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# WEEKLY — Current Affairs

## NATIONAL NEWS

### ISRO Achieves 2nd Successful Satellite Docking Under SpaDeX Mission

ISRO has successfully achieved its second satellite docking under the SpaDeX mission, marking a significant milestone in India's space exploration capabilities. This accomplishment follows the initial docking on January 16, 2025, and subsequent undocking on March 13, 2025. The docking was confirmed by Union Minister Jitendra Singh, who shared the news on social media, expressing satisfaction with the operation's success. ISRO Chairman V Narayanan also praised the smooth execution, highlighting its importance for future missions. The SpaDeX mission, launched on December 30, 2024, involved two satellites, SDX01 and SDX02, demonstrating advanced space docking technology.

#### Foot notes:

- **Successful Docking:** ISRO achieved its second successful satellite docking under the SpaDeX mission on April 21, 2025, marking a significant milestone in India's space research program. Union Minister Jitendra Singh congratulated the ISRO team on this achievement.
- **Mission Objective:** The SpaDeX mission aims to demonstrate India's technological capabilities in spacecraft rendezvous, docking, and undocking. This capability is crucial for future advancements like satellite servicing, space station operations, and interplanetary exploration.
- **Satellite Details:** The mission involves two small satellites, SDX-01 (Chaser) and SDX-02 (Target), launched on December 30, 2024, using the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)-C60 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.
- **Docking and Undocking:** The first successful docking occurred on January 16, 2025, and the satellites were later undocked on March 13, 2025. These complex maneuvers simulate critical operations for future space missions.
- **Technological Significance:** This achievement positions India as the fourth nation, after the United States, Russia, and China, to demonstrate in-space docking capabilities. This technology is essential for India's space ambitions, including lunar missions, sample returns, and building the Bharatiya Antariksh Station.

### Hindi made compulsory as 3rd language in Maharashtra Schools

The Maharashtra government has made Hindi compulsory as the third language in all schools across the state. This decision applies to schools following state, national, and international curriculums. The move aims to promote linguistic diversity and strengthen the national language among students. Hindi will now be taught from Class 1 to Class 10 alongside Marathi and English. While some have welcomed the decision, others have raised concerns about the added academic load. The government believes this step will enhance students' communication skills and national integration.

#### Foot notes:

- **Compulsory Hindi Classes** : Hindi will be compulsory only for students in Classes 1 to 5, aiming to provide a basic understanding of the language. This decision relaxes the previous rule, which made Hindi compulsory from Classes 5 to 7.
- **Marathi Remains Mandatory** : Marathi will continue to be a mandatory subject in schools, and Hindi will not replace it. The government emphasizes promoting Marathi through initiatives like granting classical language status and building Marathi Bhawan.
- **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** : The decision aligns with NEP 2020, which requires students to learn three languages, with two being Indian languages. This policy aims to promote linguistic diversity and cultural understanding.
- **Similarities between Hindi and Marathi** : Both languages share the Devanagari script, making it easier for students to learn Hindi. This similarity is highlighted as a benefit by Maharashtra's Education Minister, Deepak Kesarkar.
- **Government's Promotion of Marathi** : The Maharashtra government has taken significant steps to promote Marathi, including launching the Marathi International Council and a Marathi encyclopedia. These initiatives demonstrate the government's commitment to preserving the state's language and culture.

### Amaravati is the World's First Fully Renewable Powered City

Amaravati has been declared the world's first fully renewable powered city. The city now runs entirely on energy generated from renewable sources like solar, wind, and hydro power. This achievement marks a major milestone in global efforts toward sustainable urban development. Amaravati's model focuses on reducing carbon emissions while promoting green technologies. The city's success is expected to inspire other urban centers to adopt similar renewable strategies. It stands as a symbol of innovation and environmental responsibility on the world stage.

#### Foot notes:

- **Renewable Energy Goal**: Amaravati aims to generate 2,700 megawatts (MW) of clean energy through solar, wind, and hydropower sources, meeting its projected energy demand by 2050 and eliminating fossil fuel reliance.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure**: The city will feature green buildings, rooftop solar installations, and a district cooling system to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions. Mandatory rooftop solar systems will cover at least one-third of government housing projects.
- **Green Transportation**: Amaravati's public transportation network, including the Amaravati Metro and electric buses, will operate on renewable energy. An extensive electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure will support EV adoption.
- **Current Progress**: Officials have already installed 415 kW of rooftop solar arrays across community facilities like Anganwadis, public schools, e-health centers, and a multi-faith funeral home.

## Government Re-Appoints T. Rabi Sankar as RBI Deputy Governor

The Government of India has re-appointed T. Rabi Sankar as the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). His new tenure will be for three years, starting from May 3, 2025. Sankar, who first assumed the role in 2021, oversees critical areas such as fintech, digital payments, and currency management. His re-appointment reflects the government's confidence in his leadership during a time of rapid technological change in the financial sector. Under his guidance, RBI has made significant strides in initiatives like the Digital Rupee and strengthening cybersecurity frameworks.

### Foot notes:

- **Previous Tenure:** Sankar was initially appointed as Deputy Governor in May 2021 for a three-year term, which was then extended by another year in 2024.
- **Background:** Before becoming Deputy Governor, Sankar served as Executive Director at RBI, overseeing departments such as Information Technology, Payment and Settlement Systems, Fintech, and Risk Monitoring.
- **Areas of Expertise:** Sankar's expertise includes reserves portfolio management, monetary operations and development, exchange rate management, public debt management, payment systems, and IT infrastructure.
- **Experience:** He joined RBI in 1990 and has served in various roles, including as an IMF consultant on developing government bond markets and debt management from 2005 to 2011.
- **RBI Leadership:** Currently, the RBI's top leadership includes Governor Sanjay Malhotra and four Deputy Governors: T. Rabi Sankar, M. Rajeshwar Rao, Swaminathan Janakiraman, and Poonam Gupta.

## India's First Quantum Computing Village in Amaravati

India's first Quantum Computing Village has been established in Amaravati, marking a significant milestone in the country's technological landscape. This initiative aims to foster innovation and research in quantum computing, positioning India as a global leader in the emerging field. The village is equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure to support startups, researchers, and institutions focused on quantum technologies. It will serve as a hub for education and collaboration, offering opportunities for students and professionals to engage with cutting-edge quantum computing projects. With government backing and partnerships with international tech giants, the village is expected to drive advancements in sectors like cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and drug discovery. The establishment of the Quantum Computing Village is a testament to India's commitment to building a future-ready, tech-driven economy.

### Foot notes:

- **Location and Size:** The Quantum Computing Village will be set up on 50 acres of land in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh, and will serve as a global hub for quantum innovation.



- **Key Players:** The project involves collaboration between the Andhra Pradesh government, Real-Time Governance Society (RTGS), IBM, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), and Larsen & Toubro (L&T). IBM will provide advanced quantum systems, while L&T will handle the construction of an Iconic Building to house these systems.
- **Infrastructure:** The village will feature a dedicated data center, high-performance computing resources, and IBM's Quantum System Two. The infrastructure specifications will be jointly finalized by IBM and TCS.
- **Objective:** The Quantum Computing Village aims to advance research, development, and collaboration in quantum computing, positioning Amaravati as a global hub for quantum innovation and enabling India to become a leader in computational technologies.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### US Vice President JD Vance Receives Guard of Honour in Delhi

U.S. Vice President JD Vance received a ceremonial Guard of Honour during his visit to Delhi. The ceremony took place at the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan, marking a significant moment in India-U.S. diplomatic ties. Senior Indian officials warmly welcomed Vance, highlighting the importance of his visit in strengthening bilateral relations. Vance expressed his appreciation for the honour and emphasized the need for deeper cooperation between the two nations. His visit includes meetings with key Indian leaders to discuss trade, defense, and technology partnerships.

#### Foot notes:

- **Accompanied by Family:** He was accompanied by his wife, Second Lady Usha Vance, and their three children, Ewan, Vivek, and Mirabel, who were seen wearing traditional Indian attire.
- **Meeting with PM Modi:** Vance met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 21, 2025, at 6:30 PM at the PM's official residence, 7, Lok Kalyan Marg, to discuss strengthening economic and trade relations, enhancing defence cooperation, and exploring bilateral strategic issues.
- **Agenda:** The visit aims to deepen strategic cooperation across key areas like trade, defence, and economic partnership, with potential discussions on a bilateral trade agreement amid rising global tariff tensions.
- **Cultural Visits:** The Vance family is scheduled to explore various cultural sites, including the Swaminarayan Akshardham temple, a local handicrafts market in Delhi, Amer Fort in Jaipur, and the Taj Mahal in Agra.

## DEFENCE NEWS

### Indian Navy concluded Maiden AIKEYME Exercise in Tanzania

The Indian Navy successfully concluded its inaugural multilateral naval exercise, AIKEYME (Africa-India Key Maritime Engagement), in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, from April 13 to 18, 2025. The harbour phase featured tabletop and command-post exercises focusing on anti-piracy operations, information sharing, and training in seamanship and Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS) procedures. The subsequent sea phase included drills in search and rescue, small arms firing, and helicopter operations, fostering interoperability among the participating navies. Additionally, the exercise underscored India's commitment to its MAHASAGAR initiative, promoting mutual and holistic advancement for security and growth across regions.

**Foot notes:**

- **Participating Nations:** The exercise involved 10 countries, including India, Comoros, Djibouti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, and Tanzania.
- **Objective:** AIKEYME aims to develop collaborative solutions to regional maritime challenges and enhance interoperability among maritime forces of partner nations, aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's MAHASAGAR vision.
- **Indian Navy's Participation:** Three Indian naval ships participated in the exercise: INS Chennai, INS Kesari, and Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) Sagar.
- **Significance:** AIKEYME represents a significant evolution in international naval cooperation, fostering trust, building partnerships, and addressing common security concerns among Indian Ocean countries.

## SPORTS NEWS

### Himanshu Jakhar Wins 1st Ever Gold In U-18 Asian Athletics Championships

Himanshu Jakhar has made history by winning the first-ever gold medal for India at the U-18 Asian Athletics Championships (Para). Competing in the discus throw event, Jakhar delivered a stunning performance to secure the top podium spot. His remarkable throw not only earned him gold but also set a new championship record. This victory highlights Jakhar's immense potential and dedication to para-athletics. It marks a proud moment for India on the Asian stage, inspiring many young athletes across the country. Jakhar's achievement is a major boost for the future of Indian para-sports.

**Foot notes:**

- **Historic Win:** Himanshu's gold medal marks a significant achievement for Indian athletics, showcasing the country's growing talent in the sport.
- **India's Medal Tally:** The Indian contingent concluded the championships with a total of 11 medals, consisting of 1 gold, 5 silver, and 5 bronze medals.
- **National Record:** The Indian boys' medley relay team set a new youth national record with a time of 1:52.15, securing a silver medal.
- **Nitin Gupta:** Won silver in the boys' 5000m race walk event, narrowly missing gold by 0.01 seconds.

- **Devak Bhushan:** Claimed silver in the boys' high jump with a leap of 2.03m.

### Nishchay Throws 19.59m to Bag Silver in Shot Put

Nishchay delivered an impressive performance by throwing 19.59 meters to win the silver medal in shot put. Competing against some of the best athletes, he showcased great strength and technique. His throw marked a personal best and highlighted his growing consistency in the sport. Nishchay's achievement adds another proud moment for Indian athletics on the international stage. The silver medal is expected to boost his confidence for future competitions. His hard work and determination continue to inspire young athletes across the country.

#### Foot notes:

- **Double Medalist:** This silver medal was Nishchay's second medal in the championship. He also won a bronze medal in the discus throw event with a throw of 58.85 meters.
- **Consistency:** Despite a foul in his fourth attempt, Nishchay maintained his composure to secure the silver medal.
- **Young Talent:** As a 16-year-old shot putter, Nishchay's performance indicates a bright future in athletics.
- **Contribution to India's Medal Tally:** Nishchay's silver medal contributed to India's overall tally of 11 medals (1 gold, 5 silver, and 5 bronze) in the championship.

### Arjun Babuta wins silver at ISSF World Cup 2025

Arjun Babuta won the silver medal at the ISSF World Cup 2025, showcasing his exceptional shooting skills. Competing in the 10m Air Rifle event, he delivered a consistent and impressive performance. This marks one of his best international achievements to date, adding to his growing reputation in the shooting world. Babuta's success brings pride to India and boosts the country's standing in international shooting sports. His dedication and focus were widely praised by coaches and sports enthusiasts. The medal win is expected to inspire many young shooters across the nation.

#### Foot notes:

- **Narrow Margin:** Babuta narrowly missed the gold medal, losing by just 0.1 points to China's Olympic champion, Sheng Li Hao, who scored 252.4.
- **Competition Highlights:** Babuta was leading the competition until the final round of double elimination shots but faltered slightly, allowing Sheng to take the lead. A crucial 10.9 shot by Sheng in the penultimate round put pressure on Babuta.
- **Other Indian Performance:** Rudrankksh Patil, another Indian shooter, finished eighth in the event after being disqualified for violating ISSF rules. Arya Borse, on the other hand, impressed in the women's 10m air rifle final, finishing fifth with 188.1 points.
- **Medal Standings:** India's performance in the ISSF World Cup has put them third in the medal table with two gold, two silver, and one bronze medal.

### Simranpreet Kaur wins maiden senior international medal with silver in 25m pistol

Simranpreet Kaur Brar has clinched her maiden senior international medal, securing silver in the women's 25m pistol event at the ISSF World Cup in Lima, Peru. The 20-year-old shooter achieved a score of 33 hits over 10 rapid-fire series, narrowly missing the gold to China's Sun Yujie, who finished with 34 hits. Another Chinese athlete, Yao Qianxun, earned the bronze with 29 hits. This accomplishment adds to India's medal tally at the World Cup, which includes two golds and one bronze. Notably, Paris Olympics double medallist Manu Bhaker finished fourth in the same event. Simranpreet's performance underscores her growing prominence in international shooting sports.

#### Foot notes:

- **Maiden Senior International Medal:** Simranpreet Kaur Brar clinched her first senior international medal, a silver, in the women's 25m pistol event at the ISSF World Cup 2025 in Lima, Peru.
- **Competition Performance:** Simranpreet shot 33 hits in the 10-series of five rapid-fire shots final, finishing one hit behind China's Sun Yujie, who won the gold medal.
- **Indian Trio's Performance:** Simranpreet, along with Manu Bhaker and Esha Singh, ensured all three Indians made the finals. Manu finished fourth with 22 hits, while Esha finished sixth with 17 hits.
- **Qualifying Round:** In the qualifying round, Manu Bhaker scored 585 points to rank second, Simranpreet scored 580 points to rank fifth, and Esha Singh scored 575 points to rank eighth.
- **Medal Standings:** India's Simranpreet Kaur won silver, while China's Sun Yujie took gold, and Yao Qianxun secured bronze with 29 hits.

### Indian Boxers Shine at Asian U-15 & U-17 Championships with Three Dominant Wins on Day 2

On Day 2 of the Asian U-15 & U-17 Boxing Championships in Amman, Jordan, Indian boxers delivered a stellar performance, securing three dominant victories. In the U-15 boys' 43kg category, Hardik Dahiya showcased his prowess by defeating Kyrgyzstan's Kubanychbek Bolushov with a unanimous 5-0 decision. Rudraksh Singh followed suit in the 46kg division, overpowering Mongolia's Ibrakhim Maral, also with a 5-0 scoreline. These victories highlight the emerging talent in India's boxing contingent. The championships serve as a platform for young athletes to gain international experience and further their careers in the sport. With such promising performances, India's future in boxing looks bright on the Asian stage.

#### Foot notes:

- **Three Dominant Wins:** Indian boxers secured three victories on Day 2 of the championships, showcasing their dominance in the tournament.
- **Tikam Singh's Win:** Tikam Singh (52kg) won his bout against Ali Almesmari of UAE through a Referee Stopped Contest (RSC) in the third round, building on his gold medal win at the School Games Federation of India (SGFI) 2024.



- **Udham Singh's Victory:** Udham Singh (54kg) outboxed Mohammadparsa Motevalianastanehsari of Iran, winning 5-0 and demonstrating his skill and strategy in the ring.
- **Rahul Gariya's Success:** Rahul Gariya (57kg) overwhelmed Li Shou-Xun from Chinese Taipei, securing a win through RSC in the first round and showcasing his impressive boxing skills.
- **Strong Indian Performance:** The wins on Day 2 follow India's strong start to the tournament, with Hardik Dahiya (43kg) and Rudraksh Singh (46kg) securing commanding wins on Day 1

### India Finish ISSF World Cup Peru Leg In 3rd Place

India finished in third place at the ISSF World Cup Peru leg, showcasing a strong performance across multiple shooting events. Indian shooters secured several medals, including golds in rifle and pistol categories. Their consistent efforts throughout the competition helped them maintain a top-three position among participating nations. The young talents, along with experienced shooters, contributed significantly to the overall medal tally. This result reflects India's growing dominance and depth in international shooting sports.

#### Foot notes:

- **India's Ranking:** India secured third place overall in the tournament, behind China and the USA. China topped the medal tally with four gold, three silver, and six bronze medals, while the USA came in second.
- **Medal Count:** India won a total of 15 medals, including two gold, four silver, and one bronze. Saurabh Chaudhary won a gold medal in the mixed team event and a bronze medal in the men's air pistol.
- **Young Shooters Shine:** Young Indian shooters made a significant impact, with 18-year-old Suruchi winning three gold medals and one bronze. Arya Borse, another debutant, won two silver medals in the mixed-team rifle event.
- **Experienced Shooters Perform Well:** Seasoned shooters like Chain Singh and Simranpreet Kaur won their first individual World Cup medals. Saurabh Chaudhary's return to the international podium was a highlight, winning a mixed team gold with Suruchi.

### Oscar Piastri Wins 2025 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix

Oscar Piastri made history at the 2025 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix by claiming his first-ever Formula 1 victory. The McLaren driver executed a flawless race, managing tire degradation and strategic pit stops to fend off challenges from rivals. In a tense final laps showdown, Piastri held off a fast-charging Max Verstappen, whose late push fell just short. The win marks a significant milestone for both Piastri and McLaren, showcasing their progress and growth throughout the season. The race in Jeddah provided thrilling action, with several on-track battles and dramatic

moments, but Piastri's composure under pressure set him apart. His triumph was celebrated by his team and fans alike, propelling him into the spotlight as one of F1's rising stars.

**Foot notes:**

- **Winning Performance:** Oscar Piastri won the Grand Prix with a flawless drive, securing his third win of the 2025 season and taking the lead in the Drivers' Championship standings with 99 points.
- **Penalized Rival:** Max Verstappen, who started from pole position, received a 5-second penalty for cutting the corner and gaining an advantage over Piastri on the first lap, ultimately finishing second behind Piastri.
- **Podium Finishers:** Charles Leclerc from Ferrari secured his first podium finish of the season, coming in third, while Lando Norris from McLaren finished fourth after a strong recovery drive from 10th place.
- **Championship Standings:** Piastri's win propelled him to the top of the Drivers' Championship standings, 2 points ahead of Norris and 12 points ahead of Verstappen. McLaren also solidified their lead in the Constructors' Championship.
- **Race Drama:** The Grand Prix featured a Safety Car deployment after a collision between Yuki Tsunoda and Pierre Gasly on the first lap, and several drivers, including Leclerc and Norris, engaged in intense battles for position throughout the race.

**Indian Chess Grandmaster Koneru Humpy Won FIDE Women's Grand Prix**

Indian Chess Grandmaster Koneru Humpy clinched the title at the FIDE Women's Grand Prix, showcasing her exceptional skill and consistency. This victory further solidifies her position as one of the top female chess players in the world. Throughout the tournament, she demonstrated strategic brilliance and mental resilience against tough international competition. Humpy's win is a proud moment for Indian chess and inspires many aspiring players across the country. Her performance also earns her valuable points in the FIDE Women's World Championship cycle. With this achievement, Koneru Humpy continues to be a strong force in global women's chess.

**Foot notes:**

- **Final Round Wins:** Humpy beat Bulgarian player Nurgul Salimova in the 9th and final round, while Zhu Jiner won against Russia's Polina Shuvalova.
- **Points and Ranking:** Humpy and Zhu Jiner tied for the top spot, but Humpy took the lead due to superior tie-breaks, earning 117.5 points from the fifth leg tournament.
- **Other Notable Performances:** Divya Deshmukh, a wildcard entrant, finished third with 5.5 points, scoring four victories, three draws, and losing two games to Humpy and Zhu.
- **Humpy's Achievements:** This win adds to Humpy's impressive record, which includes becoming the youngest female Grandmaster at 15 years and 1 month old, and winning the Women's World Rapid Chess Championship in 2019 and 2024.

**Vithya, Yashas Won 400 M Hurdles Titles In National Federation Senior Athletics Competition 2025**

Vithya and Yashas emerged victorious in the 400m hurdles titles at the National Federation Senior Athletics Competition 2025. Both athletes delivered outstanding performances, showcasing speed, endurance, and flawless technique. Their wins highlight their dedication and rigorous training leading up to the event. Vithya dominated the women's category, while Yashas impressed with a commanding run in the men's event. These victories mark significant milestones in their athletic careers and bring pride to their respective states. Their achievements also boost India's hopes for strong representation in upcoming international competitions.

**Foot notes:**

- **Vithya Ramraj's Winning Performance:** Vithya Ramraj from Tamil Nadu won the women's 400m hurdles title with a meet record time of 56.04 seconds, surpassing Saritaben Gayakwad's previous record of 57.21 seconds set in 2019. This performance also qualified her for the Asian Athletics Championships.
- **Yashas P's Winning Time:** Yashas P from Karnataka claimed the men's 400m hurdles title with a personal best time of 49.32 seconds, narrowly missing the Asian Championships qualification mark of 49.19 seconds.
- **Competition Highlights:** Vithya Ramraj's winning time was notable, while Yashas P expressed that he missed the Asian qualification mark due to a lack of competition in the event.
- **Other Medalists:** In the women's event, Anu R from Kerala took silver with 58.26 seconds, and Ashwini R from Tamil Nadu secured bronze with 1:02.41 minutes. In the men's event, Subhas Das took silver with 50.11 seconds, and Ruchit Mori claimed bronze with 51.08 seconds.

**Manika and Sreeja Shine in ITTF World Cup 2025**

Manika Batra and Sreeja Akula delivered outstanding performances in the ITTF World Cup 2025. Representing India, both players showcased remarkable skill and determination on the international stage. Manika impressed the audience with her aggressive play and strategic shots. Sreeja also stood out with her quick reflexes and consistent rallies. Their combined success brought pride to Indian table tennis and inspired many young athletes. The duo's performance marks a significant milestone in India's growing presence in global table tennis events.

**Foot notes:**

- **Group Stage Challenges:** Both Indian paddlers faced tough opponents in the group stage. Manika was grouped with Bruna Takahashi of Brazil (World No. 23) and Maylis Giret, while Sreeja faced Bernadette Szocs of Romania (World No. 13).
- **Manika's Loss to Bruna:** Manika Batra lost to Bruna Takahashi 1-4 in their final group stage match, ending her campaign in the group stage. The scores were 11-13, 8-11, 4-11, 12-10.
- **Sreeja's Opponent:** Sreeja Akula lost to Bernadette Szocs of Romania in her final group stage match, although the exact score isn't specified. Both Indian paddlers failed to advance to the knockout stage.

- **Favorable Draw:** Despite the early exit, the draw for the 2025 ITTF World Cup was considered more favorable for both Manika and Sreeja compared to the previous year's daunting Chinese matchups.

### **Nitin Belurkar Leads with Perfect Score at Maharashtra International Open Grandmaster Chess Tournament**

Goa's International Master (IM) Nitin Belurkar has taken the sole lead at the 3rd Maharashtra International Open Grandmaster Chess Tournament in Pune. After five rounds, he maintained a perfect score of 5/5, notably defeating Grandmaster Sandipan Chanda in the fifth round. Belurkar's strategic play and consistent performance have positioned him at the top of the leaderboard. However, in the sixth round, his winning streak ended with a draw against Madhya Pradesh's Ayush Sharma, bringing his total to 5.5 points. Despite this, he remains the sole leader, with several competitors closely trailing.

#### **Foot notes:**

- **Sole Leader:** By the end of the sixth round, Belurkar emerged as the sole leader with 5.5 points, settling for a draw against Ayush Sharma of Madhya Pradesh after 32 moves.
- **Loss to Petrosyan:** However, Belurkar's winning streak came to an end in the seventh round when he lost to Armenian player Manuel Petrosyan, marking a significant moment in the tournament.
- **Current Standings:** After Belurkar's loss, several players, including Levan Pantsulaia and J Deepan Chakkravarthy, maintained joint leads, reshuffling the rankings and highlighting fierce competition.
- **Tournament Progress:** The tournament has seen intense competition, with notable wins and draws shuffling the leaderboard, and other players like Farrukh Amonatov, Mihail Nikitenko, and Boris Savchenko also making strong moves.

## **AWARD NEWS**

### **Dr Achyuta Samanta conferred Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma Award 2025**

Dr. Achyuta Samanta has been conferred the prestigious Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma Award for 2025. The award recognizes his outstanding contributions to education, social service, and tribal welfare. Dr. Samanta, the founder of KIIT and KISS, has dedicated his life to empowering underprivileged communities through education. Receiving this honor highlights his relentless efforts to bring about positive social change. The award ceremony celebrated his vision of inclusive growth and nation-building. Dr. Samanta's achievements continue to inspire millions across India and beyond.

#### **Foot notes:**

- **Renowned Educationist:** Prof. Achyuta Samanta, a renowned educationist, social reformer, and philanthropist, has been selected for the 7th Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma Award, 2025, in recognition of his outstanding contributions.

- **Founder of KIIT and KISS:** Samanta is the founder of KIIT (Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology) and KISS (Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences), institutions that have made significant impacts in education and social welfare.
- **Award Announcement:** The announcement was made by the Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma Trust, highlighting Samanta's achievements and dedication to societal development.
- **Award Ceremony:** The award ceremony is scheduled to take place at the Kokrajhar Town Brahma Temple premises in Assam, showcasing the region's cultural heritage.

### **M Waqar Bhatti conferred with Health Journalism Award at the IMRC**

M Waqar Bhatti was recently honored with the prestigious Health Journalism Award at the IMRC (International Media Relations Conference). This recognition highlights his exceptional contributions to health reporting, where he has consistently focused on issues related to public health and well-being. Bhatti's work has brought critical attention to health policies, healthcare access, and the challenges faced by communities in managing health crises. His ability to communicate complex health topics in an accessible and impactful manner has earned him admiration within the journalism community.

#### **Foot notes:**

- **Award Details:** M Waqar Bhatti, a senior health journalist from The News International and Geo News, received the award for his outstanding work in health journalism, specifically highlighting his efforts in promoting accurate and science-based health reporting.
- **Event:** The award was presented at an event where Dr. Raheela Ahmed was also recognized for her services, indicating a broader effort to acknowledge contributions to health sector advancements.
- **Journalistic Focus:** Bhatti's work primarily focuses on healthcare and government announcements in Pakistan, covering critical health issues like COVID-19, poliovirus, and medical facilities.
- **Reporting Style:** His reporting often incorporates government announcements and data-driven insights, showcasing his commitment to evidence-based journalism in the health sector.

### **Simone Biles wins Laureus Sportswoman of the year award 2025**

Simone Biles has been honored with the 2025 Laureus World Sportswoman of the Year award, marking her fourth win in this category. This achievement ties her with tennis legend Serena Williams for the most Laureus titles. Biles' recognition comes after a remarkable comeback at the 2024 Paris Olympics, where she secured three gold medals and one silver, including victories in the team, all-around, and vault competitions. Her performance featured the Yurchenko double pike, a move she pioneered in competition. With a total of 11 Olympic



medals and 30 World Championship medals, Biles remains the most decorated gymnast in history.

**Foot notes:**

- **Fourth Time Winner:** Simone Biles has won the Laureus World Sportswoman of the Year award for the fourth time, following her record-breaking performance at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.
- **Record-Breaking Performance:** Biles won four medals at the Paris 2024 Olympics, including three gold, becoming the most decorated artistic gymnast of all time with a total of 11 Olympic medals and 30 world championship medals.
- **Previous Wins:** Biles previously won the award in 2017, 2019, and 2020, solidifying her position as one of the greatest gymnasts in history.
- **Nominees:** Other notable nominees for the award included Aitana Bonmati, Aryna Sabalenka, Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, Sifan Hassan, and Faith Kipyegon.

### **Jemimah Rodrigues honored with prestigious Shiv Chhatrapati State Sports award**

Indian cricketer Jemimah Rodrigues has been conferred with the prestigious Shiv Chhatrapati State Sports Award by the Government of Maharashtra. This esteemed recognition is presented annually to individuals from Maharashtra who have demonstrated exceptional achievements in sports. The award ceremony took place at the Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex in Balewadi, Pune, and was graced by dignitaries including Governor Ramesh Bais and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. The Shiv Chhatrapati Award comprises a cash prize of 3 lakh, a memento featuring a headgear of Shiv Chhatrapati, and a lifetime free travel pass on Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) buses.

**Foot notes:**

- **Prestigious Award:** The Shiv Chhatrapati State Sports Award is Maharashtra's highest sporting honor, recognizing exceptional achievements in sports.
- **Award Details:** Jemimah Rodrigues received a cash prize of 3 lakh and a memento at the ceremony held at the Balewadi Sports Complex in Pune.
- **Special Connection:** The award ceremony venue held sentimental value for Rodrigues, as it's where her sporting journey began when she was selected for the U-19 state hockey team at age 9.
- **Cricket Achievements:** Rodrigues has established herself as a key figure in Indian women's cricket, with notable performances in various leagues, including the Women's Premier League and The Hundred.
- **Career Highlights:** She has played a vital role in India's gold medal win at the 2022 Asian Games and silver medal win at the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

### **PoshanTracker Wins Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Innovation**

The Poshan Tracker initiative, developed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, has been honored with the National Award for e-Governance 2024 (Gold) for its innovative

approach to child nutrition monitoring. This ICT-based system is a key component of Mission Poshan 2.0, aiming to enhance the health and well-being of children aged 0-6 years. By utilizing Growth Measuring Devices (GMD) at Anganwadi Centers, the tracker enables real-time monitoring of children's growth parameters, such as height and weight, against WHO growth standards.

**Foot notes:**

- **Award Recognition:** The Poshan Tracker application received the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration 2024 under the Innovation category (Centre) on the 17th Civil Services Day.
- **Innovation Impact:** The award recognizes the remarkable leap in technology to improve the lives of millions of women and children across India through the Poshan Tracker app.
- **App Functionality:** The Poshan Tracker is a mobile-based application designed for Anganwadi workers, enabling real-time data collection and monitoring to ensure essential services reach beneficiaries efficiently.
- **Mission Poshan 2.0:** The Poshan Tracker initiative is part of Mission Poshan 2.0, focusing on ensuring the health and well-being of children aged 0-6 years through real-time monitoring of nutritional growth.
- **Coverage and Impact:** The program has achieved significant milestones, covering 8.9 crore children, with 8.57 crore measured in one month, and providing nutritional services to 101 million beneficiaries.

### **Nadal, Duplantis, Biles Win at Laureus World Sports Awards 2025**

Rafael Nadal, Armand Duplantis, and Simone Biles were among the big winners at the Laureus World Sports Awards 2025. Nadal was honored for his remarkable comeback and achievements in tennis over the past year. Duplantis received recognition for his record-breaking performances in pole vaulting, continuing his dominance in the sport. Biles was celebrated for her inspiring return to gymnastics and her continued excellence on the world stage. The ceremony highlighted the athletes' extraordinary dedication, resilience, and impact beyond their respective sports.

**Foot notes:**

- **Laureus World Sportsman of the Year:** Mondo Duplantis, a 25-year-old Swedish-American pole vaulter, won this award for the first time after breaking his own world record nine times and winning Olympic gold in Paris. He was hailed as the greatest pole vaulter of all time.
- **Laureus World Sportswoman of the Year:** Simone Biles won her fourth Female Athlete of the Year trophy, tying Serena Williams' record. Biles made a remarkable comeback at the Paris Olympics, winning three gold medals and one silver.
- **Sporting Icon Award:** Rafael Nadal received this award, emphasizing the importance of enjoying and appreciating every moment in sports. He retired from professional tennis last year.

- **Future plans:** Simone Biles mentioned she'll be at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, but hasn't decided whether she'll compete or spectate. Mondo Duplantis aims to break more world records before the 2028 Games.

### Priyanka Chopra Jonas to be honoured at Gold House Gala 2025

Priyanka Chopra Jonas will be honoured at the prestigious Gold House Gala 2025 for her contributions to global entertainment and philanthropy. The event celebrates Asian Pacific leaders who have made significant cultural and social impacts worldwide. Priyanka, known for her achievements in both Bollywood and Hollywood, has also been a strong advocate for women's rights and education. Her recognition at the Gala highlights her influence as a trailblazer for diversity and representation. Several other prominent figures from the arts, business, and activism will also be celebrated at the ceremony. Priyanka expressed her gratitude, calling it a "deeply meaningful honour" that motivates her to continue breaking barriers.

#### Foot notes:

- **Event Details:** The Gold House Gala 2025 will be held on May 10, 2025, at the Music Center in downtown Los Angeles, bringing together over 600 influential guests.
- **A100 List:** The event will spotlight the 2025 A100 List, a curated selection of the 100 most impactful Asian Pacific leaders in culture, which will be revealed on May 1, 2025.
- **Other Honorees:** Other notable honorees include Ang Lee, Megan Thee Stallion, Jon M. Chu, Laufey, Pokémon CEO Tsunekazu Ishihara, and Olympians Suni Lee, Chuck Aoki, and Lee Kiefer.
- **Significance:** The Gold House Gala is considered a premier celebration of Asian Pacific and multicultural excellence, providing a platform to launch the next wave of cultural trends.

### Maharashtra Governor Presents Yashraj Bharti Samman Awards 2025

The Maharashtra Governor presented the Yashraj Bharti Samman Awards 2025 at a grand ceremony in Mumbai. The awards honoured outstanding individuals across fields like arts, literature, sports, and social service. This year's recipients were praised for their exceptional contributions and dedication to their crafts. In his address, the Governor emphasized the importance of recognizing and encouraging talent that uplifts society. The event saw the presence of several dignitaries, celebrities, and cultural icons who applauded the winners. The Yashraj Bharti Samman continues to be one of Maharashtra's most prestigious platforms celebrating excellence and achievement.

#### Foot notes:

- **Award Ceremony:** The 3rd edition of the Yashraj Bharti Samman awards was held in Mumbai, where Maharashtra Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan honored three organizations for their outstanding contributions to healthcare, education, and governance.

- **Event Insights:** The ceremony was attended by dignitaries like Dilip Walse Patil, former Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Speaker, and Amitabh Kant, India's G-20 Sherpa.
- **Objective:** The Yashraj Bharti Samman aims to honor grassroots-level organizations contributing meaningfully to healthcare, sustainable development, and good governance.
- **Pratham Education Foundation:** Honored for promoting sustainable development through education, known for innovative programs like ASER to monitor and improve learning outcomes.

### MapmyIndia Co-Founder Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

Rakesh Verma, Co-Founder and Chairman of MapmyIndia, has been honored with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the 16th Geospatial World Forum held in Madrid, Spain. This recognition celebrates his pioneering role in establishing India's digital mapping industry and advancing indigenous geospatial capabilities. Under his leadership, MapmyIndia transformed from a startup into a national geospatial powerhouse, influencing policy reforms and technological innovation in the sector. In his acceptance speech, Verma credited his wife and co-founder, Rashmi Verma, and their son, Rohan Verma, for their collaborative efforts in building the company. He dedicated the award to all contributors to MapmyIndia's journey and to the spirit of Indian innovation.

#### Foot notes:

- **Award Details:** Rakesh Verma, Co-Founder and Chairman & Managing Director of MapmyIndia, was honored with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the 16th Geospatial World Forum in Madrid, Spain.
- **Contribution:** Verma's pioneering efforts laid the foundation of India's digital mapping industry, and his leadership and advocacy have driven critical policy reforms and technological innovation.
- **Recognition:** The award citation highlights Verma's instrumental role in establishing indigenous digital mapping capabilities in India and taking Geo-tech to the global stage.
- **Shared Credit:** Verma dedicated the award to his co-founder wife Rashmi Verma and their son Rohan Verma, Director at MapmyIndia, acknowledging their contributions to the company's success.

### Kumar Mangalam Birla conferred with Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award 2024

Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman of the Aditya Birla Group and Padma Bhushan awardee, was honored with the prestigious Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award on April 24, 2025, in Mumbai. The award was presented by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat, recognizing Birla's significant contributions to India's growth and development. Instituted in 2022 in memory of the legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, the award is organized by the Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Smruti Pratishthan, a charitable trust managed by the Mangeshkar family. In his acceptance speech, Birla expressed pride in receiving an honor

associated with Lata Ji, emphasizing its special significance coming from the Mangeshkar family.

**Foot notes:**

- **Award Details:** Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman of the Aditya Birla Group, received the prestigious Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award on April 24, 2024, in Mumbai.
- **Recognition:** The award recognizes Birla's visionary leadership and pivotal role in shaping India's growth story, as a Padma Bhushan awardee.
- **Presenter:** RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat presented the award to Birla at the Deenanath Mangeshkar Auditorium in Vile Parle East, Mumbai.
- **Other Awardees:** The ceremony also honored other notable individuals, including Shraddha Kapoor, Sunil Shetty, and Sachin Pilgaonkar, for their contributions to Indian cinema and music.

### **MyJCB App Wins 'iF DESIGN AWARD 2025**

The MyJCB App, developed by JCB Co., Ltd., has been honored with the prestigious iF DESIGN AWARD 2025 in the Communication UX category of the User Experience (UX) division. This recognition highlights the app's excellence in enhancing user experience through its form, function, and innovative ideas. The app's service design and UI/UX were developed in collaboration with FOURDIGIT Inc., focusing on creating a seamless and intuitive user interface. The redesign strategy was informed by comprehensive user research, including surveys and interviews, to better understand credit card usage patterns and customer needs. Launched in 2016 and significantly renewed in November 2023, the MyJCB App now offers features like transaction history viewing, point balance checking, and security alert notifications, all aimed at providing a more convenient and secure user experience.

**Foot notes:**

- **Award Category:** The MyJCB App won the iF DESIGN AWARD 2025 in the Communication UX category under the User Experience (UX) division, recognized for its excellence in enhancing user experience.
- **Global Competition:** The competition received 10,651 entries from 66 countries, evaluated by 131 design experts, making it one of the world's most prestigious design awards.
- **Collaboration:** JCB collaborated with FOURDIGIT since 2021 to enhance the MyJCB App, focusing on service design, UI/UX design, and continuous improvement processes.
- **User-Centric Approach:** The team developed a strategy to define the app's role in service experience based on user behavior and challenges, conducting surveys and interviews with 50 participants to analyze credit card usage patterns and customer needs.
- **App Development:** Following the renewal, the team improved the app through store comments, user interviews, and usage data analysis, aiming to create an app that serves all customers and delivers safer card services while listening to customer feedback.



## APPOINTMENT & PERSON IN NEWS

### Samunnati appoints Venkatesh Raja as Group CHRO

Samunnati has appointed Venkatesh Raja as the new Group Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO). In his new role, Raja will lead the company's HR strategy, focusing on talent development and organizational growth. He brings with him extensive experience in human resource management across various industries. Samunnati believes his leadership will play a crucial role in strengthening their people-centric initiatives. This appointment comes at a time when the company is expanding its presence in the agri-business sector. Raja's expertise is expected to drive innovation and build a strong, future-ready workforce.

#### Foot notes:

- **Leadership Experience:** Raja brings over three decades of transformative leadership experience, recognized as an HR leader, brand strategist, and organizational expert.
- **People-First Approach:** This appointment is part of Samunnati's initiative to strengthen its people-first approach leadership team, driving future growth and innovation.
- **Background:** Venkatesh Raja has previously worked with prominent companies like Shoppers Stop and Reliance, showcasing his expertise in HR and leadership.
- **Samunnati's Growth:** Samunnati has been strategically enhancing its leadership team to promote growth and innovation, reflecting its commitment to becoming a leading agri enterprise.

### Abhishek Singh appointed as Director General, National Informatics Centre

Abhishek Singh has been appointed as the new Director General of the National Informatics Centre (NIC). He brings rich experience in technology and governance to his new role. As Director General, Singh will focus on strengthening digital infrastructure and promoting e-governance initiatives across the country. His leadership is expected to drive innovation and enhance the delivery of government services through technology. The appointment comes at a crucial time when India is rapidly expanding its digital ecosystem. Singh's vision is set to play a key role in advancing the country's digital transformation journey.

#### Foot notes:

- **Additional Charge:** Singh will continue to hold additional charge as Additional Secretary in MeitY, showcasing the government's trust in his leadership abilities.
- **Experience:** With over 29 years of experience in governance, policy formulation, and technology-driven public administration, Singh is well-suited for this role. He previously served as CEO of MyGov India and the National e-Governance Division (NeGD).
- **Academic Background:** Singh holds a Master's in Public Administration from Harvard Kennedy School of Government, obtained as a Mason Fellow in 2013, highlighting his expertise in public policy and governance.

- **Key Initiatives:** As CEO of MyGov India and NeGD, Singh played a pivotal role in implementing e-governance projects across the country, demonstrating his capability to drive technological innovation.

### **Ananya Panday becomes Chanel's first-ever brand ambassador from India**

Abhishek Singh has been appointed as the new Director General of the National Informatics Centre (NIC). He brings rich experience in technology and governance to his new role. As Director General, Singh will focus on strengthening digital infrastructure and promoting e-governance initiatives across the country. His leadership is expected to drive innovation and enhance the delivery of government services through technology. The appointment comes at a crucial time when India is rapidly expanding its digital ecosystem. Singh's vision is set to play a key role in advancing the country's digital transformation journey.

#### **Foot notes:**

- **Dream Come True:** Panday took to Instagram to share her excitement, calling it a "dream come true". She posted a carousel of photos featuring Chanel's signature products, including handbags, a classic belt, and an elegant shot of their ring collection.
- **Growing Influence:** Panday's association with Chanel reinforces her growing influence as both an actor and a fashion personality. Known for her fashion-forward appearances and red carpet looks, she has frequently made headlines for her collaborations with top designers.
- **Chanel's Expansion:** This partnership aligns with Chanel's continued expansion and deeper engagement with Indian fashion consumers. Although Chanel has long held a presence in the Indian luxury market, this is the first time the brand has chosen an Indian face to represent it globally.

### **Optoma appoints Kartik Deka as National Sales Manager**

Optoma has appointed Kartik Deka as the new National Sales Manager for India. In his new role, Deka will be responsible for driving sales growth and expanding the company's market presence. He brings extensive experience in sales and marketing from the consumer electronics industry. Optoma believes his leadership will play a crucial role in strengthening their brand and customer outreach. His appointment comes at a time when the company is focusing on innovative solutions in projection and display technology. Deka's expertise is expected to contribute significantly to Optoma's future success in India.

#### **Foot notes:**

- **Leadership Experience:** Deka brings over a decade of experience in the AV industry, having held leadership roles at prominent companies like Cubix Network, Sony, and LG, where he drove success in sales and business development.
- **Strengthening Optoma's Presence:** With his expertise, Deka is expected to strengthen Optoma's position in the Indian pro-AV and display solution markets, adding value to the organization and supporting its growth.

- **Role and Responsibilities:** As National Sales Manager, Deka will be responsible for driving sales growth and developing business strategies for Optoma's display and pro-AV solutions in India.
- **Expectations:** Optoma's Managing Director, Vijay Sharma, expressed confidence in Deka's ability to contribute to the organization's success and win stakeholders' trust.

### Justice Dinesh Maheshwari Appointed as Chairperson of the 23rd Law Commission of India

Justice Dinesh Maheshwari has been appointed as the Chairperson of the 23rd Law Commission of India. A former judge of the Supreme Court, he brings extensive judicial experience to this important role. The Law Commission is responsible for recommending reforms to strengthen and modernize India's legal framework. Justice Maheshwari's leadership is expected to accelerate the commission's work on critical legal issues. His appointment comes at a time when several important reforms are being discussed across the legal and policy spectrum. The 23rd Law Commission is anticipated to play a key role in shaping future legislative developments in the country.

#### Foot notes:

- **Commission's Term:** The 23rd Law Commission of India was constituted on September 1, 2024, and will function until August 31, 2027. Its primary objective is to review existing laws, recommend reforms, and advise the government on legal matters.
- **Key Focus Area:** One of the major agendas of the 23rd Law Commission is to examine the feasibility of implementing a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) across the country. The UCC aims to replace personal laws based on religion or community with a common set of civil laws applicable to all citizens.
- **Background:** The appointment of Justice Maheshwari comes after the 22nd Law Commission initiated nationwide consultations on the UCC in 2023, collecting public input from over 70 consultations. The 21st Law Commission had previously opined that a UCC was "neither necessary nor desirable at this stage" in its 2018 report.

### Newworld Developers onboards Manushi Chhillar as brand ambassador

Newworld Developers has onboarded Manushi Chhillar as their new brand ambassador. The collaboration aims to strengthen the company's image as a modern and aspirational real estate brand. Manushi, known for her elegance and global appeal, perfectly aligns with Newworld's vision of innovation and excellence. She will feature in various promotional campaigns and branding initiatives for the company. The partnership is expected to enhance customer engagement and boost brand visibility in a competitive market. Newworld Developers believes that Manushi's association will inspire trust and connect with a wider audience.

#### Foot notes:

- **Brand Ambassador Role:** Manushi Chhillar expressed excitement to be part of Newworld Developers' journey, creating meaningful spaces for people to grow and thrive, reflecting the brand's vision of ambition, trust, and innovation.
- **New Office Launch:** The partnership was announced alongside the opening of Newworld Developers' new corporate office in Sector 66, M3M International Financial Centre, Golf Course Ext Road, Gurugram.
- **Project Launches:** Newworld Developers plans to launch projects in prominent markets like Goa, Ayodhya, and Haryana, focusing on high-value, lifestyle-oriented developments that redefine real estate standards.
- **Founder's Vision:** Sunil Sisodiya, Founder and Chairman of Newworld Developers, believes Manushi Chhillar's global presence and relatability will resonate with the company's vision of creating world-class spaces for aspirational Indians.

### Ajay Bhushan Prasad Pandey Appointed Vice-President at AIIB

Ajay Bhushan Prasad Pandey has been appointed as the Vice-President of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). A seasoned bureaucrat, he previously served as India's Finance Secretary and CEO of UIDAI. His vast experience in governance and finance is expected to strengthen AIIB's leadership team. Pandey's appointment highlights India's growing influence in major international financial institutions. He will play a key role in shaping AIIB's policies and global infrastructure investments. The move is seen as a significant achievement for both Pandey and India on the world stage.

#### Foot notes:

- **Background and Expertise:** Pandey is a former Finance Secretary of India and CEO of Aadhaar, with over three decades of experience in leading transformational change. He played a pivotal role in shaping India's digital and financial infrastructure.
- **Key Initiatives:** Pandey was instrumental in initiatives such as Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN), and National Infrastructure Pipeline. He successfully defended Aadhaar's legal and privacy frameworks before the Supreme Court of India.
- **AIIB Overview:** The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is a multilateral development bank dedicated to financing infrastructure for tomorrow, with sustainability at its core. It has 110 approved members worldwide and is capitalized at \$100 billion.
- **India's Stake in AIIB:** India is the second-largest shareholder in AIIB, with 7.58% voting shares, after China, which holds 26.54%. This appointment highlights India's growing influence in global financial institutions.

### Dr. Mangi Lal Jat Appointed as Secretary of DARE and DG of ICAR

Dr. Mangi Lal Jat, a distinguished agronomist and Fellow of the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS), has been appointed as the Secretary of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and Director General (DG) of the Indian Council

of Agricultural Research (ICAR). With over two decades of experience in systems agronomy, conservation agriculture, and climate-smart farming, Dr. Jat has contributed significantly to sustainable agricultural practices, particularly in smallholder systems across Asia and Africa. He has held leadership roles at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), and has been instrumental in shaping agricultural research policies. Dr. Jat's appointment is expected to steer ICAR towards innovative research and development, focusing on enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainability.

**Foot notes:**

- **Expertise:** Dr. Jat brings over 25 years of experience in agronomy, climate-resilient farming, and conservation agriculture, with a focus on sustainable agricultural practices and research innovation.
- **Previous Roles:** Before his appointment, Dr. Jat served as Deputy Director General (Research) and Director of the Global Research Program at ICRISAT, Hyderabad, and worked with CIMMYT, IRRI, and ICAR.
- **Qualifications:** Dr. Jat holds a Ph.D. in Agronomy from ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, and is a Fellow of the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS).
- **Vision:** His appointment is expected to catalyze a new era of innovation, sustainability, and farmer-first research within ICAR, aligning with India's commitment to sustainable development and nutritional security.

**Ashish Goyal appointed as Director General, Election Commission of India**

Ashish Goyal has been appointed as the Director General of the Election Commission of India. This significant appointment follows the resignation of Arun Goel, who stepped down in March 2024, leaving the Commission with only one member ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The high-powered selection committee, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, recommended Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu as new Election Commissioners on March 14, 2024, to fill the vacancies. The committee also appointed Ashish Goyal as Director General to oversee the Commission's operations. Ashish Goyal, a seasoned officer, brings extensive experience to the role, ensuring the Commission's readiness for upcoming electoral processes.

**Foot notes:**

- **Appointment Term:** His appointment is for five years, until April 30, 2028, or until further orders.
- **Rank:** The appointment has been made at the Joint Secretary level by upgrading a vacant post of Director in the Commission.
- **Background:** Ashish Goyal is a 1996-batch Indian Information Service (IIS) officer who previously served as Additional DG, National Museum under the Ministry of Culture.



- **Current Leadership:** The Election Commission of India is currently headed by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, who was appointed on February 19, 2025.

### Anchor Oral Care onboards Aimee Baruah as Brand Ambassador

Anchor Oral Care has appointed Assamese actor Aimee Baruah as its brand ambassador to strengthen its presence in the North East region. This strategic move aims to enhance the brand's visibility and distribution network in Assam and the surrounding areas. As part of this initiative, Anchor Oral Care has launched two new campaigns: "Laal. Kamaal. Bemisaal." and "Naye Zamane Ki Nayi Suraksha." The second campaign, featuring Aimee Baruah, emphasizes the importance of complete oral care for families, positioning Anchor Oral Care as a scientifically advanced and ethically conscious brand.

#### Foot notes:

- **Regional Focus:** The partnership aims to deepen engagement with local consumers, expand distribution networks, and strengthen Anchor Oral Care's position in the oral care category in North East India.
- **Campaigns:** Two new campaigns, "Laal. Kamaal. Bemisaal." and "Naye Zamane Ki Nayi Suraksha," were launched to create a fresh narrative that resonates with North East consumers, highlighting Anchor Oral Care's commitment to holistic oral health.
- **Product Promotion:** Aimee Baruah will promote Anchor Red Toothpaste, a herbal formulation with 10 Ayurvedic benefits, and CalFlo formulation for whiter, stronger, and healthier teeth, emphasizing the brand's focus on natural and effective oral care solutions.
- **Aimee's Endorsement:** Aimee Baruah expressed her excitement to collaborate with Anchor Oral Care, citing the brand's dedication to providing effective solutions for families and its commitment to innovation and trust.

### Sun King onboards Rajkummar Rao as brand ambassador

Sun King, a leading global solar energy company, has onboarded Rajkummar Rao as its brand ambassador. The collaboration aims to promote clean and affordable solar energy solutions across India. Known for his versatility and social commitment, Rajkummar perfectly aligns with Sun King's mission of sustainability and empowerment. As part of the partnership, he will feature in campaigns highlighting the benefits of solar products for rural and urban households. Sun King believes that Rajkummar's influence will help raise awareness about renewable energy and its positive impact on communities. Rajkummar expressed pride in joining the initiative, calling it a step toward a greener and brighter future.

#### Foot notes:

- **Shared Values:** Rao's reputation for authenticity, empathy, and connection with everyday people aligns with Sun King's mission to deliver practical solutions that make a difference in people's lives.

- **Product Endorsement:** As ambassador, Rajkummar Rao will endorse Sun King's range of products, including solar-powered lighting systems, rooftop solar solutions, and energy-efficient appliances like fans and LED bulbs.
- **Nationwide Campaigns:** The partnership coincides with Sun King's launch of customer-focused campaigns, starting at the South Asia Forum for Distributed Energy in New Delhi, to showcase its diverse product range and promote sustainable energy.
- **Meet-and-Greet Event:** A special highlight of the campaign will be a meet-and-greet event with Rajkummar Rao, where Sun King's top-performing distributors and partners will get to meet the actor in person.

### Boeing appoints Stacie Sire as VP and MD of BIETC

Boeing has appointed Stacie Sire as the new Vice President and Managing Director of Boeing India Engineering & Technology Center (BIETC). In her new role, Stacie will lead the company's largest engineering center outside the United States. She brings extensive experience in aerospace engineering and leadership to the position. Boeing expects her appointment to strengthen its commitment to innovation and talent development in India. Stacie expressed excitement about working with the talented teams at BIETC and contributing to Boeing's global growth. Her leadership is seen as a key move in expanding Boeing's capabilities and partnerships in the region.

#### Foot notes:

- **Role and Responsibilities:** Sire will oversee strategy and operations for BIETC, advancing its goals and priorities in India, enhancing team capabilities, and supporting business growth. She will also serve as Chief Engineer for Boeing India.
- **Background and Experience:** Sire has 27 years of experience at Boeing, having started as a structural engineer and held various leadership roles, including director and chief engineer positions for several aircraft programs, such as the 787 Dreamliner, 767, and 777.
- **Previous Role and New Role of Predecessor:** Ahmed Elsherbini, who led BIETC from April 2021 to January 2025, has taken over as Senior Vice President, General Manager, and Head of Boeing Global Engineering.
- **Boeing's Growth in India:** Boeing aims to deliver value to Indian customers with advanced technologies, developing local suppliers, and shaping academic and research collaborations with Indian institutions. The company has strengthened its supply chain with over 300 local companies in India.

### Livguard appoints Sameer Nagpal as MD & CEO

Livguard has appointed Sameer Nagpal as its new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer. He brings with him vast experience in leadership roles across various industries, including manufacturing and consumer products. In his new role, Sameer will focus on driving Livguard's growth, innovation, and market expansion strategies. The company believes his

vision and expertise will help strengthen its position in the energy solutions sector. Sameer expressed his enthusiasm about leading Livguard at a time of rapid transformation and opportunity. His appointment marks a significant step in Livguard's journey toward becoming a leading brand in the energy and battery solutions market.

**Foot notes:**

- **Experience:** Nagpal brings over three decades of experience across industries, having held key leadership roles at renowned organizations such as Dalmia Bharat Ltd., Shalimar Paints, Trane Technologies, ZICOM Electronic Security Systems, and Carrier Corporation.
- **Role:** As MD & CEO, Nagpal will help accelerate Livguard's position in the energy storage and solar solutions industry, driving the company's next phase of growth and innovation.
- **Vision:** Nagpal's vision for Livguard is rooted in the company's core values of innovation, reliability, and customer-centricity. He aims to build strong teams that will make Livguard's innovative solutions more accessible to Indian households and businesses.
- **Leadership Style:** Nagpal is a strong advocate of people-first leadership, focusing on nurturing a culture that inspires excellence, collaboration, and a shared purpose. This approach aligns with Livguard's vision of fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and long-term value creation.

### **Jitendra Mishra Elected President of CIFEJ**

Jitendra Mishra has been elected as the President of the International Centre of Films for Children and Young People (CIFEJ). The announcement came during the organization's annual conference, where Mishra was chosen for his extensive experience in promoting children's cinema. Known for his passion for creating meaningful content for young audiences, Mishra's leadership is expected to steer CIFEJ towards new heights in the coming years. His election marks a significant moment for the organization, which has long championed the cultural and educational value of films aimed at children and youth. As President, Mishra plans to expand CIFEJ's reach globally, fostering collaboration between filmmakers, educators, and institutions. His appointment has been widely praised, with many hopeful that his vision will inspire a new wave of impactful films for young people.

**Foot notes:**

- **Unanimous Election:** Jitendra Mishra was unanimously elected as President of CIFEJ for the 2025-2027 term, receiving support from over 50 active members across 40 countries.
- **Global Platform for Youth Cinema:** As President, Mishra aims to leverage cinema to raise awareness about social issues and inspire youth, promoting culturally diverse films for children and young audiences worldwide.

- **CIFEJ's Mission and Background:** CIFEJ, established in 1955 under UNESCO, is a global organization promoting quality audio-visual content for children and youth, with its headquarters in Athens, Greece.
- **Leadership and Vision:** Mishra's leadership focuses on empowering young minds through meaningful cinema, with plans to expand CIFEJ's global footprint and offer filmmakers a platform to showcase their work.
- **Diverse Board and Global Collaboration:** The CIFEJ board features experts from Canada, Cyprus, China, Tunisia, Romania, Iran, Japan, and Greece, reflecting global support for Mishra's vision and collaborative efforts to advance youth-centric cinema.

### Klaus Schwab Resigns as Chairman of World Economic Forum

Klaus Schwab, the 87-year-old founder of the World Economic Forum (WEF), has resigned as chairman, ending over five decades at the helm of the influential organization. Schwab, who established the WEF in 1971, announced his immediate departure during an extraordinary board meeting on April 20, 2025. His resignation comes amid an independent investigation into allegations of financial and ethical misconduct involving Schwab and his wife, Hilde, including misuse of WEF funds and resources. Both have denied the accusations and are pursuing legal action against the whistleblower. The WEF board has appointed former Nestlé CEO Peter Brabeck-Letmathe as interim chairman while initiating a search for a permanent successor.

#### Foot notes:

- **Legacy and Impact:** Klaus Schwab's leadership and vision for stakeholder capitalism have had a profound impact on the World Economic Forum and global economic governance. His resignation marks the end of an era and presents an opportunity for the organization to redefine its role in the global community.
- **Challenges Ahead:** The World Economic Forum faces significant challenges, including criticism of elitism, internal cultural controversies, and backlash against globalization. The organization will need to navigate these challenges and adapt to a rapidly changing world under new leadership.
- **Future Direction:** The WEF's future success will depend on its ability to foster dialogue between public and private sectors, address global concerns, and redefine its relevance in a world where traditional systems of governance are under scrutiny. The organization's new leadership will play a crucial role in shaping its future direction.

### Times Music appoints Anjuman Saxena as Head of A&R

Times Music has announced the appointment of Anjuman Saxena as the new Head of A&R (Artists and Repertoire). She brings with her a wealth of experience in the Indian music industry. In her new role, Anjuman will focus on identifying and nurturing musical talent across genres. She will also be responsible for curating unique collaborations and driving innovation in the label's music offerings. Her strategic vision is expected to strengthen Times Music's

position in both the independent and mainstream music spaces. This move aligns with the company's aim to expand its artist-first approach and enhance its creative footprint.

**Foot notes:**

- **Role and Expertise:** Anjuman Saxena has been appointed as Head of A&R – Spiritual & Devotional at Times Music, bringing decades of experience in curating India's spiritual and devotional music landscape.
- **Previous Experience:** Saxena previously played a pivotal role in building Times Music's devotional and ghazal catalogue, working with legendary artists like Lata Mangeshkar, Jagjit Singh, Usha Mangeshkar, Shubha Mudgal, and Abida Parveen.
- **Artistic Vision:** Her artistic vision was shaped by the mentorship of Shri Promod Shankar, a Sarod player and disciple of Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. Saxena's experience also includes working at Saregama India, where she reimaged classical and Sufi works through albums like "Voices of Freedom", "Call of the River", and "Tajalli".
- **Multidimensional Background:** Apart from her music expertise, Saxena is a noted actor, having appeared in films like "Badrinath Ki Dulhania", "Sharmaji Namkeen", and "Bawaal", as well as OTT series like "City of Dreams". This multidimensional background brings a creative sensibility to her work in music.

### Emami onboards Raashii Khanna as brand ambassador for Emami Pure Glow

Emami has appointed actress Raashii Khanna as the brand ambassador for its newly launched skincare line, Emami Pure Glow. This strategic move aims to enhance the brand's appeal and establish a stronger connection with consumers across India. Emami Pure Glow enters the 4,000 crore brightening cream market with a science-backed formula featuring Japanese sakura flower and niacinamide, designed to provide a radiant glow without the common issue of white cast. Raashii Khanna expressed her enthusiasm for the partnership, highlighting the product's lightweight feel, instant absorption, and its celebration of natural beauty through innovative science.

**Foot notes:**

- **Product Features:** Emami Pure Glow is formulated with natural ingredients and provides benefits such as brightening, moisturizing, and evening out skin tone. The product's unique formula and benefits align with Raashii Khanna's youthful and vibrant image.
- **Market Impact:** With Raashii Khanna on board, Emami aims to increase brand visibility and appeal to a wider audience, particularly young women who admire the actress. The partnership is expected to drive sales and market share for Emami Pure Glow in the competitive skin care market.
- **Raashii Khanna's Endorsement:** Raashii Khanna expressed her excitement about partnering with Emami Pure Glow, praising the product's ability to enhance natural beauty and provide soft, glowing skin. Her endorsement is likely to resonate with her fans and followers.



### Ridhira Group appoints Oneel Verma as Chief Revenue Officer

Ridhira Group has appointed Oneel Verma as its new Chief Revenue Officer. Verma brings with him extensive experience in driving revenue growth across diverse industries. In his new role, he will focus on enhancing the company's revenue strategies and expanding its market reach. The appointment is part of Ridhira Group's efforts to strengthen its leadership team amid plans for aggressive growth. Verma expressed enthusiasm about contributing to the company's vision and long-term goals. His leadership is expected to play a key role in boosting profitability and overall business performance.

#### Foot notes:

- **Role and Responsibilities:** As CRO, Oneel will oversee Ridhira's revenue strategies, focusing on maximizing growth opportunities, enhancing customer engagement, and expanding the company's footprint domestically and globally.
- **Industry Experience:** Oneel Verma brings over three decades of cross-industry experience, having held leadership roles in FMCG, telecom, retail, and hospitality sectors. His background includes experience at Sterling Holiday Resorts, Mahindra Holidays, Cordelia Cruises, and Reliance Communications.
- **Leadership Expectations:** Ridhira Group's Founder and Managing Director, Ritesh Mastipuram, expects Oneel to drive strategic growth and accelerate the company's journey in wellness-focused real estate.
- **Company Focus:** The appointment reinforces Ridhira Group's focus on scaling its presence in wellness-led real estate, both in India and internationally, with Oneel leading revenue growth, business development, and market expansion initiatives.

### Stacie Sire Appointed as Vice President and MD of Boeing (BIETC)

Boeing has appointed Stacie Sire as the Vice President and Managing Director of the Boeing India Engineering & Technology Center (BIETC), as well as Chief Engineer for Boeing India. Sire, a 27-year Boeing veteran, succeeds Ahmed Elsherbini, who now leads Boeing Global Engineering. Based in Bengaluru, she will oversee BIETC's strategy and operations, focusing on enhancing team capabilities and supporting business growth in India. Her extensive experience includes leadership roles in major aircraft programs such as the 787, 767, and 777, and overseeing engineering for fabrication across 20 global manufacturing units. Sire expressed enthusiasm about contributing to Boeing's growth in India, emphasizing a commitment to safety, quality, engineering excellence, and collaboration.

#### Foot notes:

- **Appointment Details:** Stacie Sire has been appointed as Vice President and Managing Director of BIETC and Chief Engineer for Boeing India, succeeding Ahmed Elsherbini, who led the position from April 2021 to January 2025.
- **Responsibilities:** Sire will oversee strategy, operations, and capability development at BIETC, advancing the center's goals and priorities in India and enhancing team capabilities to support business growth.

- **Experience and Expertise:** With 27 years of proven leadership at Boeing, Sire brings invaluable experience to this role.
- **Previous Roles:** Sire began her Boeing career as a structural engineer and progressed through various leadership roles, including positions in stress analysis, airframe systems, propulsion, and integration engineering.
- **Location and Focus:** Based in Bengaluru, Sire will focus on driving Boeing's growth and innovation in India, reinforcing the company's commitment to strengthening its engineering presence in the country

### **Dreame Technology onboards Kriti Sanon as first brand ambassador in India**

Dreame Technology, a leading smart home appliance brand, has appointed Bollywood actress Kriti Sanon as its first Indian brand ambassador. This strategic partnership aims to bolster Dreame's presence in the Indian market by promoting its range of intelligent home cleaning and personal care solutions. Sanon will represent products including robotic vacuums, cordless stick vacuums, wet and dry vacuums, as well as grooming items like airstylers and high-speed hair dryers. Manu Sharma, Managing Director of Dreame India, highlighted that Sanon's tech-savvy and modern lifestyle aligns with the brand's vision of smart living. Expressing her enthusiasm, Sanon stated that Dreame's innovative products resonate with her philosophy of blending innovation with convenience.

#### **Foot notes:**

- **Brand Ambassador:** Dreame Technology has appointed Kriti Sanon as its first-ever brand ambassador in India, marking a significant partnership.
- **Kriti Sanon's Role:** As ambassador, Kriti Sanon will promote Dreame's smart cleaning solutions, including robot vacuum cleaners and wet and dry vacuum cleaners.
- **Brand Fit:** Kriti Sanon's enthusiasm for technology and innovation aligns with Dreame's mission to make life easier through smart home products.
- **Marketing Campaigns:** Kriti Sanon will feature in Dreame's upcoming marketing campaigns, highlighting the brand's products and values.
- **Market Expansion:** This partnership supports Dreame's expansion in India, where the brand aims to establish itself as a leader in the smart home cleaning segment.

## **IMPORTANT DAY NEWS**

### **World Liver Day observed on April 19th**

World Liver Day is observed every year on April 19th to raise awareness about liver health and related diseases. The day highlights the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle to prevent liver disorders. Medical experts use this occasion to educate people about the causes, symptoms, and prevention of liver diseases. Awareness campaigns, seminars, and health check-up camps are organized worldwide. The liver plays a vital role in metabolism, digestion, and

detoxification, making its care essential for overall health. Observing World Liver Day encourages early diagnosis and treatment, helping to save millions of lives globally.

**Foot notes:**

- **Theme 2025:** The theme for 2025 is "Food is Medicine," highlighting the vital role of nutrition in protecting and healing the liver. A balanced diet and conscious lifestyle changes can significantly enhance liver performance and resilience.
- **Liver Functions:** The liver performs over 500 essential functions, including detoxification, digestion, metabolism, and immune regulation. It filters toxins, produces bile, stores vitamins, and regulates blood sugar levels.
- **Common Liver Diseases:** Major liver diseases include Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD and AFLD), Hepatitis (Types B and C), Liver Cirrhosis, and Liver Cancer. These conditions can be caused by poor diet, excessive alcohol consumption, viral infections, and genetic factors.
- **Risk Factors:** Key risk factors for liver disease include excessive alcohol consumption, unhealthy diet, obesity, hepatitis infections, environmental toxins, and genetic conditions. Adopting a healthy lifestyle and regular check-ups can help prevent liver damage.

### Civil Services Day observed on 21st April

Civil Services Day is observed every year on 21st April in India. The day honors the dedication and contributions of civil servants to nation-building and public service. It marks the occasion when Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel addressed the first batch of civil servants in 1947. Various events and award ceremonies are organized to recognize outstanding work by officers across the country. Leaders and officials also use the day to reflect on reforms and improvements needed in public administration. Civil Services Day serves as a reminder of the vital role civil servants play in strengthening democracy and governance.

**Foot notes:**

- **Celebrations:** The day is marked by ceremonies and awards across the country, especially in New Delhi, where the Prime Minister and senior government officials acknowledge and honour outstanding work by civil servants.
- **Prime Minister's Awards:** On this day, the Prime Minister confers the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration, recognizing extraordinary and innovative work done by districts and organizations of central and state governments.
- **Importance:** National Civil Service Day reaffirms the commitment of civil servants to public service, excellence, and the welfare of citizens. It serves as a reminder of the ideals of public service in a democracy and encourages reforms and best practices in governance.

### Earth Day observed on 22nd April

Earth Day is observed every year on April 22 to raise awareness about environmental protection and the urgent need to combat climate change. The day was first celebrated in 1970 and has

since grown into a global movement, with over 190 countries participating in various activities. Each year, Earth Day is centered around a specific theme, and for 2025, the theme is "Planet vs. Plastics," emphasizing the reduction of plastic pollution. Schools, communities, and organizations around the world host tree-planting drives, clean-up campaigns, awareness rallies, and educational events. Earth Day serves as a reminder of our collective responsibility to preserve the planet for future generations. It encourages individuals to adopt sustainable practices and support policies that protect the environment.

**Foot notes:**

- **Global Celebration:** The day is celebrated worldwide, with various events, activities, and campaigns organized to promote sustainability, conservation, and climate action.
- **Theme:** Each year, Earth Day has a specific theme, focusing on issues like climate change, deforestation, pollution, and biodiversity loss, aiming to inspire individuals and communities to take action.
- **Environmental Awareness:** Earth Day serves as a reminder of the need to protect the environment, conserve natural resources, and adopt sustainable practices to ensure a healthy and thriving planet for future generations.
- **Call to Action:** The day encourages people to take small steps in their daily lives to make a positive impact on the environment, such as reducing waste, using public transport, or conserving energy.

### World Malaria Day is observed on 25th April 2025

World Malaria Day 2025 was observed globally on April 25 under the theme “Malaria Ends with Us: Reinvest, Reimagine, Reignite.” This theme underscores the urgent need to revitalize efforts at all levels—from global policy to grassroots action—to accelerate progress toward malaria elimination. According to the World Health Organization, in 2023, there were approximately 263 million malaria cases and 597,000 deaths worldwide, with 95% of cases occurring in the WHO African Region. The day serves as a reminder of the importance of sustained investment, innovation, and community engagement in combating this preventable and treatable disease. It also highlights the necessity for renewed dedication and teamwork to speed up the eradication of malaria.

**Foot notes:**

- **Date and Theme:** World Malaria Day is observed on April 25, 2025, with the theme "Malaria Ends With Us: Reinvest, Reimagine, Reignite", emphasizing renewed dedication, innovation, and teamwork to eradicate malaria.
- **Global Impact:** In 2023, there were 597,000 malaria deaths and 263 million new cases worldwide, with 95% of cases in the WHO African Region.
- **Objectives:** The day aims to raise awareness about malaria prevention and control measures, promote scientific research and innovation, and foster global partnerships to enhance resource mobilization.

- **Importance:** World Malaria Day highlights the need for continued investment and sustained commitment to combat malaria, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals like Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3).
- **Prevention Measures:** Preventive measures include using insect repellents, wearing protective clothing, mosquito nets, eliminating stagnant water, and spraying insecticides to reduce mosquito bites.

## OBITUARY NEWS

### Scottish-Born Indian Author William McKay Aitken passed away

Scottish-born Indian author William McKay Aitken has passed away, leaving behind a rich literary legacy. He was widely known for his travel writing, capturing the beauty and spirit of India through his works. Aitken spent much of his life in India, deeply immersing himself in its culture and landscapes. His books, such as *Exploring Indian Railways* and *Footloose in the Himalaya*, earned him a devoted readership. His passing marks the end of an era for lovers of travel literature and cultural exploration. Aitken's contributions will continue to inspire readers and travelers for generations to come.

#### Foot notes:

- **Literary Contributions:** He wrote extensively about India, its mountains, rivers, and steam trains, publishing over a dozen books, including "Nanda Devi Affair", "Seven Sacred Rivers", "Footloose in the Himalaya", and "Riding the Ranges".
- **Life and Career:** Aitken hitchhiked to India in 1959 and spent time in Himalayan ashrams, later becoming a companion to Prithwi Bir Kaur, the dowager Maharani of the erstwhile Sikh Princely state of Jind.
- **Residence and Inspiration:** He lived in Mussoorie, a hill station in the Lower Western Himalaya, which inspired much of his writing.
- **Legacy:** Aitken's writings are characterized by vivid descriptions of his travels, interspersed with insights into the land, people, and their religious beliefs, leaving a lasting impact on Indian travel literature.

### Pope Francis passed away

Pope Francis, the first Latin American pontiff, passed away on April 21, 2025, at the age of 88. He died at 7:35 a.m. local time in the Vatican's Casa Santa Marta residence, following complications from double pneumonia. Cardinal Kevin Farrell, the Vatican's camerlengo, announced the news, describing it as a moment of profound sadness for the Church. Throughout his 12-year papacy, Pope Francis was celebrated for his humility, compassion for the poor, and advocacy on global issues like climate change and capitalism. His death has prompted tributes from world leaders and religious figures, recognizing his dedication to service and love for the marginalized. A period of global mourning has begun, and a conclave of cardinals will convene to elect his successor.



**Foot notes:**

- **Cause of Death:** The exact cause of death is currently unknown, but Pope Francis had been dealing with various health issues, including chronic lung damage, knee problems, and sciatica, which prompted him to frequently use a wheelchair, walker, or cane.
- **Health Issues:** In recent months, Pope Francis had been hospitalized for bronchitis and a polymicrobial infection of his respiratory tract, and was diagnosed with early-stage kidney failure. Despite these health challenges, he continued to carry out his duties until his death.
- **Reaction:** World leaders expressed their condolences following the news of Pope Francis' death. The Vatican announced his passing, and Cardinal Kevin Farrell read the announcement from the chapel of the papal residence.

**Former Australian opener Keith Stackpole, passed away**

Former Australian Test opener Keith Stackpole has passed away at the age of 84, reportedly due to a suspected heart attack. Stackpole was a prominent figure in Australian cricket during the 1960s and 1970s, earning recognition for his aggressive batting style. He played 43 Test matches for Australia between 1966 and 1974, amassing 2,807 runs at an average of 37.42, including seven centuries. Notably, he scored a double century against England during the 1970-71 Ashes series, showcasing his prowess as an opening batsman. Beyond his playing career, Stackpole contributed to the sport as a mentor and commentator, influencing future generations of cricketers. He is survived by his wife, Pat, and their children, Peter, Tony, and Angela.

**Foot notes:**

- **Career Highlights:** Stackpole played 43 Test matches and 6 One Day Internationals for Australia between 1966 and 1974. He was known for his aggressive batting style and formed a potent opening partnership with Bill Lawry, with whom he averaged 44.89 runs together in Tests.
- **Awards and Recognition:** Stackpole was awarded an MBE in 1974 for his services to cricket. He was also named a Wisden Cricketer of the Year in 1973, recognizing his outstanding performance in the 1972 Ashes series.
- **Commentary Career:** After retiring from cricket, Stackpole became a renowned radio and TV commentator, working with the Nine and Seven Networks, and the ABC. He mentored several Victorian players, including Dean Jones and Brad Hodge, and retired from commentary in 2005.
- **Legacy:** Stackpole's legacy extends beyond his on-field accomplishments. Cricket Australia chair Mike Baird praised him as a great contributor to the game, citing his passion and influence in the sport. Cricket Victoria chair Ross Hepburn described him as a giant of the game and a true statesman of Victorian cricket.

**Former ISRO Chairman K. Kasturirangan passed away**

Dr. Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan, former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), passed away on April 25, 2025, in Bengaluru at the age of 84. An esteemed astrophysicist, he led ISRO from 1994 to 2003, a period marked by significant advancements including the operationalization of the PSLV and GSLV launch vehicles and the initiation of India's first lunar mission, Chandrayaan-1 . Beyond his contributions to space science, Dr. Kasturirangan played a pivotal role in shaping India's education landscape as the chief architect of the National Education Policy 2020 . His illustrious career earned him numerous accolades, including the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan .

**Foot notes:**

- **Legacy in Space Research:** As a pioneering ISRO chairman (1994-2003), Kasturirangan played a pivotal role in shaping India's space program and was instrumental in its success.
- **Contribution to Education:** He was the chairman of the drafting committee for the National Education Policy (NEP) and served as Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, leaving a lasting impact on India's education landscape.
- **Tributes:** Prominent leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Droupadi Murmu, paid their respects, acknowledging his visionary leadership and selfless contributions to the nation.

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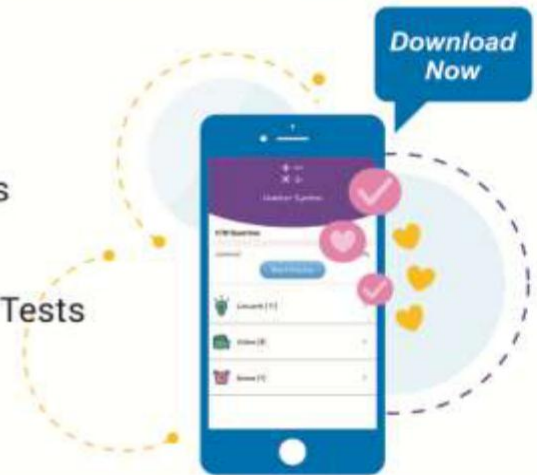
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