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WEEKLY —
Current
Affairs



NATIONAL NEWS

GoI Introduces CGSMFI 2.0 to Facilitate Credit Flow to MFI

- **Financial Scope and Beneficiaries:** The scheme features a corpus of ₹20,000 crore and is estimated to benefit approximately 36 lakh small borrowers. It is a limited-period intervention, valid until June 30, 2026, or until the ₹20,000 crore guarantee limit is reached, whichever occurs earlier.
- **Interest Rate Caps and Operational Mandates:** The scheme imposes strict pricing discipline to ensure affordability. Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) must cap interest rates at EBLR or MCLR + 2% p.a. for loans to MFIs.
- **Mandatory Allocation for Small Lenders:** To ensure equitable distribution and support smaller players who often struggle for liquidity, the scheme mandates that Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) allocate at least 5% of the total sanctioned amount to small MFIs (AUM under ₹500 crore) and at least 10% to mid-sized MFIs (AUM between ₹500 crore and ₹2,000 crore).

Gujarat Becomes 2nd State in India to Pass Uniform Civil Code

- **Mandatory Registration of Relationships:** The Bill makes the registration of both marriages and live-in relationships compulsory. Marriages must be registered within 60 days, or a fine of up to ₹10,000 will be imposed. For live-in relationships, failure to register can lead to up to three months of imprisonment.
- **Prohibition of Bigamy and Certain Practices:** It also bans practices like Nikah Halala and allows for remarriage after divorce without any conditions. Violations of marriage laws, such as using force or fraud, can attract a prison sentence of up to seven years.
- **Exemptions for Scheduled Tribes (STs):** A significant feature of the Bill is the complete exemption of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) population. Given the constitutional protections under the Fifth and Sixth Schedules, the government has ensured that the customary rights and traditional practices of tribal communities remain untouched by this new legal framework.

Footnotes: Gujarat's Governor: Acharya Devvrat, CM: Bhupendrabhai Patel, Capital: Gandhinagar

Loni Overtakes Delhi as World's Most Polluted City

- **Alarming PM2.5 Levels:** Loni recorded an annual average PM2.5 concentration of 112.5 µg/m³ in 2025. This is more than 22 times the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended safe limit of 5 µg/m³ and represents a nearly 23% increase from its 2024 levels.
- **Regional Crisis in NCR:** While Loni took the top spot globally, other cities in the National Capital Region (NCR) also ranked among the worst. Delhi was ranked the 4th

most polluted city globally ($99.6 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) but retained its title as the world's most polluted capital city for the eighth consecutive year.

- **India's Global Standing:** India is currently ranked as the 6th most polluted country in the world, showing a slight 3% improvement in national pollution levels compared to previous years.

National Housing Bank launches Gruh Sugam Portal

- **Tailored for "Service on the Move":** The portal is specifically built for Defense Personnel, Paramilitary Forces, and Government Employees (both State and Central). It allows them to apply for and manage home loans from their current place of posting, even in remote or border areas, eliminating the logistical burden of physically visiting banks.
- **Unified Digital Marketplace:** Gruh Sugam operates as a "single-window" marketplace where multiple lending institutions are integrated. Applicants submit minimal initial data, which is then shared with various banks. This allows employees to compare multiple loan offers in real-time and select the one with the best interest rates and terms.
- **Enhanced Transparency and Speed:** By digitizing the end-to-end workflow—from application to sanction—the portal significantly reduces manual paperwork and processing timelines.

Sikkim's Stuti Pradhan Selected for World Youth Parliament 2026

- **Recognition of Global Leadership:** Stuti was chosen for this international forum, which brings together youth delegates from nations like South Korea, UAE, and Thailand to collaborate on youth-led policy solutions for global challenges such as climate change and sustainable development.
- **A Proven Track Record:** Her selection follows a string of high-profile achievements, most notably winning the Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament 2025 at the state level and serving as an anchor for the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue at Bharat Mandapam in January 2026 in the presence of the Prime Minister.
- **Representation for Sikkim:** As a voice for both her state and country, she will present the perspectives and aspirations of Sikkim's youth on a global stage. Her consistent excellence in parliamentary debate led to her being honored as a Special Guest at Lok Bhawan during Sikkim's Republic Day 2026 celebrations.

Footnotes- **Sikkim's Capital:** Gangtok, **Governor:** Om Prakash Mathur, **CM:** Prem Singh Tamang

IIM Ahmedabad Launches Krishnamurthy Tandon School of AI

- **Landmark Philanthropic Endowment:** The school has been established through a ₹100 crore endowment from Chandrika Krishnamurthy Tandon (an IIMA alumna, PGP 1975)

and her husband, Ranjan Tandon. This contribution is one of the largest alumni gifts ever received by an Indian management institution, aimed at positioning India as a global leader in the "Age of AI."

- **Focus on "Translational AI":** Unlike technical engineering schools, this center will operate at the intersection of technology and management. Its primary mission is "translational research"—converting complex AI advancements into practical, deployable tools that enhance corporate decision-making, boost productivity, and address large-scale societal challenges in sectors like healthcare and agriculture.
- **The "AI Value Compass" Framework:** Alongside the launch, the school released its first major research report in collaboration with Persistent Systems. The report introduced the AI Value Compass, a holistic framework designed to help business leaders navigate the "failure trap".

Footnotes- IIM's Chairman: Pankaj Patel, Estd: 1961

DPIIT–KRAFTON signed MoU for strengthening startup & innovation ecosystem

- **Targeting the "Creative Economy":** The partnership focuses on nurturing product-based startups in high-growth sectors, specifically online gaming, esports, interactive media, and AI-driven technologies. It aims to provide these startups with a "strategic launchpad" to build globally competitive Intellectual Property (IP) and scalable solutions.
- **Structured Mentorship & Support:** Under the agreement, startups will gain access to KRAFTON's global expertise through structured mentorship, industry insights, and knowledge-exchange platforms. The collaboration is designed to help early-stage entrepreneurs achieve critical milestones such as Proof-of-Concept (PoC) development, market access, and integration into global industry ecosystems.
- **Capacity Building Initiatives:** DPIIT and KRAFTON will co-organize innovation challenges under the Bharat Startup Grand Challenge framework. This includes hosting targeted hackathons, workshops, and masterclasses across specialized domains like game design, animation, immersive technologies (AR/VR), and esports management.

DPIIT Signs MoUs with Razorpay to Strengthen India's Startup Ecosystem

- **Launch of 'Startup Sahayak' Platform:** The centerpiece of this collaboration is the Startup Sahayak digital platform. It acts as a "single-window" interface for early-stage founders, providing end-to-end assistance for company incorporation, navigating central and state government schemes, and offering structured guidance on compliance and funding opportunities.
- **Financial Empowerment and Incentives:** To lower the barrier to entry, DPIIT-recognized startups will receive incorporation support with zero professional fees (excluding statutory government charges).

- **Knowledge Sharing and Mentorship:** The partnership will leverage the Startup India Hub to conduct regular masterclasses on cutting-edge topics like Applied AI, product development, and marketing.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Balendra Shah took Oath as Nepal's Prime Minister

- **Record-Breaking Mandate & Demographics:** Balen is now the youngest Prime Minister in Nepal's history and the first to hail from the Madhesi community of the Terai region. His party, the RSP, secured a massive 182 seats out of 275 in the House of Representatives, marking the first time a single party has commanded such a dominant majority since the 2015 Constitution was promulgated.
- **Symbolism and "Auspicious" Timing:** Reflecting the deep cultural roots of the nation, the oath was administered by President Ramchandra Paudel at exactly 12:34 PM (local time)—a time chosen by astrologers for its "1-2-3-4" numerological pattern. The ceremony featured a unique blend of traditions, including Shankhnaad (conch blowing) by Hindu priests and chants by 107 Buddhist Lamas.
- **Rise of the "Gen Z" Political Wave:** Balen's ascent follows the violent September 2025 youth-led uprising that toppled the previous establishment. Running on an anti-corruption and systemic reform platform, he famously defeated four-time Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli in the Jhapa-5 constituency by a record-breaking margin of nearly 50,000 votes.

Footnotes: Nepal's Capital: Kathmandu, President: Ram Chandra Paudel, PM: Sushila Karki

Periasamy Kumaran appointed as High Commissioner to UK

- **Succession of High-Profile Envoys:** Kumaran will succeed Vikram Doraiswami, who has been reassigned as India's next Ambassador to China. This shuffle highlights a strategic rotation of veteran diplomats to India's most critical partner nations as the country navigates evolving trade and security ties with both the UK and China.
- **Extensive Diplomatic Pedigree:** A 1992-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, Kumaran is currently serving as Secretary (East) in the MEA (a post now being taken over by Rudrendra Tandon). His career includes serving as High Commissioner to Singapore (2020–2023) and Ambassador to Qatar (2016–2020), along with key roles in Washington, Islamabad, and Colombo.
- **Academic and Professional Background:** An alumnus of IIT Madras (B.Tech in Electronics and Communication), Kumaran is recognized for his expertise in economic relations and development partnership administration.

Footnotes: UK's Prime Minister: Keir Starmer, Capital: London

US President's signature on Dollar Bills approved

- **First for a Sitting President:** This marks the first time in history that a sitting US President's signature will appear on paper currency. Traditionally, banknotes have only featured the signatures of the Treasury Secretary and the US Treasurer. The first notes to feature the new design—the \$100 bills—are scheduled to begin printing in June 2026.
- **Ending a 165-Year Tradition:** To accommodate the President's signature, the Treasury has decided to remove the signature of the US Treasurer from the bills. This ends a continuous lineage dating back to 1861, when federal paper money was first introduced during the Civil War.
- **Commemorating the Semiquincentennial:** The move is officially tied to the 250th anniversary of American Independence (the Semiquincentennial) on July 4, 2026.

Footnotes- US's Capital: Washington, **President:** Donald Trump, **Vice President:** JD Vance

India Emerged as Major Global Hub for Electro-Technology Manufacturing

- **Gateway to the "Age of Electricity":** The WEF report identifies India as a global leader in bypassing the fossil fuel-heavy growth models of the West and China. By leveraging cheap solar power and storage—now costing roughly half as much as new coal in India—the country is building a superior energy future.
- **Massive Production and Export Growth:** India's electronics sector has grown six-fold in a decade, reaching a value of \$130 billion by early 2026. Solar module production capacity has surged twelve-fold to 120 GW, making India not only self-sufficient but a major potential supplier to the world.
- **Strategic Policy Support (ECMS & PLI):** To deepen the domestic ecosystem, the Union Budget 2026–27 increased the outlay for the Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS) to ₹40,000 crore.

Naba Kumar Pal appointed as Ambassador to the Republic of Chad

- **Senior Diplomatic Profile:** Shri Naba Kumar Pal is a member of the 2008 batch of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS). Prior to this ambassadorial appointment, he served as a Director within the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, where he handled key departmental responsibilities.
- **Strategic Role in Central Africa:** As the Ambassador to Chad, Pal will be responsible for strengthening India's bilateral ties with this landlocked Central African nation. His role is critical in advancing India's interests in sectors such as energy, agriculture, and infrastructure development, while also coordinating on regional security and counter-terrorism initiatives.
- **Focus on Development Partnership:** India's relationship with Chad is heavily defined by developmental cooperation and capacity building. Pal is expected to oversee various Lines of Credit (LoC) and scholarship programs (ITEC).

DEFENCE NEWS

Indian Navy warship Nilgiri joins Exercise KAKADU 2026

- **Scale and Scope:** Exercise KAKADU is Australia's premier multilateral maritime exercise. The 2026 edition is the largest to date, involving over 6,000 personnel, 30 warships, and multiple aircraft from 18 partner nations. The exercise area has been expanded this year to cover the vast waters from Darwin to Sydney, including the eastern coast of Australia.
- **Key Achievement:** During the harbour phase in Darwin, the crew of INS Nilgiri demonstrated exceptional spirit by clinching the Kakadu Shield Trophy during the sporting fixtures. This trophy is a traditional part of the exercise designed to foster camaraderie and "bridge-building" between the diverse international navies before they move into complex sea-phase maneuvers.
- **Strategic Participation:** INS Nilgiri is operating as part of a combined task group alongside ships from Australia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

The Ministry of Jal Shakti organized 'World Water Day conclave 2026'

- **Release of National Water Data:** The Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Shri C. R. Paatil, released several landmark reports to enhance data-driven governance. These included the 7th Minor Irrigation Census, the 2nd Census of Water Bodies, and the first-ever Census of Springs and Major & Medium Irrigation Projects. Additionally, the National Water Data Policy 2026 was launched to streamline evidence-based decision-making.
- **Joint Industry Declaration:** A core highlight was the transition of industries from "water users" to "water stewards." Major industry associations (including FICCI, CII, and ASSOCHAM) committed to a Joint Declaration targeting Water Neutrality and a 50% reduction in water footprint by 2030.
- **Innovation and Technology Integration:** The conclave emphasized "Ideas, Innovation, and Action" by felicitating 19 winners of the Jal Shakti Hackathon. The sessions focused on leveraging emerging technologies like AI and IoT for smart monitoring and circular water use.

Agnikul test-fires first-of-its-kind 3D-printed booster engine

- **Revolutionary Manufacturing Speed:** The Agnite engine is manufactured as a single-piece structure using Inconel (a high-strength superalloy). While traditional rocket engines take several months to assemble from thousands of parts, Agnikul's 3D-printing process produces a fully functional engine in just seven days, reducing production time by approximately 90–97%.
- **World's Largest Single-Piece Design:** Standing at one metre in height, Agnite is the largest rocket engine ever built as a single integrated component without any welds, joints, or fasteners. This "single-shot" printing significantly improves structural integrity,

reduces weight, and minimizes potential failure points during high-temperature combustion.

- **Innovative Electric Pump Architecture:** Unlike conventional engines that use complex gas generators, Agnite is driven by electric motor-driven pumps powered by battery packs.

IAF Launches India's First Helicopter-Dropped Drone Project 'Vayu Baan'

- **Stand-off Strike Capability:** Conceived as an Air-Launched Effect (ALE), the Vayu Baan is a small, autonomous drone dropped from a moving helicopter mid-flight. Its primary goal is to allow pilots to engage and destroy enemy targets from a safe distance of over 50 km, keeping the helicopter safely outside the range of enemy Man-Portable Air-Defense Systems (MANPADS).
- **Dual-Role Hybrid Platform:** The system is designed to function as both a high-definition ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) asset and a loitering munition (Kamikaze drone). Once released, it unfolds its wings and can either transmit real-time video to operators for 30 minutes or carry out a precision strike using an onboard warhead (500g to 1kg).
- **GNSS-Denied Navigation:** A critical technological feature of Vayu Baan is its ability to operate effectively in electronic warfare zones. It is engineered to navigate autonomously using AI-based target identification.

Footnotes- Chief of the Air Staff: Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh, HQ: New Delhi, Estd: 1950

BANKING NEWS

S&P lifts India FY27 GDP forecast to 7.1%

- **Drivers of Resilience:** The upgrade is fueled by three core pillars: resilient private consumption, a steady recovery in private investment, and robust growth in exports. S&P noted that India remains a global "sweet spot" due to its strong domestic demand, which buffers the economy against slowing global growth.
- **Inflation and Monetary Policy:** While growth is strong, S&P expects consumer inflation to rise to 4.3% in FY27 as prices normalize from previous lows. Consequently, the agency predicts the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will maintain a neutral stance, holding interest rates steady to balance growth momentum with price stability.
- **Geopolitical Risk Factors:** The report flags the Middle East conflict as a primary downside risk. Higher global crude oil prices (with Brent projected around \$80–\$92/bbl) could strain India's fiscal position by increasing subsidy spending and widening the trade deficit, though a healthy surplus in services trade is expected to provide a necessary cushion.

City Union Bank signs Ravindra Jadeja as brand ambassador

- **Strategic Brand Alignment:** The bank has signed a two-year agreement with Jadeja, facilitated by his talent management agency, Baseline Ventures. The partnership aims to align the bank's identity with Jadeja's public image of reliability, consistency, and multifaceted excellence—qualities that resonate with the bank's long-standing institutional values.
- **Targeted Growth & Modernization:** By roping in one of India's most popular all-rounders, City Union Bank intends to accelerate customer acquisition in both urban and semi-urban markets. A key focus of the collaboration is to modernize the bank's image to better connect with younger, digitally-savvy demographics.
- **Expanding Digital & Physical Footprint:** The announcement coincides with a period of rapid growth for the bank. As of March 2026, CUB has expanded its network to 932 branches across India.

Footnotes: City Union Bank's MD & CEO: Dr. N. Kamakudhi, HQ: Kumbakonam, Estd: 1904

South Indian Bank appoints Jose Joseph Kattoor as Part-Time Chairman

- **Tenure and Background:** Kattoor has been appointed for a three-year term. He is a veteran of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), where he served for over three decades (1991–2023), eventually retiring as an Executive Director overseeing key departments like Enforcement, Currency Management, and Corporate Strategy.
- **Internal Transition:** He succeeds V. J. Kurian, who completed his tenure on March 22, 2026. Kattoor is not new to the bank; he has been serving on the South Indian Bank board as an Independent Director since July 18, 2024.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** The appointment received formal approval from the Reserve Bank of India on February 3, 2026, and is in accordance with Section 10B(1A) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

SPORTS NEWS

Kipa Mero of Arunachal Pradesh wins gold in women's javelin F12

- **Gold Medal and National Record:** Kipa Mero clinched the gold medal in the Women's Javelin Throw (F12 category). In a dominant performance, she recorded a throw of 23.76 metres, effectively breaking her own previous national record of 22.15 metres.
- **State Impact and Support:** Her success was part of a strong showing by the Arunachal Pradesh contingent, which included a gold and bronze by Tingong Wangpan and a silver by Tech Meta. Both Mero and Wangpan are currently beneficiaries of the Chief Minister's Athletes Coaching and Empowerment Scheme (CM-ACES), which provides advanced training and financial support.

- **Championship Context:** Mero's record-breaking feat contributed to a highly competitive field at the 24th edition of the games, which saw participation from over 1,400 para-athletes across 28 states.

LeBron James breaks record for most NBA games played

- **Surpassing the "Chief":** By taking the court for his 1,612th regular-season game, LeBron passed the previous record of 1,611 games held by Hall of Famer Robert Parish since 1997. Including playoffs, LeBron's total career appearances now exceed 1,900, placing him significantly ahead of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (1,797) and Parish (1,795).
- **Unparalleled Longevity and Consistency:** At 41 years old, James is playing in a record-breaking 23rd NBA season, surpassing Vince Carter's mark of 22 seasons. Highlighting the generational gap, there are currently 79 active NBA players who were not yet born when LeBron made his league debut on October 29, 2003.
- **A Night of Multi-Records:** On the same night he broke the games-played record, LeBron continued to widen his lead in several other all-time categories. He currently holds the top spot for career points (43,000+), minutes played (60,000+), and field goals made, while also holding the record for the most All-Star and All-NBA selections in history.

Ria Solanki Wins Shot Put Gold At National Para Athletics Championship

- **Gold Medal Hat Trick:** With this victory, Ria has secured a "hat trick" of gold medals, winning the national title in shot put for three consecutive years (2024, 2025, and 2026). This consistent dominance has established her as a premier athlete in the F-46 category (for athletes with upper limb deficiencies).
- **Triumph Over Severe Hardship:** Born without her left hand below the elbow, Ria's journey was marked by extreme financial struggle. Her mother works as a housemaid and her father is a driver; the family famously shared stories of cutting back on their own meals to ensure Ria received the protein-rich diet necessary for her athletic training.
- **Strategic Career Pivot:** Ria originally began her sporting journey in 2018 as a sprinter (100m and 200m). However, following the COVID-19 pandemic, her coach, Gaurav Tyagi, suggested a switch to shot put—a move that proved to be a turning point, leading her to national records and a career-high ranking.

Chhattisgarh To Host Landmark Khelo India Tribal Games 2026

- **Decentralized Hosting Model:** The Games are being held across three culturally significant hubs to bring the action closer to tribal heartlands: Raipur (hosting hockey, football, swimming, weightlifting, and archery), Jagdalpur/Bastar (focusing on athletics), and Ambikapur/Surguja (hosting wrestling and mallakhamb).

- **Massive Participation & Inclusivity:** Approximately 3,800 participants (including over 3,000 athletes) from 30 states and Union Territories are competing. Notably, the event maintains a nearly 50:50 gender participation ratio, and host Chhattisgarh, along with Odisha, Jharkhand, and Assam, have fielded the largest contingents (each with 100+ athletes).
- **Symbolism & Talent Scouting:** The official mascot is 'Morveer'—where 'Mor' means 'our own' in Chhattisgarhi and 'Veer' signifies bravery. Beyond the competition, the event serves as a high-visibility scouting ground; standout performers will be inducted into Khelo India training centers.

Footnotes: Chhattisgarh's Governor: Ramen Deka, **CM:** Vishnu Deo Sai, **Capital:** Raipur

India's First Indoor Athletics Championships Kickoff at Kalinga Stadium

- **Historic Infrastructure Milestone:** The event was held at India's first-ever world-class indoor athletics facility, which features a 200-meter banked synthetic track (Mondo track). Unlike outdoor 400m tracks, this indoor setup requires athletes to adapt to narrower lanes, sharper turns, and a climate-controlled, wind-free environment.
- **Preparatory Ground for World Championships:** This national meet serves as a critical testing ground for both athletes and officials as Bhubaneswar has already been named the host city for the 2028 World Athletics Indoor Championships. It is the first time India will host a global track and field showpiece, making this domestic debut essential for building a local indoor ecosystem.
- **National Record-Breaking Performances:** The championships witnessed several landmark results, most notably in the 60m sprints. Gurindervir Singh shattered the men's 60m national record with a time of 6.60 seconds, while Saloni Nagar Kumari broke a 21-year-old indoor record in the women's 400m by clocking 53.73 seconds.

Transgender women athletes barred from competing in women's events at Olympics

- **Eligibility Restricted to "Biological Females":** Under the new "Policy on the Protection of the Female Category," eligibility for women's events is now strictly limited to athletes who are biological females. To enforce this, the IOC is introducing a mandatory, one-time genetic screening for the SRY gene (typically found on the Y chromosome). This test will be required for all athletes competing in the female category to confirm biological sex.
- **Scientific Basis for Fairness and Safety:** The decision followed a multi-year review by a dedicated working group. The IOC cited a "scientific consensus" that biological males retain significant performance advantages in strength, power, and endurance (ranging from 10% to over 100% depending on the sport) even after testosterone suppression. The policy aims to ensure competitive fairness and, in high-impact sports, the physical safety of female athletes.

- **Unified Global Standard:** This move marks a major shift from the 2021 framework, which previously allowed individual sports federations to set their own rules. The new policy provides a universal criteria for all Olympic sports.

India Wins Two Bronze Medals at Asia Cup Archery

- **Recurve Women's Success:** The Indian trio of Ruma Biswas, Kirti, and Ridhi Phor won the bronze medal in the women's recurve team event. They delivered a dominant performance to defeat Malaysia 5-1 in the third-place playoff, rebounding after a tough semifinal loss to China.
- **Compound Men's Podium:** In a nail-biting contest, the compound men's team—comprising veteran Rajat Chauhan, Rishabh Yadav, and Uday Kamboj—edged past Bhutan 234-232 to claim the bronze. The team had earlier topped the qualification rounds but narrowly missed the final after a one-point loss to Vietnam in the semifinals.
- **Building Momentum for Finals:** These initial bronze medals set the stage for a larger haul. By the end of the day on March 27, India added more glory, including a gold medal in the compound mixed team event (won by Rajat Chauhan and Chikitha Taniparthi) and a silver in the women's compound team event.

Indian men's team forward Gurjant Singh announced his retirement from Int. Hockey

- **A Decade of Modern-Day Revival:** The 31-year-old striker from Amritsar concludes a decorated nearly 10-year career that saw him earn 130 international caps and score 33 goals. He was a cornerstone of India's modern hockey resurgence, most notably as a key member of the back-to-back Olympic Bronze medal winning teams at Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024.
- **Injury and Career Shift:** Gurjant cited a persistent back injury sustained during the FIH Pro League in June 2025 as the primary reason for his decision. After being sidelined for nearly eight months and struggling to break back into the national side, he chose to step down to give younger talents a chance.
- **Legacy of "Big-Match" Goals:** Known for his speed and clinical finishing, Gurjant first rose to fame by scoring in the final of the 2016 Junior World Cup to help India clinch gold. He also holds the record for the fastest goal by an Indian in international hockey, scoring just 13 seconds into a match against the Netherlands in 2020.

AWARD NEWS

Karnataka Grameena Bank awarded 'National Award for Outstanding Performance in SHG Bank

- **Exceptional Credit Outreach:** The bank has demonstrated a massive commitment to rural empowerment by extending credit totaling ₹2,835 crore to 80,904 Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
- **National Recognition:** Union Minister for Rural Development, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, presented the award to the bank's General Manager, V.M. Rukmini Devi, at the National Conference on Financial Literacy and Capacity Building.
- **Impact of Consolidation:** The bank's Chairman, Shreekant M. Bhandiwad, noted that the government's 'One State - One Rural Bank' policy—which led to the merger of regional rural banks in Karnataka—significantly strengthened the bank's institutional framework.

Jharkhand Leader Kalpana Soren Gets International Honour

- **Recognition of Grassroots Leadership:** The award, presented by the BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), recognizes her significant contributions to advancing women-led development and strengthening grassroots participation in the economic and social sectors of Jharkhand.
- **A Tribute to the "Maiyan" of Jharkhand:** Dedicating the award to the women of her state, Kalpana Soren emphasized a shift in the status of women in Jharkhand—moving from being "mere beneficiaries" of government schemes to becoming active entrepreneurs and agents of change through self-help groups and local enterprises.
- **Focus on Inclusivity and Marginalized Voices:** During her address, she stressed the need for equity over just inclusion, specifically calling for the amplification of voices from marginalized and tribal communities.

Footnotes: Jharkhand's Governor: Santosh Gangwar, CM: Hemant Soren, CS: Avinash Kumar

PKF & WWF-India Present Machhli & Vanya Prani Mitra Awards

- **Honoring "The Lady of the Lakes":** The Machhli Award is named after the legendary tigress of Ranthambore (T-16), known for her 19-year reign and fearless nature. The 2026 recipient of this prestigious national award is Anita Chaudhary, a forest guard at Rajasthan's Shergarh Sanctuary.
- **Community & Conflict Management:** The Vanya Prani Mitra Award focuses on individuals who excel in managing human-wildlife conflict. A notable 2026 winner is Anil Bishnoi from Hanumangarh, often called the "Protector of Deer."
- **Strategic Expansion and Prize Pool:** For the first time, the foundation allocated a significant prize pool of ₹10 lakh to be distributed across awardees in both Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

APPOINTMENT & PERSON IN NEWS

Ramachandran R appointed as Director of Census Operations, Karnataka

- **Officer Profile and Cadre:** Ramachandran R is a 2012-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Karnataka cadre. Prior to this central deputation, he served in various significant roles within the state, including a tenure as the Managing Director of the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC).
- **Tenure and Scheme:** The appointment has been made under the Central Staffing Scheme (CSS) for a period of three years. His term is effective from the date he assumes charge of the post or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- **Strategic Role:** As Director of Census Operations, he will lead the planning and execution of demographic data collection and citizen record management in Karnataka.

CA P.V. Narayana Rao appointed Co-opted Member of ICAI's SRSB

- **Role in ESG and Global Standards:** As a member of the SRSB, CA Narayana Rao will play a direct role in developing globally benchmarked sustainability reporting standards. These frameworks are designed to help Indian companies align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, ensuring transparency and ethical governance.
- **Regulatory & Institutional Collaboration:** The Board works in close coordination with major regulatory bodies, including SEBI, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), and NITI Aayog. Rao will contribute to key initiatives such as implementing Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) audits and facilitating the growth of the Social Stock Exchange ecosystem in India.
- **Strong Leadership Legacy:** Hailing from Telangana (Warangal), CA Narayana Rao is a distinguished veteran who served as the Chairman of the ICAI Warangal Branch in 2015 and was previously a co-opted member of the ICAI's Public Relations Committee (2016).

Padma Shri awardee Sudarsan Pattnaik appointed as Brand Ambassador for Census 2027

- **Expertise in Sustainability Governance:** The appointment to the SRSB—a non-standing committee of the ICAI—recognizes Rao's extensive experience in advancing professional standards. In this role, he will contribute to developing globally aligned Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) reporting frameworks, helping Indian corporates stay future-ready and transparent.
- **Strategic Regulatory Alignment:** As a member of the SRSB, Rao will work in coordination with key bodies like SEBI, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), and NITI Aayog. The board's primary mission is to help Indian businesses align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 through structured sustainability audits and reporting mechanisms.
- **Distinguished Leadership Record:** Based in Hyderabad/Warangal, Rao has a long history of leadership within the ICAI, having served as the Chairman of the Warangal

Branch in 2015 and a co-opted member of the ICAI's Public Relations Committee in 2016.

Rudrendra Tandon appointed as East Secretary, MEA

- **Succession and Leadership Transition:** A 1994-batch officer of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Tandon will succeed Periasamy Kumaran (IFS:1992) in this critical role. As Secretary (East), he will be responsible for overseeing India's diplomatic relations with countries in East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific region.
- **Extensive Regional Expertise:** Tandon brings significant experience in handling complex geopolitical territories. He previously served as India's Ambassador to Greece (2023–2026) and was the Ambassador to Afghanistan (2020–2021) during the high-stakes period of the Taliban takeover. He also served as India's Ambassador to the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, making him well-versed in the "Act East" region.
- **Strategic Portfolio Focus:** In his new capacity, he will lead India's engagement with major regional groupings including ASEAN, BIMSTEC, and the East Asia Summit. His role is pivotal in strengthening the "Act East Policy" and managing bilateral ties with key partners like Japan, South Korea, and Australia, particularly within the framework of the Indo-Pacific strategy.

Footnotes: MEA's Minister Responsible : Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, HQ: New Delhi, Estd: 1946

Puneet Gupta appointed as Chairperson of DNPA

- **Leadership Transition:** Gupta succeeds Mariam Mammen Mathew (CEO of Manorama Online), who completed her two-year term. Having previously served as the Vice Chairperson of the DNPA, Gupta's elevation is seen as a move to ensure continuity in the association's ongoing strategic initiatives and policy advocacy.
- **Focus on AI and Digital Disruption:** Upon his appointment, Gupta highlighted that the industry is navigating a "consequential shift" driven by Artificial Intelligence. His primary focus will be on shaping policy frameworks that address how content is discovered, valued, and monetized in an AI-driven world, ensuring that publishers are proactive participants rather than just reactive observers.
- **New Executive Team:** Alongside Gupta, the DNPA appointed Anant Goenka (Executive Director of The Indian Express Group) as the new Vice Chairperson.

BBC appointed Matt Brittin as new DG

- **Strategic Digital Pivot:** Brittin spent nearly two decades at Google, most recently serving as the President for EMEA (Europe, Middle East, and Africa). His appointment signals a "tech-first" shift for the BBC, prioritizing digital infrastructure, algorithmic engagement, and data-driven reach to compete with platforms like Netflix and YouTube.

- **Succession Amidst Turbulence:** He succeeds Tim Davie, who resigned following controversy surrounding a Panorama documentary's editing of a speech by Donald Trump—an issue that evolved into a \$10 billion lawsuit. Until Brittin takes over in May, Rhodri Talfan Davies will serve as the Interim Director-General starting April 2.
- **Unique Background & Challenges:** Brittin is the first BBC Director-General to be appointed without direct experience in television journalism. A former Olympic rower (1988 Seoul Games) and a self-proclaimed Doctor Who fan, he faces immediate challenges including negotiating the Royal Charter renewal (due in 2027).

Footnotes: BBC's Chairman: Samir Shah, HQ: London, Estd: 1922

OBITUARY NEWS

French Former PM Lionel Jospin, Architect of 35-hour Week passed away

- **Architect of Major Social Reforms:** Jospin is best remembered as the "father of the 35-hour workweek," a landmark labor reform implemented in 2000 to reduce unemployment and improve work-life balance. His tenure also saw the introduction of the PACS (civil solidarity pacts) for both same-sex and opposite-sex couples, and the law on gender parity in politics.
- **The "Plural Left" and Economic Growth:** He successfully led a diverse coalition of Socialists, Communists, and Greens, a period known as "cohabitation." Under his leadership, France experienced a significant economic upturn, characterized by a substantial drop in unemployment and the creation of the CMU (Universal Health Coverage), which ensured healthcare for the most precarious citizens.
- **A "Bolt from the Blue" Political Exit:** His political career ended abruptly in the 2002 presidential election.

Birute Galdikas Dies at 79: Legendary Orangutan Researcher passed away

- **The Last of the "Trimates":** Dr. Galdikas was the final surviving member of the "Trimates" (also known as "Leakey's Angels")—a trio of women handpicked by paleoanthropologist Louis Leakey to study great apes. Alongside Jane Goodall (chimpanzees) and the late Dian Fossey (gorillas), Galdikas revolutionized our understanding of primates, proving that women were uniquely suited for the patience and persistence required for long-term field research.
- **World's Longest Continuous Study:** In 1971, she established "Camp Leakey" in the Tanjung Puting Reserve of Indonesian Borneo. Her work there became the longest continuous study of any wild mammal by a single principal investigator.
- **Conservation & Rehabilitation Pioneer:** Beyond research, she was a fierce activist. She founded Orangutan Foundation International (OFI) in 1986 and established a world-renowned rehabilitation center that has helped over 450 captive orangutans return to the wild.