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WEEKLY —
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Affairs



NATIONAL NEWS

Jharkhand's Bhagaiya Silk, Munda Jewellery & Bamboo Craft Receive GI Tag

- **Recognition of Traditional Heritage:** The GI tag has been awarded to Bhagaiya silk, Kuchai silk, Munda jewellery, and Jharkhand bamboo craft, officially validating their unique geographical origins and cultural significance. These products are deeply rooted in local knowledge systems and represent generations of craftsmanship that define the state's indigenous identity.
- **Economic Empowerment for Artisans:** By providing these products with legal protection and brand authenticity, the GI recognition helps prevent imitation and allows producers to command premium value in both domestic and international markets. This is expected to create enhanced livelihood opportunities and ensure that economic benefits flow directly to the rural communities that have preserved these crafts.
- **Role of Institutional Support:** The success of this registration is largely attributed to the catalytic role of NABARD, which facilitated the entire process by identifying unique product characteristics, organizing producer groups, and strengthening value chains.

Centre Blocks Telegram Access Till June 22

- **Preventing Exam-Related Fraud:** The NTA reported that organized cheating syndicates were using Telegram to circulate fake "paper leak" claims to defraud candidates. These groups demanded money from students and families by promising access to the actual examination papers, which the NTA maintains are fully secure.
- **Targeting Misuse of Platform Features:** Authorities specifically identified that scammers were exploiting Telegram's message-editing feature to fabricate evidence of leaks after exams had concluded. Consequently, the government has mandated that Telegram disable its message-editing functionality in India until June 30 to prevent the manipulation of historical timestamps.
- **Ensuring a Secure Re-examination:** The restriction is a "calibrated and time-bound" action intended to cover the re-test on June 21 and its immediate aftermath. The NTA has advised all candidates to ignore unverified content online and rely solely on official channels for genuine examination updates.

IndiaAI Mission-Supported Avataar.ai Launches Indigenous AI Video Model 'Varya'

- **Technological Efficiency & Cost:** Varya utilizes an advanced distillation technique that reduces the number of computational steps from 50 to just 4. This breakthrough makes the model significantly faster and allows for video generation at approximately ₹0.48 per second, making it up to 10 times more cost-efficient than leading global models.
- **Deep Cultural Context Awareness:** Unlike global models that may struggle with specific regional nuances, Varya is trained on 40,000 Indian cultural datasets. This enables it to accurately generate visual outputs reflecting Indian festivals, attire, food,

architecture, and everyday life, ensuring the content is contextually relevant to the local population

- **Empowering Indian Creators & MSMEs:** The model is positioned as a tool to democratize AI-driven storytelling for MSMEs, educators, and creators who previously found global AI tools structurally unaffordable. By lowering the barrier to entry, it aims to help these groups create professional-grade visual lessons, product advertisements, and informational videos with ease.

Tripura's Traditional Musical Instrument Sarinda Receives GI Tag Recognition

- **Cultural Preservation:** The GI tag provides formal legal protection to the Sarinda, helping to safeguard the authentic craftsmanship of Tripura's indigenous communities. This recognition is expected to play a crucial role in promoting and sustaining the state's invaluable folk music traditions for future generations.
- **Unique Craftsmanship:** The instrument is traditionally carved from a single block of wood and features a hollow resonator that produces a distinct, melodic sound. Its unique design and historical association with local tribes are now officially documented and protected under this certification.
- **State Milestone:** This achievement marks the fourth product from Tripura to receive a GI tag, following the Tripura Queen Pineapple, Risha/Pachra (Rignai), and Matabari Peda. The government anticipates that this status will enhance the instrument's visibility on both national and international stages, creating new opportunities for local artisans and musicians.

Footnotes: Tripura's CM: Manik Saha, Governor: Indrasena Reddy, Capital: Agartala

India's first Nuclear Engineering Design Centre 'CODENE'

- **Strategic Partnership:** The centre is a collaborative effort between IIT Hyderabad, CEEPL India, and the French multinational Dassault Systèmes. This partnership aims to combine academic research with advanced industrial design tools to support India's growing civil nuclear sector.
- **Technological Focus:** CODENE will utilize cutting-edge technologies, including advanced 3D modeling and digital twin platforms provided by Dassault Systèmes. The facility will specifically focus on next-generation reactor technologies, nuclear safety systems, computational modeling, and the development of advanced materials.
- **National Objectives:** This initiative aligns with India's long-term goal of achieving 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047. By fostering world-class engineering talent, the centre is expected to significantly reduce dependence on foreign expertise and bolster India's self-reliance in nuclear design and innovation.

Bengaluru ranked second-best AI-native cluster in Asia

- **Ranking as Asia's Second-Best AI-Native Cluster:** Bengaluru has been officially ranked as the second-best AI-native startup cluster in Asia, trailing only Beijing. This recognition, featured in the Global Startup Ecosystem Report (GSER) 2026, highlights the city's focus on businesses that integrate artificial intelligence at their very core.
- **Strong Foundation in Research & Funding:** The city accounts for approximately 58% of India's total AI startup funding, demonstrating significant investor confidence. Additionally, Bengaluru has broken into the global top 10 for "R&D Engine" performance, bolstered by its dense network of engineers, researchers, and leading academic institutions.
- **Global Ecosystem Standing:** Beyond its AI-specific achievements, Bengaluru remains a premier global destination for innovation, ranking 15th overall among the world's top startup ecosystems. With an ecosystem value of approximately \$152.8 billion, the city continues to solidify its status as a major player in the global technology economy.

Footnotes: Bangalore's Chief Commissioner: Maheshwar Rao

SC Declares Right to Walk on Safe Footpaths a Fundamental Right

- **Constitutional Recognition of Pedestrian Rights:** The Supreme Court has ruled that the right to walk on safe, demarcated footpaths is a fundamental right protected under Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution. The bench emphasized that this right to movement takes legal precedence over the privilege of using motorized vehicles on public roads.
- **Mandatory Duty of Civic Authorities:** The judgment establishes that local bodies—including municipal corporations, panchayats, and urban development authorities—have an enforceable legal duty to construct and maintain safe footpaths. Citizens are now empowered to seek constitutional remedies and compensation if these authorities fail to provide adequate and safe pedestrian infrastructure.
- **Call for Legislative Reform:** Identifying the lack of dedicated laws for walkers as a "civilizational problem," the Court has urged the government to enact a comprehensive statutory framework. It also recommended the establishment of a regulatory body to ensure institutional accountability.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Canada Sets Guinness World Record with Giant 12,800-Square-Metre Flag

- **Record-Breaking Dimensions:** The flag measures 160 metres long by 80 metres wide, covering a total area of 12,800 square metres, which is roughly equivalent to the size of two football fields. It weighs approximately 3,400 pounds and was manufactured from a special weather-resistant fabric by the Vancouver-based company, Blast Media Print.
- **Strategic Installation and Timing:** The flag was spread across "The Cut," a prominent ski run on Grouse Mountain, to ensure visibility from across Metro Vancouver, the air, and surrounding regions. It was intentionally installed in June 2026 to welcome

international visitors and demonstrate support for Team Canada during the FIFA World Cup.

- **Public 7 Regulatory Reception:** While the project has generated significant local pride and interest, its display has sparked debate regarding flag etiquette because it touches the ground, which some guidelines advise against.

Elon Musk Becomes World's First Trillionaire After SpaceX IPO

- **Record-Breaking Market Debut:** SpaceX's IPO raised approximately \$75 billion, making it the largest public offering in history and comfortably surpassing the previous benchmark set by Saudi Aramco in 2019. The company's shares, trading under the ticker symbol SPCX, opened at \$150 and closed at \$160.95 on their first day, cementing a market valuation that exceeded \$2 trillion.
- **Impact on Musk's Personal Wealth:** As the largest shareholder of SpaceX, owning roughly 42% of the equity, the post-IPO surge in share price pushed Musk's estimated net worth past the \$1 trillion mark. His fortune is primarily derived from this significant stake in SpaceX, combined with his existing holdings in Tesla and other ventures like xAI and X (formerly Twitter).
- **Economic 7 Social Implications:** Musk's rise to trillionaire status has sparked intense global discourse regarding extreme wealth inequality and the influence of tech oligarchs in the modern era.

PM Narendra Modi Receives Slovakia's Highest National Award

- **Recognition of Diplomatic Ties:** The award was conferred by Slovak President Peter Pellegrini in recognition of the Prime Minister's exceptional contributions to strengthening the bilateral partnership between India and Slovakia. It reflects the growing depth of cooperation in areas such as trade, technology, and strategic affairs.
- **A Milestone Achievement:** This prestigious recognition marks the 33rd international honour bestowed upon Prime Minister Modi by a foreign nation. Furthermore, this visit is historic as he is the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Slovakia since the country gained its independence.
- **Dedication to the People of India:** In his acceptance, the Prime Minister expressed his gratitude and dedicated the honour to the 1.4 billion people of India. He emphasized that the award stands as a testament to the warmth, trust, and enduring bonds of friendship that unite the two nations.

UK Announces Social Media Ban for U-16 Users

- **Scope of the Social Media Ban:** The ban will apply to major platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Snapchat, and YouTube. Essential messaging

services like WhatsApp and Signal will remain accessible, as the government intends to protect children's ability to communicate safely with friends and family.

- **Targeting Harmful Online Features:** Beyond a general social media ban, the government is implementing strict regulations to protect users under 18 from "high-risk" digital interactions. These measures will restrict features like livestreaming and the ability for strangers to contact children on gaming or social platforms.
- **Timeline & Enforcement:** The government plans to present the new regulations to Parliament before the end of 2026, with full implementation expected by Spring 2027. Tech companies failing to comply with the new age-verification requirements will face significant financial penalties for violating the safety standards.

Sarvam AI Becomes India's 130th Unicorn After Raising USD 234 Million

- **Significant Funding:** Sarvam AI successfully raised \$234 million in the first close of its Series B funding round. This massive capital injection was spearheaded by HCL Tech, which committed \$150 million to become a lead strategic investor.
- **Strategic Collaboration:** The partnership with HCLTech aims to integrate Sarvam's sovereign AI research with the IT giant's global enterprise reach. This collaboration focuses on building secure, scalable, and responsible AI solutions tailored for governments and large-scale industries.

Navi Mumbai & Guwahati Airports named World's Most Beautiful Airports 2026

- **Architectural Inspiration:** The airport's Terminal 1 features a distinctive lotus-inspired design that symbolizes purity and renewal. This aesthetic choice aims to reflect India's vision as a modern global economic powerhouse while offering a futuristic visual appeal.
- **Cultural & Biophilic Design:** Terminal 2 is guided by the biophilic elegance of the "Bamboo Orchid," which honors the rich biodiversity of Northeast India. The structure utilizes bamboo-inspired elements and organic shapes to create a space that feels deeply connected to the region's natural landscapes.
- **Sustainability Focus:** The design emphasizes environmental responsibility through the use of passive daylighting and sustainable materials. Large open spaces and fluid ceiling patterns, which trace the rhythms of the Brahmaputra River, enhance both the aesthetic beauty and the operational efficiency of the terminal.

ISRO–DAE Develop Artificial Heating System for 200-Day Lunar Lander Life

- **Mechanism of Survival:** The heating system utilizes Radioisotope Heater Units (RHUs), which generate continuous heat through the natural radioactive decay of specific isotopes. Unlike solar panels, which are ineffective during the two-week-long lunar night, these heaters provide a reliable, constant thermal source to protect delicate electronics and batteries from freezing.

- **Overcoming the "Lunar Night" Challenge:** Previous missions like Chandrayaan-3 relied on solar power, which resulted in the lander losing function once the sun set and temperatures dropped drastically. By maintaining critical component temperatures, these heaters allow the spacecraft to remain operational through multiple lunar day-night cycles, drastically increasing mission duration.
- **Strategic Collaboration:** This project combines ISRO's advanced space engineering capabilities with the DAE's specialized knowledge in nuclear and thermal technology. Successfully scaling this technology is considered a pivotal milestone for India, enabling long-term scientific experiments and paving the way for more complex interplanetary exploration.

India Rises to 5th Spot in QS World University Rankings 2027

- **Rise to 5th Most Represented System:** India has achieved the rank of the world's fifth most represented higher education system. This milestone follows a remarkable 271% growth in representation since 2017, moving from 14 institutions to 52.
- **Broad-Based Academic Excellence:** The progress is no longer limited to elite engineering schools; 13 non-IIT institutions achieved their highest-ever rankings this year. This signifies a more systemic improvement across public and private universities throughout 19 states and union territories.
- **Strengthened Research & Employability:** Indian universities are gaining global recognition for their research output and graduate value. Specifically, 11 institutions now rank among the world's top 100 for research impact, while six feature in the top 100 for employer reputation.

DEFENCE NEWS

Lt. General Dhiraj Seth appointed as Chief of the Army

- **Current Professional Role:** Lieutenant General Dhiraj Seth is currently serving as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff, an appointment he has held since April 1, 2026. His elevation to the top post follows a distinguished tenure in this crucial administrative and strategic position at Army Headquarters.
- **Extensive Command Experience:** Throughout his career spanning nearly four decades, he has commanded forces in diverse environments, including an Armoured Regiment in the desert and a Counter-Insurgency Force in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Academic & Strategic Background:** An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, he was commissioned into the Armoured Corps in December 1986. Beyond his foundational training, he has furthered his expertise through the Higher Command Course, the National Defence College, and the prestigious Command and Staff Course in Paris.

Indian Army Introduces New Uniform Code

- **Incorporation of Indigenous Attire:** The new regulations officially introduce the traditional, closed-neck Bandi jacket as authorized formal civil attire for officers. This jacket can be worn over a full-sleeved shirt with formal trousers, reflecting the Army's effort to align military traditions with contemporary Indian values.
- **Removal of Colonial-Era Symbols and Practices:** The Army has phased out several remnants of the British era, such as the use of the term "Royal" in dress-related nomenclature and the mandatory use of ceremonial pouch belts in certain mess dresses.
- **Standardization and Modernization of Daily Wear:** A new standardized winter uniform (Dress 3B), featuring an Angola shirt and a battle jacket, has been introduced for all ranks, with a full transition planned by June 2029.

Indian Army Receives 106 Peacekeeper Jet-Powered Kamikaze Drones from SMPP

- **High-Speed Strike Capability:** These drones are engineered for deep-strike missions, boasting a top speed of 450 km/h and an operational range of 180 kilometers. This allows the Army to neutralize critical high-value targets, such as command centers, radar installations, and logistics hubs, from a safe standoff distance.
- **Precision in Contested Environments:** The system is specifically designed to function in contested electromagnetic environments, maintaining mission accuracy despite hostile electronic warfare like jamming and spoofing. During trials, the drone demonstrated exceptional precision with a "Circular Error Probable" (CEP) of less than 5 meters.
- **Indigenous Manufacturing Milestone:** Completed within a rapid six-month timeframe, the delivery underscores a successful push toward Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) in defense. The project fills a vital operational gap between conventional artillery and long-range missile systems, with SMPP already proposing an enhanced variant for future consideration.

Indian Coast Guard Inducts Indigenous Air Cushion Vehicle in Goa

- **Boost to Indigenous Defence Manufacturing:** The induction of the first indigenous Air Cushion Vehicle (ACV), designated H-561, marks a significant milestone for the "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" (Self-Reliant India) initiative. It is the first hovercraft built by a private Indian shipyard, Chowgule & Company, highlighting the growing sophistication of the nation's maritime industrial base.
- **Enhanced Operational Versatility:** Designed to operate on both land and water, the hovercraft can navigate challenging terrains such as mudflats, marshlands, and shallow coastal waters where conventional vessels cannot reach. This unique capability is critical for coastal surveillance, search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, and disaster relief operations.
- **Strategic Deployment & Future Expansion:** This vessel is the first of six hovercrafts ordered by the Indian Coast Guard under a ₹387.4 crore contract. It will be stationed in

Haldia, West Bengal, to strengthen security across eastern India's riverine and deltaic regions.

BANKING NEWS

CBI Recognized as 'Best Tech Emerging Business Bank' in 2026

- **Recognition of Innovation:** The award celebrates the bank's strategic shift toward technology-led growth and its ability to implement future-ready banking solutions. It specifically recognizes their efforts in driving digital innovation to better serve emerging business sectors.
- **Leadership Commitment:** Senior bank officials, including Deputy General Manager S. K. Sahoo, received the award on behalf of the organization. The accolade underscores the bank's internal push to modernize infrastructure and adopt cutting-edge financial technologies.
- **Focus on Transformation:** The honor serves as an official validation of the bank's ongoing digital transformation journey. By prioritizing automated and efficient systems, the Central Bank of India aims to remain competitive in an increasingly tech-driven financial ecosystem.

Footnotes: CBI's MD & CEO: Kalyan Kumar, HQ: Mumbai, Estd: 1911

Vivek Tripathi appointed Executive Director of AU Small Finance Bank

- **Role and Tenure:** Vivek Tripathi has been appointed to the board as an Executive Director and Whole-Time Director for a tenure of three years. This elevation is part of the bank's structured succession planning to ensure leadership depth and long-term institutional stability.
- **Professional Background:** Having been associated with AU Small Finance Bank since 2014, Tripathi previously served as the Chief Credit Officer. His career spans over two decades in the financial services sector, including prior roles at ICICI Bank, Reliance Capital, and the Aditya Birla Group.
- **Strategic Contribution:** Tripathi is recognized for his pivotal role in institutionalizing robust risk management and governance frameworks. His expertise in credit policy, underwriting, and portfolio management has been instrumental in enhancing the bank's balance sheet resilience and supporting its growth in the commercial banking segment.

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

Chairman Keki Mistry's Term at HDFC Bank Extended

- **Extension Details:** The extension is effective until September 18, 2026. This tenure will conclude on that date or upon the appointment of a regular part-time chairman, whichever occurs earlier.

- **Purpose of the Move:** This is a stopgap arrangement to ensure leadership stability while the bank continues its structured search for a permanent, full-time chairman.
- **Context of the Appointment:** Keki Mistry has been serving in this interim role since March 18, 2026, following the sudden resignation of the former non-executive chairman, Atanu Chakraborty, who stepped down citing concerns over the bank's internal practices and alignment with his personal values.

Footnotes: HDFC Bank's MD & CEO: Sashidhar Jagdishan, HQ: 1995, Estd: Mumbai

Indian Bank Honoured with Golden Peacock Award for Excellence in AI

- **Excellence in Artificial Intelligence:** Indian Bank received the prestigious Golden Peacock Award for Excellence in Artificial Intelligence – 2026. The honor recognizes the bank's leadership in leveraging AI-driven innovations to significantly enhance customer service and operational efficiency.
- **Industry-Leading Performance:** The bank was identified as the top performer within the Financial Sector (Banking) category for this award. This distinction reflects its commitment to building a future-ready banking framework that prioritizes digital intelligence and trust.
- **Rigorous Jury Evaluation:** The award was conferred by the Institute of Directors (IoD) following a comprehensive assessment process. A distinguished jury, chaired by former Chief Justice of India Uday U. Lalit, evaluated organizations on their strategic AI alignment and ethical implementation.

Footnotes: Indian Bank's MD & CEO: Binod Kumar, HQ: Chennai, Estd: 1907

SPORTS NEWS

India's Dhiraj Bommadevara & Kumkum Mohod clinched gold in recurve mixed team event

- **Dominant Performance Against Top Seeds:** The Indian duo defeated the top-seeded South Korean pair of Oh Ye-jin and Kim Je-deok with a clinical score of 5-1. Throughout their campaign, they showed remarkable composure and consistency, conceding only four set points across their entire journey to the title.
- **Significance for Both Athletes:** This victory represents the first-ever World Cup gold medal in the recurve mixed team event for both Dhiraj Bommadevara and Kumkum Mohod. For the teenager Kumkum, it is a particularly impressive season, as it follows her success with the Indian women's recurve team at the World Cup stage in Shanghai just last month.
- **Broader Impact on Indian Archery:** The win highlights the growing depth and confidence within the Indian recurve setup as they prepare for the upcoming Asian Games. Furthermore, the event was a double celebration for Dhiraj Bommadevara, who also claimed the men's individual recurve gold in Antalya.

Sudarsan Pattnaik Win Russia Grand Sand Master Cup 2026

- **Recognition of Global Talent:** Pattnaik secured the top title after competing against leading sand sculptors from approximately 12 countries. The victory is considered a significant milestone for Indian art, further cementing his status as a globally recognized master of the craft.
- **Message-Driven Artistry:** He received the award for his impactful sand sculpture that highlighted the urgent global challenges of climate change and rising temperatures. By choosing this theme over traditional mythological or historical subjects, he successfully demonstrated the power of sand art as a medium for social and environmental advocacy.
- **Technical & Creative Excellence:** The competition evaluated participants based on their technical precision, artistic creativity, and ability to convey complex ideas under challenging weather conditions. Pattnaik's success in Kaliningrad reinforces India's growing influence in international cultural diplomacy and specialized artistic competitions.

Lewis Hamilton wins first F1 race with Ferrari in Barcelona

- **Strategic Masterclass:** Ferrari executed a perfect three-stop strategy, which allowed Hamilton to gain a crucial advantage over his rivals. He successfully capitalized on a well-timed Virtual Safety Car period, which provided him with a "free" pit stop and helped him maintain the lead until the finish line.
- **Historic British Podium:** Hamilton shared the podium with fellow British drivers George Russell (Mercedes) and Lando Norris (McLaren), who finished second and third, respectively. This event marked the first all-British podium in Formula 1 since the 1968 United States Grand Prix.
- **A Milestone for the Veteran Driver:** At 41 years old, Hamilton became the oldest Grand Prix winner since Jack Brabham in 1970. The victory was an emotional breakthrough for the seven-time world champion, ending a nearly two-year winless drought since his last triumph in 2024.

Smriti Mandhana Named Sole Sportsperson in TIME's 100 Most Influential People of 2026

- **Global Recognition:** Mandhana has been placed in the "Titans" category alongside international icons like Cristiano Ronaldo and Erling Haaland. This selection highlights her role in shaping the current global sports landscape and her status as a trailblazer for women's cricket.
- **Record-Breaking Career:** TIME recognized her for a series of historic milestones, including becoming the first Indian woman to score a double century in a domestic one-day match. She also holds the record as the first Indian to score centuries across all three international formats.

- **Leadership and Impact:** Beyond her individual statistics, the magazine emphasized her success as a captain, having led Royal Challengers Bengaluru to Women's Premier League titles in both 2024 and 2026. Her contribution as vice-captain during India's victorious ICC Women's ODI World Cup campaign last year was also cited as a defining achievement.

Neha Goyal completed 200 international caps for India

- **Career Longevity and Consistency:** Since making her senior team debut in 2014 at the FIH Champions Challenge in Glasgow, Neha has been a consistent performer for over a decade. Her journey to 200 caps highlights her ability to maintain high physical intensity and tactical discipline, making her one of the most reliable players in the squad.
- **Role in Indian Hockey's Rise:** Neha has been an integral part of several historic campaigns, including India's fourth-place finish at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and a bronze medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games. Her expertise in the midfield, characterized by exceptional dodging skills and precise distribution, has been pivotal in India's success on the continental and global stages.
- **Overcoming Personal Challenges:** Born into modest circumstances in Sonipat, Haryana, Neha's path to 200 international appearances is an inspiring story of resilience and hard work. Her transition from playing at a local academy to becoming a senior leader for the national team serves as a beacon of motivation for aspiring athletes from similar backgrounds.

Messi Equals Miroslav Klose as FIFA World Cup's Joint Highest Goalscorer

- **Record-Equaling Performance:** By netting a sensational hat-trick in the Group J match, Messi moved his career World Cup tally to 16 goals. This effort draws him level with Germany's Miroslav Klose, who previously held the record solo since the 2014 tournament.
- **A Career First:** Remarkably, this match marked the first-ever hat-trick of Messi's World Cup career. The performance was instrumental in Argentina's dominant 3–0 victory as they began their defense of the World Cup title.
- **Extended Legacy:** Messi also became the first man to appear in six different World Cup tournaments, further cementing his legacy in the sport. Having debuted in 2006, he continues to break barriers as he leads Argentina in the current 2026 edition.

Akshara Gupta scores triple century in Bihar Cricket Tournament

- **Record-Breaking Triple Century:** Akshara scored an unbeaten 306 off just 126 balls at the Sandis Compound Ground in Bhagalpur. This extraordinary knock included 55 fours and 8 sixes, showcasing her immense power-hitting ability.

- **Dominant Match Performance:** Her explosive innings powered her team to a massive total of 450 runs in 40 overs. The opposition was subsequently bowled out for 121, resulting in a commanding 329-run victory for her side.
- **Emerging Talent from Bihar:** Hailing from Raxaul, Akshara is the first female cricketer from Bihar to feature in four consecutive BCCI women's age-group tournaments. Her success follows the national attention garnered by Bihar's male prodigy Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, further cementing the state's growing reputation for producing top-tier cricket talent.

Deepti Sharma Becomes Joint-Highest Wicket-Taker for India

- **Equalizing the National Record:** During the Women's T20 World Cup 2026 match against the Netherlands, Deepti Sharma claimed her 355th international wicket. This feat allowed her to level with iconic former pacer Jhulan Goswami as India's joint-highest wicket-taker in women's international cricket.
- **Dominance in the T20I Format:** Beyond her overall international record, Deepti is also the leading wicket-taker in Women's T20 Internationals globally. Her ability to consistently stifle opposition batters has made her the first bowler in the format to surpass 160 wickets.
- **A Landmark All-Rounder:** Deepti's achievement highlights her extraordinary longevity and impact as a world-class all-rounder. She remains a pivotal figure for India, frequently contributing with both the ball and the bat in high-pressure tournaments like the ongoing T20 World Cup.

India's Neeraj Chopra finishes fourth at 2026 Doha Diamond League

- **Successful Return to Competition:** Competing for the first time since September 2025, Neeraj Chopra made his comeback following a lengthy recovery from a back injury. He recorded a best throw of 85.69 metres in his third attempt, placing fourth in a highly competitive field.
- **Securing Commonwealth Games Qualification:** Despite missing the podium, Neeraj successfully cleared the Athletics Federation of India's (AFI) qualification standard of 82.61 metres for the upcoming Commonwealth Games. He achieved this mark with his second attempt of 82.77 metres, officially cementing his spot for the event in Glasgow.
- **Performance Context in a Star-Studded Field:** The event was won by Sri Lankan athlete Rumesh Pathirage, who continued his dominant season with a throw of 88.68 metres. Neeraj's fourth-place finish serves as an encouraging season-opener as he continues to regain his rhythm and fitness for major championships later this year.

AWARD NEWS

Renowned Material Scientist Dr Krishnamurthy Balasubramanian Honoured With Padma Shri

- **Advancement in Defence & Space Technology:** He has played a pivotal role in strengthening India's strategic capabilities through research in advanced materials. His work includes the development of critical components for cryogenic engines and various defence-related projects.
- **Innovation in Biomedical & Material Engineering:** Beyond aerospace, he has contributed extensively to the development of prosthetic implants and medical devices. His research has also spurred metallurgical innovations that are vital for modern industrial and health applications.
- **Focus on Future Technologies & Sustainability:** He is currently spearheading research into electric mobility solutions and the production of rare earth magnets. These efforts align with the national goal of becoming a global hub for sustainable technology and advanced manufacturing.

ELIQUO HYDROK won the Circular Economy Award

- **Recognition of ELOVAC® Technology:** The award specifically honors the company's ELOVAC® technology, which effectively recovers value from sludge treatment processes. This system provides a practical and measurable way for operators to improve plant performance while significantly reducing waste.
- **Environmental & Operational Benefits:** The technology captures methane that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, it enables the recovery of struvite crystals, which can be repurposed as a bioavailable fertilizer, effectively closing the resource loop.
- **Commitment to Sustainability:** This national recognition underscores ELIQUO HYDROK's ambition to be a leader in the water and energy-from-waste sectors. By focusing on circular economy principles, the company continues to help its clients operate more resiliently and sustainably for the future.

Lt Vishal Kumar Awarded Sword of Honour & President's Gold Medal

- **Recognition of Excellence:** The "Sword of Honour" is awarded to the best all-round cadet, while the President's Gold Medal is presented to the individual who secures the first position in the overall order of merit. These accolades reflect his outstanding leadership, physical fitness, and professional competence throughout his training.
- **Inspirational Background:** Lieutenant Kumar is the son of a retired Sepoy from the 4 Bihar Regiment, making his success a poignant story of merit and dedication. He is the first person in his family to be commissioned as an officer, serving as a powerful inspiration for defense aspirants across the country.

- **Structured Military Journey:** His foundation was built at the Rashtriya Military School (RMS) in Chail, followed by rigorous training at the National Defence Academy (NDA) and the IMA. He is now set to join the 4 Garhwal Rifles, carrying forward the values of discipline and service instilled throughout his formative years.

BPCL's Kochi Refinery wins 'Leadership in Future-Ready Refining Award'

- **Focus on Digital and Future-Ready Operations:** BPCL's Kochi Refinery has been actively investing in "future-ready" capabilities by integrating Artificial Intelligence, advanced machine learning, and cloud-native digital solutions. These initiatives aim to transform the complex into an intelligent energy facility capable of navigating a complex and volatile global energy market.
- **Commitment to Sustainability & Energy Transition:** The refinery continues to gain recognition for its dedication to responsible growth and environmental stewardship. By prioritizing energy efficiency, emissions reduction, and large-scale investments in green hydrogen and compressed biogas (CBG) projects, the facility is aligning itself with India's long-term energy transition goals.
- **A Culture of Operational Excellence:** Kochi Refinery is currently celebrating its Diamond Jubilee year, marked by a series of awards for operational performance and manufacturing innovation. Its recent successes, including achieving record-breaking crude throughput and major safety milestones.

Footnotes: BPCL's Chairman & MD: Sanjay Khanna, HQ: Mumbai, Estd: 1976

APPOINTMENT & PERSON IN NEWS

Amit P Javalgi appointed as Inspector General in NIA

- **Role and Deputation:** Amit P. Javalgi has been appointed to the position of Inspector General at the NIA on a deputation basis. This move integrates his long-standing expertise into the central agency's framework to strengthen its national-level investigative operations.
- **Professional Background:** A 2006-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the West Bengal cadre, Javalgi has served in various capacities across the country. Before this appointment, he gained national recognition for his innovative "e-Malkhana" project, which digitized evidence management in police stations using barcode technology.
- **Track Record of Excellence:** His previous work in modernizing police administration and enhancing procedural transparency earned him the National e-Governance Award. His transition to the NIA is seen as a strategic deployment of an officer known for leveraging technology to solve complex administrative and legal challenges.

Footnotes: NIA's DG: Rakesh Aggarwal, HQ: New Delhi, Estd: 2009

Vijay Deverakonda Named Brand Ambassador Of TG20 League

- **Promoting Grassroots Talent:** As the face of the tournament, Vijay Deverakonda will play a key role in promoting the league's primary objective: identifying and nurturing budding cricketing talent from the various districts of Telangana. He has expressed his enthusiasm for providing a professional platform where young players can showcase their skills and gain national recognition.
- **Star-Studded Launch:** The event is set for a grand opening on June 21, featuring a live concert by National Award-winning music composer S. Thaman. The league has already garnered significant attention by attracting prominent domestic players, such as Mohammed Siraj and Tilak Varma, reinforcing the tournament's stature and commitment to quality cricket.
- **League Structure and Scale:** The inaugural season features eight franchises competing in 32 matches over 21 days at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad. The tournament follows a professional format similar to the Indian Premier League (IPL), ensuring a high-energy entertainment experience for fans with double-header matches and live broadcasts on JioStar.

Meenu Choudhary appointed as Inspector General in SSB

- **New Role as Inspector General:** Meenu Choudhary, a 2000-batch IPS officer of the AGMUT cadre, has been appointed as the Inspector General (IG) in the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). This high-level appointment was approved by the Competent Authority on June 18, 2026.
- **Deployment on Deputation:** She will serve in this role on a central deputation basis, transitioning from her previous responsibilities to join the SSB leadership team. The Ministry of Home Affairs has requested that she be relieved immediately to assume her new duties.
- **Strategic Administrative Move:** Her posting is part of a broader set of recent bureaucratic appointments announced by the Centre to fill existing vacancies across various central armed police forces. This move is expected to bolster the operational and administrative capabilities of the SSB, one of India's vital border-guarding organizations.

Former SAIL Chairman joins as CEO, Hindustan Zinc Ltd.

- **Appointment of CEO-Designate:** The Board of Directors of Hindustan Zinc officially approved the appointment of Amarendu Prakash as CEO-Designate, effective June 19, 2026. He steps into this role to spearhead the company's ambitious operational and strategic expansion goals.
- **Deep Industry Expertise:** Prakash brings over 30 years of experience in the metals and steel industry, including his recent tenure leading SAIL's transformation agenda. His background in operational excellence, digitalization, and capacity expansion is expected to be pivotal for Hindustan Zinc's mining and smelting operations.

- **Leadership Succession:** He succeeds Arun Misra, who recently transitioned to a broader leadership role as the Group CEO of Vedanta Limited. The move is viewed by market analysts as a strategic effort to further institutionalize operational efficiency and strengthen the company's market competitiveness.

Vivek Aggarwal appointed as Vice President of the FATF

- **First-Ever Representation for India:** This marks the first time in history that India has been elected to the Vice-Presidency of the FATF. The appointment is seen as a major diplomatic milestone, reflecting international trust in India's global leadership.
- **Term of Service & Responsibilities:** Mr. Aggarwal will serve a one-year term, officially assuming the role from July 2026 to June 2027. He will work closely with the FATF President to steer the organization's agenda and uphold its global mandate.
- **Professional Background & Expertise:** Currently serving as the Secretary to the Ministry of Culture, he is a 1994-batch IAS officer with extensive experience in financial regulation. He previously led India's delegation to the FATF and served as the Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND).

Footnotes: FATF's President: Elisa de Anda Madrazo, **HQ:** Paris, **Estd:** 1989

DFS appoints Hitesh Rameshchandra Joshi as CMD of GIC Re

- **Formal Elevation to Leadership:** The Department of Financial Services (DFS) has officially appointed Hitesh Rameshchandra Joshi as the Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD) of the General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re).
- **Tenure & Government Approval:** His appointment was approved by the Central Government via a Ministry of Finance order dated June 15, 2026. He will serve in this leadership role until his superannuation on September 30, 2028, or until further government orders are issued.
- **Professional Background & Expertise:** Mr. Joshi is an insurance industry veteran who previously served as an Executive Director at GIC Re, where he managed diverse portfolios including international operations, finance, and risk management. He holds postgraduate degrees in Accountancy and Financial Management and is a Fellow of the Insurance Institute of India.

Dr. Saibal Chattopadhyay appointed as Chairperson of NSC

- **Strategic Leadership Appointment:** The ACC officially appointed Dr. Saibal Chattopadhyay as the Chairperson of the National Statistical Commission (NSC) on June 18, 2026. He succeeds Rajeeva Laxman Karandikar and will lead the apex body responsible for overseeing India's core statistical activities.
- **Academic & Professional Pedigree:** Dr. Chattopadhyay is a distinguished academic and the former Director of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Calcutta. He holds

advanced degrees in Statistics, including a Ph.D. and MS from the University of Connecticut, providing him with the deep technical expertise required to lead the nation's statistical governance.

- **Commission's Mandate and Composition:** The NSC acts as the nodal body for evolving statistical priorities, setting quality standards, and ensuring coordination between various government agencies and states. Alongside Dr. Chattopadhyay, the government has also appointed three new part-time members—Prof. Shubhabrata Das, Satyendra Bahadur Singh, and Dr. Madhavan Mukund—to strengthen the commission's operational capacity.

Footnotes: NSC's Chairman: Saibal Chattopadhyay, HQ: New Delhi, Estd: 2006

OBITUARY NEWS

Thailand's Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol, UN Goodwill Ambassador passed away

- **Public Service and Legal Advocacy:** The Princess was widely respected for her dedication to justice reform and her work as an advocate for women's rights, particularly regarding the rehabilitation of incarcerated women. Her signature "Kamlangjai," or "Inspire," project focused on improving conditions for female prisoners and remains a cornerstone of her social legacy.
- **Diplomatic and International Contributions:** Beyond her domestic roles, she served as Thailand's ambassador to Austria and held significant positions with the United Nations, including as a goodwill ambassador for the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. Her academic background, which included a doctorate from Cornell University, allowed her to be a strong voice for the rule of law and human rights on the global stage.
- **National Mourning and Royal Protocols:** Following the official announcement of her passing on June 12, the Thai government declared a period of mourning, with flags flown at half-mast for 15 days across the country.

Renowned Mand Folk Singer Gavri Devi passed away

- **Pioneer of Mand Singing:** Gavri Devi was one of the most prominent exponents of the Mand style, a soulful and traditional folk music form originating from the deserts of Rajasthan. Her rendition of the iconic song "Kesariya Balam" became synonymous with the cultural identity and warm hospitality of the state.
- **Decades of Cultural Contribution:** Throughout her long career, she remained a dedicated practitioner of folk art, performing on prestigious platforms across India and abroad. Her work with All India Radio and Doordarshan helped bring the unique melodies of Rajasthan into the homes of millions, ensuring the survival of the art form for future generations.

- **An Irreparable Loss:** Political leaders, including Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma and former CM Ashok Gehlot, expressed deep sorrow over her passing, terming it an irreparable loss to the nation's cultural landscape.

Former Vice Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Vijay Oberoi passed away

- **Distinguished Military Career:** Lt Gen Oberoi served as the Vice Chief of Army Staff from 2000 to 2001, capping off a stellar career in the Indian Army. During his time in uniform, he played a critical role in various strategic and operational commands, consistently demonstrating tactical brilliance and firm leadership.
- **Wartime Bravery:** A veteran of the 1965 and 1971 wars, he was known for his immense courage under fire, most notably during the Battle of Basantar in the 1971 conflict. His commitment to duty was such that he continued to serve with distinction despite sustaining a severe injury that resulted in the loss of his leg during active operations.
- **Contributions to Military Thought:** Post-retirement, he became a prominent military intellectual and a founding director of the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS). He authored numerous books and articles, advocating for military reforms and sharing his profound insights on national security and modern warfare tactics with the next generation of officers.

Padma Shri Awardee & Renowned Buddhist Scholar Robert A.F. Thurman passed away

- **Pioneering Scholar & Translator:** As a professor at Columbia University, Thurman held the first endowed chair in Buddhist studies in the West. He was instrumental in making complex Tibetan philosophy accessible to global audiences through his prolific writing and translations.
- **Lifelong Friend of India & Dalai Lama:** Thurman made history as the first Westerner to be ordained as a Tibetan Buddhist monk by the Dalai Lama. He served as a bridge between cultures, earning India's prestigious Padma Shri award in 2020 for his significant contributions to literature and education.
- **Advocacy & Cultural Preservation:** As the co-founder and President of Tibet House US, he spent decades advocating for human rights and the preservation of Tibetan heritage. His passing has been mourned by world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who remembered him as a "lifelong friend of India."