Norway Chess 2025

In a dramatic Round 6 of the Norway Chess 2025 tournament, 19-year-old Indian Grandmaster and reigning World Champion D Gukesh achieved his first classical victory over former World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen. Despite being in a challenging position for much of the game, Gukesh capitalized on a critical blunder by Carlsen during a time scramble, turning the tables to secure a remarkable win. This victory not only marked a personal milestone for Gukesh but also made him the second Indian player, after R Praggnanandhaa, to defeat Carlsen in this prestigious tournament.

Foot notes:

- **Rematch Victory:** Gukesh bounced back from a loss to Carlsen in the first round, where Carlsen had declared himself the "king of chess" on social media. In the rematch, Gukesh displayed exceptional resilience and sharp calculative powers to turn the tables in the endgame.
- **Game Highlights:** Gukesh started with the move 1.e4, and Carlsen responded with the Berlin Defense. Despite Carlsen's impressive 98.7% accuracy at one point, Gukesh made accurate moves to extend the game and increase pressure. Carlsen's critical mistakes, including 44...f6 and 52...Ne2+, allowed Gukesh to seize the advantage.
- **Tournament Standings:** After this game, Magnus Carlsen and Fabiano Caruana are tied for the lead with 9.5 points each, while Gukesh sits just behind them with 8.5 points, establishing himself as a top contender in the event.
- **Significance:** This victory is not only a personal triumph for Gukesh but also a moment of pride for Indian chess, showcasing the emergence of a new generation of Indian players ready to challenge the world's elite.

India Finish Second with 24 Medals at Asian Athletics Championship 2025

India concluded the 26th Asian Athletics Championships 2025 in Gumi, South Korea, with a remarkable performance, securing a total of 24 medals—8 gold, 10 silver, and 6 bronze—and finishing second overall behind China. This marks India's best finish at the championships since their victory on home soil in Bhubaneswar in 2017. Long-distance runner Gulveer Singh

emerged as a standout performer, clinching gold medals in both the 5000m and 10,000m events, setting a competition record in the 5000m .

Foot notes:

- **Second Place Finish:** India secured the second position in the overall medal tally, winning a total of 24 medals, including 8 gold, 10 silver, and 6 bronze medals.
- **Best Finish Since 2017:** This achievement marks India's best finish at the Asian Athletics Championships since 2017, when they won the championship on home turf in Bhubaneshwar.
- **Dominant Performances:** Indian athletes shone in various events, with Gulveer Singh winning double gold in the men's 5000m and 10000m races, setting a championship record in the 5000m event. Avinash Sable also claimed gold in the men's 3000m steeplechase.
- **Future Prospects:** This performance is seen as a significant boost for Indian athletics ahead of the Paris Olympics, showcasing the country's growing depth in athletics and improved grassroots programs, training facilities, and sports science support.

Indian Wrestlers Won 21 Medals at Ulaanbaatar Open 2025

Indian wrestlers delivered a stellar performance at the 2025 Ulaanbaatar Open, securing a total of 21 medals—comprising 6 golds, 7 silvers, and 8 bronzes. This achievement marked India's best-ever showing at a United World Wrestling Ranking Series event. The competition, held from May 29 to June 1 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, featured over 200 athletes from around the globe. This impressive medal haul underscores India's growing prominence in international wrestling competitions.

Foot notes:

- **Total Medals:** Indian wrestlers won a total of 21 medals at the Ulaanbaatar Open 2025, consisting of 6 golds, 7 silvers, and 8 bronzes.
- **Notable Gold Medalists:** Reetika Hooda won gold in the women's 76kg category, while Antim Panghal secured gold in the women's 53kg division.
- **Performance Highlights:** Aman Sehrawat, India's youngest individual Olympic medalist, won a bronze medal in the men's 57kg freestyle category after a strong comeback following his historic performance at the Paris 2024 Olympics.
- **Tournament Significance:** The Ulaanbaatar Open 2025 was a prestigious event in the United World Wrestling (UWW) Ranking Series, attracting over 200 wrestlers from around the globe.

PKL legend Pardeep Narwal retires at 28

Pardeep Narwal, the legendary "Dubki King" of kabaddi, announced his retirement from professional play on June 2, 2025, at the age of 28. The decision came a day after he went unsold in the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) Season 12 auction, marking a poignant end to an illustrious career. He holds the record for the most raid points in PKL history, amassing a

staggering 1,801 points over 190 matches, and is renowned for his unmatched 34-point raid in a single match during Season 5.

Foot notes:

- **Legacy:** Narwal ended his legendary career with a record 1,801 raid points in 190 matches, averaging 9.47 raid points per match. He guided Patna Pirates to three consecutive PKL titles and holds multiple records in the league.
- **Reason for Retirement:** Narwal cited his declining form and age as factors contributing to his decision. He felt that defenders had figured him out, and his skills had declined over time.
- **Future Plans:** Narwal plans to transition into a coaching role, where he can stay connected to kabaddi. He has already started training kids in his village and looks forward to sharing his expertise with the next generation.
- **Impact on PKL:** Narwal's retirement marks the end of an era in the Pro Kabaddi League. His absence will be felt, but his legacy will continue to inspire future players. The league will begin its new season without one of its biggest stars on the mat.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru Won Maiden IPL Title 2025

Royal Challengers Bengaluru clinched their maiden IPL title in 2025, ending years of anticipation and near-misses. The team delivered a stellar performance throughout the season, showcasing a well-balanced combination of experience and young talent. In the final, RCB outclassed their opponents with a commanding display in both batting and bowling. Key contributions came from their star players, who rose to the occasion under pressure. This historic win marked a turning point for the franchise and ignited celebrations among their passionate fanbase worldwide.

Foot notes:

- **RCB's Historic Win:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru defeated Punjab Kings by 6 runs in the IPL 2025 final, marking their first-ever IPL title win after 18 years.
- **Krunal Pandya's Match-Winning Performance:** Krunal Pandya was named Player of the Final for his impressive bowling, claiming 2 wickets for 17 runs in 4 overs, including the crucial wicket of Josh Inglis.
- **RCB's Strong Team Effort:** RCB posted 190/9 in 20 overs, with Virat Kohli scoring 43 runs, and their bowlers restricted Punjab Kings to 184/7, showcasing a well-rounded team performance.

Oscar Piastri Claims Dominant Victory at Spanish Grand Prix 2025

Oscar Piastri claimed a dominant victory at the 2025 Spanish Grand Prix, marking his fifth win of the Formula One season. Driving for McLaren, he started from pole position and led the race from start to finish at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya. Piastri's teammate, Lando Norris, finished second, securing a 1-2 finish for the team. Charles Leclerc of Ferrari took third place after a collision between Max Verstappen and George Russell dropped both down the order.

This win solidified Piastri's lead in the Drivers' Championship and showcased McLaren's rising dominance in the 2025 season.

Foot notes:

- **Dominant Win:** Oscar Piastri clinched a commanding victory in the Spanish Grand Prix, leading teammate Lando Norris to a McLaren 1-2 finish. Piastri made an excellent start from pole position and built an early lead.
- **Late-Race Drama:** The race saw late drama unfold when Max Verstappen and George Russell collided, resulting in a 10-second time penalty for Verstappen. Despite this, Piastri remained focused and crossed the line to take victory.
- **Championship Lead:** Piastri's win has further strengthened his championship lead, putting him 10 points ahead of Norris in the Drivers' Championship. Verstappen trails Piastri by 49 points.
- **Impressive Team Performance:** McLaren had a strong team performance, with Norris supporting Piastri to secure a 1-2 finish. Charles Leclerc took third place for Ferrari, while Nico Hulkenberg impressed with fifth place for Kick Sauber.

AWARD NEWS

Serena Williams Honoured with Princess of Asturias Award for Sports 2025

Serena Williams has been honoured with the prestigious Princess of Asturias Award for Sports 2025. This award recognizes her outstanding contribution to the world of tennis and her lasting impact on global sports. Widely regarded as one of the greatest athletes of all time, Serena has won 23 Grand Slam singles titles in her illustrious career. The award also acknowledges her role in breaking barriers and advocating for gender and racial equality in sports. Serena expressed gratitude for the honour, stating it was a proud moment in her career.

Foot notes:

- **Award Details:** The Princess of Asturias Award is one of Spain's highest civilian honors, recognizing excellence in various fields, including sports, arts, literature, and science. The award carries a cash prize of €50,000 (\$57,000) and is presented annually in Oviedo, Spain, by Princess Leonor.
- **Serena's Achievements:** With 73 career singles titles, including 23 Grand Slam victories, Serena Williams is widely regarded as one of the greatest athletes of all time. Her career spanned over two decades, breaking barriers in tennis and global sports.
- **Previous Winners:** Past recipients of the sports prize include global icons like skier Lindsey Vonn, the IOC Refugee Olympic Team, and the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team.

NICDC honoured with Udyog Vikas Award

The National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC) has been honored with the prestigious Udyog Vikas Award at the Udyog Vikas 2025 event organized by Janmabhumi

Daily in Kerala. This recognition underscores NICDC's significant contributions to India's industrial development, particularly through its initiatives in establishing Greenfield Industrial Smart Cities. The award ceremony was graced by Shri Bhupathi Raju Srinivasa Varma, Minister of State for Heavy Industries, Public Enterprises, and Steel. He highlighted the Union Government's commitment to developing state-of-the-art industrial infrastructure across the country.

Foot notes:

- **Logistics Data Services:** NICDC Logistics Data Services Ltd. (NLDSL) showcased its contributions to transforming India's logistics ecosystem through the Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP).
- **Impact:** NICDC's recognition at the Udyog Vikas event highlights its vital role in catalyzing India's industrial transformation and enhancing the country's competitiveness in the global manufacturing and logistics arena.
- **Government Commitment:** The Union Minister for State for Heavy Industries, Public Enterprises, and Steel, Shri Bhupathi Raju Srinivasa Varma, emphasized the government's commitment to developing Greenfield Industrial Smart Cities across India.
- **Palakkad Industrial Smart City:** The award ceremony also featured a technical session focusing on the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme.

President Droupadi Murmu presented Distinguished Service Awards at Defence Investiture Ceremony-II

President Droupadi Murmu conferred 92 Distinguished Service Decorations during the Defence Investiture Ceremony-II at Rashtrapati Bhavan. The awards included 30 Param Vishisht Seva Medals (PVSM), five Uttam Yudh Seva Medals (UYSM), and 57 Ati Vishisht Seva Medals (AVSM), recognizing exceptional service across the Indian Armed Forces, Indian Coast Guard, and Border Roads Organisation (BRO). Notable recipients of the PVSM included Lieutenant Generals Manoj Kumar Katiyar, Dhiraj Seth, and Anindya Sengupta from the Army; Vice Admirals Sanjay Jasjit Singh and Suraj Berry from the Navy; and Air Marshals Narmdeshwar Tiwari and Balakrishnan Manikantan from the Air Force.

Foot notes:

- **Honoring Distinguished Service:** The ceremony was held to honor and recognize the exceptional service, leadership, and devotion to duty displayed by personnel of the Indian Armed Forces, Indian Coast Guard, and Border Roads Organisation (BRO).
- **Total 92 Awards Presented:** President Murmu conferred a total of 92 Distinguished Service Decorations. These included the Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM), Uttam Yudh Seva Medal (UYSM), and Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM).
- **Breakdown of Awards:** Specifically, 30 Param Vishisht Seva Medals, 5 Uttam Yudh Seva Medals, and 57 Ati Vishisht Seva Medals were presented to both serving and retired personnel.

- Highest Peacetime and Conflict Awards: The PVSM is India's highest peacetime military award for distinguished service of the most exceptional order, while the UYSM is conferred for distinguished service during conflict or hostilities.

ANEI Honors Dr. M. I. Sahadulla with Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr. M. I. Sahadulla, Chairman and Managing Director of KIMSHEALTH, was honored with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award by the Association of Nurse Executives India (ANEI) during its 5th Annual Flagship Event held in Kochi. The award was presented by ANEI's National President, Capt. Ajitha Nair, recognizing Dr. Sahadulla's exceptional contributions to the healthcare sector in India and the Middle East. With nearly five decades of leadership, he has been instrumental in elevating KIMSHEALTH's reputation as a trusted healthcare provider, championing patient safety, and fostering a culture of empathy and excellence.

Foot notes:

- Recognition: The award recognizes Dr. Sahadulla's pivotal role in transforming KIMSHEALTH into a prominent healthcare presence in the Middle East and India, particularly in Kerala.
- Healthcare Contributions: With over 45 years of global healthcare experience, Dr. Sahadulla has shaped KIMSHEALTH into a leading healthcare provider with a significant presence in India and the GCC.
- Academic and Professional Achievements: Dr. Sahadulla holds fellowships from the Royal Colleges of Physicians in Ireland and London and an MBA from Hull, UK. He has also contributed to academia as an MRCP examiner and through published works in medicine.
- Leadership and Impact: Under his vision, KIMSHEALTH became a pioneer in accessible, quality healthcare across Kerala and expanded internationally, earning the ACHSI Gold Medallion in 2015.
- Event Details: The award was presented at the CAHO conference themed "Make Healthcare Efficient, Effective, Economical, and Equitable," highlighting Dr. Sahadulla's contributions to healthcare quality and safety.

Peru Shines Bright at the Talía Awards 2025

Peru achieved significant recognition at the 2025 Talía Awards, a prestigious celebration of Ibero-American theater held at the Teatro Fernán Gómez in Madrid. The country was honored with three nominations in the Best Latin American Performing Arts Production category, highlighting its vibrant theatrical scene. The nominated productions included "Cisnes," directed by Alberto Ísola; "Discurso de Promoción," a collaborative work by the renowned group Yuyachkani under the direction of Miguel Rubio; and "La Mariscala," co-directed by Mateo Chiarella and Lucho Tuesta and award-winning producer Carlos Arana represented Peru at the event, amplifying the visibility of Peruvian theater on the international stage.

Foot notes:

- **Strong Presence:** Peru took center stage at the 3rd edition of the Talía Awards, held on May 12, 2025, at the Teatro Fernán Gómez Centro Cultural de la Villa in Madrid, showcasing its artistic excellence and cultural presence.
- **International Recognition:** Peru's strong presence at the awards underscores the growing international recognition of its theater scene, celebrated for its artistic depth and universal resonance grounded in a distinct cultural identity.
- **Peruvian Representation:** Celebrated Peruvian actress, director, and producer Ana María Estrada, head of Dakini Productions, participated as an official presenter at the ceremony, joined by award-winning Peruvian producer Carlos Arana.
- **Cultural Significance:** The Talía Awards, organized by the Academy of Performing Arts of Spain, honor excellence in Ibero-American theater, highlighting Peru's talent, stories, and creative vision on an international platform.

Kumar Mangalam Birla Honoured with Global Leadership Award 2025

Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman of the Aditya Birla Group, was honored with the 2025 Global Leadership Award by the U.S.-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) at its Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C. This prestigious award recognizes his significant contributions to strengthening the U.S.-India economic partnership through substantial investments and cross-border innovation. In his acceptance speech, Birla highlighted the group's \$4.1 billion greenfield aluminum rolling mill project in Bay Minette, Alabama, marking the largest industrial investment in the state's history .

Foot notes:

- **Award Recognition:** Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman of Aditya Birla Group, received the Global Leadership Award 2025 from the U.S.-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) at its 8th annual Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C.
- **Leadership and Investments:** Birla was recognized for his exceptional leadership and commitment to strengthening U.S.-India economic ties, with Aditya Birla Group investing over \$15 billion in the U.S. and generating significant employment opportunities.
- **Job Creation and Operations:** The group operates in 15 U.S. states, employing over 5,400 people, and has established itself as India's largest investor in the U.S., reflecting a deep commitment to long-term bilateral cooperation.

AGREEMENT & MOU NEWS**Microsoft and Yotta Partner to Advance AI Adoption Across India**

Microsoft and Yotta Data Services have announced a strategic partnership to accelerate artificial intelligence (AI) adoption across India. This collaboration integrates Microsoft's Azure AI services with Yotta's Shakti Cloud, a sovereign AI cloud platform, aiming to provide

advanced AI capabilities to developers, startups, enterprises, and public sector organizations nationwide. By combining Microsoft's AI models and tools with Yotta's robust GPU infrastructure, the initiative seeks to enable real-time AI applications with reduced latency, ensuring enhanced performance and faster deployment.

Foot notes:

- **IndiaAI Mission Alignment:** The partnership aligns with the IndiaAI Mission, a flagship government program focused on building a robust AI ecosystem within the country.
- **Key Benefits:** The partnership will offer powerful and accessible AI services to various users, including public and private sector organizations, research institutions, startups, and universities.
- **Data Sovereignty:** Yotta's India-hosted infrastructure guarantees that data remains within national borders, complying with the country's data sovereignty policies.
- **Sector-Wide AI Innovation:** The integrated AI platform will support critical sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, education, finance, retail, and manufacturing.

Microsoft & Yotta Partner to Accelerate AI Innovation in India

Microsoft and Yotta Data Services have partnered to accelerate AI innovation in India by integrating Microsoft's Azure AI services with Yotta's Shakti Cloud platform. This collaboration aims to provide developers, startups, enterprises, and public sector organizations across India with advanced AI capabilities, all within a sovereign cloud infrastructure. The partnership supports the IndiaAI Mission, which has received over 500 proposals for developing indigenous AI models, by enhancing local AI capabilities and fostering innovation. By combining Microsoft's advanced AI models, applications, and agents with Yotta's robust GPU infrastructure, the initiative enables real-time AI applications with ultra-low latency compute across sectors like agriculture, healthcare, education, finance, manufacturing, retail, and media.

Foot notes:

- **Integration of Azure AI and Shakti Cloud:** The core of the partnership involves Microsoft integrating its advanced Azure AI services (including models, applications, and development tools) with Yotta's Shakti Cloud, a high-performance, sovereign AI cloud platform based in India.
- **Supporting IndiaAI Mission:** This collaboration directly aligns with and aims to accelerate the IndiaAI Mission, a government initiative focused on establishing India as a global leader in AI by fostering indigenous AI development and infrastructure.
- **Sovereign & Secure AI:** A crucial aspect is the emphasis on data sovereignty and security. By hosting Microsoft's AI services on Yotta's India-based infrastructure, the partnership ensures that data remains within national borders, addressing privacy and compliance concerns.

Hyundai Motor India onboards Pankaj Tripathi as brand ambassador

Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL) has appointed acclaimed actor Pankaj Tripathi as its new brand ambassador. This strategic move aims to deepen Hyundai's connection with Indian consumers, particularly in smaller towns and rural areas where Tripathi's grounded persona and widespread appeal resonate strongly. This collaboration adds to Hyundai's lineup of brand ambassadors, which includes Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone, reflecting the company's strategy to connect with a broad spectrum of Indian consumers through relatable and trusted personalities.

Foot notes:

- **Brand Values Alignment:** Tripathi embodies HMIL's core values of reliability, authenticity, and a deep-rooted connection with India's diverse audience, resonating with the company's vision of "Progress for Humanity".
- **Personal Connection:** Pankaj Tripathi has a personal connection with the brand, having owned a Hyundai as his first car, and values the brand's trust and innovation.
- **Marketing Strategy:** The partnership aims to enhance Hyundai's brand narrative by focusing on emotions, honesty, and shared purpose, showcasing technologically advanced yet humane products.

Saurabh Kumar appointed as Director in the Department of Revenue

Saurabh Kumar, a 2009-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the Chhattisgarh cadre, has been appointed as Director in the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India. His appointment, made under the Central Staffing Scheme, is for a tenure of five years from the date he assumes charge or until further orders. Prior to this, Kumar has held various administrative positions in Chhattisgarh, gaining extensive experience in governance and public administration. His new role in the Department of Revenue will involve contributing to the formulation and implementation of fiscal policies, overseeing revenue collection, and enhancing tax administration.

Foot notes:

- **IAS Officer (2009 Batch, Chhattisgarh Cadre):** He is an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the 2009 batch, allocated to the Chhattisgarh cadre. This background brings significant administrative experience to his new role.
- **Key Role in Revenue Administration:** As Director in the Department of Revenue, he will play a crucial role in overseeing and implementing policies related to taxation, customs, and other revenue-generating functions of the government.
- **Part of Recent Bureaucratic Reshuffle:** This appointment is part of a series of appointments and recommendations by the Government of India, indicating a regular process of bureaucratic changes and new postings.
- **Focus on Governance and Policy Implementation:** His role will involve contributing to the efficient functioning of the revenue department, which is vital for the nation's economic stability and development.

Sudarshan Venu to take over as TVS Motor Chairman & MD

Sudarshan Venu, currently the Managing Director of TVS Motor Company, has been appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD), effective August 25, 2025. This decision, unanimously approved by the company's Board of Directors, acknowledges Venu's pivotal role in steering the company's growth and strategic evolution during his tenure as Director. Under Venu's guidance, TVS Motor is expected to continue its focus on innovation, customer-centricity, and technological advancement, reinforcing its position as a global mobility leader.

Foot notes:

- Succession from Sir Ralf Speth: He will succeed Sir Ralf Speth, who has served as the Chairman for the past three years and has decided not to seek re-appointment at the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM) on August 22, 2025.
- Sir Ralf Speth to be Chief Mentor: To ensure continuity and benefit from his vast experience, Sir Ralf Speth will transition to the role of Chief Mentor for TVS Motor Company for a period of three years, effective August 23, 2025.
- Recognition of Past Contributions: The Board's decision to appoint Sudarshan Venu acknowledges his exemplary contributions to the company's sustained growth and strategic development during his tenure as Managing Director.

Ashwani Lohani appointed as Director of Prime Ministers Museum & Library

Ashwani Lohani has been appointed as the Director of the Prime Ministers Museum & Library, a prestigious institution dedicated to preserving the legacy of India's Prime Ministers. Known for his leadership roles in the aviation and tourism sectors, Lohani brings extensive administrative experience to this new position. He previously served as the Chairman of the Railway Board and also held top positions in Air India and the India Tourism Development Corporation. His appointment is expected to enhance the museum's outreach, modernization, and educational value. The museum, located in New Delhi, showcases the lives, contributions, and journeys of India's Prime Ministers.

Foot notes:

- Experienced Bureaucrat: Lohani is a retired Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineering (IRSME) officer (1980 batch) with a distinguished career.
- "Turnaround Specialist": He is widely known for his ability to revitalize struggling organizations, having successfully led entities like Air India, Railway Board, India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), and Madhya Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (MPTDC).
- Successor to Sanjiv Nandan Sahai: Lohani takes over the role after the tenure of former power secretary Sanjiv Nandan Sahai ended, with Lily Pandeya serving as interim director.

- Part of PMML Reconstitution: His appointment comes at a time when the PMML Society and its executive council have undergone a reconstitution, expanding to include new prominent members.

First centre fuselage for LCA Tejas Mk IA handed over to HAL

In a significant boost to India's indigenous defence manufacturing, Hyderabad-based VEM Technologies has delivered the first centre fuselage assembly for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas Mk1A to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). This marks the first time a major sub-assembly for the Tejas has been produced by a private Indian company, highlighting a critical shift towards deeper industry collaboration in defence production. The handover ceremony, held in Hyderabad, was attended by Secretary (Defence Production) Sanjeev Kumar and HAL Chairman and Managing Director Dr. D.K. Sunil.

Foot notes:

- Indigenous Manufacturing Boost: This is the first time a major sub-assembly for the LCA Tejas has been manufactured by a private Indian company, VEM Technologies in Hyderabad.
- Increased Production Capacity: The delivery signifies the establishment of a fourth production line for the LCA Mk1A, supplementing the existing two lines at HAL Bengaluru and one at HAL Nashik.
- Private Sector Collaboration: The successful production by VEM Technologies highlights HAL's strategy of nurturing a national aerospace ecosystem by collaborating with private partners and providing them with critical inputs and technical know-how.
- Key Component for Advanced Variant: The centre fuselage is a vital structural component of the Tejas Mk1A, which is an upgraded version of the LCA Tejas.

Lt Gen Dinesh Singh Rana Appointed as New CINCAN

Lieutenant General Dinesh Singh Rana has been appointed as the 18th Commander-in-Chief of the Andaman and Nicobar Command (CINCAN), India's sole integrated tri-service command. He assumed command on June 1, 2025, succeeding Air Marshal Saju Balakrishnan. Lt Gen Rana is the first Chief of Defence Intelligence to be elevated to the rank of Commander-in-Chief, highlighting the growing importance of military intelligence in India's strategic framework. Commissioned into the 10th Battalion of The Garhwal Rifles in 1987, he has held various operational, instructional, and staff appointments across diverse terrains and theatres, including commanding the Gajraj Corps along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Foot notes:

- Historic Milestone: He made history by becoming the first Chief of Defence Intelligence to be elevated to the rank of Commander-in-Chief, highlighting the growing importance of defence intelligence and jointmanship in India's military leadership.
- Extensive Experience: With over 37 years of service, Lt Gen Rana has held diverse operational, instructional, and staff appointments across various terrains and theatres,

including tenures with the Indian Military Training Team and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

- Academic Background: He is a graduate of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, and a postgraduate of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, with additional qualifications from the National Defence College, New Delhi, Centre for National Defence Studies, Madrid, Spain, and the National Defence University, USA.

Rajiv Memani Takes Charge as CII President for FY26

Rajiv Memani, Chairman and CEO of EY India, has been appointed as the President of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) for the fiscal year 2025–26. He succeeds Sanjiv Puri, Chairman and Managing Director of ITC Ltd. Memani's appointment was confirmed during the first meeting of the newly constituted CII National Council. Joining him in the leadership team are R Mukundan, Managing Director and CEO of Tata Chemicals, as President-Designate, and Dr. Suchitra K Ella, Co-founder and Managing Director of Bharat Biotech, as Vice President. Memani brings a wealth of experience to his new role, having served on various government committees, including the Ministry of Finance's taskforce that drafted a new Direct Tax Code in 2019.

Foot notes:

- Key Appointments: Alongside Memani, R Mukundan, MD & CEO of Tata Chemicals, has taken charge as CII's President-Designate for 2025-26, and Suchitra K Ella, Co-founder and MD of Bharat Biotech, has become CII's Vice President.
- Expertise and Experience: Memani brings decades of experience from the consulting and finance sector, with a strong background in advising large Indian companies and multinational organizations on strategic matters. He's also a member of EY's Global Executive Board as Chair of its Growth Markets Council.
- Objectives: As CII, Memani is expected to drive innovation, regulatory reforms, digital transformation, and entrepreneurship support, leveraging his global network and insights to enhance India's global competitiveness.
- Strategic Significance: Memani's appointment signals a strategic move aimed at strengthening industry-government collaboration and driving inclusive economic growth amid dynamic economic conditions.

Ramraj Cotton appoints Dushyanth Sridhar as Brand Ambassador for Acharya Panchakacham Veshti

Ramraj Cotton has appointed renowned Vedic scholar and cultural exponent Dushyanth Sridhar as the brand ambassador for its Acharya Panchakacham Veshti, a garment deeply rooted in India's spiritual and cultural heritage. This collaboration transcends conventional brand endorsements, uniting two entities committed to preserving and promoting Sanatana Dharma and traditional Indian attire. Ramraj Cotton's founder, K.R. Nagarajan, emphasized that

Sridhar's dedication to spreading Indian tradition worldwide makes him an ideal representative for this initiative.

Foot notes:

- **Brand Representation:** The partnership aims to symbolize and promote traditional Indian values and culture through Ramraj Cotton's clothing line, specifically the Acharya Panchakacham Veshti.
- **Dushyanth Sridhar's Expertise:** As a renowned Vedic scholar, Sridhar brings depth and authenticity to the brand's message, potentially appealing to customers looking for products rooted in Indian traditions.
- **Cultural Significance:** This collaboration emphasizes the importance of preserving and promoting India's cultural heritage, with Ramraj Cotton positioning itself as a brand that values and respects traditional Indian attire.

About Ramraj Cotton:

CEO: K. R. Nagarajan

Founded: 1983

Headquarters: Tiruppur

Nikhil Pavan Kalyan appointed as Director of Census Operations, Odisha

Nikhil Pavan Kalyan, a 2012-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, has been appointed as the Director of Census Operations (DCO) and Director of Citizen Registration (DCR) for Odisha. The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), Government of India, issued the appointment order on June 2, 2025, directing the Odisha government to relieve Kalyan from his current duties to assume this new role. His tenure is set to continue until December 31, 2025, or until further orders. The appointment comes as Odisha prepares for the upcoming nationwide census, which is anticipated to include caste enumeration.

Foot notes:

- **Tenure:** The appointment is valid until December 31, 2025, or until further orders, whichever comes earlier. Kalyan is expected to join his new role within three weeks of the appointment order.
- **Responsibilities:** As DCO and DCR, Kalyan will oversee critical demographic and citizenship data management efforts in Odisha, playing a pivotal role in managing data for national policy, welfare schemes, resource allocation, and long-term planning.
- **Census Significance:** The appointment comes ahead of anticipated updates and preparations for the next census exercise in India, which has seen delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Background:** The Department of Personnel & Training, Government of India, made the appointment, and Odisha Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja received the official communication regarding Kalyan's appointment.

About Odisha:

CM: Mohan Charan Majhi

Capital: Bhubaneswar

Shailendra Nath Gupta appointed as New Director General of Defence Estates

Shailendra Nath Gupta, a 1990-batch officer of the Indian Defence Estates Service (IDES), assumed office as the Director General of Defence Estates on May 31, 2025. With over three decades of experience, he has held significant positions, including CEO of various Cantonment Boards, Defence Estate Officer of multiple circles, and Principal Director of Defence Estates in the Eastern Command. The Directorate General of Defence Estates (DGDE) manages approximately 18 lakh acres of defence land across India, operating through six commands, 38 Defence Estates Circles, and 61 Cantonment Boards.

Foot notes:

- **Previous Roles:** He has served as CEO of several Cantonment Boards, Defence Estates Officer, Staff Officer, Director, Defence Estates, Central Command, and Principal Director, Defence Estates, Eastern Command.
- **Responsibilities:** As DGDE, Gupta will oversee the management of approximately 18 lakh acres of defence land across India, including 61 Cantonment Boards and 38 Defence Estates Circles.
- **Key Focus Areas:** His tenure is expected to focus on digitization of defence land records, land audit reforms, streamlining land management, preventing encroachments, and ensuring proper land utilization.
- **Significance:** The appointment comes at a time when strategic land management and modernization of cantonments are key priorities of the Ministry of Defence, and Gupta's experience is expected to strengthen urban planning, infrastructure development, and public service delivery in cantonment areas.

Nykaa Fashion appointed Ishaan Khatter & Shanaya Kapoor as new brand faces

Nykaa Fashion has appointed actors Ishaan Khatter and Shanaya Kapoor as its new brand ambassadors, aiming to resonate with Gen Z's evolving fashion sensibilities. The duo brings a blend of authenticity and boldness to the brand, reflecting a generation that values self-expression and individuality. Ishaan's natural ease and refined charm complement Shanaya's blend of feminine cool and street-smart attitude, capturing the essence of Nykaa Fashion's inclusive and experimental style ethos. Their partnership is set to enhance Nykaa Fashion's connection with a younger audience, offering a diverse range of styles for every mood and occasion.

Foot notes:

- **Emphasis on Individuality:** Nykaa Fashion's partnership with Ishaan Khatter and Shanaya Kapoor highlights the brand's focus on individuality and self-expression in fashion, appealing to a generation that values authenticity and confidence.

- Brand Ambassadors' Unique Styles: Khatter and Kapoor bring their distinct fashion edges to the brand, with Khatter's natural ease and refined charm complementing Kapoor's blend of feminine cool and street-smart attitude.
- Inclusive Fashion Conversation: The partnership aims to create a bold, inclusive fashion conversation, celebrating personal narratives and offering a diverse range of styles for every mood and moment.
- Driving Growth through Innovative Campaigns: Adwaita Nayar, Executive Director and CEO of Nykaa Fashion, stated that the partnership will enhance the brand's growth through innovative campaigns, trend drops, and seasonal edits, showcasing a wide range of personal styles.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Anti-Tobacco Day observed on 31st May

Anti-Tobacco Day is observed every year on 31st May to raise awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco use and to encourage people to quit smoking and using tobacco products. It was established by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1987 as World No Tobacco Day. Tobacco consumption is a leading cause of preventable diseases and deaths worldwide, including lung cancer, heart disease, stroke, and respiratory illnesses. The day highlights the need for stronger policies and actions to reduce tobacco consumption and protect public health. Various campaigns, educational programs, and community activities are held globally to support tobacco cessation and promote a healthier lifestyle.

Foot notes:

- History: World No Tobacco Day was first established by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1987 to draw global attention to the tobacco epidemic and preventable deaths it causes.
- WHO's Role: The WHO leads this global public health campaign, providing resources and support to countries to implement tobacco control measures and promote awareness about tobacco's risks.
- Health Risks: Tobacco use is a leading cause of preventable deaths worldwide, resulting in over 8 million deaths annually, including 1.2 million due to second-hand smoke exposure.
- Awareness Efforts: The day is marked with various activities, including campaigns, events, and award ceremonies, to encourage people to quit tobacco and promote a tobacco-free world.

Telangana Formation Day observed on 02nd June

Telangana celebrated its 11th Formation Day, marking over a decade since its creation as India's 29th state on June 2, 2014. The day was commemorated with grand festivities across the state, reflecting on the region's rich cultural heritage and the resilience of its people in achieving

statehood. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy led the main ceremony at Parade Grounds in Secunderabad, paying floral tributes to Telangana martyrs at Gun Park and unveiling the Telangana Talli statue in Palakurti. The celebrations included cultural programs showcasing Telangana's traditions, language, and history. A significant highlight was the launch of the Rajiv Yuva Vikasam scheme, aimed at promoting self-employment among youth from SC, ST, BC, and minority communities, with an initial allocation of 1,000 crore.

Foot notes:

- **History:** The state was formed after a prolonged movement advocating for statehood due to historical, cultural, and socio-economic disparities with Andhra Pradesh.
- **Key Factors:** The bifurcation was driven by distinct identities, socio-economic imbalances, demand for local governance, and water resource conflicts between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Celebrations:** The day is marked with formal events, parades, and ceremonies across the state's 33 districts, highlighting Telangana's history, traditions, and achievements.
- **Significance:** Telangana Formation Day honors the struggle and sacrifices made by the people in their pursuit of a separate state, celebrating the victory of carving out a distinct identity apart from Andhra Pradesh.

World Environment Day observed on 05th June

World Environment Day is observed every year on 5th June to raise global awareness about environmental protection and encourage actions to preserve the planet. Established by the United Nations in 1974, this day serves as a platform for promoting sustainable development and addressing pressing environmental issues such as pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss. Each year, World Environment Day focuses on a specific theme to highlight critical environmental challenges and inspire positive change. Governments, organizations, and individuals worldwide participate through campaigns, tree planting drives, clean-up activities, and educational events.

Foot notes:

- **Date and Significance:** World Environment Day is celebrated every year on June 5th, marking the opening day of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (the Stockholm Conference), which led to the creation of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).
- **Global Awareness and Action:** It is the largest global platform for public outreach on the environment, celebrated by millions of people across the world, promoting awareness and action for the protection of our planet.
- **Annual Theme and Host Country:** Each year, World Environment Day has a specific theme that addresses a pressing environmental concern, and a host country where the main international celebrations take place. The theme for 2025 is "Land Restoration, Desertification and Drought Resilience", with Saudi Arabia being the global host.

- **Urgency of Environmental Issues:** The day highlights the urgency of environmental challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and unsustainable consumption, urging individuals, communities, governments, and businesses to take responsibility.

OBITUARY NEWS

Etienne-Emile Baulieu, Pioneer of the Abortion Pill, passed away

Dr. Etienne-Emile Baulieu, renowned French biochemist and endocrinologist, passed away on May 30, 2025, at the age of 98 in Paris. He is celebrated globally as the inventor of RU-486 (mifepristone), the first medical abortion pill, which revolutionized reproductive healthcare by providing a non-surgical option for early pregnancy termination. Born Émile Blum in Strasbourg in 1926, Baulieu joined the French Resistance at 15 during World War II and later adopted the name Étienne-Émile. He pursued medicine and science, earning his doctorate in 1963 and becoming a professor at the University of Paris-Sud. In 1963, he founded a pioneering research unit on hormones at INSERM, leading it until 1997.

Foot notes:

- **Discovery of Mifepristone:** Baulieu is best known for his work on the development of mifepristone, also known as RU-486, a medication that enables women to safely terminate pregnancies.
- **Career and Recognition:** Baulieu had a distinguished career, serving as President of the French Society of Endocrinology, INSERM, and the Foundation for Medical Research.
- **Impact on Women's Rights:** Baulieu's work had a significant impact on women's rights, providing them with greater control over their reproductive health.

Tamil Director Vikram Sugumaran passed away

Tamil filmmaker Vikram Sugumaran, renowned for his authentic rural narratives, tragically passed away on June 2, 2025, at the age of 47. He died of a cardiac arrest while traveling by bus from Madurai to Chennai after narrating a new script to a producer. Sugumaran began his career as an assistant director to the legendary Balu Mahendra in 1999–2000. His directorial debut, *Madha Yaanai Kootam* (2013), was lauded for its raw portrayal of rural life and caste tensions in Tamil Nadu.

Foot notes:

- **Notable Works:** He is known for his critically acclaimed films like "*Madha Yaanai Kootam*" (2013) and "*Raavana Kottam*" (2023), showcasing his ability to craft gritty rural stories with social commentary.
- **Career Background:** Sugumaran began his career as an assistant director to legendary filmmaker Balu Mahendra and later worked with Vetrimaaran on the film "*Aadukalam*" (2011), starring Dhanush.

- **Tribute from Peers:** The Tamil film industry paid heartfelt tributes to Sugumaran, with actor Shanthnu Bhagyaraj and music composer Justin Prabhakaran expressing their grief and sharing memories of working with him.

Canada's first astronaut, Marc Garneau passed away

Marc Garneau, Canada's first astronaut and former federal cabinet minister, passed away on June 4, 2025, at the age of 76 following a brief but challenging battle with cancer. His wife, Pam Garneau, confirmed the news, stating that he faced his final days with the same strength and grace that defined his life. Transitioning to politics, Garneau was elected as a Liberal Member of Parliament in 2008, representing Montreal-area ridings until his retirement in 2023. He held significant cabinet positions, including Minister of Transport from 2015 to 2021 and Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2021.

Foot notes:

- **Distinguished Military and Engineering Background:** Before his astronaut career, Garneau served as a naval officer in the Canadian Armed Forces and was an electrical engineer, graduating from the Royal Military College of Canada and holding a PhD from Imperial College London.
- **Head of Canadian Space Agency:** Following his successful space flights, Garneau served as the President of the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) from 2001 to 2005, playing a crucial role in shaping Canada's space program.
- **Prominent Political Career:** After his time in space and at the CSA, Garneau transitioned into politics. He was elected as a Member of Parliament in 2008 and held significant cabinet positions, including Minister of Transport and Minister of Foreign Affairs, under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

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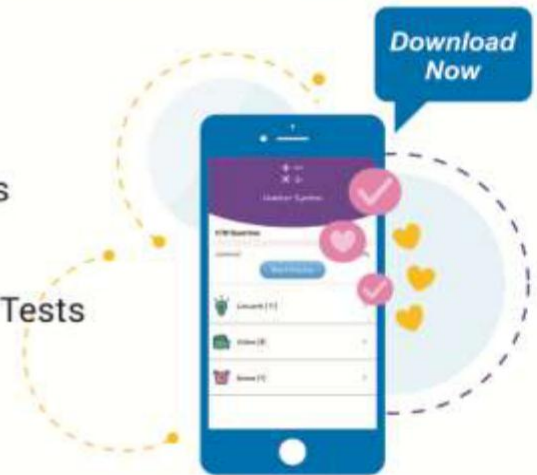
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