



# Current Affairs

28 Jan, 2025

## M. Mohan Appointed as Director of ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre



### 1. M. Mohan Appointed as Director of ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre

M. Mohan has been appointed as the Director of ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), taking charge on January 27, 2025. He succeeds Dr. V. Narayanan, who was recently appointed as the ISRO Chairman. Mohan has held key leadership roles in ISRO, including Director (Projects) at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) and Project Director for major GSLV missions. His contributions include leading the Moon Impact Probe on Chandrayaan-1, which placed the Indian flag on the lunar surface. As LPSC Director, he will oversee the development of liquid propulsion systems for India's space missions.



#### Foot notes:

- M. Mohan has been an integral part of ISRO's propulsion initiatives and has significantly contributed to various projects over the years, with expertise in liquid propulsion systems.
- He has held several key positions, including Director of Projects at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, and has been recognized with prestigious awards like the ISRO Performance Excellence Award.
- The Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre is a crucial center for ISRO, focusing on the development of liquid propulsion stages for launch vehicles and spacecraft, and has contributed to missions like the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle and Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle.

- With M. Mohan at the helm, LPSC is expected to continue its trajectory of innovation and excellence, further strengthening ISRO's propulsion capabilities and contributing to upcoming missions like Gaganyaan.
- M. Mohan joins a lineage of distinguished directors who have propelled India's space missions, including Dr. A.E. Muthunayagam, Dr. K. Sivan, and Dr. S. Somanath, and is poised to make a significant impact in his new role.

## 2. Assam Announces Dibrugarh as Second Capital

The Assam government has announced Dibrugarh as the state's second capital, a significant move aimed at decentralizing administrative functions. The decision is expected to help ease the pressure on Guwahati, the current capital, by distributing governmental activities across the state. Dibrugarh, located in the eastern part of Assam, will serve as a hub for administration and development in the region. This step is also part of the state government's broader plan to promote balanced growth and better governance in the northeastern regions of Assam. The move has been welcomed by many, as it promises to boost infrastructure, employment, and economic activities in Dibrugarh.



### Foot notes:

- Dibrugarh is being upgraded to a full-fledged city, which will not only enhance the ease of living but also improve connectivity within the region.
- The city has come a long way from its complex past, when it was once a center for militancy, particularly for the proscribed group ULFA(I).
- The Assam government is investing heavily in urban development, with the Chief Minister laying the foundation for four major flyovers costing Rs 377 crores to improve infrastructure and connectivity.
- Dibrugarh is being positioned as a hub for investment and business, with the government promoting it as a potential site for semiconductor manufacturing and collaborating with major corporations to develop the energy sector.
- The announcement coincided with Republic Day celebrations, marking a significant transformation for the city and its people, despite recent low-intensity blasts claimed by ULFA(I) on January 26, 2025.

## 3. Alexander Lukashenko re-elected as Belarus's President

Alexander Lukashenko has been re-elected as the President of Belarus, extending his long-standing rule since 1994. The election, however, was marred by allegations of fraud and a lack of transparency, sparking widespread protests across the country. Opposition leaders and international observers have criticized the electoral process,

calling it neither free nor fair. Despite these concerns, Lukashenko maintains strong support from the security forces and key allies like Russia. His re-election signals a continuation of his authoritarian governance, with potential crackdowns on dissent and tighter control over political opposition.

**Foot notes:**

- Lukashenko's victory was widely expected, with the opposition calling the election a "farce" and a "sham" due to the lack of democratic freedoms and the repression of opposition candidates.
- The election saw a turnout of 85.70%, with Lukashenko winning 5,136,995 votes, while his closest rival, Sergei Syrankov, received just 189,930 votes.
- The European Union's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, called the election a "blatant affront to democracy", and the exiled Belarus opposition leader, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, described it as a "senseless farce".
- Lukashenko's re-election has been congratulated by Russian president Vladimir Putin and Chinese president Xi Jinping, among others.
- The election has been criticized for its lack of transparency and democratic freedoms, with the opposition claiming that the vote was rigged and that Lukashenko's victory was predetermined.



**4. Jasprit Bumrah Won ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year 2024**

Indian fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah has been honored with the ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year award for 2024, following a remarkable performance throughout the year. After recovering from a back injury in late 2023, Bumrah emerged as the leading wicket-taker, claiming 71 wickets in 13 matches, surpassing his closest competitor, Gus Atkinson, by 19 wickets. His exceptional average of 14.92 and a strike rate of 30.1 set new benchmarks among bowlers with over 70 wickets in a calendar year. Notably, during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia, Bumrah secured 32 wickets in five matches at an average of 13.06, earning him the Player of the Series title, even though India lost the series. This accolade marks Bumrah as the first Indian cricketer to receive this award since Virat Kohli in 2018.



**Foot notes:**

- He took 71 wickets in 2024, the highest by any bowler in the year, with a stunning average of 14.92 and a strike rate of 30.1.



- Bumrah's performance was instrumental in India's wins against England and Bangladesh at home, as well as their impressive showings in South Africa and Australia.
- He became the fourth Indian bowler to claim more than 70 Test wickets in a calendar year, joining an elite group that includes Ravichandran Ashwin, Anil Kumble, and Kapil Dev.
- Bumrah's average of 14.92 was the lowest amongst all the 17 bowlers who registered more than 70 wickets in Test cricket in a calendar year.
- He also won the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year, edging out nominees like Travis Head, Joe Root, and Harry Brook, and becoming the fifth Indian to win the award.

### **5. Team Marksmen Network appoints Rishi Kapoor as CEO and Director**

Team Marksmen Network has appointed Rishi Kapoor as its new CEO and Director. With a wealth of experience in the business and sports sectors, Kapoor is expected to drive the company's strategic growth and innovation. His leadership will focus on expanding the company's footprint and creating new opportunities within the sports ecosystem. Prior to this role, Kapoor has held various leadership positions, gaining a reputation for his business acumen and industry insights. His appointment marks a significant milestone in the company's mission to strengthen its position in the market and enhance its operational capabilities.



#### **Foot notes:**

- Kapoor will lead Team Marksmen Network's strategic growth initiatives, overseeing all aspects of business operations, with a focus on expanding the company's market presence and developing innovative client solutions.
- He brings over 20 years of extensive expertise in building and managing sustainable verticals within the media industry, with a proven record of helping organizations achieve their strategic objectives.
- Kapoor's appointment marks a significant milestone in the company's journey, as Team Marksmen Network aims to strengthen its position as an industry leader, expand its portfolio of offerings, and accelerate its international expansion plans.
- He's passionate about driving innovation, and his track record in creating multiple successful media business verticals aligns perfectly with Team Marksmen Network's vision for the future.
- The co-founders of Team Marksmen Network, Rajesh Khubchandani, Aakash Tiwari, and Sharad Gupta, have expressed their confidence in Kapoor's ability to

drive the company's next phase of growth, citing his deep understanding of the media landscape and proven ability to build sustainable businesses.

#### **6. Fleishman Hillard appoints Madhulika Ojha as MD for India**

Fleishman Hillard has appointed Madhulika Ojha as the Managing Director for its India operations, effective January 27, 2025. Based in Mumbai, Ojha will oversee strategy, operations, and growth across the agency's India offices, reporting directly to Joanne Wong, Asia Pacific President and Senior Partner at Fleishman Hillard. Ojha brings nearly 20 years of strategy consulting experience, having previously served as an Executive Director in the Strategy and Transactions advisory team at EY in India. Her career includes roles at Capgemini, Deloitte, TCS, and Tech Mahindra, advising Fortune 500 companies across various sectors. Joanne Wong stated that Ojha's expertise in post-merger integration and financial communications will strengthen the agency's position as a trusted advisor in India's evolving business landscape.



#### **Foot notes:**

- She'll be overseeing the strategy, operations, and growth of the agency's India offices, reporting directly to Joanne Wong, Asia Pacific president and senior partner at Fleishman Hillard.
- With nearly 20 years of strategy consulting experience, Ojha brings a wealth of expertise in designing and implementing large-scale transformation programs to help businesses grow and thrive.
- Her background includes stints at top global business advisory and technology consulting firms like EY, Capgemini, Deloitte, TCS, and Tech Mahindra, where she advised C-level leaders across various industries.
- Ojha's appointment is a significant move for Fleishman Hillard, as the agency looks to solidify its position as a trusted advisor in the Indian market, offering both high-level strategic counsel and robust implementation for clients.
- As she takes on this new role, Ojha is poised to drive growth, strategy, and innovation for Fleishman Hillard's India operations, and we can't wait to see the impact she'll make.

#### **7. JM Financial appoints Ankur Jhaveri as MD & CEO of Institutional Equities**

JM Financial has appointed Ankur Jhaveri as the Managing Director and CEO of its Institutional Equities division, effective January 15, 2025. In this role, Jhaveri will be responsible for strengthening the firm's sales, trading, research, and derivatives businesses. He brings nearly two decades of experience in institutional equities and derivatives, having previously served as Managing Director at Axis Capital. Jhaveri

holds an MBA in Finance from NL Dalmia Institute of Management Studies and Research, and a Master's degree in International Finance from ICAI University. Chirag Negandhi, Managing Director at JM Financial, expressed confidence that Jhaveri's expertise will leverage emerging market opportunities and accelerate growth in the company's equities business.



**Foot notes:**

- Jhaveri will be responsible for overseeing the strategy, operations, and growth of JM Financial's institutional equities business, which is a crucial part of the company's overall operations.
- With his extensive experience in the financial industry, Jhaveri is well-equipped to drive growth and innovation in JM Financial's institutional equities business, and his expertise will be invaluable in navigating the complex landscape of the financial markets.
- This appointment is a significant move for JM Financial, as the company looks to expand its presence in the institutional equities space and capitalize on emerging growth opportunities in the market.
- JM Financial has been performing well, with its consolidated revenue increasing by 46% year-over-year in Q4FY24, and its net profit rising by 90% year-over-year in FY24, making it an exciting time for Jhaveri to join the team.
- With Jhaveri at the helm, JM Financial's institutional equities business is poised for continued growth and success, and we can expect to see some exciting developments in the coming months and years.

**8. PR Sreejesh conferred with Padma Bhushan**

Former Indian men's hockey captain PR Sreejesh has been conferred with the prestigious Padma Bhushan award, India's third-highest civilian honor, in recognition of his significant contributions to the sport. Sreejesh, who retired after securing a bronze medal at the Paris 2024 Olympics, has been a pivotal figure in Indian hockey, known for his exceptional goalkeeping skills and leadership. His illustrious career includes leading India to a historic bronze medal at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, ending a 41-year Olympic medal drought for the men's hockey team. Sreejesh's dedication and achievements have left an indelible mark on Indian hockey, inspiring future generations of players.



**Foot notes:**

- He's only the second hockey player to receive this award, after the legendary Major Dhyan Chand, who got it back in 1956.
- Sreejesh had an incredible 18-year career, playing 336 international matches and helping India win numerous titles, including bronze medals at the Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Olympics.
- He's a three-time FIH Goalkeeper of the Year and has also received the Arjuna Award, Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, and World Games Athlete of the Year award.
- As a coach, Sreejesh recently guided the Indian junior team to a Junior Asia Cup title win, showing his continued impact on the sport.
- Hockey India President Dr. Dilip Tirkey and Secretary General Shri Bhola Nath Singh have congratulated Sreejesh on this well-deserved honor, recognizing his monumental contribution to Indian hockey.

### 9. Hariman Sharma: The Apple Man Of India Honored With Padma Shri

Hariman Sharma, a visionary farmer from Himachal Pradesh, has been honored with the Padma Shri award for his groundbreaking work in apple cultivation. In 1999, he began experimenting with apple farming in the lower regions of the state, areas traditionally considered unsuitable due to their warmer climates. By 2007, Sharma successfully developed a disease-resistant apple variety that thrives at elevations as low as 1,800 feet above sea level, challenging conventional agricultural beliefs. His innovation has not only transformed apple farming in warmer regions but also inspired countless farmers to adopt new cultivation techniques. This recognition underscores Sharma's significant contributions to agriculture and his role in advancing sustainable farming practices in India.



#### Foot notes:

- He developed the HRMN-99 apple variety, which is a self-pollinating, low-chilling variety that can thrive in tropical and sub-tropical regions, making apple cultivation possible in areas where it was previously considered unviable.
- The HRMN-99 variety has several unique features, including striped red-over-yellow skin, soft and juicy pulp, and the ability to produce up to 75 kg of fruit per plant annually.
- Sharma's innovation has empowered thousands of farmers across India, providing them with an additional source of income and improving their livelihoods.



- His work has also made apples more accessible and affordable to the common man, aligning with India's sustainable development goals and contributing to food security.
- Sharma's recognition with the Padma Shri is a testament to the impact of his innovation, which has been validated by the National Innovation Foundation and has expanded to 29 states and UTs in India.

#### **10. Amitabh Bachchan ropes in as brand ambassador for India Gate Basmati Rice**

KRBL Ltd., the parent company of India Gate Basmati Rice, has announced a partnership with renowned actor Amitabh Bachchan as the brand ambassador for India Gate Basmati Rice. This collaboration aims to strengthen the brand's connection with consumers and reaffirm its position as a leader in the basmati rice market. With a legacy spanning over 130 years, KRBL has consistently set benchmarks in quality and innovation, making India Gate Basmati Rice a preferred choice for millions of households globally.



#### **Foot notes:**

- Bachchan's association with the brand is a huge deal, highlighting India Gate's focus on strengthening its consumer engagement and presence in the global basmati rice market.
- According to Ayush Gupta, India Business Head at KRBL Limited, Bachchan's stature, integrity, and timeless appeal perfectly resonate with the brand's core values and rich heritage.
- With Bachchan on board, India Gate aims to deepen its consumer engagement and take the brand's story to every corner of the country and the world, catering to varied tastes and culinary traditions.
- Bachchan's versatility and iconic roles throughout his career blend seamlessly with India Gate's legacy, delighting households worldwide with its unmatched offerings.
- The partnership was announced on January 25, 2025, and is expected to further establish India Gate Basmati Rice as a leading brand in the global market.



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