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WEEKLY —
Current
Affairs



NATIONAL NEWS

CMEC Signs MoU with Delhi University to Boost Maritime Education

- **Human Capital Development:** The MoU aims to strengthen India's maritime talent pipeline. Currently, India contributes 12% of the global seafaring workforce, and this collaboration is part of a strategic push to increase that share to 20% by 2030.
- **Specialized Curriculum:** Delhi University will develop new academic frameworks, including core and elective courses, diplomas, and training programs. These will focus on high-growth areas such as maritime logistics, green shipping, supply chain management, and maritime policy.
- **Strategic Alignment:** The initiative aligns with the Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 and the Blue Economy framework. It seeks to bridge the gap between academic research and industry needs, ensuring that Indian youth are equipped for professional careers in the maritime sector.

Himadri Speciality Chemical Commissions India's First Anode Material Plant

- **Strategic Location:** The plant is located at Sreerampur, Hooghly district, West Bengal. It is part of the company's existing integrated speciality carbon complex.
- **Production Capacity:** The facility has an initial capacity of 20,000 metric tonnes per annum (MTPA) of synthetic anode material. Himadri aims to scale this up to 200,000 MTPA over the next few years to meet global demand.
- **Self-Reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat):** This is India's first commercial-scale plant of its kind, aimed at reducing the country's heavy reliance on imports for critical EV battery components, specifically from China.

SC declared Right to Safe Road Travel Part of Article 21 of Constitution

- **Constitutional Integration:** The Court ruled that the "Right to Life" is not merely about physical existence but includes the right to live with dignity and safety. Since road accidents are a leading cause of unnatural death in India, the state is now constitutionally obligated to provide safe, hazard-free infrastructure as a prerequisite for protecting the lives of its citizens.
- **Zero-Tolerance for Highway Obstructions:** A major focus of the ruling was the strict prohibition of heavy vehicles parking on National Highways. The Court observed that stationary trucks on high-speed corridors are "death traps," and it directed authorities to ensure mandatory 24/7 patrolling and the creation of designated "Rest and Parking Bays" away from main carriageways.
- **State Liability and "Safe Systems" Approach:** The judgment shifts the burden of safety onto the state and road-owning agencies. It mandates the implementation of an Electronic Monitoring and Enforcement system, requiring the government to use technology.

Tripura, Kerala & Odisha emerged as top performers in PAI 2.0

- **Exceptional State-Level Performance:** Tripura emerged as a standout, with nearly 80% (943 out of 1,176) of its Gram Panchayats reaching the Front Runner (Grade A) category. Odisha and Telangana also dominated the charts, contributing 555 and 624 Front Runners respectively, showcasing strong development in rural governance.
- **Thematic Excellence in Kerala:** While Tripura led in overall volume of top-tier panchayats, Kerala maintained its reputation for high-quality outcomes. Over 10% of Kerala's participating panchayats achieved Grade A, with particularly strong scores in the "Healthy Panchayat" and "Socially Just" thematic areas.
- **Massive Participation and Data Scale:** PAI 2.0 recorded a record-breaking participation rate of 97.30%, with over 2.59 lakh Gram Panchayats submitting validated data.

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

Footnotes: Kerala's CM: Pinarayi Vijayan, **Governor:** Rajendra Arlekar, **Capital:** Thiruvananthapuram

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

Sikkim becomes country's first paperless judiciary state

- **End-to-End Digital Ecosystem:** Sikkim has transitioned entirely from physical records to a digital workflow. This includes mandatory e-filing, digital case management, and electronic archives, ensuring that every step—from filing a petition to the final judgment—is handled without physical paper.
- **Dismantling Geographical Barriers:** Given Sikkim's difficult Himalayan terrain, the paperless system is a game-changer. It allows litigants and lawyers in remote areas to participate in virtual hearings and track case progress in real-time, eliminating the need for arduous, days-long travel to court complexes.
- **Integration of Advanced Tech (AI):** The state's judicial infrastructure now leverages AI-driven tools like SUVAS (for language translation) and SUPACE (for legal research). These tools act as "force multipliers," helping judges manage cases more efficiently while maintaining the human element of justice.

India deployed Aarogya Maitri portable healthcare infrastructure

- **World's First Portable Disaster Hospital:** This modular system consists of 72 compact, waterproof cubes that can be transported via drone, helicopter, or even hand-carried. It is designed to be fully operational within just 12 minutes, providing a "field hospital" experience in remote or disaster-hit zones.
- **Comprehensive Medical Capability:** Despite its portability, the infrastructure includes a mini-ICU, an operation theatre, a portable X-ray machine, and a ventilator. It can treat up

to 200 casualties simultaneously and handle various emergencies like bullet wounds, major burns, and fractures.

- **Tech-Driven "Golden Hour" Care:** The cubes utilize AI, data analytics, and RFID tagging to track medical inventory and expiration dates. This ensures that life-saving treatment is administered during the critical "golden hour," even in areas with zero existing infrastructure.

Bengaluru Police Introduces India's First AI-powered multilingual 'Namma 112'

- **Real-Time Translation (VANKI System):** The helpline utilizes an AI solution called VANKI (Voice AI for Nationwide Key Interventions). It allows callers to speak in their native tongue, which the AI instantly interprets and relays to call handlers in a language they understand, and vice-versa, ensuring no delay during the "golden hour" of an emergency.
- **Extensive Language Support:** The system currently supports over 10 Indian and international languages. This includes regional languages like Bengali, Odia, Malayalam, and Manipuri, as well as foreign languages such as French, Spanish, and Arabic. This is critical for Bengaluru's diverse population of global professionals and students.
- **Data-Driven Inclusivity:** The project was developed after analyzing nearly 8,000 daily calls, identifying that roughly 100–200 calls every day faced significant language hurdles. By integrating this AI, the police have bridged a gap that previously hindered emergency response for non-Kannada or non-Hindi speakers.

Seven-year-old Ishank Singh becomes youngest swimmer to cross Palk Strait

- **World Record Performance:** Ishank completed the 29-kilometer swim from Talaimannar (Sri Lanka) to Dhanushkodi (India) in just 9 hours and 50 minutes. For this achievement, the Universal Records Forum (URF) awarded him the certificate for being the "Youngest and Fastest Palk Strait Swimmer."
- **Surpassing Previous Records:** At just seven years old, Ishank broke the previous record held by Jay Jashwanth from Tamil Nadu, who crossed the strait in 2019 at the age of 10. His timing was also significantly faster than Jashwanth's 10 hours and 30 minutes.
- **Overcoming Extreme Conditions:** The crossing is known for its strong currents and unpredictable waves. To prepare, Ishank trained for 4–5 hours daily at the Dhurwa Dam in Ranchi and underwent specialized sea training in Rameswaram to adapt to the oceanic environment before the final attempt.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Dinesh Trivedi appointed as High Commissioner to People's Republic of Bangladesh

- **Rare Political Appointment:** Trivedi is a veteran politician and former Union Minister, making this a rare instance where a non-IFS (Indian Foreign Service) officer is chosen for

a critical diplomatic role. This reflects New Delhi's intent to use senior political weight to stabilize ties with the new government in Dhaka.

- **Succession:** He will succeed Pranay Verma, who is moving to Brussels to serve as India's Ambassador to the European Union and Belgium.
- **Political Profile:** Trivedi has served as the Union Railway Minister (2011–2012) and Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare. He was a long-time MP from West Bengal (representing Barrackpore) and joined the BJP in 2021 after leaving the Trinamool Congress.

India & New Zealand Sign Landmark Trade Deal

- **100% Duty-Free Access:** The agreement provides immediate duty-free access for 100% of Indian exports to New Zealand. This is a massive boost for labor-intensive sectors like textiles, leather, gems & jewellery, and engineering goods, which previously faced tariffs of up to 10%.
- **Massive Investment Commitment:** In a landmark provision (similar to the deal with EFTA), New Zealand has made a binding commitment to invest \$20 billion (₹1.66 lakh crore) in India over the next 15 years, signaling long-term trust in the Indian economy.
- **Visa & Mobility Quotas:** For the first time, New Zealand has signed a special annex on student mobility and professional pathways for India. This includes a quota of 5,000 annual visas for skilled Indian professionals (including AYUSH practitioners, chefs, and IT experts) and extended post-study work visas for STEM graduates.

UNESCO Adds 12 New Global Geoparks, Expanding Network to 241 Sites

- **Livelihood-Led Growth:** The roadmap transitions from basic digital inclusion (like Aadhaar/UPI) to high-productivity systems focused on job linkages and digital advisory for farmers.
- **Phased Implementation:** Phase II (2035–2047) will specifically focus on integrating Indian MSMEs into global value chains through grassroots innovation.
- **Urban Governance:** Alongside this, a new framework titled "Moving Towards Effective City Government" was released to empower "Million-plus Cities" with better fiscal and administrative autonomy.

India, Kenya Sign CBIC-KRA Customs Cooperation Pact

- **Pre-Arrival Data Exchange:** The core of the pact is the exchange of pre-arrival information for goods. This allows customs officials to receive and process shipment data before cargo physically arrives, enabling them to flag high-risk consignments while ensuring legitimate goods pass through without delay.
- **Enhanced Ease of Doing Business:** By streamlining customs procedures and reducing manual inspections, the agreement is designed to lower transaction costs and "turnaround

time" for traders. This is critical as bilateral trade reached a record \$4.31 billion in 2025–26, a 25% increase over the previous year.

- **Strengthening Risk Management:** The MoU provides a formal framework for intelligence sharing between the CBIC and KRA. This collaboration is intended to combat commercial fraud, smuggling, and trade-based money laundering, ensuring a more secure and transparent trading corridor.

Finland Launches Europe's First Fully Integrated Lithium Project

- **End-to-End Integration:** Located near Kokkola, this is the first project in Europe to integrate the full value chain—from mining and concentration of spodumene ore to refining it into battery-grade lithium hydroxide—all within a 43-kilometer radius.
- **Production Capacity and Impact:** The project aims to produce 15,000 tonnes of lithium hydroxide annually, which is expected to meet approximately 10% of Europe's total demand, significantly reducing reliance on imports from Asia and Australia.
- **Strategic Ownership:** The project involves an investment of approximately €783 million and is a joint venture between South African mining giant Sibanye-Stillwater (holding an 80% stake) and the state-owned Finnish Minerals Group (20%).

Footnotes: Finland's President: Alexander Stubb, PM: Petteri Orpo, Capital: Helsinki

China Launches Pakistani Satellite 'PRSC-EO3' Aboard Long March-6 Rocket

- **Mission Details and Rocketry:** The satellite was launched at 8:15 p.m. (Beijing Time) from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in Shanxi Province. It was carried by a Long March-6 rocket, marking the 640th flight mission for the Long March carrier rocket series.
- **Indigenous Achievement and Purpose:** Developed by Pakistan's SUPARCO (Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission), the PRSC-EO3 is a high-resolution, electro-optical imaging satellite. It is designed to boost Pakistan's capabilities in land management, agricultural monitoring, and disaster response.
- **Technological Milestones:** The satellite features advanced payloads including a Multi-Geometry Imaging Module for better terrain modeling and an onboard AI-powered system for real-time data analysis.

IISc Bengaluru Emerges as India's Top University

- **Consistent NIRF Leadership:** In the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025/2026 cycles, IISc consistently retains the #1 rank in both the "University" and "Research Institutions" categories. It remains the benchmark for academic quality, beating out all other major universities in the country.
- **Global Research Powerhouse:** On the world stage, IISc is recognized for its incredible research output. In the QS World University Rankings 2026, it remains India's highest-

ranked institution for Citations per Faculty, a metric that proves the global impact and significance of the research papers published by its scholars.

- **Expansion into Quantum Tech:** Beyond traditional sciences, IISc recently launched India's first Centre for Quantum Materials and Devices. This positions the university at the forefront of the global "Second Quantum Revolution," focusing on building indigenous quantum computers and secure communication technologies

DEFENCE NEWS

Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1 Signals New Era for India's Private Space Industry

- **First Private Orbital Launch:** Vikram-1 is India's first privately developed multi-stage orbital launch vehicle. While Skyroot's previous mission (Prarambh) was sub-orbital, Vikram-1 is designed to place satellites into Low Earth Orbit (LEO), officially ending the era where satellite launches were the exclusive domain of ISRO.
- **Technological Innovation:** The rocket features a full-carbon-fiber body and 3D-printed liquid engines. Its "plug-and-play" design allows it to be assembled and launched within 24 hours from any location, offering a highly flexible and cost-effective solution for the global small-satellite market.
- **Strategic Impact (NewSpace India):** This mission is a direct result of the 2020 Space Sector Reforms. It positions India as a competitive hub for commercial space activities, shifting the role of ISRO toward deep-space exploration and R&D, while private players like Skyroot handle the high-frequency commercial launch business.

FM Nirmal Sitharaman delivers Keynote & Launched Mission Jagrook

- **Vigilance:** She urged SEBI and all regulated entities to remain "exceptionally vigilant," stating that tools of defense must evolve faster than the tools of attack.
- **Investor Verification:** The FM commended the rollout of "SEBI Check," a tool that allows investors to verify the payment details of registered intermediaries before transferring any money, reducing the risk of payment to fraudulent accounts.
- **Soft-Touch Regulation:** She advocated for a "principles-based" regulatory approach rather than an overly detailed rulebook, emphasizing the importance of public consultation to improve the quality of compliance.

India Becomes 5th-Largest Military Spender

- **Global Total:** Worldwide military spending hit a record \$2.89 trillion (2.5% of global GDP), marking the 11th consecutive year of growth.
- **Top Five Concentration:** The top five spenders (USA, China, Russia, Germany, and India) together account for 58% of total global defense expenditure.

- **Regional Comparison:** While India ranks 5th, Pakistan's spending rose 11% to \$11.9 billion, ranking it 31st globally. India's expenditure remains nearly eight times higher than Pakistan's.

Mizoram declared 'insurgency-free' as last militant group laid down arms

- **Surrender of the Last Militant Group:** The Lalhmingthanga Sanate faction of the Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) or HPC(D), the final active insurgent group in the state, formally laid down arms. During a "homecoming and arms-laying ceremony" at Sesawng, 43 cadres, including their leader Sanate, surrendered their weapons and pledged to join mainstream society.
- **The Peace Accord:** This event follows a Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed between the Mizoram government and the HPC(D) on April 14, 2026. The agreement focuses on the comprehensive development of Hmar-dominated areas within the Sinlung Hills Council (SHC), including infrastructure upgrades, enhanced budgetary allocations starting from 2027-28, and the recognition of the Sikipui Ruoi festival.
- **Significance of Chief Minister Lalduhoma:** The declaration is deeply symbolic as CM Lalduhoma, a former IPS officer, played a pivotal role in mediating the original 1986 Mizoram Peace Accord.

Footnotes: Mizoram's CM: Lalduhoma, **Governor:** V. K. Singh, **Capital:** Aizawl

India & Sri Lanka Conduct IN-SLN DIVEX 2026

- **Deep-Sea Milestone:** Divers from both navies achieved a significant operational milestone by successfully executing mixed gas dives beyond 55 metres. This included exploring historic World War-era shipwrecks, specifically the SS Worcester and SS Perseus, off the Colombo coast.
- **Key Participation:** The Indian Navy's specialized Diving Support and Submarine Rescue Vessel, INS Nireekshak, participated alongside elite diving teams from both nations. The exercise focused on strengthening interoperability in underwater search, rescue, and salvage operations.
- **Humanitarian & Strategic Outreach:** Aligned with the MAHASAGAR vision, India handed over two BHISM cubes (mobile medical units) under the Aarogya Maitri initiative.

Vishvajit Sahay took charge as Defence Finance Secretary

- **Extensive Leadership Background:** Prior to this elevation, Sahay served as the Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA). His career spans over three decades, including key roles as Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser in the Department of Science and Technology and Finance Manager (Acquisition Wing) in the Ministry of Defence.

- **Strategic Financial Oversight:** As Defence Finance Secretary, he is now responsible for the financial management and budgeting of India's massive defence expenditure. His appointment is expected to streamline procurement policies, enhance fiscal discipline, and support the strategic decision-making required for modernizing the armed forces.
- **Focus on 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat':** His leadership comes at a critical time as the Ministry pushes for self-reliance in defence production. Sahay is expected to play a pivotal role in aligning financial reforms with the government's goal of domestic manufacturing and indigenous technological development in the defence sector.

BANKING NEWS

B Ramesh Babu appointed as MD & CEO of KVB

- **Third Term Approval:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the re-appointment of B Ramesh Babu for a third term of two years, effective from July 29, 2026.
- **Leadership Continuity:** This extension follows his initial appointment in 2020 and a second term in 2023, signaling regulatory confidence in his leadership and the bank's consistent growth in profitability and asset quality.
- **Professional Background:** Before joining KVB, he served as the Deputy Managing Director & Chief Operating Officer at the State Bank of India (SBI), bringing extensive experience in retail banking and operations.

Footnotes: KVB's MD & CEO: Ramesh Babu B, HQ: Karur, Founded: 1916

Federal Bank appoints Manikandan M as CFO

- **Effective Date and Succession:** Manikandan M will officially take charge as the CFO and Key Managerial Personnel on May 1, 2026. He succeeds Venkatraman Venkateswaran, who will step down from the CFO position on April 30 but will continue to serve as an Executive Director of the bank.
- **Internal Promotion and Expertise:** Manikandan is an internal veteran, having been with Federal Bank since October 2013. Prior to this promotion, he served as Deputy Vice President-II and Head of Financial Reporting.
- **Distinguished Professional Credentials:** At 35 years old, he is a Fellow Member of the ICAI, an Associate Member of the ICSI, and a licensed CPA (USA). Notably, he was recognized as one of the "40 under 40: CA Business Leaders" by the ICAI in 2025 and is a Gold Medalist in Bachelor of Commerce.

Footnotes: Federal Bank's MD & CEO: KVS Manian, HQ: Kerala, Estd: 1931

Flipkart, Axis Bank & PayU launch biometric card payments

- **OTP-Free Experience:** The initiative allows users to authenticate transactions using Face ID or fingerprint on Android and iOS devices. This replaces the traditional SMS-

based One-Time Password (OTP), addressing common friction points like network delays and failed delivery.

- **Initial Rollout and Infrastructure:** The service is launched first for Axis Bank cardholders on the Flipkart platform. The system is powered by PayU's infrastructure on the merchant side, while Axis Bank uses Wibmo (a PayU company) to handle issuer-level biometric verification.
- **Enhanced Security and Compliance:** The move aligns with the RBI's recent "Authentication Mechanisms for Digital Payment Transactions Directions, 2025."

Footnotes: Axis Bank's MD & CEO: Amitabh Chaudhry, HQ: Mumbai, Estd: 1993

City Union Bank appoints R Vijay Anandh as MD & CEO

- **Tenure and Succession:** R. Vijay Anandh succeeds Dr. N. Kamakodi, who completed a distinguished 15-year tenure at the helm on April 30, 2026. Anandh's appointment is for a term of three years.
- **Professional Background:** A veteran in the banking sector with over 28 years of experience, Anandh specializes in retail assets, risk management, and credit underwriting. Before being elevated to MD & CEO, he served as the bank's Executive Director. His prior career includes senior leadership roles at RBL Bank, Barclays, and ICICI Bank.
- **Strategic Focus:** Under his leadership, the bank intends to maintain its strong focus on the MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) segment, which currently accounts for over 50% of its business.

Footnotes: CUB's MD & CEO: Dr. N. Kamakodi, HQ: Tamil Nadu, Estd: 1904

SPORTS NEWS

Punjab Kings Set New IPL Record with Historic 265-Run Chase

- **World Record Chase:** Punjab Kings successfully chased down a target of 265 runs set by the Delhi Capitals (DC) at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, finishing at 265/4 with seven balls to spare. This broke their own previous world record of 262 set against KKR in 2024.
- **Opening Blitz & Finishing Power:** The chase was powered by an explosive start from Prabhsimran Singh (76 off 26) and Priyansh Arya (43 off 17), who guided PBKS to 116/0 in the powerplay. Captain Shreyas Iyer then anchored the finish with a composed 71 off 36 balls*.
- **Record-Breaking Day for KL Rahul:** Despite ending up on the losing side, Delhi's KL Rahul made history by scoring 152 off 67 balls*. This became the highest-ever T20 score by an Indian and the first 150-plus score by an Indian in the IPL, surpassing the previous record held by Abhishek Sharma (141).

Sabastian Sawe Creates History with Sub-2 Hour Marathon at London Marathon 2026

- **Historic World Record:** Kenya's Sebastian Sawa became the first person to officially run a sub-two-hour marathon in a sanctioned race, clocking a time of 1:59:30. He shattered the previous world record of 2:00:35 (set by Kelvin Kiptum) by 65 seconds.
- **Official "Legal" Barrier:** Unlike previous sub-two-hour attempts performed in controlled exhibition settings, Sawa's record was achieved under standard competitive conditions, making it the first "legal" sub-two-hour marathon eligible for official World Athletics ratification.
- **Incredible Negative Split:** Sawa reached the halfway mark in 60:29 but accelerated significantly in the second half, running the final 21.1 km in an astonishing 59:01 to pull away from Ethiopia's Yomif Kejelcha (who also finished sub-two at 1:59:41).

India emerged as top-performing nation at ISSF Junior World Cup 2026

- **Medal Tally Leader:** India finished at the top of the standings with a total of 16 medals, comprising 5 gold, 6 silver, and 5 bronze. This placed the Indian contingent ahead of all other participating federations, including major shooting powerhouses.
- **World Record Performance:** A standout moment of the tournament was the gold medal victory by Divyanshu Dewangan and Shambhavi Kshirsagar in the 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team event, where they set a new Junior World Record with a score of 499.9.
- **Final Day Success:** India secured its top position on the final day with two podium finishes: Hemant Burman clinched silver in the Men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions, and the duo of Zuhair Khan and Addya Katyal won bronze in the Trap Mixed Team event—India's first shotgun medal of the meet.

Rithika Sri Scripts History as India's First Transgender Umpire

- **Pioneer of Institutional Change:** Rithika was instrumental in pushing the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) to update its official systems. For the first time in its history, the TNCA included an "Other" category in its state-panel umpire application forms, allowing transgender individuals to apply under their true identity.
- **Proven Track Record:** Before her formal transition, she built a solid technical foundation by officiating over 300 matches in the Salem and Namakkal districts. Her expertise and "unbiased calls" earned her the respect of players and officials, eventually leading her to clear the Coimbatore District Cricket Association (CDCA) exams in February 2026.
- **Overcoming Social Barriers:** Despite facing initial discrimination and being denied entry to some grounds, she received strong backing from district cricket officials. She is currently preparing for the TNCA State Panel exams in June 2026, with the long-term goal of becoming a BCCI-accredited umpire.

Punjab FC Retain AIFF Elite Youth League Title

- **Dominant Final Victory:** Punjab FC (The Cubs) defeated Zinc Football Academy 3-0 in the final held on April 28, 2026, at the Ramsar Sahib Sports Stadium in Garhshankar, Punjab.
- **Decisive 10-Minute Blitz:** After a goalless first half, Punjab FC scored all three goals within a dramatic 10-minute window. The scorers were Karish Soram (69'), captain Vishal Yadav (70'), and Thongram Rishikanta Singh (79').
- **Successful Title Defense:** This win marks a successful defense of their crown, solidifying Punjab FC's reputation as a dominant force in Indian youth football and a premier talent pipeline.

ONGC Athletes Win Gold & Silver at IBSF World Billiards Championship 2026

- **All-ONGC Final:** The gold medal match was an all-India, all-ONGC affair between Sourav Kothari and Pankaj Advani. Kothari delivered a dominant performance to win the final 1133–477, effectively defending his world title.
- **Record-Breaking Performance:** During the three-hour final, Sourav Kothari recorded a massive 485 break, which took him over an hour to complete. This feat, along with other high breaks of 241 and 155, secured his back-to-back world championship titles.
- **Legacy of Excellence:** This win was emotionally significant for Kothari, as it marked his third world title and followed in the footsteps of his late father, Manoj Kothari (a 1990 world champion).

Footnotes: ONGC's Chairman & CEO: Arun Kumar Singh, **HQ:** Delhi, **Estd:** 1956

Bellana won gold medal at Commonwealth Youth & Junior Weightlifting Championships

- **Gold Medal Performance:** Harika won the gold in the women's 69 kg weight category on the third day of the competition (April 29, 2026). Her victory contributed to India's dominant run at the championships, where the Indian squad consistently secured top podium finishes.
- **Total Lift Stats:** She achieved a combined total lift of 197 kg. This performance was composed of a successful lift of 86 kg in the Snatch and 111 kg in the Clean and Jerk segments.
- **Indian Medal Tally:** Her gold was the standout achievement for India on day three, alongside silver medals won by teammates Karangi Tharangini (179 kg) and Bhumika Mohite (195 kg) in the 63 kg category, as well as Abhishek Nipane in the Universal Cup.

AWARD NEWS

AP's Guntur Municipal Corporation Wins UNIDO GEM Award 2026

- **Recognition of Women-Led Green Initiative:** The award recognizes GMC's "Sustainable Cities" project, which successfully transitioned over 200 women from

informal waste collection to formal employment as electric auto-tipper drivers for door-to-door garbage collection.

- **Intersection of Gender and Climate:** The initiative was lauded for achieving dual goals—promoting gender equality by providing sustainable livelihoods and dignity to women, while simultaneously advancing environmental sustainability through zero-emission, eco-friendly waste management.
- **Global Platform and Framework:** The award was presented in Vienna, Austria, during the International Day of Women in Industry 2026. The project is part of the Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot (SCIAP), a Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded program implemented by UNIDO to foster green jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in urban centers.

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

Botanist N. Alim Yusuf Honoured by World Wide Fund

- **AI-Powered Conservation:** Yusuf, a researcher at the Malabar Botanical Garden and Institute for Plant Sciences (MBGIPS) in Kozhikode, was recognized for developing an AI-based mobile application called "Neophyte ID." The app uses the advanced YOLOv11 machine learning model to help users instantly identify nearly 100 invasive plant species in Kerala.
- **Geospatial Tracking and Mapping:** Beyond simple identification, the app integrates geospatial tracking to map the spread of harmful species. This provides critical real-time data for forest officials and researchers to take timely action in ecologically sensitive areas like the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, which is heavily impacted by invasive flora like *Senna spectabilis*.
- **Empowering Grassroots Action:** Inspired by his fieldwork with tribal communities, Yusuf designed the app to be accessible in both Malayalam and English. Along with the award, he received a ₹1.5 lakh seed grant from the WWF to scale the project and expand its database to cover invasive species across India.

Sumitra Guha & Laxman Krishnarao honoured at Sur Jyotsna National Music Awards 2026

- **Stalwarts of Hindustani Music:** The 2026 awards recognized Padma Shri Sumitra Guha and Pandit Laxman Krishnarao Pandit. Both are esteemed figures in the Hindustani classical tradition—Guha is renowned for her soulful renditions across various gharanas, while Pandit is a distinguished representative of the Gwalior Gharana, known for preserving the traditional Khayal style.
- **Institutional Legacy:** The awards are instituted by the Lokmat Media Group in memory of Jyotsna Darda, the founder of Lokmat Sakhi Manch. The initiative aims to provide a

national platform that bridges the gap between established maestros and emerging talent in Indian classical music.

- **National Expansion & Cultural Impact:** While the main ceremony was held in Delhi and presented by Supreme Court judge Justice Sandeep Mehta, the 2026 edition saw the awards reach nine cities across India, including Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Pune.

Indian Scientist Parveen Shaikh Wins 2026 Whitley Award

- **Focus on the Indian Skimmer:** Shaikh was recognized for her "Guardians of the Skimmer" initiative. This project protects the Indian Skimmer, an endangered riverine bird known for its distinctive orange bill and its habit of "skimming" the water for fish. India currently holds over 90% of the global population of this species.
- **Community-Led Conservation Model:** Her work on the Chambal River involves training local community members to act as "nest guardians." These guardians protect seasonal sandbar nests from predators like stray dogs and jackals, and from human disturbance. Under her leadership, the local skimmer population grew from 400 in 2017 to roughly 1,000 by 2025.
- **Expansion to the Ganga Basin:** With the funding from the Whitley Award, Shaikh plans to expand this successful model to Prayagraj, where the Ganga and Yamuna rivers meet.

APPOINTMENT & PERSON IN NEWS

Nitu Samra named as interim CEO of Noida airport

- **Regulatory Compliance:** The appointment follows a directive from the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), which mandates that the CEO of an Indian airport must be an Indian national to serve as the designated security coordinator.
- **Leadership Transition:** Samra, who has served as the airport's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) since October 2021, replaces Christoph Schnellmann. Schnellmann, a Swiss national, will transition to the role of Executive Vice Chairman on the board.
- **Fast-tracking Operations:** This move is intended to expedite the final security clearances required for the airport to begin commercial flights. Following its inauguration in March 2026, flight operations are now expected to commence by mid-to-late May 2026.

Footnotes: Noida's Chairman: Manoj Kumar Singh, Commissioner: Selva Kumari J

Former IRTS officer appointed as first CEO of DMIL

- **Global Expansion Mandate:** DMIL has been established to export Delhi Metro's technical expertise. It will handle metro rail projects, consultancy, and Operation & Maintenance (O&M) assignments both within India (outside the Delhi-NCR region) and in international markets.

- **Veteran Leadership:** Sanjay Jamuar is a retired Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) officer from the 1987 batch. Interestingly, he was DMRC's very first Operations and Maintenance employee when he joined the organization in 1998, making his return as CEO a significant "homecoming."
- **Strategic Advisory Role:** Beyond project execution, DMIL is mandated to provide specialized advisory services to governments, transit authorities, and financial lenders to help design and implement long-term urban mobility and transit systems globally.

Footnotes: DMIL's MD: Vikas Kumar, HQ: New Delhi, Estd: 1995

Dilip Kumar assumes charge as CVO of SAIL

- **Extensive Background & Expertise:** A 2002-batch IRSME officer, Kumar brings over two decades of experience from the Indian Railways. His expertise spans train operations, rolling stock maintenance, and human resource management, having previously served as the Additional Divisional Railway Manager (East Central Railway).
- **Track Record of Innovation:** He is highly regarded for several key initiatives, including launching the first ISO 9001 certified train in the East Central Railway and leading the nationally acclaimed Madhubani Railway Station beautification project.
- **Academic & Global Credentials:** An alumnus of IIT BHU (Mechanical Engineering), he has received advanced management training at INSEAD Singapore and ICLIF Malaysia. His role at SAIL is aimed at strengthening transparency, integrity, and anti-corruption frameworks within the steel giant.

Former Punjab & Haryana HC Judge Anupinder Singh appointed as NCLT President

- **Breaking Convention:** Justice Grewal's appointment is historic as he is the first senior puisne judge (a judge who is not a Chief Justice) of a High Court to be appointed to this role. Historically, the NCLT Presidency has been reserved for retired Chief Justices of High Courts.
- **Tenure and Succession:** He succeeds Justice (Retd.) Ramalingam Sudhakar, who completed his term earlier this year. Justice Grewal will hold the office for a period of five years or until he attains the age of 67 years, whichever is earlier.
- **Vast Legal Expertise:** Born in Ludhiana and an alumnus of St. Stephen's College, Justice Grewal has over 30 years of legal experience. He served as a judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court for over 11 years.

Pravesh Wahi elected as Mayor of MCD

- **Landslide Victory with Strategic Support:** Wahi, the councillor from Rohini East, secured 156 out of 165 votes cast. His win was bolstered by the support of 14 councillors from the Indraprastha Vikas Party (IVP).

- **Policy Focus: No Sealing Drive:** Immediately after assuming office, Wahi announced a "zero-tolerance" policy toward sealing commercial activities in residential areas. He clarified that while a Supreme Court-mandated survey would be conducted to identify the misuse of premises, it would not lead to sealing, especially for small shops under 20 square meters.
- **Sanitation and Landfill Goals:** His primary administrative priority is to take Delhi into the top 10 of the Swachh Survekshan. He announced a budget of ₹50 crore for new cleaning machinery and set a firm goal to flatten Delhi's three major landfill sites—Bhalswa, Okhla, and Ghazipur—within specified timelines.

Footnotes: MCD's Commissioner: Sanjeev Khirwar, **Mayor:** Raja Iqbal Singh, **Deputy Mayor:** Jai Bhagwan Yadav

C V Anand appointed as New DGP of Telangana

- **Distinguished Career & Profile:** A 1991-batch IPS officer, Anand is currently serving as the Special Chief Secretary (Home). He has over 35 years of service, including nearly a decade in Maoist-affected districts, for which he received the President's Gallantry Medal in 2002.
- **Technological Reformer:** He is widely credited with pioneering modern policing initiatives in Telangana, such as the creation of SHE Teams for women's safety, the implementation of e-challans for traffic enforcement, and the massive expansion of CCTV surveillance in Hyderabad and Cyberabad.
- **Deep Local Expertise:** Anand has the unique distinction of having served as the Commissioner of Police for both Hyderabad City (twice) and Cyberabad.

Shreyas Iyer Named Brand Ambassador of F1 Programme in India

- **Official F1-Sanctioned Initiative:** The partnership revolves around the launch of the F1 Sim Racing India Open 2026. This is an official Formula 1-sanctioned competition, the first of its kind in India, designed to create a legitimate national pathway for emerging talent in motorsports and e-sports.
- **Connecting Cricket and Youth Culture:** Iyer was chosen because his influence extends beyond cricket into youth and digital-native cultures. As a high-performing athlete and a known Formula 1 fan, he serves as a "fitting face" to bridge the gap between traditional Indian sports fans and the growing global sim racing community.
- **Path to Global Racing:** The programme aims to fix "structural deficiencies" in Indian motorsports. By using F1 25 (the official FIA game) across PC and consoles, the initiative provides young Indians with access to global-format competition, culminating in a national final in Mumbai in November 2026.

Infosys appoints Nitin Paranjpe as Non-Executive Vice Chairman

- **Supporting the Strategic Agenda:** In this expanded role, Paranjpe will work closely with Chairman Nandan Nilekani to guide the Board and oversee the company's long-term strategic priorities. His expertise is expected to be a "force multiplier" in navigating structural shifts in the IT sector, such as the industrialization of AI.
- **Leadership Continuity:** Nandan Nilekani explicitly clarified that he will continue as the Chairman of the Board for as long as necessary. The appointment of a Vice Chairman is intended to enhance board functions and governance rather than signal an immediate leadership transition or succession.
- **Global Corporate Pedigree:** Paranjpe brings massive experience from his nearly four-decade career at Unilever, where he served as Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Chief Transformation Officer. He currently holds significant positions as the Non-Executive Chairman of Hindustan Unilever (HUL) and Non-Executive Vice Chairman of Heineken NV.

Footnotes: Infosys's MD & CEO: Salil Parekh, HQ: Bangalore, Estd: 1981

OBITUARY NEWS

India's 1968 Olympic Bronze Medalist Gurbax Singh Grewal Passed Away

- **Olympic Achievement:** Grewal was a key member of the Indian hockey team that won the bronze medal at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. He was known as a "speedy forward" during his playing days and represented Western Railways for the majority of his domestic career.
- **A Rare Family Milestone:** He holds the rare distinction of playing alongside his brother, Balbir Singh Grewal, during the same 1968 Olympic Games. This marked the first time in Indian hockey history that two siblings represented the national team together at the Olympics.
- **Post-Retirement Contributions:** Beyond the field, he served as a senior sports officer with Western Railways and as the Honorary Secretary of the Mumbai Hockey Association. He was widely respected as a mentor and administrator who played a significant role in nurturing and identifying young hockey talent across India.

Raghu Rai, veteran Padma-Shri winning photographer, dies at 83

- **Chronicler of Modern India:** A protégé of Henri Cartier-Bresson, Rai was renowned for his "visual record" of India's history. His most iconic works include the haunting documentation of the 1984 Bhopal Gas Tragedy and his extensive coverage of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War.
- **Global Recognition:** In 1977, he was nominated by Cartier-Bresson to join Magnum Photos, becoming one of the first Indian photographers to join the prestigious international cooperative.

- **Prolific Legacy:** Beyond his career as the Chief Photographer for The Statesman and Picture Editor for India Today, Rai published nearly 60 photo-books. His subjects ranged from intimate portraits of Mother Teresa, Indira Gandhi, and the Dalai Lama to the spiritual landscapes of Varanasi and the Himalayas.

Vijay Kumar, associated with golf, passed away

- **2002 Indian Open Champion:** His career-defining achievement was winning the 2002 Indian Open at the Delhi Golf Club. He remains one of only nine Indians to have ever won this prestigious national open title, which was his lone victory on the Asian Tour.
- **Domestic Dominance:** He was a powerhouse on the Indian domestic circuit, winning the Order of Merit four times (1995-96, 1997-98, 1998-99, and 1999-2000). Over his career, which began in 1988, he secured nearly 100 titles on the domestic tour and represented India internationally at the 1999 Alfred Dunhill Cup in Scotland.
- **Grassroots Inspiration:** A self-taught player who started as a forecaddie at the Lucknow Golf Club, Vijay Kumar became a role model for many.