IBT®

IBT INSTITUTE PVT. LTD

WEEKLY —
Current
Affairs

NATIONAL NEWS

India Ranks 6th in Asia Manufacturing Index 2026

- **Mixed Pillar Performance**: While India ranks 1st in Workforce (due to labor size and cost) and 3rd in Economy (driven by high GDP growth), it struggles in other areas. It ranks poorly in Tax Policy (9th), International Trade (9th), and Political Risk (9th), with the report highlighting high logistics costs and administrative complexity as major bottlenecks.
- **Intensifying Regional Competition**: India maintained its 6th place from the previous year but faces pressure as neighbors move faster. China retained the top spot, while Malaysia surged to 2nd place for the first time. Vietnam slipped to 3rd, and Singapore (4th) overtook South Korea (5th), reflecting a highly dynamic shift in Asian manufacturing hubs.
- **Strategic "Red Flag" for Make in India**: The index serves as a call to action for India's goal of a $1 trillion manufacturing economy by FY2026. The report suggests that to move up, India must pivot from relying solely on labor availability to accelerating logistics efficiency, policy stability, and digital infrastructure to compete with Southeast Asian peers.

Footnotes: **Top Performers**: China (1st), Malaysia (2nd), Vietnam (3rd)

Punjab Launches 'Mukhya Mantri Sehat Yojana'

- **Universal Health Coverage**: Is yojana ketahat Punjab keharparivar (family) ko harsaal ₹5 lakh tak ka muftilajmilega. Yeh scheme sirfgareebparivarontakmahdoodnahihai, balkiisme middle-class aur un-organized sector ke workers ko bhishamilkiyagayahai, taaki "Health for All" ka mission pooraho sake.
- **Empanelled Hospitals aur OPD Suvidha**: Is scheme keandar state kesabhisarkari hospitals kesaath-saath bade private hospitals ko bhijodagayahai. Khaasbaat yeh hai ki isme surgery kesaath-saath OPD (Outpatient Department) aur dawaiyon ka kharchabhi cover kiyajayega, jo pehle ki schemes meinaksarnahihotatha.
- **Digital Health Card:** Har beneficiary ko ek QR-code based 'Sehat Card' diya jayega. Is digital card ki madad se mareezbinakisi paper-work ke cashless ilajkarwasakenge. Saath hi, is yojana keliyehar district mein 'Sehat Mitra' ki tanaati (appointment) ki jayegi jo logon ko hospital meinbharti hone meinmadadkarenge.

Footnotes: **Launched in Mohali** by Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann, Free Treatment Up to Rs.10 Lakh

Pixxel-led Consortium Signs Pact with IN-SPACe

- **India's First Private National Constellation**: This is the country's first privately-led national Earth Observation (EO) satellite system. Under this Public-Private Partnership

(PPP), the consortium will design, build, own, and operate a fleet of 12 advanced satellites to provide sovereign "Earth Intelligence" for India.

- **Massive Private Investment**: The consortium—which includes Pixxel, Dhruva Space, PierSight, and SatSure—will invest over ₹1,200 crore over the next five years. This marks a fundamental shift from government-funded space infrastructure to a model where private companies finance and manage critical national assets.
- **Multimodal Data Capabilities**: The 12-satellite constellation will feature a mix of high-resolution optical, multispectral, SAR (Radar), and hyperspectral sensors. While the Indian government will have priority access to this data for national security and governance, the consortium is also permitted to sell the data to global commercial markets.

About Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre-
Chairman: Dr. Pawan Goenka, **HQ**: Ahmedabad, **Estd**: 2020

Uttarakhand Govt implements the UCC Ordinance, 2026

- **Stringent Penalties for Fraud and Coercion**: The ordinance introduces strict criminal measures against force, coercion, and fraud in both marriages and live-in relationships. Notably, it makes the misrepresentation of identity at the time of marriage a legal ground for annulment.
- **Administrative Reforms and Digital Integration**: To improve efficiency, the ordinance mandates that if a sub-registrar fails to act within a specific timeframe, cases are automatically forwarded to higher authorities (Registrar/Registrar General). It also aligns all penal provisions with the new national laws: the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita.
- **Gender-Neutral Language and Termination Certificates**: In a move toward inclusivity, the term "widow" has been replaced with "spouse" in legal documentation. Additionally, the ordinance simplifies the end of live-in partnerships by requiring the Registrar to issue a formal termination certificate upon the dissolution of the relationship.

Indian Railways Deploys First Humanoid Robot 'ASC ARJUN'

- **Advanced AI Surveillance**: ASC ARJUN is equipped with a Face Recognition System (FRS) for intrusion detection and AI-based crowd monitoring. It generates real-time alerts for the Railway Protection Force (RPF) control room, helping manage heavy passenger flow and identify suspicious activities.
- **Indigenous Development**: The robot is a product of indigenous innovation, having been designed and developed entirely in Visakhapatnam. Standing at 165 cm, it features semi-autonomous navigation and obstacle-avoidance technology, allowing it to patrol platforms 24/7.
- **Interactive Passenger Assistance**: Beyond security, it acts as a digital assistant. It can make automated announcements in English, Hindi, and Telugu, and is programmed with

"friendly" social gestures, such as offering a Namaste to passengers and saluting RPF personnel.

Sikkim Police Conferred with President's Police Colour Award 2026

- **Elite Milestone:** Sikkim has become the 15th state in India and only the 3rd in the Northeast (following Assam and Manipur) to receive this rare distinction, commonly known as the "Nishaan."
- **Recognition of Excellence**: The award honors the force's sustained excellence in maintaining one of India's most peaceful law-and-order environments, its effective disaster response (specifically during the 2023 Glacial Lake Outburst Flood), and its role in securing strategically sensitive international borders.
- **Symbolic Uniform Change**: All 6,500 personnel of the Sikkim Police are now entitled to wear a special emblem (insignia) on the left sleeve of their uniform. A ceremonial flag, measuring 3'9" by 3' with golden fringes, will be formally presented during a special "Alankaran Parade" later this year.

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

MP Governor Mangubhai Patel Declares 2026 as 'Year of Agriculture'

- **Financial Commitment & "Samriddh Kisan" Vision**: Under the tagline "Prosperous Farmer – Prosperous State," the Governor highlighted a massive jump in the state's agriculture budget—from ₹600 crore in 2002-03 to over ₹27,000 crore in 2024-25—to drive the state toward becoming a global agricultural hub.
- **10-Point Development Model**: The initiative is built on a multifaceted model focusing on 10 core activities, including technology transfer (drones and hydroponics), natural farming, digital transparency in markets, and expanding e-Mandi systems across 259 markets to benefit over 40 lakh registered farmers.
- **"Milk Capital" & Irrigation Push**: A primary goal is to make MP the "Milk Capital of India" by increasing its share in national milk production from 9% to 20% through the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Kamdhenu Scheme. Additionally, three major river-linking projects (including Ken-Betwa) aim to irrigate 1.6 million hectares across 25 districts.

Footnotes: **MP's Governor**: Mangubhai C. Patel, **CM**: Mohan Yadav, **Capital**: Bhopal

Nagaland inaugurates first Drone School & Centre of Excellence

- **DGCA-Compliant Training & Skill Development**: The school will offer official Remote Pilot Certificate (RPC) courses compliant with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Additionally, it provides specialized training in First Person View (FPV) flying, drone repair, and data analysis, with the first batch of 50 trainees already receiving free, sponsored training.

- **A Hub for Innovation and Research**: Beyond being a school, the facility functions as a Centre of Excellence for UAV research. It is designed to provide technical support to government departments for applications in agriculture, disaster management, surveying, and mapping, helping the state move toward "technology-driven governance."
- **Infrastructure for the "Last Mile"**: The institution is fully equipped with advanced classrooms, simulators, assembly workshops, and dedicated flying grounds at Tsiesema and Thizama. The goal is to transfer this technical knowledge to interior districts, ensuring that the benefits of drone technology reach the most remote areas of Nagaland.

Footnotes: **Nagaland's CM**:Neiphiu Rio, **Governor**: Ajay Kumar, **Capital**: Kohima

Adani Defence Signs MoU with Brazil's Embraer

- **India's First Private-Sector Assembly Line**: The collaboration focuses on establishing a Final Assembly Line (FAL) in India for Embraer's regional jets (typically 70–150 seats). This would make Adani the first private Indian company to assemble large-scale commercial passenger aircraft domestically.
- **Support for Regional Connectivity (UDAN):** The partnership is specifically designed to meet the demand for regional air travel. With India projected to need over 500 regional aircraft in the next 20 years, these locally made jets will support the government's UDAN scheme to connect Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.
- **End-to-End Aviation Ecosystem**: Beyond manufacturing, the MoU covers a "phased increase in indigenization," including supply chain development, Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) services, and pilot training. This aligns with the "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" (Self-Reliant India) initiative to reduce dependence on imported aircraft and spare parts

India climbs to 38th in Global Innovation Index 2025

- **Regional and Income-Group Leadership**: India has solidified its position as a global over-performer. It now ranks 1st among the 37 lower-middle-income economies and 1st in the Central and Southern Asia region. This demonstrates that India is effectively converting its investments in education and infrastructure into high-value innovation outputs.
- **Strength in Digital and Knowledge Outputs**: A major driver for this rank is India's performance in specific sub-categories. The country ranks 1st globally in ICT services exports and 22nd in Knowledge & Technology Outputs. This is fueled by a massive unicorn ecosystem (the 3rd largest globally) and a significant rise in intellectual property activity—ranking 4th in trademark filings and 6th in patents worldwide in 2024.
- **Impact of Strategic Government Schemes**: The improvement is largely attributed to targeted initiatives such as the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme and the India Semiconductor Mission. As of 2025, the PLI scheme alone has attracted over ₹2 lakh

crore in investments and created over 12.6 lakh jobs, turning India into a critical hub for smartphone and electronics manufacturing.

NITI Aayog Launches Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0

- **Objective of 100% Saturation**: The campaign aims to achieve full coverage (saturation) of critical indicators in health, nutrition, and infrastructure across 112 Aspirational Districts and 513 Aspirational Blocks.
- **Time-Bound Mission Mode**: It is a high-intensity, 3-month initiative running from January 2026 to April 2026, designed to accelerate development through focused action plans and monthly progress tracking.
- **Grassroots Community Engagement**: The program prioritizes "Jan Bhagidari" (People's Participation), mobilizing local communities and district officials to bridge the gap between policy intent and ground-level implementation.

New Aadhaar App Launched, Bringing Secure & Versatile Digital ID

- **Selective Data Sharing and Privacy Control**: The app introduces "Consent-based Selective Sharing," allowing users to share only specific details (like name and age) via a secure QR code for everyday needs like hotel check-ins, eliminating the need to provide physical photocopies and protecting the full Aadhaar number.
- **Face Authentication and Offline Verification**: It features AI-driven Face ID for instant identity verification and allows for "Offline Verification," which enables users to prove their identity securely even in areas with no internet connectivity by using encrypted stored credentials.
- **One Family – One App Management**: The app supports the "Multi-profile" feature, allowing a single user to manage up to five Aadhaar profiles on one device, while also enabling residents to update critical details like mobile numbers and addresses directly through the interface.

Indian researchers developed a new high-voltage supercapacitor

- **Unprecedented Voltage Capacity**: The new supercapacitor achieves an operating voltage of 3.4 V, overcoming the traditional 3.0 V limit of commercial devices where electrolytes typically begin to decompose or face safety risks like flammability.
- **Advanced Material Innovation**: It utilizes a dual-functional Porous Graphene Carbon Nanocomposite (PGCN) electrode that is both water-repellent and highly compatible with organic electrolytes, doubling the energy density and providing 33% higher energy storage than conventional models.
- **Industrial Scalability and Durability**: The electrodes are produced through an eco-friendly hydrothermal process that is easily scalable for mass production, with the

resulting device retaining 96% of its performance even after 15,000 charge-discharge cycles.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

France Passes Bill to Ban Social Media for Children U-15

- **Age Limit and Mandatory Verification**: The bill prohibits children under the age of 15 from creating or using social media accounts. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat will be legally required to implement "safety by design" and robust age-verification systems that comply with EU privacy standards.
- **Expansion of Smartphone Bans:** Building on existing rules for primary and middle schools, the new law extends the ban on smartphones to high schools (lycées). The goal is to create distraction-free learning environments and reduce the "algorithmic addiction" that lawmakers argue interferes with cognitive development.
- **Strict Platform Accountability**: Unlike previous voluntary guidelines, this law places the burden of compliance on tech companies rather than parents. Platforms that fail to exclude minors or use addictive features on them could face massive fines—up to 6% of their global annual turnover—under the European Union's Digital Services Act (DSA) framework.

Microsoft Unveils Second-GEN 'Maia 200' In-House AI Chip

- **Massive Performance Leap**: Built on TSMC's cutting-edge 3nm process, the Maia 200 features over 140 billion transistors. It is optimized for "inference" (running AI models) and delivers over 10 petaFLOPS of 4-bit (FP4) performance—three times faster than Amazon's competing Trainium 3 chip.
- **Industry-Leading Memory & Efficiency**: To solve the "memory wall" bottleneck, Microsoft equipped the chip with 216GB of HBM3e memory and a redesigned subsystem. This allows for 30% better "performance-per-dollar" than previous systems, making it significantly cheaper to run massive models like OpenAI's GPT-5.2.
- **Scalable "Ethernet-First" Infrastructure**: Unlike many rivals that use proprietary networking, the Maia 200 uses a custom transport layer built on standard Ethernet. This allows Microsoft to link up to 6,144 chips in a single cluster, providing the massive scale needed for the world's most complex "reasoning" AI workloads.

DEFENCE NEWS

Indian Army Partners with IISc to Develop AI Defence System

- **Focus on Indigenous AI Systems**: The primary goal is to develop a fully indigenous AI-based system tailored for modern warfare. This initiative aligns with the Atmanirbhar

Bharat (Self-Reliant India) mission, aiming to reduce the military's dependence on foreign software and hardware for critical defense operations.

- **Addressing Digital Battlefield Challenges**: The system is being designed to tackle emerging threats in the digital and information domain. This includes using AI for real-time data processing, predictive analytics, and decision-support mechanisms to manage the massive flow of data from drones, sensors, and satellites.
- **Triple-Helix Collaboration**: The project follows a unique collaborative model involving military operational experience (Indian Army), academic research (IISc), and startup innovation. Notably, the Indian startup Indy Astra is a key partner in this venture, bridging the gap between high-level research and battlefield-ready deployment.

Military Quantum Mission Policy Framework released

- **Civil-Military Fusion**: The framework breaks the "lab-only" cycle by creating dedicated governing bodies that include experts from the government, academia, and private deep-tech startups. This is designed to fast-track the transition of quantum tools from research to active battlefield deployment.
- **Tri-Service Jointness**: For the first time, a unified policy ensures that the Army, Navy, and Air Force adopt standardized quantum protocols from the start. This "jointness" is critical for the operational success of India's upcoming Integrated Theatre Commands.
- **Alignment with National Goals**: The MQM is strategically aligned with the ₹6,003 crore National Quantum Mission (NQM). It ensures that the Armed Forces are not just passive users but active stakeholders in India's broader push for Atmanirbharta (self-reliance) in critical emerging technologies.

BANKING NEWS

Suryoday Small Finance Bank Partners with HyperVerge

- AI-Powered Video KYC: The bank has deployed HyperVerge's advanced Video KYC (VKYC) solution. This AI-driven platform allows for real-time identity verification, enabling customers to open accounts remotely and securely within minutes, significantly reducing manual paperwork.
- Doubling Operational Productivity: The solution is designed to double the efficiency of the bank's verification agents. By automating key checks, each agent can now successfully complete nearly twice the number of verificationcalls per day compared to previous workflows, allowing the bank to scale rapidly without increasing overhead.
- Enhanced Security and Compliance: Built with a "compliance-first" architecture, the platform ensures that all personal data is stored securely and is accessible only by the bank. This reinforces regulatory adherence and provides a high-quality, fraud-resistant experience for the bank's growing digital customer base.

**Footnotes**: **SSFB's CEO**: R. Baskar Babu, **HQ**: Mumbai, **Estd**: 2008

Ashwini Kumar Tewari took Charge as SBI MD

- Extended Tenure for Stability: The Government of India reappointed him for a second term that will last until December 31, 2027, or until his superannuation. This move is designed to ensure leadership continuity within India's largest public sector bank.
- Strategic Portfolio: In his current capacity, he oversees Corporate Banking and Subsidiaries. This includes handling the bank's large corporate credit business as well as non-bank arms like SBI Card, Mutual Funds, and Life/General Insurance.
- Veteran Background: A career banker who joined SBI in 1991 as a Probationary Officer, he previously served as the MD & CEO of SBI Cards and was the Country Head for SBI's US Operations. He is credited with driving significant technology refreshes and digital partnerships (like GPay and Paytm) during his career.

Footnotes: **SBI's Chairman**: C. Sreenivasulu Setty, **HQ**: Mumbai, **Estd**: 1955

Union Bank of India appoints Dhirendra Jain as CFO

- **Internal Promotion for Continuity**: Dhirendra Jain, currently the General Manager of Finance and Accounts at Union Bank, will officially take over the CFO role on February 1, 2026. He succeeds Avinash Vasant Prabhu, who resigned from the position for personal reasons.
- **Extensive Banking Pedigree**: A qualified Chartered Accountant (CA) with over 28 years of experience, Jain brings deep institutional knowledge to the role. His background spans critical areas including large corporate credit, as well as leadership stints as a Regional and Zonal Head within the bank.
- **Strategic Timing**: The transition comes at a high point for the bank; UBI recently reported a 9.7% rise in net profit to ₹5,073 crore for the December 2025 quarter. Jain will be tasked with maintaining this momentum, specifically focusing on improving Net Interest Margins (NIM) and managing credit costs in a shifting interest rate environment.

Footnotes: **UBI's MD & CEO**: Ashish Pandey, **HQ**: Mumbai, **Estd**: 1919

Munish Jain re-appointed as Director at CSF Bank

- **New Three-Year Tenure**: Munish Jain has been re-appointed as a Whole-Time Director, designated as Executive Director, for a period of three years. This new term is set to take effect from August 28, 2026, ensuring a seamless transition and stability in the bank's top-tier management.
- **Core Founding Member & Veteran**: Jain is a foundational figure at CSFB, having been with the institution since its inception in 2000 (then Capital Local Area Bank). Over his 24+ year career, he has served in pivotal roles including Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO), making him one of the most experienced executives in India's small finance banking sector.

- **Regulatory and Governance Process**: While the Board has greenlit the extension, the appointment remains subject to final approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the bank's shareholders. This follows standard regulatory procedures for high-level banking appointments to ensure compliance with the Banking Regulation Act.

Footnotes: **CSFB's Chairman:** Madan Gopal Sharma, **HQ**: Jalandhar, **Estd**: 2000

SPORTS NEWS

Nat Sciver-Brunt Creates History with 1st Century in WPL

- **Breaking the "Nineties" Jinx**: After 82 matches and four seasons of the tournament, Sciver-Brunt finally broke the elusive three-figure barrier. Prior to this, the league had seen several players fall in the 90s (notably Sophie Devine and Georgia Voll at 99), but her unbeaten 100 off 57 balls is the first official ton in WPL history.
- **Match-Winning Dominance**: Playing for the Mumbai Indians against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in Vadodara, her innings featured 16 fours and 1 six. This powerhouse performance propelled Mumbai to 199/4, the highest total of the 2026 season, securing a vital 15-run victory.
- **Record-Breaking Partnership**: During her knock, she shared a massive 131-run stand with Hayley Matthews. This was their fifth century partnership together in the WPL, further cementing their status as the most successful batting duo in the league's history.

Rohit Sharma named brand ambassador for 2026 Men's T20 WC

- **Historic "Active Player" Milestone**: Rohit is the first active cricketer to be appointed as an official ICC ambassador for a major tournament. While he retired from T20 Internationals after leading India to the 2024 title, he remains active in Test and ODI formats.
- **Legacy as a Two-Time Winner**: His selection honors his unique career trajectory; he is one of the very few players to have won the T20 World Cup twice—first as a youngster in the inaugural 2007 edition and then as captain in 2024.
- **Key Promotional Role:** As the face of the tournament, he is leading major campaigns (like JioStar's "History Repeat Karenge, History Defeat Karenge"), leveraging his massive global influence to drive fan engagement for the event scheduled from February 7 to March 8, 2026.

Former Australian bowler Kane Richardson announces retirement

- **World Cup Winning Legacy**: Richardson was a vital part of Australia's limited-overs setup for over a decade, representing the country in 25 ODIs and 36 T20Is. His career highlight was being a member of the squad that won the 2021 ICC Men's T20 World Cup in the UAE. He also featured in the 2019 ODI World Cup and the 2022 T20 World Cup.

- **Big Bash League Legend**: While an international star, Richardson's greatest impact was in the Big Bash League (BBL). He retires as the fifth-highest wicket-taker in BBL history with 142 wickets. He played for the Adelaide Strikers, Melbourne Renegades (winning the BBL|08 title), and finally the Sydney Sixers, where he made his last professional appearances.
- **Master of the "Death Overs"**: Renowned for his tactical versatility rather than raw pace, Richardson became one of the world's most sought-after T20 freelancers. His ability to bowl precise yorkers and clever variations earned him stints in the IPL.

Khelo India Winter Games 2026: Haryana Overall Champion

- **Overall Championship Victory**: Haryana emerged as the overall champion of the Ladakh phase by clinching 4 gold medals, primarily dominated by their stellar performances in figure skating and short-track ice skating.
- **Star Performer (Sachin Singh):** Skater Sachin Singh was a key contributor to Haryana's top spot, becoming the first athlete of the 2026 edition to win two gold medals, securing victories in both the men's 500m short-track sprint and the 3000m short-track relay.
- **Phase Standings**: While Haryana led in gold count, hosts Ladakh finished second with 11 total medals (2 gold, 5 silver, 4 bronze), followed by Maharashtra and Telangana, who also secured 2 gold medals each but were separated by their silver medal counts.

AWARD NEWS

Ms. Vartika Shukla Conferred Lifetime Contribution Award

- **Awarding Body and Industry Impact**: The award was presented at the FICCI Chemicals & Petrochemicals Awards 2025 (held in Jan 2026) in New Delhi. It celebrates her over three decades of leadership and transformative impact on India's core industrial sectors, specifically in refineries, chemicals, and petrochemicals.
- **Champion of Self-Reliance**: The honor specifically recognizes her commitment to the "Make in India" initiative. Under her guidance, EIL has significantly reduced dependence on foreign technologies by developing indigenous engineering solutions and project management expertise for critical national infrastructure.
- **Strategic Shift to** Green Energy: Shukla has been instrumental in diversifying EIL's portfolio into sustainable domains. She has spearheaded major projects in Green Hydrogen, Biofuels, and Renewable Energy, aligning the company's growth with India's net-zero and energy transition goals.

Rohit Sharma to Be Honoured with Padma Shri 2026

- **Recognition of Leadership Legacy**: The award primarily honors Rohit's captaincy, specifically leading India to two major ICC titles in a short span: the 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup and the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy.
- **End of an Era**: The honor comes as Rohit transitioned out of the longer formats, having retired from T20Is in 2024 and Test cricket in 2025. He remains an active and vital figure in the ODI setup as the team looks toward the 2027 World Cup.
- **Individual Brilliance**: Beyond leadership, the award acknowledges his historic career statistics, including being the only player with three ODI double-centuries and his milestone of surpassing 20,000 international runs with 50 centuries across formats.

Dr Chandrakant Lahariya Becomes 1st Indian Wiley Research Awardee

- **Global Recognition for Policy Impact**: Dr. Lahariya won in the "Impact Beyond Academia" category, a prize that honors researchers whose work transcends journals to create tangible changes in policy and society. He was selected from over 2,000 nominations worldwide.
- **Shaping India's Health Infrastructure**: The award recognizes his pivotal role in designing and evaluating critical healthcare models in India, including Delhi's Mohalla Clinics and the national Ayushman Bharat program. His research has been instrumental in strengthening primary healthcare services for over a billion people.
- **Advancing National Immunization**: His evidence-based evaluations supported the introduction of six new vaccines into India's national program.

Dharmendra Singh Deol awarded Padma Vibhushan 2026

- **Posthumous Recognition**: The award was conferred posthumously, following the passing of the "He-Man" of Indian cinema on November 24, 2025. This recognition serves as a final tribute to his massive influence on Indian culture and his career spanning over six decades.
- **Versatile Cinematic Legacy**: Dharmendra was honored in the field of Art (Cinema) for his extraordinary range across more than 300 films. The citation highlights his rare ability to excel in diverse genres—from the iconic action of Sholay and the sensitivity of Bandini to the comic brilliance of ChupkeChupke and his modern-day resurgence in Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani.
- **Top-Tier Honor**: This is an elevation of his previous honors; he was already a recipient of the Padma Bhushan in 2012. For 2026, he is one of only five recipients of the Padma Vibhushan, joining other distinguished figures like former Supreme Court judge K.T. Thomas and classical violinist N. Rajam.

Shubhanshu Shukla honoured with Ashok Chakra

- **Historic Space Achievement**: The award recognizes Shukla's role as the pilot of the Axiom-4 (Ax-4) mission in June 2025. He became the first Indian to set foot on the ISS and only the second Indian in space, following Rakesh Sharma's 1984 flight (who was also an Ashoka Chakra recipient).
- **Conspicuous Courage in the "Final Frontier"**: While the Ashoka Chakra is traditionally awarded for ground-based bravery, the government cited Shukla's "conspicuous courage" and "indomitable spirit" in navigating the high-risk environment of space. During his 18-day mission, he managed complex orbital maneuvers and conducted over 60 scientific experiments critical for India's future space programs.
- **Strategic Precursor to Gaganyaan**: Shukla's mission and subsequent honor highlight India's growing human spaceflight ambitions. His successful mission provided vital data on life support and microgravity resilience.

APPOINTMENT & PERSON IN NEWS

Raymond Lifestyle appoints Satyaki Ghosh as New CEO

- **Extensive Industry Experience**: Ghosh is a seasoned veteran with over 25 years of experience across FMCG, textiles, and retail. He has held senior leadership roles at global giants including L'Oréal India (where he managed brands like Garnier and Maybelline) and PepsiCo, bringing a blend of B2B and B2C expertise.
- **Transition from Aditya Birla Group**: Before joining Raymond, he served as the CEO of Cellulosic Fashion Yarn at Grasim Industries (Aditya Birla Group). His experience in managing large-scale, multi-country manufacturing operations and complex supply chains is seen as a major asset for Raymond's global expansion.
- **Strategic Growth Mandate**: His appointment follows the exit of Sunil Kataria in 2025 and comes at a "crucial inflection point" for the company. Ghosh is tasked with driving innovation and consumer centricity as Raymond Lifestyle prepares for its next growth phase, focusing on rising domestic consumption and international market opportunities.

Footnotes: **Raymond's Chairman**: Gautam Singhania, **HQ**: Mumbai, **Estd**: 1925

Amelia Valverde appointed as Coach of Indian Women's Football Team

- **World Cup Pedigree**: Valverde, 39, is a highly experienced international coach who led the Costa Rican national team to their only two FIFA Women's World Cup appearances (2015 and 2023). In 2015, she made history as the second-youngest head coach in World Cup history at just 28 years old.
- **Immediate Mission**: She has already joined the Indian squad ("Blue Tigresses") at their training camp in Antalya, Türkiye. Her primary goal is to lead the team through the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026, which begins in March, with a focus on securing India's first-ever qualification for the FIFA Women's World Cup.

- **Proven Championship Success**: Beyond international football, Valverde comes with recent club success, having led Mexican side CF Monterrey to a historic Bicampeonato (two consecutive titles) in 2024. She was also named the Mexican Balón de Oro Best Coach and the 2016 CONCACAF Female Coach of the Year.

Swapna Gautam Meshram appointed as DIG in CRPF

- **Transition to Central Deputation**: A 2011-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Bihar cadre, Dr. Meshram has been moved from her state duties to a central deputation. Prior to this, she served in several high-profile roles in Bihar, including as the DIG of the Mithila Range (becoming the first woman to hold that post) and Commandant of the Bihar Special Armed Police (BSAP).
- **Dual Appointment with Spouse**: In a notable coincidence, her husband, Ashish Bharti (also a 2011-batch Bihar cadre IPS officer), was appointed as a DIG in the CRPF on the same day. Both officers were directed to be relieved from their Bihar postings immediately to assume their new national security responsibilities at the Centre.
- **Focus on National Security**: Her shift to the CRPF—India's largest Central Armed Police Force—indicates a transition from state-level law and order to broader national security operations, likely involving counter-insurgency or internal security management, areas where she previously earned a reputation as a proactive and "daredevil" officer in Bihar.

GMDC appoints Shri Sandeep Kumar IAS as Director

- **Strategic Transition**: Shri Sandeep Kumar, a 2002-batch IAS officer of the Gujarat cadre, replaces Ms. Arti Kanwar, IAS on the GMDC Board. This change follows his recent appointment as the Secretary (Economic Affairs) within the Finance Department of the Government of Gujarat.
- **Vast Administrative Expertise**: With over 20 years of experience, Shri Kumar brings deep expertise across critical sectors including Agriculture, Home, and Power. His background in energy and power distribution is particularly valuable for GMDC, which operates in both the mining and power sectors.
- **Corporate Governance Alignment**: The appointment was made through a circular resolution by the Board of Directors and is subject to shareholder approval. His dual role—managing the state's economic affairs while serving on the GMDC Board—is intended to align the corporation's strategic goals with the broader economic objectives of the Gujarat government.

Footnotes: **GMDC's MD**: Roopwant Singh, **HQ**: Vastrapur, **Estd**: 1963

Hitendra Malhotra appointed as DG Safety, Railway Board

- **Transition from Operations to Safety**: Hitendra Malhotra, who was previously serving as Member (Operations & Business Development) on the Railway Board, was laterally shifted to the post of Director General (Safety) in an exchange of roles with Hari Shankar Verma.
- **Veteran IRMS/IRSEE Officer**: A member of the 1987 batch of the Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers (IRSEE), Malhotra brings over 35 years of extensive experience in rolling stock management, locomotive production, and project execution.
- **Proven Leadership Record**: Before his tenure at the Railway Board, he served in high-profile leadership roles, including General Manager of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) and Chief General Manager (Rolling Stock) at the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC).

OBITUARY NEWS

Former Indian Football Team Defender Ilyas Pasha passed away

- **East Bengal Stalwart & Captain**: Pasha was a mainstay of the East Bengal defense from 1990 to 1998, a period often cited as one of the club's most successful eras. He famously captained the team to its first-ever international title at the Wai Wai Cup in 1993 and led them during their historic 6-2 victory over Iraq's Al-Zawraa SC.
- **Highly Decorated Domestic Career**: Known for his calm demeanor and "cerebral" defending, he won a staggering number of trophies, including five Calcutta Football Leagues, five IFA Shields, and four Durand Cups. He also won the Santosh Trophy twice representing Bengal (1993, 1995) after starting his career with his home state, Karnataka.
- **International Representation**: Pasha earned eight caps for the Indian national team. He made his debut in 1987 against Bulgaria and went on to represent the country in two editions of the Nehru Cup (1987, 1991), the 1991 SAF Games, and the 1992 Asian Cup qualifiers.

Former BCCI Chief Bindra passed away

- **Architect of Globalized Cricket**: Bindra, alongside Jagmohan Dalmiya, was instrumental in shifting the power center of world cricket to the Indian subcontinent. He played a pivotal role in bringing the ICC World Cup to India for the first time in 1987 (the Reliance Cup) and again in 1996, breaking the traditional monopoly of England and Australia over the tournament.
- **Revolutionized Cricket Marketing**: A visionary administrator, Bindra is credited with unlocking the commercial potential of Indian cricket. He successfully challenged the state-run monopoly on broadcast rights in the Supreme Court, paving the way for the massive satellite television and sponsorship deals that turned the BCCI into the wealthiest cricket board in the world.
- **Punjab Cricket & Infrastructure Legacy**: Serving as the President of the Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) for 36 years (1978–2014), he spearheaded the creation of the

world-class stadium in Mohali. In 2015, the venue was renamed the I.S. Bindra Stadium in his honor.

Veteran Journalist & Padma Awardee Mark Tully passed away

- **The "Voice of India":** Tully served as the BBC's New Delhi bureau chief for over 20 years (1972–1993). His calm and authoritative voice became the most trusted source of news for millions across the subcontinent, particularly during times of crisis when state-run media was censored, such as the 1971 Bangladesh War and the 1975 Emergency (during which he was briefly expelled).
- **Witness to History**: He provided definitive coverage of India's most turbulent modern chapters, including the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, Operation Blue Star, the assassinations of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi, and the Babri Masjid demolition. His deep empathy and "ear to the ground" approach earned him respect from both common citizens and top political leaders.
- **Highly Decorated Author**: A prolific writer, he authored influential books like No Full Stops in India and Amritsar: Mrs Gandhi's Last Battle. For his immense contributions to journalism and Indo-British relations, he was knighted in the UK (2002) and received two of India's highest civilian honors: the Padma Shri (1992) and the Padma Bhushan (2005).

Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar passed away

- **The Tragic Accident**: The 66-year-old leader was traveling from Mumbai to Baramati for a local election campaign when his chartered Learjet 45 encountered difficulties during an emergency landing. The aircraft crashed and burst into flames just 200 meters from the runway; all five people on board, including two pilots and two staff members, perished.
- **A Political Power Vacuum**: Known as "Ajit Dada," he was the longest-serving Deputy CM of Maharashtra, holding the post six times under various coalitions. His death creates a significant leadership void within the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the ruling Mahayuti alliance, especially as the state prepares for upcoming local body elections.
- **State Honours and Mourning**: The Maharashtra government declared three days of state mourning and a public holiday on the day of his passing. His last rites were performed with full state honors on January 29 at the Vidya Pratishthan ground in Baramati.

Footnotes: **Maharashtra's CM**: Devendra Fadnavis, **Governor**: C.P Radhakrishnan, **Capital**: Mumbai

Michael Nobbs Former Coach of Indian Hockey Team passed away

- **Olympic Tenure and Revival**: Nobbs took charge of the Indian men's hockey team in 2011 during a critical transition period, successfully guiding the team to qualify for the

2012 London Olympics after they had famously failed to qualify for the Beijing Games in 2008.

- **Transformation of Physical Fitness**: He is widely credited with revolutionizing the physical conditioning and dietary standards of Indian hockey players, shifting the team's culture toward high-intensity fitness and the aggressive "Australian style" of play.
- **Distinguished Playing Career**: Before his coaching career, Nobbs was an elite defender for the Australian national team (Kookaburras), earning 76 international caps and representing his country at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics and the 1981 World Cup.