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WEEKLY —
Current
Affairs



NATIONAL NEWS

Ahmedabad's Kankaria Depot Achieves India's First Water-Neutral Railway Status

- **Phytoremediation Technology:** The depot achieved water neutrality by implementing a natural, plant-based wastewater treatment system called phytoremediation. This eco-friendly process uses specially selected plants in a multi-stage wetland system to purify wastewater generated from coach washing and maintenance without relying on heavy chemicals.
- **Massive Resource Conservation:** The facility treats and recycles approximately 1.60 lakh litres of water daily (equivalent to over 300 household tanks). Annually, this translates to a saving of nearly 5.84 crore litres of freshwater, significantly reducing the depot's dependence on groundwater and municipal supplies.
- **Sustainability Blueprint:** This milestone aligns with Indian Railways' broader goal of becoming a "Net Zero Carbon Emitter" and sets a scalable model for other railway depots across the country.

Goa's Sadhvi Satish Sail Crowned Miss India 2026

- **The Winner:** Sadhvi Satish Sail, representing Goa, was crowned Femina Miss India World 2026. She was crowned by the outgoing titleholder, Nikita Porwal, and will now represent India at the 75th Miss World pageant.
- **The Runners-Up:** Rajnandini Pawar from Maharashtra was named the first runner-up, while Sree Advaita G from Jammu and Kashmir was adjudged the second runner-up.
- **Historic Venue:** The grand finale was held at the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) in Bhubaneswar. This marked the first time a university campus served as the venue for this prestigious national pageant, themed "Daughters of This Soil."

MoT Launches 'Vishwa Sutra' to Promote Indian Handlooms Globally

- **Global Fusion of Design:** The initiative features 30 distinct handloom weaves from across India, each creatively reinterpreted with design inspirations from 30 different countries. For example, it pairs Odisha Ikat with Greek silhouettes and Kanchipuram with Norwegian lines.
- **Strategic Collaboration:** Developed by the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms) and the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), the collection was showcased at the 61st Femina Miss India (April 2026) to gain national and international visibility.
- **Alignment with "5F Vision":** The project supports the Prime Minister's 5F Vision (Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign) and the "Vocal for Local to Global" approach, aiming to transform traditional weaving into a globally competitive fashion industry.

BECIL Signs MoU with C-DAC to Strengthen Collaboration in Digital Transformation

- **Focus on Emerging Tech:** The partnership centers on joint project implementation and technical support in cutting-edge fields, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), 5G, Cybersecurity, Internet of Things (IoT), and Cloud Computing.
- **Strategic Turnkey Solutions:** The collaboration aims to develop turnkey solutions across various sectors, facilitating technology transfer and the commercialization of innovative products to build a future-ready digital ecosystem.
- **Capacity Building:** A significant portion of the MoU is dedicated to workforce upskilling and skill development initiatives, designed to strengthen technical capabilities and prepare a specialized workforce for India's growing digital economy.

Footnotes: BECIL's Minister: Ashwini Vaishnaw, **HQ:** New Delhi, **Estd:** 1947

Indian Railways Allows UDID Card In Divyangjan Coaches

- **Bona Fide Passenger Status:** PwDs holding a valid UDID card (issued by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) are now officially recognized as bona fide passengers for traveling in unreserved Divyangjan coaches. This applies to Mail and Express trains across the Indian Railways network.
- **Specific Coach Access:** Eligible passengers can travel in the SLRD (Second Class Luggage-cum-Brake Van with Compartment for Divyangjan) and LSLRD coaches. This clarifies the documentation required, moving beyond the traditional Railway-issued concession certificates to include the nationally standardized UDID.
- **Strict Enforcement against Misuse:** To ensure these facilities remain available for genuine beneficiaries, the Railways stated that strict action will be taken against unauthorized passengers found in these coaches under the Railway Act, 1989.

C-DOT & Jumps Automation Partner for Cybersecurity Gamification

- **Gamified Learning Experience:** The platform is designed to transform traditional, often dry cybersecurity training into an interactive experience. It will feature a "Gaming Arena," leaderboards, and realistic simulations covering critical threats like phishing, social engineering, and malware response under time-bound scenarios.
- **AI-Driven Personalization:** A standout feature of the solution is an AI-driven behavioral analytics engine. This system will continuously evaluate a user's performance and dynamically adjust the complexity of challenges, ensuring the training remains effective and updated with the latest emerging cyber threats.
- **Commercial Deployment:** Developed under the C-DOT Collaborative Research Programme (CCRP), the platform is intended to be launched as a commercial-grade Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solution. This will make it accessible to both individuals and large enterprises looking to build a "cyber-resilient" culture.

Shri Bhupender Yadav announces Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary as India's 99th Ramsar site

- **Location & Rank:** Situated in the Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh, Shekha Jheel is now the 12th Ramsar site in the state. Uttar Pradesh currently holds the second-highest number of Ramsar sites in India, following Tamil Nadu (which has 20).
- **Ecological Significance:** The lake is a perennial freshwater body that formed following the construction of the Upper Ganges Canal. It serves as a vital stopover on the Central Asian Flyway, hosting over 60 wetland-dependent species and thousands of migratory birds like the Bar-headed Goose, Painted Stork, and various duck species during the winter.
- **Recent Momentum:** This announcement follows the addition of two other sites earlier in 2026—Patna Bird Sanctuary (UP) and Chhari-Dhand (Gujarat)—reflecting a rapid expansion of India's protected wetland network.

Chandrababu Naidu Inaugurates SRM University-AP Quantum Facility

- **India's First Open-Access Lab:** The system at SRM University-AP, named Amaravati 1S, is the first of its kind in an Indian academic institution. Unlike traditional "black box" quantum systems, this facility provides open access to students, researchers, and startups to test and certify their own quantum hardware and algorithms.
- **Indigenous Deep-Tech Milestone:** Developed by a national consortium including the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), IISc, and DRDO, the facility boasts over 80% indigenous components. It was built by Indian startups Qubitech and Qbit Force in a record eight months.
- **Extreme Engineering:** The facility utilizes superconducting technology and operates at cryogenic temperatures nearing absolute zero (-273°C). This environment is essential for stabilizing qubits, the fundamental building blocks of quantum computing, allowing for high-precision research in drug discovery, climate modeling, and cryptography.

India Launches First Advanced 3D Glass Chip Packaging Unit in Odisha

- **Pioneering Glass Substrate Technology:** This is the first facility in India to move away from traditional organic or silicon substrates to glass substrates. Glass offers superior flatness, better thermal stability, and lower signal loss, making it the preferred material for next-generation, high-performance chips.
- **Economic & Industrial Scale:** With a strategic investment of approximately ₹1,943 crore (supported by both Central and State fiscal incentives), the unit is designed for massive scale.
- **Strategic Global Positioning:** By focusing on Heterogeneous Integration (3DHI), India is leapfrogging into a high-end niche of the semiconductor value chain. These advanced

modules are critical for "deep-tech" sectors, including Generative AI, 5G/6G telecommunications, aerospace, and defense electronics.

Footnotes: Odisha's CM: Mohan Charan Majhi, **Governor:** Kambhampati Hari Babu, **Capital:** Bhubaneswar

Eveready commissions India's first alkaline battery unit

- **Investment & Capacity:** Developed with an investment of approximately ₹200 crore, the plant has an annual peak production capacity of 360 million alkaline batteries (with an installed capacity of 456 million units).
- **Strategic Impact:** This is the only operational alkaline battery unit in India and the first of its kind in the SAARC region. It aims to reduce India's heavy reliance on imports (import substitution) and is supported by the government's PLI (Production Linked Incentive) scheme.
- **Sustainability & Employment:** The facility is a zero-discharge unit equipped with a 1 MW rooftop solar installation and a rainwater harvesting system. It is expected to generate over 500 direct and indirect jobs in the Jammu and Kashmir region.

Justice Lisa Gill appointed Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh HC

- **Historic Appointment:** Justice Lisa Gill will become the first woman Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court since its inception. She officially assumes office on April 25, 2026.
- **Succession:** She succeeds the incumbent Chief Justice, Dhiraj Singh Thakur, following his retirement on April 24, 2026. Her appointment was made by the President under Article 217(1) of the Constitution.
- **New Collegium Policy:** Her elevation follows a recent Supreme Court Collegium policy of "advance transfer." She was moved from the Punjab and Haryana High Court to Andhra Pradesh in March 2026 to familiarize herself with the court's administration before taking over the top post.

Footnotes: Andhra Pradesh's **Governor:** Syed Abdul Nazeer, **CM:** N. Chandrababu Naidu, **Capital:** Amaravathi

Meghalaya launches CM-INSPIRE scheme for the UPSC Qualifiers

- **Tiered Financial Incentives:** The scheme provides direct monetary assistance to UPSC aspirants from Meghalaya based on exam milestones. Candidates receive ₹50,000 for clearing the Preliminary stage and ₹1,00,000 for clearing the Mains examination.
- **Addressing Representation:** Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma introduced the initiative to reverse the declining representation of the state's youth and indigenous communities in the national civil services, ensuring that economic constraints do not hinder talented candidates.

- **Application & Eligibility:** Managed by the Meghalaya Administrative Training Institute (MATI), the scheme is available to permanent residents of Meghalaya. Eligible candidates can apply through the official MATI portal by providing their UPSC admit cards and result documentation.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Former Union Minister Dinesh Trivedi appointed as India's Ambassador to Bangladesh

- **Rare Political Appointment:** In a departure from the tradition of appointing career diplomats from the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), the government has chosen a seasoned politician. This signals a "strategic reset," using Trivedi's political weight and negotiation skills to handle sensitive bilateral ties directly.
- **Strategic Expertise & Regional Connection:** As a former Union Minister (Railways) and a veteran politician from West Bengal, Trivedi shares a deep linguistic and cultural connection with Bangladesh. His proficiency in the language and understanding of border-state dynamics are seen as key assets for stabilizing relations with the new government in Dhaka.
- **Diplomatic Shift:** Trivedi succeeds Pranay Verma, who has been reassigned to Brussels as India's Ambassador to the European Union. The shift comes at a critical time as India seeks to navigate a complex phase in its relationship with Bangladesh following recent political transitions in the neighboring country.

Ravi Shankar appointed as Ambassador to the Hellenic Republic of Greece

- **Academic Excellence:** Before entering the diplomatic service, Shri Ravi Shankar earned a Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) in Chemical Engineering from IIT Delhi (1993) and an MBA in Finance and Marketing from the Faculty of Management Studies (FMS), Delhi.
- **Strategic Policy Leadership:** Prior to his recent field postings, he held high-level policy roles at the Ministry of External Affairs headquarters, serving as Additional Secretary in charge of South East Asian countries and as Joint Secretary in the President's Secretariat.
- **Strengthening the Maritime Gateway:** His appointment comes as India and Greece enhance their Strategic Partnership, specifically focusing on the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).

Singapore emerges as top FDI source in Apr-Dec FY26

- **Dominant Market Share:** Singapore contributed approximately \$12.3 billion in FDI during this nine-month period, maintaining its position as the largest investor, followed by Mauritius and the United States.

- **Key Growth Sectors:** The majority of these inflows were directed toward the Services sector (including finance, banking, and insurance), Computer Software & Hardware, and Non-Conventional Energy.
- **Ease of Doing Business:** The surge is attributed to the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) and the efficient tax and regulatory framework in Singapore, which makes it a preferred hub for multinational corporations to route investments into India.

Footnotes: Singapore's President: Tharman Shanmugaratnam, PM: Lawrence Wong

Apple Inc. names John Ternus as next CEO

- **Succession Timeline:** John Ternus, currently the Senior Vice President of Hardware Engineering, will officially take over as CEO on September 1, 2026. Tim Cook will transition to the role of Executive Chairman of the board, focusing on long-term strategy and global policy engagement.
- **Hardware-Led Vision:** Ternus joined Apple in 2001 and has been instrumental in the development of the iPhone, iPad, and the transition to Apple Silicon. His appointment is seen as a strategic move to keep product innovation and engineering at the core of Apple's future, especially as the company pivots toward an AI-driven hardware ecosystem.
- **Leadership Reshuffle:** As part of this transition, Johnny Srouji (previously SVP of Hardware Technologies) has been named the new Chief Hardware Officer, effective immediately. He will oversee the Hardware Engineering division previously led by Ternus, consolidating Apple's chip and product design under a single vertical.

Footnotes: Apple Inc.'s Previous CEO: Tim Cook, HQ: California, Estd: 1976

Arthur Law Named Young Global Leader 2026 by World Economic Forum

- **Urban Innovation:** Law is recognized for transforming urban living by turning traditional self-storage into a tech-enabled platform. He focuses on solving the spatial crisis in densely populated Asian cities by optimizing underutilized industrial assets into modern, high-value storage hubs.
- **"Conscience-Led Capital":** An Oxford-educated mathematician and former investment banker (Goldman Sachs, HSBC), Law is noted for bridging the gap between institutional finance—partnering with firms like Blackstone—and social purpose, treating space as a scalable service to reduce urban psychological and physical strain.
- **Global Leadership Cohort:** He joins a highly selective group of 118 individuals from 55 countries for 2026. This class includes diverse figures such as Isha Ambani, Jay Shah (ICC Chairman), and Olympic gold medalist Thea LaFond, all recognized for their potential to shape a more resilient and inclusive future.

Turkey Passes New Law to Restrict Social Media Access for U-15

- **Age Restriction & Implementation:** Digital platforms (including YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook) are prohibited from offering services to children under the age of 15. The law is expected to come into full force within six months after President Erdoğan's final signature.
- **Verification & Control:** Platforms must implement robust age verification systems—potentially using the Turkish e-government (e-Devlet) portal—and provide advanced parental control tools to monitor screen time and manage account settings.
- **Compliance & Penalties:** Companies with more than 10 million daily users in Turkey must respond to government content-removal orders within one hour. Failure to comply can result in heavy fines and significant internet bandwidth reductions (throttling).

Footnotes: Turkey's President: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Vice President: Cevdet Yılmaz, Capital: Ankara

US Announces Heavy Anti-Dumping Duty on Solar Cells and Panels

- **Significant Tariff Rates:** The US Department of Commerce has imposed a preliminary anti-dumping duty of 123.04% on solar cells and panels imported from India. Additionally, duties were announced for Indonesia (35.17%) and Laos (22.46%), following allegations that these products were being sold below fair market value.
- **Total Duty Burden:** This new anti-dumping duty (AD) is in addition to the countervailing duties (CVD) of over 125% announced in February. Combined, most Indian solar exporters now face a total tariff burden of approximately 234%, effectively pricing them out of the US market.
- **Targeted Companies & Timeline:** The investigation identified "critical circumstances" for major firms including Mundra Solar PV, Kowa, and Premier Energies. A final determination from the Commerce Department is expected by July 13, 2026, with the International Trade Commission (ITC) scheduled to make a final injury ruling by October 2026.

DEFENCE NEWS

India Charts 100 GW Nuclear Via SHANTI Act

- **End of State Monopoly:** The SHANTI Act repeals the Atomic Energy Act of 1962, officially opening India's nuclear sector to private and foreign participation. For the first time, private entities can build, own, and operate nuclear plants, with up to 49% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) allowed in civilian projects.
- **Massive Capacity Target:** The Act provides the legal framework to scale India's nuclear capacity from its current ~8.8 GW to 100 GW by 2047. To achieve this, the government is focusing on a dual track: the large-scale deployment of indigenous 700 MW PHWRs and the rapid development of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), specifically the "Bharat Small Reactor."

- **Liability & Regulatory Reform:** The Act consolidates nuclear governance under one law and grants statutory status to the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), ensuring its independence. Crucially, it overhauls the civil liability framework to align with international standards, removing the "legal uncertainty" that previously deterred global technology partners and private investors.

India Uzbekistan Conduct DUSTLIK 2026 Military Exercise

- **Location & Timeline:** The exercise is being held at the Gurumsaray Field Training Area in the Namangan region of Uzbekistan. It commenced on April 12, 2026, and is scheduled to conclude on April 25, 2026.
- **Participating Forces:** The Indian contingent consists of 60 personnel, including 45 from the MAHAR Regiment of the Indian Army and 15 from the Indian Air Force. The Uzbekistan contingent has a matching strength of 60 personnel from its Army and Air Force.
- **Operational Focus:** The primary objective is to enhance interoperability in semi-mountainous terrain. The drills focus on joint special operations, specifically targeting the neutralization of unlawful armed groups (counter-terrorism) and the integration of niche technologies like UAVs for modern warfare.

FedEx, IIT-M Completes India's 1st Intra-City Drone Delivery

- **Location & Route:** The trials were conducted in Bengaluru (April 2026), connecting Electronic City Phase II to a site near Kempegowda International Airport. This route specifically navigated complex urban airspace, including Airport Yellow and Red Zones with DGCA approval.
- **Time Efficiency:** The drone bypassed Bengaluru's heavy traffic, reducing a typical 60-minute (53 km) road journey to a flight of approximately 21 minutes (39–42 km).
- **Partnership & Tech:** The project was led by the FedEx SMART Centre at IIT-Madras in collaboration with Amber Wings, an IIT-M-incubated deep-tech startup. The drones featured advanced safety systems, including autonomous flight termination and anti-collision lighting.

Upendra Dwivedi Inducted into US Army War College International Hall of Fame

- **Historic Achievement:** General Upendra Dwivedi, the Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), became only the third Indian Army Chief to receive this prestigious honor. He follows in the footsteps of former Chiefs General V.K. Singh (2013) and General Bikram Singh (2014).
- **Alumnus and Distinguished Fellow:** The induction took place at the Carlisle Barracks in Pennsylvania. General Dwivedi is an alumnus and a "Distinguished Fellow" of the US

Army War College, and during his visit, he addressed faculty and international student officers on leadership and evolving security dynamics.

- **Strengthening Defence Ties:** This recognition highlights the deepening India-US strategic partnership and military-to-military exchanges. It occurred during the General's official visit to the US, where he also engaged with leadership at the US Army Pacific (USARPAC) headquarters in Hawaii to discuss regional stability in the Indo-Pacific.

BANKING NEWS

Bank of Baroda appoints Manish Nath as New Treasury Head

- **Internal Veteran Leadership:** Manish Nath Mehrotra is a seasoned insider with over 27 years of experience within Bank of Baroda. His deep institutional knowledge is expected to provide stability and continuity to the bank's "Special Treasury" operations in Mumbai.
- **Strategic Scope:** As the Head (In-Charge) of Treasury & Global Markets effective April 18, 2026, he oversees critical functions including liquidity management, foreign exchange operations, and the bank's investment portfolio. This role is vital for maintaining the bank's financial health in a volatile global interest rate environment.
- **Chain of Transitions:** The appointment was triggered by the departure of the previous head, Sushanta Kumar Mohanty, who was elevated to the position of Executive Director at Bank of Maharashtra. This move reflects a broader reshuffle of top-tier management across state-run banks directed by the Department of Financial Services (DFS).

Footnotes: BOB's MD & CEO: Debadatta Chand, HQ: Gujarat, Estd: 1908

Central Bank of India appoints Raj Kokil Singh as CRO

- **Risk Governance & ESG Focus:** Beyond traditional credit and market risks, Singh is expected to lead the bank's Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) risk framework. His SCR (Sustainability & Climate Risk) certification from GARP makes him uniquely qualified to align the bank with the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) increasing focus on climate-related financial disclosures.
- **Asset Quality Management:** His appointment comes at a time when the bank is focused on maintaining the momentum of its improved asset quality. Having served as Deputy Zonal Head in Kolkata, he brings "ground-level" experience in recovery and credit monitoring, which is critical for keeping the bank's Net Non-Performing Assets (NNPA) within healthy limits.
- **Regulatory Compliance Lead:** As CRO, he will serve as the primary liaison between the bank and regulatory bodies like the RBI for all risk-weighted asset (RWA) calculations and stress-testing results. This is vital for ensuring the bank remains well-capitalized and compliant with Basel III norms.

HDFC Life Reappoints Vibha Padalkar as MD & CEO

- **Extended 5-Year Tenure:** The Board of Directors approved her reappointment for a second five-year term, which will officially begin on September 12, 2026, and run through 2031.
- **Regulatory & Leadership Continuity:** This move ensures leadership stability as the company navigates major industry shifts, including the IRDAI's recent clarification on CEO tenure caps and increased competition from new market entrants.
- **Track Record of Growth:** Since taking the helm in 2018, Padalkar has been credited with overseeing the company's successful 2017 listing, managing the industry's first major M&A (Exide Life acquisition), and maintaining HDFC Life's position as a top-tier private insurer.

Footnotes: HDFC Life's MD & CEO: Vibha Padalkar , HQ: Mumbai, Estd: 2000

RBL Bank reappoints Deepak Kumar as Chief Risk Officer

- **Extended Tenure:** The reappointment is for a further six-month term, effective from May 1, 2026. This ensures continuity in the bank's risk management framework during a period of evolving regulatory landscapes.
- **Compliance with New Norms:** The extension aligns with the RBI's Commercial Banks – Governance Directions, 2025, as well as SEBI's latest listing regulations. This highlights the bank's focus on maintaining strict adherence to updated corporate governance standards.
- **Veteran Expertise:** Kumar has over 40 years of experience in the banking sector. Before joining RBL Bank in 2020, he held senior roles at the State Bank of India and was notably part of the RBI-appointed resolution committee for the PMC Bank crisis.

Footnotes: RBL Bank's MD & CEO: R Subramaniakumar, HQ: Mumbai, Estd: 1943

Vivek Tripathi Named ED & WTD at AU Small Finance Bank

- **Role & Tenure:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved his appointment as Executive Director (ED) and Whole-time Director (WTD) for a term of three years, effective from April 24, 2026.
- **Background:** He has been with AU Small Finance Bank since 2014 and previously served as the Chief Credit Officer (CCO), overseeing risk management, credit policy, and underwriting.
- **Strategic Goal:** His elevation is part of the bank's succession planning and leadership strengthening as it transitions toward becoming a Universal Bank (having received in-principle approval from the RBI in 2025).

Footnotes: AUSFB's MD & CEO: Sanjay Agarwal, HQ: Jaipur, Estd: 1996

SPORTS NEWS

Nishita Yogesh Antarkar awarded Miss Sake India 2026 title

- **Historic Title:** Nishita Yogesh Antarkar was crowned Miss Sake India 2026, making her the premier cultural ambassador for Japanese sake and culture within India.
- **Cultural Bridge:** Her role involves promoting the heritage, production, and appreciation of Japanese rice wine while fostering stronger diplomatic and gastronomic ties between India and Japan.
- **Global Representation:** As the national winner, she will represent India on the international stage at the Miss Sake International pageant held in Japan, competing against representatives from around the world.

Aranyak Ghosh became India's 95th Grandmaster

- **The Final Milestone:** Aranyak secured his third and final GM norm at the Bangkok Chess Club Open 2026 in Thailand (April 2026), where he finished tied for first place with an unbeaten score of 7/9.
- **A Test of Patience:** While he crossed the required 2500 ELO rating mark and earned his first GM norm back in 2022 (Sants Open, Spain), he had to wait nearly four years to secure the elusive final norm needed for the title.
- **Recent Dominance:** Before earning the GM title, he proved his form by becoming the 2026 Indian National Rapid Champion in March. He is currently a South Eastern Railway employee and hails from Kolkata, West Bengal.

Shiva Narwal wins gold in 10m air pistol ISSF Junior World Cup

- **Dominant Performance:** Shiva Narwal won the gold in the Men's 10m Air Pistol event with a final score of 241.8. He showed immense consistency, having also topped the qualification round earlier that day with a score of 576.
- **India's Medal Haul:** His gold led a strong start for India at the Cairo (Egypt) meet. Fellow Indian Chirag Sharma secured the bronze in the same event (218.9), while Pannaah Bhugra won silver in the Women's 10m Air Rifle, placing India at the top of the medal tally on Day 1.
- **A Significant Comeback:** This victory is particularly notable as it marks Narwal's successful return to the global junior circuit after a significant hiatus. The Asian Games gold medalist (Team event) proved he remains one of India's brightest prospects for the senior transition.

Viktor Axelsen Announces Retirement From Badminton

- **Reason for Retirement:** The 32-year-old cited persistent back issues and chronic nerve pain as the primary reasons. Despite undergoing surgery in April 2025, he stated that his body no longer allows him to train or compete at the elite level required for professional badminton.

- **Historic Career Legacy:** Axelsen retires as one of the most successful players in history, most notably as a two-time Olympic gold medalist (Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024). He also secured two World Championship titles (2017, 2022) and spent over 100 consecutive weeks as the world No. 1.
- **Impact on the Sport:** Beyond his titles, the 1.94m (6'4") shuttler was credited with redefining the physical profile of men's singles.

Virat Kohli Becomes First Player in IPL History to Hit 800 Boundaries

- **Historic Milestone:** During an IPL 2026 match against the Gujarat Titans at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, Virat Kohli became the first player in IPL history to hit 800 fours. He reached the mark by driving Kagiso Rabada to the long-on boundary and finished the innings with a career total of 807 fours.
- **Dual Record Achievement:** In the same match, Kohli also became only the third player to hit 300 IPL sixes (joining Chris Gayle and Rohit Sharma). Notably, he is the first player to achieve this six-hitting milestone for a single franchise (Royal Challengers Bengaluru).
- **Dominant Statistical Lead:** Kohli now holds a significant lead over other boundary-hitters; the next closest active player is Shikhar Dhawan (retired with 768 fours), followed by David Warner (663) and Rohit Sharma (653). Following his 81-run knock in this match, Kohli also claimed the Orange Cap as the leading run-scorer of the 2026 season.

AWARD NEWS

Dr. Ch. Srinivasa Rao Conferred 9th Prof. M.S. Swaminathan Award

- **Recognition of Excellence:** The award recognizes Dr. Rao's pioneering work in climate-resilient agriculture, dryland farming, and soil health management. His research has been instrumental in developing strategies for carbon sequestration and sustainable land use in India.
- **Prestigious Legacy:** Named after the "Father of the Green Revolution in India," this biennial award is given to eminent scientists who have made significant impacts on food security and agricultural sustainability. It carries a gold medal and a cash prize of ₹2 lakh.
- **Ceremony Details:** The award was presented by the Retired ICAR Employees Association (RICAREA) in Hyderabad. During the event, Dr. Rao's leadership in managing National Agricultural Projects and his role in policy-making for rainfed areas were specifically lauded.

NLC India CMD Prasanna Kumar Motupalli Receives Pride of Telangana Award

- **Occasion and Organizers:** The award was presented during the 4th Telangana Public Relations Conference and National Public Relations Day celebrations in Hyderabad. It was organized by the Public Relations Society of India (PRSI), Hyderabad Chapter.
- **Leadership in Energy:** The honor recognizes his leadership in advancing lignite mining, thermal power generation, and renewable energy. Under his tenure, NLC India has become a key contributor to regional energy security, supplying approximately 400 MW of power to the Telugu states.
- **Personal and Professional Milestone:** A native of Bhadrachalam, Motupalli expressed pride in receiving the award in his home state. He dedicated the achievement to the employees of NLC India, highlighting the company's recent progress in digital transformation and sustainable "Navratna" growth.

Former MP Santosh Kumar Honoured as 'Global Green Icon' at World Climate Leaders Conclave

- **The Award & Venue:** On April 17, 2026, Santosh Kumar was conferred with the "Global Green Icon" title at the World Climate Leaders Conclave. The prestigious ceremony was held at the historic House of Lords in the British Parliament, London.
- **Recognition of Green Initiatives:** The honor specifically recognizes his leadership in founding the "Green India Challenge" (GIC). Under the slogan "Hara Hai Toh Bhara Hai", the movement has successfully mobilized millions of citizens to plant over 196 million geo-tagged trees across India.
- **Ecological Impact:** The award also highlighted his contributions to the Telanganaku Haritha Haram program, which helped increase Telangana's green cover by nearly 8% and supported significant biodiversity revival, such as the increase in the tiger population in the Nallamala forest region.

APPOINTMENT & PERSON IN NEWS

Shailesh Bansal appointed as Director in the UPSC

- **Cadre & Background:** He is a 2011-batch officer of the Indian Posts & Telecommunications Accounts and Finance Service (IP&TA&FS). Prior to this appointment, he was recommended for Central deputation by the Department of Telecommunications.
- **Tenure & Scheme:** His appointment as Director in the UPSC is made under the Central Staffing Scheme (CSS). He will serve a tenure of five years from the date he assumes charge or until further orders.

- **Strict Joining Timeline:** In accordance with the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) guidelines, he is required to join his new post within three weeks. Failure to do so could result in debarment from future Central deputation under the CSS.

Footnotes: UPSC's Chairperson: Ajay Kumar, HQ: New Delhi, Estd: 1926

Grappling Federation of India appoints Sikander Kumar Chairman

- **Political & Academic Background:** Professor Sikander Kumar is a prominent Rajya Sabha MP from Himachal Pradesh and a former Vice-Chancellor of Himachal Pradesh University. His appointment brings high-level administrative experience and political influence to the federation.
- **Strategic Growth for Grappling:** The GFI aims to leverage his leadership to professionalize the sport in India. Since grappling is recognized by United World Wrestling (UWW) and viewed as a potential future Olympic discipline, his role is seen as critical for securing better government support and infrastructure.
- **Unanimous Mandate:** His appointment was made unanimously by the federation's board. General Secretary Subodh Kumar Yadav formally extended the invitation, emphasizing that Kumar's expertise would help Indian grapplers achieve greater success on the international stage.

Preeti Yadav appointed to the post of GM of FCI

- **Regional Posting & Terms:** She will be stationed at the FCI Regional Office in Panchkula, Haryana, serving the role on a deputation basis for a period of three years. Her tenure is officially set to begin on August 21, 2026, or from the date she assumes charge, whichever is later.
- **Administrative Transition:** Prior to this new role, she was serving as the Managing Director of MARKFED (Punjab State Cooperative Supply and Marketing Federation Ltd). Her move to FCI is part of the Central Staffing Scheme under the Department of Food and Public Distribution.
- **Diverse Background:** An accomplished officer, Yadav holds a Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) degree. Before her tenure at MARKFED, she held several key administrative positions in Punjab, including serving as the Deputy Commissioner of Patiala and Rupnagar, where she was recognized for her work in district governance and public service.

Ashok Meena Chairs 7th DDWS Peyjal Samvad

- **"Jal Arpan" Initiative:** Secretary Meena highlighted the introduction of Jal Arpan, a protocol for the systematic handing over of water supply assets to Gram Panchayats. This involves a mandatory 15-day trial run to ensure the quality and reliability of the system before the local community takes full ownership.

- **Digital Governance & Accountability:** The meeting stressed the creation of digital footprints through tools like the Sujalam Bharat App and Sujala Gaon IDs. It also featured "Jal Seva Aankalan," a mechanism that allows consumers and Gram Panchayats to self-assess water quality and service levels, moving beyond simple infrastructure metrics.
- **Funding Linked to Performance:** It was clearly stated that future funding under the Jal Jeevan Mission is now closely tied to the functionality and performance of water schemes.

Rajesh Kumar Agarwal Takes Charge as Director at Power Finance Corporation

- **Elevation to Board Level:** Effective April 23, 2026, Rajesh Kumar Agarwal has taken charge as Director (Finance) of Power Finance Corporation Limited. He was previously serving as the Executive Director (Finance) at the same organization since January 2024.
- **Extensive Sector Experience:** He brings over 31 years of experience in the power and financial sectors. Before joining PFC in 2009, he worked with other major power sector entities including NTPC Limited, Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL), and Delhi Transco Limited.
- **Key Specializations:** A member of the Institute of Cost Accountants of India, Agarwal has been instrumental in spearheading digital reforms and enhancing financial reporting frameworks. His expertise spans corporate accounts, taxation, fund management, and the implementation of power sector reforms.

Veteran Economist Ashok Lahiri Set to Become Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog

- **Succession and Appointment:** On April 25, 2026, the Union Government appointed eminent economist Ashok Kumar Lahiri as the Vice-Chairperson of NITI Aayog. He succeeds Suman K. Bery, who had held the position for four years. This change is part of a broader reconstitution of the think tank, which includes the appointment of four new full-time members.
- **Distinguished Career:** Lahiri is a veteran economist with over four decades of experience. He served as India's Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) from 2002 to 2007 under the tenures of Prime Ministers Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh. Additionally, he was a member of the Fifteenth Finance Commission and has held senior roles at the World Bank and the IMF.
- **Political and Academic Background:** Beyond his economic expertise, Lahiri is currently a BJP MLA from the Balurghat constituency in West Bengal (though he opted not to contest the 2026 state assembly polls).

Parminder Singh appointed CEO of Reliance Enterprise Intelligence Limited

- **Joint Venture Leadership:** Singh has been appointed as the founding CEO of REIL, a strategic 70:30 joint venture between Reliance Industries Limited (70%) and Meta Platforms (30%). The venture aims to accelerate the adoption of enterprise-level Artificial Intelligence across India.
- **Tech Veteran Background:** He brings over 30 years of experience in the global technology sector, having held senior leadership positions at major firms including Google (MD, Display Network APAC), Twitter (MD, SEA, India & MENA), Apple, and IBM.
- **Strategic Focus:** Under his leadership, REIL will combine Meta's AI capabilities with Reliance's massive compute infrastructure and Jio's nationwide connectivity to provide scalable and "sovereign" AI solutions specifically tailored for Indian businesses.

OBITUARY NEWS

Brazil basketball legend Oscar Schmidt passed away

- **Unmatched Olympic Scorer:** Schmidt holds the record for the most points in Olympic basketball history with 1,093 points across five Games (1980–1996). His record for the most points in a single Olympic game (55 points against Spain in 1988) remains unbeaten to this day.
- **A "Pure" Scorer with Massive Career Numbers:** For decades, he was recognized as the all-time leading scorer in the history of professional basketball with 49,737 career points—a feat only recently surpassed by LeBron James in 2024.
- **Dedication to Country over NBA:** Despite being drafted by the New Jersey Nets in 1984, Schmidt famously declined to play in the NBA because, at the time, doing so would have disqualified him from representing the Brazilian national team.

Padma Shri awardee and Bundeli Martial Arts Pioneer Bhagwandas Raikwar passed away

- **Guardian of Tradition:** Raikwar was the foremost pioneer of Bundeli Martial Arts, a weapon-based art form originating from the Bundelkhand region. In 1964, he established the Chhatrasal Bundelkhand Akhada in Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, where he trained over 1,000 students in traditional combat skills using the lathi (staff), talwar (sword), and bhala (spear).
- **Padma Shri Recognition:** He was conferred with the Padma Shri in 2026 (under the Sports category) as one of the "Unsung Heroes" for his lifelong commitment to preserving and globalizing indigenous Indian martial arts, which were on the verge of extinction.
- **Stage Transformation:** He is credited with modernizing the ancient "Akhada" tradition by transforming it into a format suitable for stage performances, thereby bringing international visibility to the cultural heritage of Madhya Pradesh.

Padma Shri Bhagwandas Raikwar passed away

- **Guardian of Traditional Arts:** Known as the pride of Bundelkhand, Raikwar was the guardian of the ancient weapon-based martial art known as 'Akhada'. He dedicated over 60 years to preserving this tradition, teaching more than 1,000 students the use of traditional weapons like the sword, spear, and trident.
- **National Recognition:** In recognition of his lifelong service to sports and cultural heritage, the Government of India had announced the Padma Shri 2026 for him earlier this year. He is credited with bringing international recognition to the Bundeli war art.
- **Establishment of Chhatrasal Akhada:** In 1964, he established the Chhatrasal Bundelkhand Akhada in Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, using his own limited resources. His last rites were performed with full state honours in Sagar on April 19, 2026.

Bikaji Chairman Shiv Ratan Agarwal Dies at 74

- **Passing & Legacy:** He passed away at the age of 74 in Chennai after suffering a sudden heart attack. He was in the city to attend to his wife's medical surgery at the time.
- **Industry Pioneer:** A grandson of Gangabishan 'Haldiram' Agarwal, he moved out of the family business to establish his own brand. He founded Bikaji in 1993 (initially as Shivdeep Products in 1986), successfully transforming traditional Bikaneri snacks into an internationally recognized brand.
- **Business Achievement:** Under his leadership, Bikaji Foods International grew into one of India's largest ethnic snack companies and achieved a successful public listing on the Indian stock exchanges in November 2022.

Former Andhra Pradesh CM Nadendla Bhaskara Rao Passed Away

- **Brief but Historic Tenure:** Nadendla Bhaskara Rao, who passed away on April 22, 2026, at the age of 90, holds the record for the shortest tenure as Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh. He served for just 31 days in 1984 after a political coup while then-CM N.T. Rama Rao (NTR) was away in the US for medical treatment.
- **Political Career and Affiliations:** He was a co-founder of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) alongside NTR in 1982 and served as its first Finance Minister. Over his long career, he was also a member of the Congress party and a Lok Sabha MP from Khammam (1998). In his later years, he joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2019.
- **Family and Legacy:** He is survived by his son, Nadendla Manohar, who is a prominent leader in the Jana Sena Party and currently serves as a Cabinet Minister in the Andhra Pradesh government.