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WEEKLY —
Current
Affairs



NATIONAL NEWS

Delhi Govt signs MoU with Prasar Bharati for Delhi Film City

- **Integrated Media Hub:** The Delhi Government (via DTTDC) and Prasar Bharati signed an MoU on March 27, 2026, to establish a world-class media and entertainment hub. The project, named "Delhi Film City," will be developed on 486.7 acres in north Delhi's Khampur.
- **Focus on Emerging Tech:** The hub is designed as a state-of-the-art ecosystem for the AVGC sector (Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics), OTT content, and AI-driven production. It aims to provide comprehensive infrastructure, including modern studios, post-production facilities, and research centers.
- **Economic & Policy Push:** This initiative aligns with the "Make in India" vision to boost the creative economy and generate youth employment. To support this, the Delhi Government is drafting a new film policy that includes a single-window clearance system and subsidies of up to ₹3 crore for film projects shot in the capital.

India begins first fully digital Census 2027

- **First-Ever Digital Census:** This is the first time in India's history that the census is being conducted entirely through digital means. Over 3 million enumerators will collect and submit data directly via mobile applications on smartphones, replacing the traditional paper-based system. This shift is expected to enable near real-time data processing and faster publication of results.
- **Introduction of Self-Enumeration:** For the first time, citizens have the option of self-enumeration. Through a dedicated online portal (available in 16 languages), individuals can fill in their own household details before an enumerator visits.
- **Digital Assets & Amenities:** It also tracks essential amenities like the main source of drinking water, availability of kitchen and bathing facilities, and the primary fuel used for cooking (LPG/PNG).

India approves IBC Amendment Bill 2026

- **Creditor-Initiated Insolvency (CIIRP):** The Bill introduces a new "out-of-court" mechanism called the Creditor-Initiated Insolvency Resolution Process. Unlike the standard process, CIIRP allows specified financial creditors to start resolution proceedings with a faster 150-day timeline.
- **Group & Cross-Border Insolvency:** For the first time, the law provides a formal framework to handle Group Insolvency, allowing interconnected companies within a corporate conglomerate to be resolved together rather than through fragmented, individual cases.

- **Mandatory Admission & Stricter Timelines:** To tackle chronic judicial delays, the Bill makes it mandatory for the Adjudicating Authority (NCLT) to admit an insolvency application within 14 days if the default is clearly established.

PM Modi launches Kaynes Semiconductor Plant in Gujarat

- **₹3,300 Crore Strategic Investment:** Developed by KaynesSemicon (a subsidiary of Kaynes Technology), the plant was built with an investment of ₹3,300 crore at Sanand GIDC. It is the second major semiconductor unit to become operational in India, following the Micron plant which began production exactly one month prior on February 28, 2026.
- **Massive Production Capacity:** The facility is designed to manufacture up to 6.3 million chips per day (approximately 300 million annually). It will focus on advanced packaging and testing of Intelligent Power Modules (IPMs), which are critical components for electric vehicles (EVs), industrial automation, and consumer electronics like smartphones and energy-efficient appliances.
- **"Make in India, Make for the World":** Highlighting India's transition into its "Techade," the Prime Minister noted that a significant portion of the chips produced at this facility are already earmarked for export to global markets, including the United States. This aligns with the government's vision of doubling India's semiconductor market from ₹4.5 lakh crore to ₹9 lakh crore by 2030.

Indian Navy inducts stealth frigate INS Dunagiri

- **Fifth of the Nilgiri-Class (Project 17A):** INS Dunagiri is the fifth of seven advanced stealth frigates being built under Project 17A. It is a "reincarnation" of the erstwhile Leander-class frigate of the same name that served from 1977 to 2010. This new version represents a generational leap in design, featuring significantly improved stealth shaping, reduced radar signatures, and advanced automation.
- **Superior "Triple-Threat" Capability:** Designed as a multi-mission platform, the frigate is equipped to handle threats across air, surface, and underwater domains. Its "teeth" include BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, MRSAM (Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missiles), and an MF-STAR radar system. For underwater warfare, it carries indigenous torpedo launchers and anti-submarine rockets.
- **Record Efficiency & Indigenization:** In a boost to Aatmanirbharta, the ship has 75% indigenous content, involving over 200 Indian MSMEs. Notably, the construction period for Dunagiri was compressed to 80 months—a 13-month improvement over the lead ship, INS Nilgiri—demonstrating the increasing maturity and efficiency of Indian naval shipbuilding.

AP Science City signs MoU with CSIRNIScPR

- **Strengthening STI Policy & Communication:** The partnership aims to bridge the gap between complex scientific research and public understanding. It focuses on Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) policy research to promote evidence-based policymaking in Andhra Pradesh, ensuring that governance is backed by data-driven scientific insights.
- **Capacity Building & Mentorship:** A core component of the agreement is the organization of joint training programs, workshops, and masterclasses. These initiatives are designed to benefit students and researchers from school to university levels, providing them with mentorship and academic guidance to foster a robust "scientific temper" across the state.
- **Knowledge-Driven Ecosystem:** The collaboration will facilitate joint research projects and the publication of scientific journals. By aligning outreach efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), both institutions aim to create an innovation-oriented ecosystem that enhances scientific literacy among the general public.

Punjab govt to build glass bridge over Sutlej Lake

- **North India's First Glass Skywalk:** The proposed bridge will be the first of its kind in North India, designed to offer a "floating" experience over the serene waters of the Nangal Dam lake. Estimated to cost approximately ₹10 crore, it is being built at Shivalik Park (Sutlej Park) and aims to provide panoramic views of the surrounding Shivalik hills and the Sutlej River.
- **Rapid Construction Timeline:** The Chief Minister announced that the project is expected to be completed within six months. This fast-track development is part of a larger ₹75 crore package for Nangal, which includes a new "Centre of Excellence" for skill development (named after Kargil martyr Captain Amol Kalia) and a 500-seat auditorium at the local School of Eminence.
- **Tourism & Economic Catalyst:** The bridge is a strategic move to transform Nangal—traditionally known for the Bhakra-Nangal engineering marvel—into a modern adventure tourism hub.

Amaravati declared permanent capital of Andhra Pradesh

- **Statutory Legal Status:** Parliament passed the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which officially grants Amaravati statutory recognition as the sole and permanent capital. This ends years of legal and political ambiguity by specifically naming Amaravati in the central law that bifurcated the state in 2014.
- **Retrospective Implementation:** The declaration is deemed to have come into force retrospectively from June 2, 2024. This date aligns with the end of the 10-year period during which Hyderabad served as the joint capital and marks the official transition to Amaravati as the successor capital.

- **End of the "Three-Capital" Model:** This federal legislation effectively overrides and settles the previous "Three-Capital" proposal (which sought to split functions between Visakhapatnam, Amaravati, and Kurnool).

Footnotes: AP's Governor: Syed Abdul Nazeer, CM: N. Chandrababu Naidu

Lok Sabha approves Jan Vishwas Bill 2026

- **Mass Decriminalization:** The Bill amends 784 provisions across 79 Central Acts administered by 23 Ministries. Its primary goal is to decriminalize 717 provisions, shifting minor, technical, or procedural defaults from criminal imprisonment to civil penalties or simple warnings.
- **Dual-Purpose Reform:** It is specifically designed to enhance two key government metrics: Ease of Doing Business (by reducing the compliance burden on industries and startups) and Ease of Living (by ensuring citizens are not treated as criminals for minor lapses, such as expired driving licenses).
- **Administrative Adjudication:** To reduce the burden on the judiciary, the Bill introduces a new enforcement mechanism. It allows for the appointment of Adjudicating Officers and Appellate Authorities within government departments to handle settlements and levy fines, moving these cases out of the traditional court system.

Delhi launches Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana

- **Revamped "Ladli Scheme":** This scheme replaces and upgrades the older Ladli Yojana (2008). It increases the government's total investment per girl from ₹36,000 to ₹56,000–₹61,000. With accrued interest (managed via SBI Life), the total maturity amount exceeds ₹1.20 Lakh by the time the beneficiary turns 21.
- **Eligibility & Purpose:** To qualify, the girl must be born in Delhi, and the family must have a Delhi residence of at least 3 years with an annual income not exceeding ₹1.20 Lakh. The scheme is limited to two daughters per family and is strictly designed to ensure girls remain unmarried until age 18 and complete their higher education.
- **Strict Conditionalities & Social Reform:** The scheme acts as a tool for social engineering by mandating that the beneficiary must remain unmarried until the age of 18 and complete mandatory immunization as per government norms.

DGCA signs MoU with Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya

- **New Degree Program (B.Sc. in AME):** The primary focus of the MoU is the launch of a first-of-its-kind, industry-aligned three-year B.Sc. in Aviation Maintenance Engineering (AME). Starting from the 2026-27 academic year (August 2026), this degree will bridge the gap for technical staff who have skills but lack formal academic credentials, enhancing their career progression globally.

- **Research & Capacity Building:** GSV will act as a strategic research and knowledge partner for the DGCA. The collaboration will focus on cutting-edge areas such as Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), aircraft parts manufacturing, and high-precision engineering. Additionally, GSV will provide specialized training and capacity-building programs for DGCA officers.
- **National MRO Strategy:** The partnership aligns with the government's goal to make India a global MRO hub. By integrating DGCA's regulatory standards (CAR-66/147) with GSV's academic curriculum and existing industry ties (with giants like Airbus and Safran).

NCERT granted Deemed University status

- **Degree-Granting Authority:** This status transforms NCERT from an advisory body into a full-fledged academic institution. It can now independently design and offer its own undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral (PhD) programmes, as well as innovative certificate and diploma courses in education and pedagogy.
- **Expansion of Regional Institutes:** The "Deemed University" status extends to NCERT's six constituent units, including the five Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs) in Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Mysore, and Shillong, and the PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education in Bhopal. This allows these regional hubs to function as high-standard research and teacher-training universities.
- **Mandatory Academic Standards:** To maintain this status, NCERT must now comply with strict UGC regulations. This includes participating in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), seeking NAAC accreditation, and implementing the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) to facilitate digital credit transfer for its students.

Nyaya Setu AI chatbot launched

- **Multilingual AI Legal Assistant:** Developed by the Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD), Nyaya Setu is a voice-first, multimodal, and multilingual AI platform. It is designed to help citizens understand their legal rights, entitlements, and court procedures in multiple Indian languages, effectively breaking the language barrier in the justice system.
- **Role of Mascot "Dishika":** Dishika serves as the official digital legal guide for the platform. Her role is to act as a friendly interface that assists first-time users in navigating the chatbot, simplifying complex legal queries, and providing step-by-step guidance on legal actions.
- **Integration with BHASHINI Stack:** The chatbot leverages the BHASHINI AI stack, including Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) and Natural Language Processing (NLP).

UIDAI partners with MapmyIndia

- **Integration with Mappls App:** UIDAI will integrate its verified database of Aadhaar centres into MapmyIndia's Mappls App. This will allow residents to easily find and navigate to the nearest authorized Aadhaar Seva Kendras (ASKs) and other certified centres using indigenous mapping technology.
- **Service-Specific Filtering:** The new feature will allow users to identify centres based on the specific nature of their requirements. For example, the app will distinguish between centres offering adult enrolment, child enrolment (Bal Aadhaar), or those providing only demographic updates (like address or mobile number changes).
- **Combating Misinformation:** A primary goal of this partnership is to provide a "verified digital map" to prevent citizens from falling victim to unauthorized or fraudulent service providers. By directing users only to official locations.

Karmayogi Sadhana Saptah 2026 launched

- **Focus on "Nagrik Devo Bhav":** The Prime Minister emphasized a shift toward citizen-centric governance, underlining the mantra "Nagrik Devo Bhav" (Citizen is God). The initiative aims to transform civil services from a "rule-based" to a "role-based" approach, making public service more sensitive, responsive, and accountable to the aspirations of the people.
- **The Three Sutras:** The week-long program (April 2–8, 2026) is anchored around three core pillars: Technology (AI and digital infrastructure), Tradition (indigenous governance insights and Indian knowledge systems), and Tangible Outcomes (monitoring citizen impact and service delivery).
- **Massive Collaborative Scale:** As one of India's largest-ever capacity-building efforts, the initiative brings together over 100 Central Ministries, 30 States/UTs, and 250+ training institutions.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Japan launches world's first freightonly Shinkansen

- **High-Speed Logistics:** Launched on March 23, 2026, by East Japan Railway Co. (JR East), this is the world's first dedicated freight-only bullet train. Reaching speeds of 275 kmph, it operates on the Tohoku Shinkansen line between Morioka and Tokyo, covering the distance in approximately 3–4 hours.
- **Repurposed Design:** The service uses converted E3 series trains, which were formerly passenger carriages. All 394 seats across seven cars were removed to accommodate up to 1,000 cargo boxes (approx. 17.4 tonnes). The interiors feature reinforced flooring and specialized securing systems to handle high-value, time-sensitive goods like semiconductors, medical supplies, and fresh seafood.
- **Addressing the "2024 Problem":** The initiative aims to solve Japan's severe truck driver shortage and logistics delays caused by new labor regulations on driver overtime. By

shifting freight to high-speed rail, Japan is also reducing carbon emissions compared to road and air transport.

Mongolia elects Uchral Nyam-Osor as PM

- **Political Ascent:** Uchral Nyam-Osor—the Chairman of the ruling Mongolian People's Party (MPP)—became the 33rd Prime Minister of Mongolia. He was confirmed by the State Great Khural (Parliament) with a strong majority of 88 votes from the 107 lawmakers present.
- **A Reformist Background:** Previously the Minister of Digital Development and Communications, Uchral is known for his "digital-first" approach to governance. He gained prominence for leading transparency reforms and is notably the first Mongolian PM to have had a previous career as a popular hip-hop artist.
- **Mission of Stability:** His immediate mandate is to manage economic pressures, streamline Soviet-era regulatory systems, and restore investor confidence through a newly proposed coalition government with the opposition Hun Party.

Singapore Changi tops Skytrax Airport Awards 2026

- **Global Top 3 Rankings:** Singapore Changi Airport was named the "World's Best Airport," followed by Incheon International Airport (Seoul, South Korea) at 2nd place and Tokyo Haneda Airport (Japan) at 3rd. Notably, Doha's Hamad International Airport dropped out of the top rankings this year due to regional disruptions.
- **Performance of Indian Airports:** Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport maintained its lead in the region, ranking 28th globally (up from 32nd) and winning "Best Airport in India & South Asia."
- **Delhi's IGI Achievement:** IGI Airport climbed to 28th position (up from 32nd in 2025). Crucially, it was ranked 3rd globally in the category of airports handling over 70 million passengers annually, proving its efficiency as a massive global hub.

Myanmar elects Min Aung Hlaing as President

- **Consolidation of Power:** The election formalizes Min Aung Hlaing's control over the state, five years after he led the 2021 coup. To assume the presidency, he officially stepped down as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, appointing his loyalist, Ye Win Oo, as the new military head.
- **A "Sham" Transition:** The vote took place in a parliament dominated by the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) and appointed military legislators. Most international observers and opposition groups have dismissed the process as a "sham" designed to provide a veneer of civilian legitimacy to continued military rule.

- **Ongoing Civil War and Instability:** The transition occurs as Myanmar remains locked in a brutal civil war. While the junta hopes the move will help secure international recognition (particularly from regional neighbors), the National Unity Government (NUG) and ethnic resistance groups.

DEFENCE NEWS

IAF to equip MiG29 with ASRAAM missiles

- **Significant Range Boost:** The ASRAAM (Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missile) will replace the Soviet-era R-73 missile. It offers an engagement range of over 25 km, effectively doubling the 10–15 km reach of the legacy system.
- **Advanced Combat Tech:** Developed by MBDA, the ASRAAM is a "fire-and-forget" heat-seeking missile. It can travel at speeds exceeding Mach 3 and features Lock-On After Launch (LOAL) capability, allowing pilots to engage agile targets with high precision in close-combat dogfights.
- **Standardization & Indigenization:** The IAF is standardizing the ASRAAM across multiple platforms, including the LCA Tejas, Sukhoi Su-30MKI, and Jaguar. Under the "Make in India" initiative, Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) has partnered with MBDA to assemble and test these missiles at a facility in Hyderabad.

Launch of NGOPV 'Shachi'

- **First of the NGOPV Class:** Shachi is the first of 11 Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (NGOPVs) being built for the Indian Navy. The project is a joint effort between two shipyards: Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), which is building seven vessels, and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), building the remaining four.
- **High Indigenous Content:** In line with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, the vessel features approximately 76% indigenous content. This includes the ship's design, advanced engineering systems, and critical equipment sourced entirely from the Indian defense industry.
- **Multipurpose Operational Role:** These ships are designed for diverse missions, including anti-piracy, counter-infiltration, search and rescue (SAR), and the protection of offshore assets. Notably, they are equipped with modular payloads for mine warfare and have a helipad capable of hosting multi-role helicopters or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs).

INS Dunagiri delivered to Indian Navy

- **Project 17A Milestone:** 'Dunagiri' (Yard 3023) is the fifth ship of the Nilgiri-class (Project 17A) and the second built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata. It is a follow-on to the Shivalik-class frigates, featuring improved stealth, advanced weapons, and upgraded sensor suites.

- **Technological Prowess:** The warship is equipped with state-of-the-art systems, including BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, MFSTAR (radar), and MRSAM (air defence). It is powered by a CODOG (Combined Diesel or Gas) propulsion system, allowing for high-speed multi-dimensional operations across air, surface, and sub-surface domains.
- **Aatmanirbharta (Self-Reliance):** The frigate boasts approximately 75% indigenous content, involving over 200 Indian MSMEs. Notably, the construction period was compressed to 80 months, demonstrating India's maturing expertise in advanced "Integrated Construction" methodologies.

Lt Gen Sandeep Jain takes charge of Southern Command

- **Succession and Background:** Lt Gen Sandeep Jain succeeds Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth, who has moved on to become the Vice Chief of the Army Staff. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy (NDA), Lt Gen Jain was commissioned into the MAHAR Regiment in June 1988 and has nearly four decades of distinguished service.
- **Operational Expertise:** He brings extensive experience from diverse environments, having previously commanded an Infantry Battalion in the UN Mission in South Sudan, a Counter Insurgency Force, and a Pivot Corps in the Northern Command. He also served as the Chief of Staff at the Southern Command headquarters prior to this promotion.
- **Strategic Priorities:** Upon taking charge, he emphasized a focus on operational readiness across the Southern Command's vast geography (including deserts, coastlines, and island territories).

Lt Gen Pushendra Pal Singh leads Western Command

- **Transition from Vice Chief:** Prior to this appointment, Lt Gen Singh served as the 48th Vice Chief of the Army Staff (VCOAS). He succeeds Lt Gen Manoj Kumar Katiyar, who superannuated on March 31, 2026. This move reflects a strategic rotation of top leadership within the Indian Army's "sword arm."
- **Special Forces Expertise:** He is a highly decorated officer from the Parachute Regiment (Special Forces), commissioned in 1987. His extensive operational background includes participation in Operation Pawan (Sri Lanka), Operation Meghdoot (Siachen), and counter-insurgency operations. He is currently the third Special Forces officer to lead the Western Command in its history.
- **Strategic Focus on Modernization:** Upon taking command, he highlighted a vision focused on multi-domain operations and the induction of niche technologies, specifically drones and counter-drone systems.

SPORTS NEWS

Kimi Antonelli wins Japanese Grand Prix 2026

- **Youngest Championship Leader:** By winning the Japanese Grand Prix on March 29, 2026, 19-year-old Mercedes driver Kimi Antonelli became the youngest driver in Formula 1 history to lead the World Drivers' Championship.
- **Strategic Masterclass:** Despite a slow start from pole position, Antonelli secured his second consecutive victory of the season (after China). He capitalized on a Safety Car on Lap 22 (caused by Ollie Bearman's crash) to pit from the provisional lead and re-emerge in P1, eventually finishing 13.7 seconds ahead of Oscar Piastri.
- **Historic F1 Milestone:** Antonelli's victory marked the 500th win from pole position in the history of the F1 World Championship, dating back to the first-ever race in 1950. He now heads the 2026 standings ahead of teammates and rivals like George Russell and Max Verstappen.

Sunil Narine becomes most capped overseas IPL player

- **Surpassing a Legend:** Narine achieved this feat during KKR's IPL 2026 opener against Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium. By stepping onto the field, he earned his 190th IPL cap, officially overtaking former Mumbai Indians icon Kieron Pollard, who held the record with 189 appearances.
- **Unparalleled Franchise Loyalty:** Much like Pollard, Narine's record is defined by singular loyalty; he has played all 190 matches for the Kolkata Knight Riders. Since his debut in 2012, he has been a cornerstone of the franchise, playing a pivotal role in their three title-winning campaigns (2012, 2014, and 2024).
- **Elite "Firsts" and All-Round Impact:** Narine remains the only player in IPL history to be named Most Valuable Player (MVP) three times (2012, 2018, and 2024). Entering the 2026 season, he also holds the unique record of being the first player to achieve a "double" of 500 runs and 15 wickets in a single season.

Anahat Singh & Abhay Singh named ASF Players of the Year

- **Individual Top Honours:** Abhay Singh was named the ASF Men's Player of the Year 2025 (Dato Alex Lee Award), while Anahat Singh secured the ASF Girls' Player of the Year 2025. This marks the first time since 2022 (Saurav Ghosal and Joshna Chinappa) that Indian players have swept these top continental awards.
- **Youngest to Top 20:** 18-year-old Anahat Singh recently became the youngest Asian woman ever to enter the world's top 20 rankings, surpassing the long-standing record held by Malaysian legend Nicol David. Both Anahat (World No. 20) and Abhay (World No. 25) also recently clinched the Indian Open 2026 titles in their respective categories.
- **Team of the Year:** The Indian Boys' Team was recognized as the ASF Men's Team of the Year following their bronze medal finish at the World Junior Team Championships 2025 in Egypt.

Shyam Sunder Swami wins bronze in para archery

- **Podium Finish:** Shyam Sunder Swami clinched the bronze medal by defeating his opponent in a closely contested third-place play-off. This victory adds to India's growing tally in international para-archery and reaffirms his position as a top-tier competitor in the compound event.
- **Ranking Points:** This performance is significant for the World Rankings, providing crucial points that will influence seedings for upcoming major tournaments, including the 2026 Asian Para Games.
- **Consistent Excellence:** Hailing from Rajasthan, Swami continues his streak of international success. His bronze win in Dubai follows a series of strong performances on the world stage.

Gurung & Shrestha win NNIPA awards

- **Top Honors for Gurung and Shrestha:** Karate star Arika Gurung and table tennis player Santoo Shrestha were crowned the "Best of the Best" Female and Male Athletes, respectively. Shrestha was recognized for his historic feat as the first Nepali table tennis player to qualify for the Olympics, while Gurung was honored for her multiple international medals, including silver at the World Karate 1 Youth League.
- **Historic Venue:** For the first time in its 20-edition history, the awards ceremony was hosted outside the Kathmandu Valley. The event took place at the Chandeshwari Temple premises in Banepa Municipality to promote sports culture across different regions of Nepal.
- **Wide Recognition and Prizes:** The "Best of the Best" winners each received a cash prize of NPR 100,000. In total, 26 athletes from different sports were recognized as the best in their respective disciplines, while Abhishek Baral (Taekwondo) and Swastika Tiruwa (Boxing) were named the "Talented Players of the Year."

AWARD NEWS

Jupally Krishna Rao receives World Peace Grand Prize

- **Prestigious Recognition:** Telangana's Minister for Tourism, Culture, and Archaeology, Jupally Krishna Rao, was conferred with the "Grand Prize for Contribution to World Peace" on March 27, 2026. The award was presented by the International Interchange Development Association (IIDA) during the International Buddhist Peace Conference held in Hyderabad.
- **Focus on Buddhist Heritage:** The award recognizes Rao's significant efforts in preserving spiritual heritage and promoting international cultural exchange. He has been a key driver in developing Buddhavanam (Nagarjuna Sagar) into a global center for Buddhist learning and a "World Peace Centre."
- **Global Participation:** The conference featured over 150 delegates and monks from 22 countries, including Sri Lanka and Vietnam. During the event, the Minister emphasized

that the teachings of Gautama Buddha—specifically compassion and non-violence—remain the most viable path to resolving modern global conflicts.

Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay selected for Saraswati Samman

- **Prestigious Honor:** Eminent Bengali writer Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay has been selected for the 35th Saraswati Samman (2025). Instituted by the K.K. Birla Foundation in 1991, it is one of India's highest literary awards, carrying a cash prize of ₹15 lakh, a citation, and a plaque.
- **Award-Winning Work:** He is being recognized for his 2020 novel "Hara Parvati Katha." The book is noted for reinterpreting Indian mythology through a modern lens, blending spiritual depth with contemporary social and environmental themes through the journey of the deities Shiva and Parvati.
- **Prolific Literary Career:** Born in 1956 in Kolkata, Mukhopadhyay is a highly decorated author with a body of work including nine novels and 11 short story collections.

PAN Health wins Excellence in Manufacturing Award

- **Manufacturing Scale & Location:** PAN Health operates India's largest manufacturing facility for disposable personal hygiene products. The state-of-the-art facility is spread across 30 acres (700,000 sq. ft.) in Rajkot, Gujarat, and has an annual production capacity of over 3.7 billion units.
- **Key Portfolio Brands:** The company is a leading player in the disposable hygiene segment with three flagship brands: Little Angel (baby care), Liberty (adult care), and Everteen (women's hygiene). The award recognizes their excellence in maintaining international quality standards across these eight product categories.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Established in 2017, the company follows the philosophy of "Make in India, Made for India and the World."

APPOINTMENT & PERSON IN NEWS

Dr Thomas Pucadyil appointed Director of BRIC-NCCS

- **Expertise in Cell Biology:** Dr. Pucadyil is a world-renowned molecular biologist and biochemist specializing in membrane biochemistry and vesicular transport. His research specifically focuses on how cell membranes undergo regulated fission to form organelles—a process critical to understanding cellular health and disease mechanisms.
- **Transition from IISER Pune:** Prior to this appointment, Dr. Pucadyil served as a Professor and Chair of Biology at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune. He takes over the leadership mantle from Dr. Manisha Inamdar, who had been serving as the interim director since the superannuation of the previous additional director in late 2025.

- **Highly Decorated Career:** He is a recipient of the prestigious Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize (2018), India's highest multidisciplinary science award. He is also an International Research Scholar of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) and a Fellow of both the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and the Indian Academy of Sciences (IAS).

Senior Bureaucrat Vir Vikram Yadav appointed New Aviation Body Chief

- **New Leadership at DGCA:** Vir Vikram Yadav, a 1996-batch IAS officer of the Odisha cadre, has been appointed as the Director General of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). He replaces Faiz Ahmed Kidwai, who has been moved to the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).
- **Transition from Environment Ministry:** Prior to this appointment, Yadav served as the Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. He also held additional charge as the Chairman of the CPCB.
- **Critical Sector Challenges:** Yadav takes charge at a time when the aviation sector is facing intense scrutiny following major safety incidents in 2025 and operational disruptions at major carriers like IndiGo. His immediate focus is expected to be on strengthening regulatory oversight, pilot rest norms, and air safety standards.

IndiGo appoints William Walsh as New CEO

- **Global Aviation Heavyweight:** William Walsh is a veteran with over four decades of experience. He is currently the Director General of the International Air Transport Association (IATA). He previously served as the CEO of British Airways and was the founding CEO of International Airlines Group (IAG).
- **Succession Timeline:** Walsh succeeds Pieter Elbers, who resigned on March 10, 2026. While the appointment is immediate, Walsh will officially join IndiGo by August 3, 2026, following the completion of his tenure at IATA on July 31.
- **Strategic Mandate:** His appointment comes at a critical time as India's largest airline navigates operational challenges, including a major flight cancellation crisis in late 2025 related to new pilot duty norms.

IAS Chanchal Kumar Takes Charge as I&B Secretary

- **Cadre and Background:** Chanchal Kumar is a 1992-batch IAS officer of the Bihar cadre. He holds a strong academic background with B.Tech and M.Tech degrees from IIT Kanpur and a Ph.D. in Economics from Patna University.
- **Direct Role Swap:** His appointment was part of a major bureaucratic reshuffle by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC). He swapped positions with Sanjay Jaju (1992-batch, Telangana cadre); while Kumar moved from the Ministry of Development

of North Eastern Region (DoNER) to I&B, Jaju took over as the new Secretary of DoNER.

- **Diverse Administrative Experience:** Prior to this role, he served in high-level positions including Secretary in the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Managing Director of the NHIDCL (National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd), and Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Bihar.

Ashwini Bhide Becomes First Woman BMC Commissioner

- **Historic Appointment:** Ashwini Bhide, a 1995-batch IAS officer of the Maharashtra cadre, is the first woman to lead the BMC, which is India's richest civic body. She succeeded Bhushan Gagrani following his retirement.
- **"Metro Woman" of Mumbai:** She earned this nickname for her pivotal role as the Managing Director of the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC), where she spearheaded the execution of the Mumbai Metro Line 3 (Aqua Line)—the city's first underground metro corridor.
- **Extensive Civic Experience:** Before this top role, she served as the Additional Municipal Commissioner in the BMC (2020–2024), where she was instrumental in managing the COVID-19 pandemic response and overseeing the Mumbai Coastal Road Project.

Sand Artist Sudarshan Pattnaik appointed Brand Ambassador for India Census 2027

- **Public Awareness through Art:** As a Padma Shri awardee known for his socially relevant sand sculptures, Pattnaik will use his art to educate citizens about the importance of the census. His role is to mobilize public participation and ensure accurate data collection for what is being called a "People's Census."
- **Support for India's First Digital Census:** This 16th National Census (and 8th since Independence) is the first to be conducted entirely digitally. Enumerators will use smartphone-based apps, and for the first time, a self-enumeration portal will allow citizens to fill in their own details online.
- **Phased Rollout and Mascots:** The awareness campaign led by Pattnaik supports a two-phase process: Phase I (Houselisting) begins in April 2026, followed by Phase II (Population Enumeration) in February 2027. The official mascots for the exercise are "Pragati" (female) and "Vikas" (male).