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WEEKLY —  
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Affairs



## NATIONAL NEWS

### MoCA & Delhi International Airport Launch 'Air Suvidha 2.0' portal

- In June 2026, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) jointly launched 'AIR SUVIDHA 2.0', an upgraded contactless Passenger Health Self-Declaration (PHSD) portal, to strengthen public health surveillance at points of entry.

#### About Air Suvidha 2.0 Portal:

- Developed by: The portal was developed in collaboration with the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW).
- Self Declaration: Through this portal, the international arriving passengers are required to submit an online health Self-Declaration Form (SDF) covering 21-day travel history, exposure history and any related symptoms, before immigration clearance.
- Timeline: Passengers can complete the SDF up to 24 hours in advance before arrival to India and have been advised to fill the form before or during web check-in.
- Integrated Multi-Agencies: The portal provides real-time data sharing with multiple agencies that include: Airport Health Officers (APHOs), Bureau of Immigration (BoI), Integrated Disease Surveillance Program (IDSP) and State Surveillance Officers.

### India launches world's first nuclear process heat-based hydrogen production facility

- Location: Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR), Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu
- Developers: The technology was developed indigenously by the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Mumbai
- This innovation strengthens India's move toward a hydrogen economy, improving energy security and supporting the goal of Net Zero emissions by 2070.

#### Footnotes:

Hydrogen (H): lightest, Cleanfuel, colorless, odorless and highly flammable.

### Union Home Minister Amit Shah to launch Bharat Taxi in Gujarat

- The Ministry of Cooperation has rolled out Bharat Taxi, billed as India's first driver-owned cooperative ride-hailing service, with operations live in parts of Gujarat (Ahmedabad and Surat) and the National Capital Region.
- Bharat Taxi is the working incarnation of the Sahkar Taxi idea that Amit Shah first announced in the Lok Sabha in March 2025. Its central promise is zero commission on rides, with earnings credited directly to drivers, positioning the cooperative model as an alternative to commission-charging aggregators like Ola, Uber and Rapido. The launch operationalises the 'Sahkar se Samriddhi' (prosperity through cooperation) vision in the gig and platform economy.
- Bharat Taxi is registered under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002 and was established on 6 June, 2025. The platform operates on a zero-commission model, ensuring that the maximum benefit from the income generated through services reaches the

Saarthis directly. In addition, Saarthis are also provided benefits of insurance, loans, pension and various government social security schemes.

### **India Climbs to 70th Rank in the World Economic Forum Energy Transition Index 2026**

- India improved its position to 70th in the 2026 Energy Transition Index. The index measures how effectively countries are shifting towards secure, sustainable, and affordable energy.
- The index is published by the World Economic Forum. It evaluates countries on energy security, sustainability, and equity.
- India's ranking improved due to growth in renewable energy and clean energy policies. The country continues to expand its solar and wind energy capacity.

### **Herbalife&IIT Madras launch India's First CoE on Plant Cell Fermentation Technology**

- Herbalife and IIT Madras jointly established India's first Centre of Excellence on Plant Cell Fermentation Technology. The centre will focus on advanced plant-based biotechnology research.
- Plant cell fermentation enables the production of valuable plant compounds under controlled laboratory conditions. This technology supports sustainable production without excessive harvesting of plants.
- The collaboration aims to promote innovation, research, and skill development. It will also strengthen India's biotechnology ecosystem.

### **Jagat Prakash Nadda launched the SamagraShishu Bal Swasthya Programme**

- The programme aims to improve the health and nutrition of children across India. It focuses on preventive, promotive, and curative healthcare services.
- It strengthens child health screening and early disease detection. The initiative also supports timely treatment and referral services.
- The programme contributes to reducing child mortality and improving overall child development. It aligns with India's public health goals.

### **Ethan Vaz & Harshavardhan G.B become India's 96th and 97th Chess Grandmasters**

- Ethan Vaz and Harshavardhan G.B became India's 96th and 97th Chess Grandmasters. They achieved the required norms and FIDE rating criteria.
- Their success reflects India's rapid rise as a global chess powerhouse. The country continues to produce world-class chess talent.
- Their achievement is expected to inspire young chess players nationwide. It also strengthens India's presence in international chess.

### **Ayushman Sarathi PM-JAY Chatbot launched**

- Ayushman Sarathi, a WhatsApp chatbot for beneficiaries of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY. Designed to deliver PM-JAY services through a simple conversational interface, Ayushman Sarathi will enable citizens to access key scheme-related services, thereby improving accessibility and strengthening last-mile service delivery.
- The chatbot enables beneficiaries to access essential PM-JAY services anytime and anywhere without the need to visit government offices or call centres. Built on secure API-based integrations with PM-JAY systems, Ayushman Sarathi delivers real-time information and services directly on WhatsApp

### **India's First Offshore Airport Approved in Maharashtra**

- India's First Offshore Airport: Maharashtra has approved the preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for India's first offshore airport, proposed near Kore Beach in Palghar district.
- World-Class Capacity: The proposed airport will feature two parallel runways and is planned to handle 90 million passengers and 3 million metric tonnes of cargo annually, making it one of India's largest aviation hubs.
- Boost to Mumbai & Trade: The airport will serve as the third international airport for the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and will be integrated with the Vadhavan Port, expressways, metro, and high-speed rail to strengthen connectivity and logistics.

### **MoSPI Releases 2026 SDG Publications Highlighting India's Progress under NIF**

- Four SDG Publications Released: The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released four key publications on Statistics Day (29 June 2026), including the SDG–National Indicator Framework (NIF) Progress Report 2026, Data Snapshot, NIF 2026 (with metadata), and the thematic bulletin "Transforming Lives: India's Achievements under the People Dimension of the SDGs."
- 277 National SDG Indicators: The National Indicator Framework (NIF) 2026 comprises 277 national indicators covering all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), serving as India's official framework for monitoring SDG progress and supporting evidence-based policymaking.
- Focus on Human Development: The thematic bulletin highlights India's achievements under the 'People' dimension of the SDGs, focusing on No Poverty (SDG 1), Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Good Health (SDG 3), Quality Education (SDG 4), and Gender Equality (SDG 5).

### **India Approves First PinS Helicopter Approach**

- India has approved its first Point-in-Space (PinS) helicopter approach based on satellite navigation (GNSS). It allows helicopters to operate safely without relying on conventional ground-based landing systems.

- The procedure improves operations during poor weather and low visibility. It is especially useful for emergency medical services, offshore oil platforms, and remote mountainous regions.
- PinS follows Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) standards and enhances aviation safety. It marks an important milestone in India's modern helicopter navigation infrastructure.

### **DIKSHA Becomes India's 'One Nation One Digital Platform'**

- DIKSHA has been officially designated as India's "One Nation, One Digital Platform" for school education. It provides free digital learning content for students, teachers, and parents.
- The platform offers e-books, QR-code-enabled textbooks, videos, assessments, and teacher training in multiple Indian languages. It supports both online and offline learning across all states.
- DIKSHA plays a key role in implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. It promotes digital inclusion and equal access to quality education.

### **Odisha Government Approves ₹ 2,000 Crore Deep Sea Fishing Initiative**

- The Odisha Cabinet has approved a ₹ 2,000 crore Deep Sea Fishing Initiative to modernize the marine fisheries sector. The mission aims to shift fishermen from coastal to deep-sea fishing.
- Financial assistance will be provided for modern fishing vessels, cold-chain infrastructure, fish landing centres, and skill development. This will improve fish production and boost exports.
- The initiative supports the Blue Economy by creating employment and increasing fishermen's income. It also promotes sustainable fishing and reduces pressure on coastal fish resources.

### **MECON Limited Achieves Miniratna Category-I Status**

- MECON Limited has been granted Miniratna Category-I status by the Government of India. The PSU operates under the Ministry of Steel and provides engineering and consultancy services.
- The status allows MECON to make investments of up to ₹ 500 crore or its net worth (whichever is lower) without prior government approval. This increases its financial and operational autonomy.
- The recognition reflects MECON's sustained profitability and strong financial performance. It will help the company expand projects in steel, mining, infrastructure, and energy sectors.

### **Gujarat Police Launch 'Operation Surakshit Cyberspace'**

- The Gujarat Police has launched **Operation Surakshit Cyberspace** to combat rising cyber frauds, online financial scams, and digital crimes across the state. The initiative targets cybercriminal networks using coordinated intelligence and technology-driven investigations.
- The operation includes statewide awareness campaigns, faster cybercrime response teams, digital forensic support, and closer coordination with banks and social media platforms. Citizens are also being educated about phishing, fake investment schemes, and online fraud prevention.
- The initiative aims to improve cyber safety and enhance public confidence in digital transactions. It also supports India's broader goal of creating a secure digital ecosystem under the Digital India initiative.

### Central Govt Notifies Employees' Provident Fund Scheme, 2026

- The Ministry of Labour and Employment has officially notified the **Employees' Provident Fund Scheme, 2026**, updating the regulatory framework governing provident fund accounts. The scheme modernizes several operational provisions while protecting employees' retirement savings.
- It introduces greater digitization, simplified claim settlement, improved account portability, and stronger transparency measures. The reforms are designed to reduce paperwork and provide faster services to EPF subscribers.
- The new scheme enhances ease of doing business for employers while improving service delivery for employees. It also supports the government's vision of a technology-driven and efficient social security system.

### Gujarat to Invest ₹ 190 Crore in Semiconductor Training Hub at IIT Gandhinagar

- The Gujarat government has approved an investment of **₹ 190 crore** to establish a **Semiconductor Training Hub** at Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar. The centre will develop skilled manpower for India's rapidly expanding semiconductor industry.
- The hub will provide advanced training in chip design, semiconductor manufacturing, packaging, testing, and fabrication technologies. It will also collaborate with industry leaders and research institutions to promote innovation and practical learning.
- The project supports the **India Semiconductor Mission** by creating a highly skilled workforce. It strengthens Gujarat's position as a major semiconductor manufacturing and innovation destination.

### India's First Privately Developed Orbital-Class Rocket Vikram-1 Set for Launch

- Skyroot Aerospace is set to launch **Vikram-1**, India's first privately developed orbital-class rocket. The mission marks a major milestone in the country's private space sector following space sector reforms.

- Vikram-1 is a three-stage launch vehicle capable of placing small satellites into Low Earth Orbit (LEO). It incorporates advanced carbon-composite structures, 3D-printed engines, and cost-efficient launch technologies.
- The launch will demonstrate India's growing capabilities in commercial space launches and private innovation. It is expected to strengthen India's position in the global small-satellite launch market and support the vision of a vibrant space economy.

### **India with 61 unicorns, slipped one place to 4th position in the Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2026**

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become the primary driver of global startup growth, pushing the number of unicorns to a record 1,603. (combined valuation of \$8 trillion)
- AI unicorns now account for 36 per cent of the total value of all unicorns worldwide.
- India: most valuable unicorns are Zerodha, Zepto, Razorpay.
- Bengaluru remained India's unicorn capital with 25 unicorns, followed by Mumbai with 13.
- Diaspora: Indians co-founded 156 unicorns outside India.

#### **Footnotes:**

Bengaluru-based startup Sarvam AI has achieved unicorn status

### **Mohan Charan Majhi announces 'Go East' platform**

- The 'Go East' platform aims to attract investment and promote industrial development in Odisha. It focuses on expanding trade with eastern and Southeast Asian regions.
- The initiative supports sectors such as manufacturing, ports, logistics, and exports. It seeks to improve economic growth and employment opportunities.
- Odisha aims to strengthen its position as an investment destination. The platform complements the state's long-term development strategy.

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **India Sign statement on AI opportunity at 2nd Pax Silica Summit in USA**

- India, signed a Statement on Artificial Intelligence (AI), the United States of America (USA)-led initiative that aims to build trusted and resilient supply chains to support AI technologies, at the 2nd Pax Silica Summit held from June 25 to June 26, 2026 in Washington D.C., the USA.
- The two-day long summit was hosted by Jacob Helberg, Secretary of Economic Affairs, the US Department of State.
- Indian Representation: At the summit, the Indian delegation was led by S. Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), along with representatives from Indian industry.

- Pax Silica: The word “Pax” is a historical term which refers to peace, stability and prosperity. It is a flagship initiative of the US Department of State’s on AI and supply chain security.

**Footnotes:** Father of AI: John McCarthy

Pax Silica Initiative (2025): US-led initiative on AI and supply chain security

### **China’s LineShine Emerged World’s Most Powerful Supercomputer**

- In June 2026, the 67th edition of the TOP500 Supercomputer Rankings 2026, a biannual list of the world’s most powerful supercomputers, was released at the International Supercomputing (ISC) High Performance 2026 conference in Hamburg, Germany. As per the latest rankings, China’s LineShine machine, based at the National Supercomputing Center in Shenzhen, emerged as the world’s most powerful supercomputer, replacing the United States of America (USA)’s El Capitan.
- LineShine is nearly 26 times faster than India’s most powerful supercomputer ‘Shakti Cloud’, which secured 32nd spot on the list, with a performance of 84.31 petaflops.
- Other Top 5: The USAs’ Frontier (3rd) and Aurora (4th), followed by Germany’s Jupiter, which ranks 5th.
- Most Represented Countries: The USA with 161 systems, topped among the countries with the highest share of systems on the list, followed by Japan (44), Germany (41), China (31), among others.

### **China topped foreign exchange reserves in 2026**

- China continued to hold the world's largest foreign exchange reserves in 2026. Its reserves provide stability to the country's economy and currency.
- Foreign exchange reserves consist of foreign currencies, gold, and other reserve assets. They help manage exchange rates and external financial shocks.
- Large forex reserves enhance investor confidence and support international trade. They also strengthen a country's financial resilience.

### **Italy becomes the UNESCO World Heritage Capital**

- Italy has the highest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the world. This has earned it the title of UNESCO World Heritage Capital.
- The country is known for its rich cultural, historical, and architectural heritage. Its heritage sites attract millions of tourists every year.
- Italy's recognition highlights the importance of preserving cultural treasures. It also boosts its global tourism and cultural influence.

### **People in Albania have launched the “Flamingo Revolution”**

- **Environmental Protest:** Thousands of people in Albania launched the "Flamingo Revolution" to oppose a proposed luxury coastal resort project near the protected Vjosa–Narta Lagoon, an important habitat for flamingos and other wildlife.
- **Opposition to Development:** Protesters argue that the project, linked to businessman Jared Kushner, could damage sensitive ecosystems and have also raised concerns about transparency and corruption in the approval process.
- **Symbol of Resistance:** Flamingo-shaped placards have become the movement's symbol, and the demonstrations have expanded into broader demands for greater government accountability and environmental protection in Albania.

### India, Saudi Arabia sign pact to deepen water management cooperation

- **MoU Signed:** India and Saudi Arabia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) during Saudi Water Week in Jeddah to strengthen bilateral cooperation in water resource management.
- **Key Areas of Cooperation:** The agreement focuses on water resources planning, sustainable water management, irrigation systems, capacity building, and the exchange of technical expertise and best practices.
- **Strategic Partnership:** The MoU was signed by Indian Ambassador Dr. Suhel Khan and Saudi Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture Abdulrahman Abdulmohsen Al-Fadley, marking another step in strengthening the India–Saudi Arabia strategic partnership.

### India Steps Up Humanitarian Assistance to Earthquake-Hit Venezuela under Operation Amistad

- India has launched **Operation Amistad** to provide humanitarian assistance to earthquake-affected Venezuela. Relief supplies include emergency medicines, medical equipment, food items, tents, and other essential materials for affected communities.
- The operation reflects India's commitment to the principle of '**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**' (**The World is One Family**) and its role as a first responder during global disasters. Indian agencies are coordinating with Venezuelan authorities to ensure timely delivery of relief materials.
- The mission strengthens India–Venezuela bilateral relations through humanitarian diplomacy. It also highlights India's growing reputation as a responsible global partner in disaster relief and emergency response.

## DEFENCE NEWS

### Project BRAHMANK of BRO Marks its 16th Raising Day

- **16th Raising Day Celebrated:** Project BRAHMANK of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) celebrated its 16th Raising Day on 29 June 2026 at Ranaghat, Arunachal Pradesh, marking 15 years of dedicated service in developing strategic border infrastructure.

- Strategic Infrastructure Development: The project is responsible for the development and maintenance of 811 km of roads and about 86 bridges across Siang, East Siang, West Siang, Upper Siang, Shi-Yomi districts of Arunachal Pradesh, and parts of Dhemaji district in Assam.
- Major Achievements (FY 2025–26): During FY 2025–26, Project BRAHMANK completed 13 strategic bridges (390 m total span), blacktopped 61 km of roads to National Highway Double Lane (NHDL) standards, and developed helipads to improve connectivity in remote border areas.

## **BANKING NEWS**

### **jUMPP Secured NPCI Approval to Operate as TPAP, Enabling UPI Services**

- In June 2026, jUMPP, an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven fintech platform, secured the approval from National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to operate as Third Party Application Provider (TPAP).
- The approval enables the company to integrate Unified Payments Interface (UPI) payment capabilities within its application (app).
- About jUMPP: Founded in 2025 by Sarvjeet Singh Virk, jUMPP currently offers investment products such as digital gold, Mutual Funds (MFs), and Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) within its app.

#### **Footnotes:**

UPI: Launch by NPCI (2016), Operational in 8 countries: UAE, Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, France, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Qatar

### **PayGlocal Launches Google Pay Card Payments for Global Merchant Transaction**

- Google Pay Integration: PayGlocal has launched Google Pay Card Payments on its International Payment Gateway, becoming one of the first Indian cross-border payment platforms to enable Google Pay for global transactions.
- Global Customer Reach: Indian merchants can now access over 1 billion global customers across major markets such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, UAE, Singapore, and Western Europe, offering one-tap payments in local currencies.
- Faster & Secure Cross-Border Payments: With Google Pay (alongside Apple Pay), merchants can provide a faster, more secure checkout experience, helping improve payment success rates, reduce cart abandonment, and boost international sales.

### **NPCI Partners HSBC & JP Morgan for Global UPI**

- National Payments Corporation of India has partnered with HSBC India and JPMorgan Payments to enable real-time foreign exchange (FX) settlement for international UPI transactions.
- The partnership will make cross-border UPI payments faster, more secure, and cost-efficient. It reduces settlement delays by processing currency conversion in real time.

- The initiative strengthens India's global digital payments ecosystem and supports the international expansion of UPI. It also improves payment convenience for overseas travelers and businesses.

### **SBI Life Insurance Partners with IIT Bombay to Build India's Own AI-Powered Cyber Defence System**

- SBI Life has partnered with IIT Bombay to develop an indigenous AI-powered cyber defence system for the insurance industry. The collaboration focuses on building advanced cybersecurity solutions within India.
- The AI system will provide real-time threat detection, fraud prevention, anomaly detection, and cyber risk management. It will enhance the security of customer data and digital insurance platforms.
- The initiative supports Atmanirbhar Bharat by promoting home-grown cybersecurity technologies. It also strengthens digital trust and resilience in India's financial services sector.

## **SPORTS NEWS**

### **World Champion Viswanathan Anand Conferred SJFI Gold Medal**

- In June 2026, Viswanathan Anand, India's first Chess Grandmaster (GM) and Deputy President of the International Chess Federation (FIDE), was conferred the Sports Journalists' Federation of India (SJFI) Gold Medal for his exceptional contribution to Indian chess and outstanding achievements in the sport.
- Viswanathan Anand received the SJFI Gold Medal from former India captain Krishnamachari Srikkanth at the Madras Cricket Club (MCC), Chennai, in a ceremony organised by the SJFI and Tamil Nadu Sports Journalists Association (TNSJA).

#### **About SJFI Gold Medal:**

- Overview: Instituted in 2019, the SJFI Gold Medal honours sportspersons for their outstanding contributions to the long-term growth and development of their respective sports.
- Recognition: Viswanathan Anand became the 6th recipient of the SJFI Gold Medal, joining sporting legends Sunil Gavaskar, Vijay Amritraj, Prakash Padukone, P. T. Usha, and Milkha Singh (posthumous).

### **Kerala long jumper broke Anju Bobby George's 22-year-old national record**

- A long jumper from Kerala surpassed the 22-year-old national record set by Anju Bobby George. The feat marks a major milestone in Indian athletics.
- The new record reflects the rising standard of track and field in India. It showcases the emergence of talented young athletes.
- The achievement is expected to boost India's medal hopes in future international competitions. It also inspires aspiring athletes across the country.

## AWARD NEWS

### Delhi Metro Rail Corporation wins UITP Achievement Award for Operational Excellence

- DMRC received the UITP Achievement Award for Operational Excellence. The award recognizes outstanding performance in public transport operations.
- UITP is a global organization for public transport authorities and operators. It promotes innovation and sustainable mobility.
- DMRC was recognized for its efficient, safe, and reliable metro services. It is regarded as one of the world's leading metro systems.

### Narendra Modi receives Seychelles' highest civilian award

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi received Seychelles' highest civilian honour during his visit. The award recognizes his contribution to strengthening bilateral relations.
- India and Seychelles cooperate in maritime security, defence, healthcare, and development. The partnership is important for the Indian Ocean region.
- The honour reflects the growing strategic relationship between the two countries. It also highlights India's commitment to regional cooperation.

### Two Indian women conservationists won the 2026 Green Oscar Awards

- In June 2026, two Indian women conservationists, Parveen Sheikh and Barkha Subba, among 6 who were honoured with 2026 Whitley Award often known as “Green Oscar” in recognition of their exemplary work in protecting Endangered (EN) species.
- The awards were officially presented by Princess Anne, at the Royal Geographical Society in London, the United Kingdom (UK).
- Green Oscar: The award, presented annually by Whitley Fund Nature (WFN), aims to recognise grassroots conservation efforts.

## MOU NEWS

### Gujarat Police signs MoU with Bharat Taxi to enhance public safety and urban mobility

- In June 2026, Gujarat Police signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the multi-state cooperative society Sahakar Taxi Cooperative Limited (Bharat Taxi) to strengthen public safety, traffic management, and urban mobility through digital integration.
- The agreement was signed during the launch of Bharat Taxi in Gandhinagar, Gujarat in the presence of Union Minister Amit Shah, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Minister of Cooperation.
- MoUs with Institutions: Bharat Taxi also exchanged MoUs with the Airports Authority of India (AAI) (Rajkot, Surat & Vadodara), Gujarat Metro Rail Corporation (GMRC), Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC)/Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS), Gujarat

State Cooperative Bank (GSC Bank), Adani Airport, Gujarat Traffic Police, and Western Railway–Ahmedabad Division.

### **OPSA Launches TRL Compass Platform and Signs MoU with DSCI**

- **TRL Compass Platform Launched:** The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (OPSA), in collaboration with the Data Security Council of India (DSCI), launched the TRL Compass Platform to standardize Technology Readiness Level (TRL) assessments across sectors using a nine-level framework adapted for India's innovation ecosystem.
- **Supports National Innovation:** The platform will support key initiatives such as the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) and the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund, enabling objective and evidence-based evaluation of technologies seeking public funding.
- **MoU with DSCI:** OPSA and DSCI signed an MoU to collaborate on technology readiness assessments, capability mapping, Technology Radar development, assessor training, and nationwide adoption of the TRL Compass framework.

### **MCA Signs MoU with IIT Madras to Launch Corporate Mitra Scheme for MSMEs**

- **MoU Signed:** The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) signed an MoU with IIT Madras to launch the Corporate Mitra Scheme, aimed at strengthening compliance, governance, and ease of doing business for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- **Technology-Driven Support:** Under the scheme, IIT Madras will develop AI-enabled digital tools and technology solutions to help MSMEs with regulatory compliance, corporate governance, and business advisory services.
- **Boost to MSME Ecosystem:** The initiative seeks to improve financial discipline, legal compliance, and sustainable growth of MSMEs while supporting India's vision of a digitally empowered and globally competitive business ecosystem.

### **Ministry of Tourism Signs MoU with Google India to Boost Digital Tourism**

- The Ministry of Tourism has signed an MoU with Google India to promote India's tourism sector through digital technologies. The collaboration will enhance online visibility of tourist destinations using Google's platforms.
- The partnership will focus on AI-powered travel information, digital skill development for tourism stakeholders, multilingual content creation, and improved destination marketing. It will also help small tourism businesses strengthen their digital presence.
- The initiative supports the government's vision of making India a globally competitive tourism destination. It is expected to increase tourist arrivals, improve visitor experiences, and generate employment in the tourism sector.

## **APPOINTMENT & PERSON IN NEWS**

**U. P. Rajeev appointed Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre**

- U. P. Rajeev has been appointed as the Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC). He succeeded in leading one of ISRO's most important launch vehicle centres.
- VSSC is located in Thiruvananthapuram. It is the lead centre for the design and development of India's launch vehicles.
- VSSC was named after Vikram Sarabhai. It plays a key role in missions such as PSLV, GSLV, and future space programmes.

### **HDFC Bank appoints Former CEC Rajiv Kumar as Part-Time Chairman**

- HDFC Bank appointed Rajiv Kumar as its Part-Time Chairman. His appointment is subject to regulatory and shareholder approvals.
- Rajiv Kumar brings extensive experience in public administration and governance. His leadership is expected to strengthen the bank's corporate governance framework.
- The appointment highlights HDFC Bank's focus on experienced leadership. It also reflects the growing trend of appointing distinguished public servants to corporate boards.

### **OpenAI appoints Prabhjeet Singh as MD for India**

- OpenAI appointed Prabhjeet Singh as its Managing Director for India. He will lead the company's business strategy and expansion in the country.
- His appointment reflects OpenAI's growing focus on the Indian AI ecosystem. India is a key market for AI innovation and adoption.
- The move aims to strengthen partnerships with businesses, developers, and policymakers. It also supports the responsible growth of AI technologies in India.

### **Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit Becomes Vice Chief of the Air Staff**

- Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit has been appointed as the Vice Chief of the Air Staff (VCAS) of the Indian Air Force. The VCAS is the second-highest-ranking officer and oversees operations, planning, and modernization.
- He is a fighter pilot with over 3,300 flying hours and is a recipient of the PVSM and AVSM. He has commanded frontline fighter squadrons, operational bases, and key Air Force establishments.
- His appointment is expected to strengthen the IAF's combat preparedness and indigenous defence capability. It will also support the induction of next-generation aircraft and defence technologies.

### **Ravi Agrawal Reappointed as CBDT Chairman**

- Ravi Agrawal has been reappointed as Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). CBDT is the apex body responsible for administering direct taxes in India.
- His tenure has been extended to ensure continuity in tax administration and ongoing policy reforms. He has played an important role in improving taxpayer services and digital tax systems.

- The reappointment is expected to support better tax compliance and strengthen India's direct tax framework. CBDT functions under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.

### **RBI Appoints Ravi Shankar as New Executive Director**

- The Reserve Bank of India has appointed **Ravi Shankar** as its new Executive Director with effect from **July 3, 2026**. He will oversee key departments related to regulation, supervision, and financial sector operations as assigned by the RBI.
- Prior to his promotion as ED, Shankar was serving as Adviser-In-Charge of the Department of Statistics and Information Management of the Bank.
- As a career central banker statistician, he has experience of over three decades in the Reserve Bank having worked in the areas of corporate, banking statistics, government securities market and settlement systems, debt management, and surveys in the Reserve Bank.

### **Prashant Sitaram Appointed Additional Secretary in Home Ministry**

- Senior IAS officer **Prashant Sitaram** has been appointed as **Additional Secretary** in the Ministry of Home Affairs. He will be responsible for handling important administrative and policy-related matters within the ministry.
- As Additional Secretary, he will assist in formulating and implementing policies related to internal security, governance, and coordination with states. The position is among the senior-most administrative roles in the Union Government.
- His appointment is expected to strengthen policy implementation and administrative efficiency in the Home Ministry. It also reflects the government's focus on experienced leadership in critical governance sectors.