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WEEKLY —
Current
Affairs



NATIONAL NEWS

PM Modi inaugurates India's 1st 'ring metro' in Delhi

- **Completion of the 72 km Loop:** The inauguration of the Majlis Park–Maujpur corridor closes the loop of the 71.56 km Pink Line, making it a continuous circular network. It is now the longest individual line in the Delhi Metro, significantly improving connectivity between North, East, and Northwest Delhi.
- **Engineering Marvels:** The new section features a double-decker viaduct—a unique structure that carries the metro tracks on the upper deck and a road flyover on the lower deck—and a new bridge over the Yamuna River (the fifth metro bridge across the river).
- **Massive Infrastructure Boost:** The project was part of a larger ₹33,500 crore development package. Alongside the Ring Metro, the PM inaugurated an extension of the Magenta Line (Deepali Chowk to Majlis Park).

Indian Railways Launches 'SHINE' App

- **Dedicated Reporting for Harassment:** SHINE stands for Sexual Harassment Incident Notification for Empowerment. It is a customized module integrated into the existing HRMS (Human Resource Management System) that allows women employees to securely and directly lodge complaints regarding workplace sexual harassment.
- **Ensuring Confidentiality and Speed:** The app was developed to make the grievance redressal mechanism more transparent and expeditious. Once a complaint is recorded through the Employee Self Service (ESS) portal, it is instantly routed to the specific internal committee responsible for such cases, bypassing traditional bureaucratic delays.
- **Inclusivity for Non-Employees:** In a significant move toward broader safety, the SHINE module also allows reporting on behalf of outsiders, contractual staff, visitors, and students who interact with the railway environment but may not have direct access to internal employee systems.

IIT Bombay & Honeywell Launch Sustainability Skills Hub

- **Massive Skilling Goal:** The initiative aims to train and certify over 100,000 students by 2030 in sustainability-related fields. It is designed to bridge the growing "green talent gap" in India, particularly as the country expects to create 3.4 million jobs in the green sector by the end of the decade.
- **Five Specialized Learning Tracks:** The CoE offers 40-hour certificate-based programs across five critical areas: Sustainability Reporting, Sustainable Finance, Energy Security, Sustainability Infrastructure, and Policy Advocacy. These tracks combine academic theory with 40 hours of hands-on, real-world project work.
- **Full Funding and Pilot Phase:** The center is fully funded by the Honeywell Hometown Solutions India Foundation (HHSIF). It will begin with a two-month pilot phase training an initial batch of 250 students before scaling up to engage approximately 20,000 students annually from across India.

NITI Aayog & TEPL Partner to Drive India's Electronics Manufacturing Growth

- **Strategic Alignment for "Atmanirbhar Bharat":** The partnership focuses on scaling up domestic electronics production and reducing import dependency. NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Suman Bery and TEPL CEO Dr. Randhir Thakur formalized this engagement to ensure that government policy is grounded in industry realities, specifically targeting semiconductor assembly, testing, and mobile component manufacturing.
- **Strengthening Global Value Chains (GVCs):** A primary goal is to shift India from a "labor-intensive assembly" model to a high-value manufacturing hub. This involves bolstering resilient supply chains and increasing India's participation in GVCs to meet a national target of \$500 billion in electronics output by 2030.
- **Policy Support & Massive Funding:** The collaboration is backed by a significant increase in government support. The Union Budget 2026–27 recently boosted the outlay for the Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS) to ₹40,000 crore.

Tata Advanced Systems Partners with Ramco for IAF C-130J MRO Facility

- **Strategic Alliance:** Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) has partnered with Ramco Systems to implement advanced aviation software for the Indian Air Force's (IAF) C-130J Super Hercules fleet.
- **MRO Hub:** The partnership focuses on setting up a world-class Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) facility in India, reducing the need to send aircraft abroad for servicing.
- **Digital Transformation:** Ramco will provide the "Aviation Suite V5.9" to digitize and automate maintenance logs, supply chain management, and compliance for the fleet.

NITI Aayog Unveils Fiscal Health Index 2026 to Assess Financial Strength of States

- **Key Initiative:** NITI Aayog has released the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026 to assess the financial performance and fiscal stability of Indian states.
- **Purpose of the Index:** The index evaluates states on parameters such as revenue mobilization, expenditure quality, debt management, and fiscal sustainability.
- **Objective:** The initiative aims to promote healthy financial competition among states and encourage better fiscal management practices.
- **Significance:** The Fiscal Health Index will help policymakers identify strong and weak areas in state finances, enabling targeted reforms and improved economic governance in India.

UIDAI Launches First Structured Bug Bounty Programme To Strengthen Aadhaar System Security

- **Key Initiative:** Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has launched its first structured Bug Bounty Programme to enhance the security of the Aadhaar ecosystem.
- **Purpose:** The programme aims to identify security vulnerabilities by inviting ethical hackers and security researchers to report potential flaws in the Aadhaar system.
- **Security Focus:** This initiative is designed to strengthen cybersecurity measures and protect citizens' digital identity data across Aadhaar platforms.
- **Significance:** The move reflects the Government of India's commitment to improving digital infrastructure security and ensuring a safer Aadhaar framework.

Gujarat Rolls Out 'Lake and Air Watch' Initiative for AQI and Water Body Monitoring

- **New Initiative:** Gujarat has launched the 'Lake and Air Watch' initiative to monitor air quality and the health of lakes across the state.
- **Purpose:** The programme focuses on tracking Air Quality Index (AQI) levels and assessing the environmental condition of urban water bodies.
- **Environmental Monitoring:** The initiative will use advanced monitoring systems and regular data analysis to detect pollution and ecological changes.
- **Significance:** The move aims to strengthen environmental protection efforts and promote sustainable management of natural resources in India.

PM Modi Launches ₹5,600 Crore Development Projects in Tiruchirappalli

- **Major Initiative:** Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, launched development projects worth ₹5,600 crore in Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu.
- **Project Focus:** The projects include infrastructure, railways, and connectivity improvements aimed at boosting regional development.
- **Objective:** These initiatives are intended to strengthen transportation networks, promote economic growth, and improve public services in the region.
- **Significance:** The projects are expected to enhance connectivity and accelerate development in Tamil Nadu, supporting the state's economic progress.

IEA Will Launch Largest-Ever Oil Release From Global Strategic Reserves

- **Major Announcement:** International Energy Agency (IEA) has announced the largest-ever release of oil from global strategic reserves to stabilize energy markets.
- **Reason for the Move:** The decision aims to address global supply disruptions and rising crude oil prices caused by geopolitical tensions.
- **Global Coordination:** The release will involve oil reserves from multiple member countries, coordinated by the International Energy Agency.
- **Impact:** The move is expected to ease pressure on global energy markets and support energy security worldwide.

DRDO Tests Indigenous Air Droppable Container from P-8I Aircraft

- **Successful Test:** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully tested an indigenous Air Droppable Container (ADC) from the Boeing P-8I Poseidon aircraft.
- **Purpose:** The container is designed to deliver emergency supplies, equipment, and essential items to remote or inaccessible areas during military and humanitarian operations.
- **Indigenous Development:** The system has been developed domestically to strengthen India's defence logistics and operational capability.
- **Significance:** The successful test enhances the Indian Armed Forces' ability to carry out efficient aerial supply missions, especially in challenging terrains across India.

India's First Microalgae-Based "PureAir" Tower in Delhi

- **Biological Filtration:** Unlike traditional smog towers, this uses microalgae to capture carbon dioxide and release oxygen through photosynthesis.
- **Efficiency:** It is designed to handle high-density pollutants and provides a more sustainable, "green" alternative to mechanical filters.
- **Pilot Phase:** Deployed in New Delhi to combat the city's persistent air quality challenges and serve as a model for urban air purification.

Launch of Bharat Tex 2026

- **Global Platform:** Union Minister Giriraj Singh launched the event to position India as a global textile powerhouse.
- **5F Vision:** The initiative aligns with the "Farm to Fiber to Factory to Fashion to Foreign" strategy.
- **Investment Goal:** Aimed at attracting international brands and showcasing India's sustainable manufacturing capabilities.

NITI Aayog's Fiscal Health Index 2026

- **State Ranking:** The index evaluates states based on fiscal deficit, tax revenue growth, and debt-to-GSDP ratios.
- **Economic Stability:** It provides a data-driven roadmap for states to improve their financial management and creditworthiness.
- **Transparency:** Designed to encourage competitive federalism by highlighting states with the most sustainable fiscal policies.

Footnotes: NITI Aayog's CEO: IAS Nidhi Chhibber, HQ: New Delhi, Estd: 2015

NITI Aayog Launches 2nd Annual Edition Of Fiscal Health Index 2026

- **Expanded Coverage (Including NE & Himalayan States):** Unlike the first edition which focused only on 18 major states, the 2026 report now includes 10 North-Eastern and Himalayan states. To ensure a fair comparison, these states are ranked separately due to their unique geographical and structural challenges.
- **Top Performers (Achievers):** Among the 18 major states, Odisha retained its top position for fiscal discipline, followed by Goa and Jharkhand. In the newly added North-Eastern and Himalayan category, Arunachal Pradesh emerged as the top performer, followed by Uttarakhand and Tripura.
- **Five Pillars of Evaluation:** Quality of Expenditure, Revenue Mobilization, Fiscal Prudence, Debt Index, Debt Sustainability

Perplexity Launches 'Personal Computer' AI Agent

- **Always-On "Digital Proxy" on Mac Mini:** Unlike standard chatbots, Personal Computer runs 24/7 on a dedicated Mac mini. It stays connected to the user's local files, apps, and Perplexity's servers, allowing it to execute tasks, monitor triggers, and manage workflows even while the user is away or asleep.
- **Multi-Model Orchestration:** The system doesn't rely on just one AI. It uses an orchestration harness to delegate tasks to the best available models. For example, it might use Claude Opus

4.6 for complex reasoning, Google Gemini for deep research, and Grok for high-speed lightweight tasks, all within a single workflow.

- **Built-in Safety & Enterprise Integration:** To ensure security when handling personal data, Perplexity included a "Kill Switch" for instant shutdown and a full audit trail of every session. Alongside the personal version, they launched "Computer for Enterprise," which connects directly to professional tools like Salesforce, Snowflake, and HubSpot to automate corporate data analysis.

Coursera Collaborates with Mission Karmayogi to Provide Skill Development

- **Integration with iGOT Marketplace:** Coursera will deliver a curated collection of world-class courses directly through the iGOT (Integrated Government Online Training) Marketplace gateway. This allows over 1.5 crore registered government officials to access high-quality content from top global universities and industry leaders.
- **Focus on Emerging Tech & Governance:** The partnership targets critical "future-ready" skills. Key training domains include Generative AI and Prompt Engineering, Data Analytics, Cybersecurity, Digital Governance, and Sustainability. The goal is to help officials design more efficient, data-driven public programs.
- **Transition to "Role-Based" Learning:** The collaboration supports the mission's core objective of shifting from a traditional "rule-based" system to a "role-based" competency model.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Suneet Mehta appointed as High Commissioner of India to Kingdom of Tonga

- **Dual Responsibility:** Shri Suneet Mehta, a 2007-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, will serve as the High Commissioner to the Kingdom of Tonga while continuing his current role as the High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Fiji.
- **Strategic Residence:** His primary residence will remain in Suva, Fiji, from where he will oversee India's diplomatic relations and developmental partnerships with Tonga.
- **Extensive Experience:** Before his current Pacific assignments, Mehta served as the Deputy High Commissioner to Australia (Canberra) and held significant positions in Indian missions in Washington D.C. and Madrid, as well as at the MEA headquarters in New Delhi.

India & Uzbekistan Launch Pharma-Nutraceutical Corridor

- **Strategic Trade Bridge:** The corridor is designed to streamline the export and import of pharmaceutical and nutraceutical products between the two nations, leveraging Uzbekistan as a gateway to Central Asia.
- **Regulatory Alignment:** Both countries aim to harmonize standards and certification processes to reduce trade barriers and ensure the quality of health supplements and medicines.
- **Economic Impact:** This initiative is expected to boost India's pharma exports significantly while helping Uzbekistan develop its domestic manufacturing capabilities through Indian expertise.

India Remains World's 2nd Biggest Arms Importer after Ukraine

- **Global Ranking:** According to the 2026 SIPRI report, India remains the world's second-largest arms importer (8.2% of global imports), with Ukraine taking the top spot (9.7%) due to its ongoing conflict.
- **Supplier Trends:** Russia remains India's top supplier (40%), but its share has dropped significantly as India diversifies its imports toward *France, Israel, and the USA*.
- **Indigenous Push:** Despite the high ranking, India's total imports fell by 4% compared to the previous five-year block, reflecting the impact of the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" self-reliance initiative.

DEFENCE NEWS

India Sends Military Contingent for Exercise LAMITIYE 2026

- **Tri-Service Milestone:** For the first time, this edition features participation from all three branches of the Indian Armed Forces. The contingent includes the Assam Regiment of the Indian Army, alongside representation from the Indian Navy (INS Trikand) and the Indian Air Force (C-130 aircraft).
- **Duration and Location:** The 12-day exercise is being held from March 9 to March 20, 2026, at the Seychelles Defence Academy. "LAMITIYE," which translates to "Friendship" in the Creole language, has been conducted biennially since 2001.
- **Operational Focus:** The exercise focuses on enhancing synergy in sub-conventional operations within semi-urban environments. It includes tactical drills for neutralizing potential threats, sharing best practices for UN peacekeeping missions, and showcasing new-generation military equipment.

US & South Korea launched Military Exercise 'Freedom Shield'

- **Focus on All-Domain Operations:** The 11-day exercise (running through March 19) is a "combined, joint, all-domain" event. For the first time, it significantly integrates space, cyber, and information warfare alongside traditional land, air, and sea maneuvers to reflect the complexities of modern conflict.
- **Strategic Shift in Training:** While involving approximately 18,000 South Korean troops, the number of field training drills has been reduced to 22 (down from 51 last year). This shift aims to facilitate potential diplomacy between North Korea and the U.S. and focuses on the "conditions-based" transfer of wartime operational control from Washington to Seoul.
- **North Korean Warning:** Pyongyang has reacted sharply, with Kim Yo-jong (sister of Kim Jong Un) condemning the drills as a "provocative and invasive war simulation." She warned of "unimaginably terrible consequences" and hinted at an "overwhelming and preemptive" offensive in response to what North Korea views as a rehearsal for invasion.

India & Seychelles Begin Joint Military 'Exercise LAMITIYE 2026'

- **11th Edition:** The biennial exercise (meaning 'Friendship' in Creole) is being held at the Seychelles Defence Academy from March 9 to 20, 2026.

- **Tri-Service Participation:** For the first time, this edition features a tri-service Indian contingent, including the Army (Assam Regiment), Navy (INS Trikand), and Air Force (C-130 aircraft).
- **Focus Areas:** The drills focus on sub-conventional operations in semi-urban environments and enhancing interoperability for international peacekeeping missions.

BANKING NEWS

Axis MF elevates R Sivakumar as its CIO

- **Internal Succession:** Effective March 5, 2026, R Sivakumar succeeds Ashish Gupta, who stepped down to pursue other interests. Under this new structure, core investment heads—Shreyash Devalkar (Equity), Devang Shah (Fixed Income), and Nandik Malik (Equity & Hybrid SIF)—will report directly to him.
- **Founding Member:** A veteran with over 25 years of experience, Sivakumar has been with Axis AMC since its inception in 2009. Prior to this elevation, he served as the Head of Products and Corporate Strategy and spent 14 years leading the Fixed Income division.
- **Strategic Goals:** In his new role, he will oversee an asset base exceeding ₹3.75 lakh crore (as of February 2026). His mandate is to drive the firm's investment strategy and research-led processes to help Axis AMC reach its target of a 6%–7% market share by FY29.

SBI Emerges as Strongest Indian Bank Globally

- **Global Strength Leader:** SBI is ranked as the 16th strongest banking brand in the world (up from 24th in 2025). It is the only Indian bank to receive the prestigious AAA+ brand strength rating, the highest accolade for brand resilience and stakeholder trust.
- **Dominant Market Share & Scale:** As of March 2025, SBI has solidified its position as a "proxy for the Indian economy" with a massive balance sheet of ₹66.76 Lakh Crore (approx. \$781 billion), commanding a 22.5% market share in deposits and nearly 20% in advances.
- **Digital & Financial Resilience:** The bank's "strongest" status is fueled by its digital transformation (87 million+ YONO users) and improved asset quality. Its Gross NPA ratio fell to 1.82% in FY2025, while standalone net profit grew 16% to a record ₹70,901 Crore.

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

Ketan Merchant appointed as CEO of Fino Payments Bank

- **Reason for Appointment:** The leadership change follows the arrest of the bank's MD & CEO, Rishi Gupta, by the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) in connection with an investigation into alleged GST evasion by third-party program managers.
- **Tenure and Transition:** Merchant, who was serving as the bank's Chief Financial Officer (CFO), will hold the interim post for a period of three months. His appointment is intended to ensure operational continuity while the board reassesses the "fit and proper" status of the regular CEO.
- **Strategic Stability:** Despite the leadership crisis, Merchant has assured stakeholders that the bank's operations remain stable and its plans to transition into a Small Finance Bank (SFB)—for which it received in-principle approval in December 2025—remain on track.

Parthanil Ghosh appointed MD & CEO of HDFC ERGO

- **Leadership Transition:** Ghosh succeeds Ritesh Kumar, who led the company for 15 years and is transitioning to a role within the Fairfax Group.
- **Internal Promotion:** Parthanil was previously the President of Retail Business, bringing extensive experience in the general insurance sector.
- **Strategic Focus:** His appointment aims to maintain HDFC ERGO's position as a top private-sector player in the non-life insurance market.

Footnotes: HDFC ERGO's Previous MD: Anuj Tyagi, HQ: Mumbai

SBI & MUFG Bank (Japan) Partnership

- **Strategic Ties:** State Bank of India and Japan's MUFG Bank signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to boost India–Japan financial corridors.
- **Corporate Support:** The deal focuses on assisting Japanese companies looking to invest in India and Indian firms expanding into Japan.
- **Digital Innovation:** Both banks will collaborate on supply chain financing and digital banking solutions for cross-border trade.

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

SPORTS NEWS

George Russell Wins Australian Grand Prix 2026

- **Mercedes 1-2 Finish:** George Russell converted his pole position into a season-opening victory, leading teammate Kimi Antonelli to a dominant Mercedes one-two finish.
- **Decisive Strategy:** The race turned on lap 12 when Mercedes capitalized on a Virtual Safety Car (caused by Isack Hadjar's Red Bull) to pit both cars, while Ferrari's Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton stayed out, ultimately cost them the lead.
- **New Regulation Debut:** The race marked the first competitive use of the 2026 hybrid engines and active aerodynamics, featuring a high-intensity battle between Russell and Leclerc, who traded the lead multiple times in the opening 10 laps.

Gary Kirsten Named Head Coach of Sri Lanka Men's Cricket Team

- **Two-Year Tenure & Core Goal:** Kirsten has signed a two-year contract starting April 15, 2026, which runs until April 2028. His primary mandate is to overhaul the team's performance and lead them through the 2027 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, which will be hosted in his home country, South Africa (alongside Namibia and Zimbabwe).
- **Replacing a Legend:** He succeeds former Sri Lankan captain Sanath Jayasuriya, who resigned following the team's disappointing Super Eight exit at the 2026 T20 World Cup. Kirsten's arrival is seen as a move to bring in "blockbuster" international expertise to stabilize a side that has struggled for consistency in recent global tournaments.

- **Elite Coaching Pedigree:** Kirsten brings one of the most successful resumes in world cricket, having coached India to the 2011 World Cup title and guided South Africa to the No. 1 ranking in all formats in 2013.

Smriti Mandhana Retains No.1 Spot, Jemimah Rodrigues Slips to 12th

- **Top Performance:** Indian opener Smriti Mandhana has maintained her position as the World No.1 in the latest ICC Women's ODI Batting Rankings following consistent performances.
- **Ranking Shift:** Middle-order batter Jemimah Rodrigues saw a slight decline, slipping out of the top 10 to the 12th position after a quiet series.
- **Team Impact:** Mandhana's dominance continues to anchor India's top order as the team prepares for the upcoming World Cup cycle.

Iran Pulls Out of FIFA World Cup 2026 Amid Geopolitical Tensions

- **Major Decision:** Iran has announced its withdrawal from the 2026 FIFA World Cup due to escalating geopolitical tensions and security concerns.
- **Reason for Withdrawal:** The decision is linked to rising diplomatic and regional conflicts, particularly tensions involving the host nation, the United States.
- **The Tournament:** The 2026 FIFA World Cup will be jointly hosted by United States, Canada, and Mexico from June 11 to July 19, 2026.
- **Impact:** Iran's withdrawal may lead FIFA to select a replacement team from the Asian qualifiers and could also result in disciplinary or financial penalties for the team.

Sumit Antil Wins Gold at World Para Athletics Grand Prix

- **Javelin Dominance:** The Paralympic champion secured the Gold medal, continuing his winning streak in the F64 category.
- **World Ranking:** This victory solidifies his position as the world number one heading into major upcoming championships.
- **Consistency:** Antil continues to push the boundaries of para-athletics, often nearing his own world record marks during competition.

Mayank Chakraborty becomes India's 94th Grandmaster

- **First Grandmaster from the Northeast:** Hailing from Guwahati, Mayank has made history by becoming the first-ever Grandmaster from Assam and the entire North Eastern region of India.
- **The Final Norm in Sweden:** He secured his third and final GM norm in March 2026 at the 8th GM Tournament in Stockholm, Sweden. He dominated the field, finishing first with a score of 7/9 and remained unbeaten throughout the tournament.
- **Rapid Rise from IM to GM:** After becoming an International Master (IM) in late 2023, Mayank consistently climbed the rankings. His journey is notable for his self-taught roots—initially learning through YouTube and ChessBase videos—before becoming the national U-11 and U-17 champion.

Shailesh Kumar Wins Gold at World Para Athletics Grand Prix

- **Double Gold & Podium Sweeps:** Shailesh dominated the competition by winning gold in the Men's High Jump T42/T63 event with a jump of 1.84m. He didn't stop there—he also secured a second gold in the Men's Long Jump T42/63 with a leap of 5.47m, leading an all-Indian podium sweep in both events.
- **Successful Injury Comeback:** This Grand Prix served as a crucial "test" for the reigning world champion, who had been sidelined with a left knee injury since late 2025. While his high jump mark was below his personal best of 1.91m, he expressed satisfaction with his steady return to form without further aggravating the injury.
- **Road to Asian Para Games:** Shailesh has identified the 2026 Asian Para Games as his primary target for the year. He is currently training in Bengaluru to refine his take-off technique, with the goal of surpassing his own Asian record of 1.91m during the continental games.

AWARD NEWS

Rashmika Mandanna won Best Actress Award

- **Telangana Gaddar Awards 2025:** Rashmika Mandanna won the Best Actress award at the prestigious Telangana Gaddar Film Awards, announced in March 2026. These awards were instituted by the Government of Telangana to recognize excellence in Telugu cinema.
- **Winning Performance:** She received the honor for her role as Bhooma Devi in the 2025 romantic drama *The Girlfriend*, directed by Rahul Ravindran. Her portrayal of a woman navigating a controlling relationship was widely praised for its emotional depth and authenticity.
- **Personal Milestone:** The award announcement coincided with a significant personal milestone, coming shortly after her high-profile wedding to actor Vijay Deverakonda. The couple celebrated the win together, with Vijay sharing a public message of pride for her achievement.

Amol Palekar to Receive META Lifetime Achievement Award 2026

- **Prestigious Recognition:** Veteran actor and filmmaker Amol Palekar will be honored at the 21st edition of the Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) in New Delhi.
- **Legacy of Work:** The award celebrates his "extraordinary contribution" to Indian theatre and cinema, particularly his "boy-next-door" persona and his pioneering work in alternative theatre spaces.
- **The Event:** The festival will take place from March 19 to 25, 2026, with the Lifetime Achievement honor being the highlight of the awards ceremony.

KSRTC Wins National Award for "Dhwani Spandana"

- **Innovative Feedback:** The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) won for its AI-based grievance redressal system.
- **Public Service:** "Dhwani Spandana" allows passengers to voice concerns through a simplified, responsive digital platform.
- **Modernization:** This award recognizes KSRTC's shift toward technology-driven governance in public transportation.

Footnotes: KSRTC's MD: V. Anbukumar, HQ: Bengaluru, Estd: 1948

APPOINTMENT & PERSON IN NEWS

President appoints Justice Sushrut Dharmadhikari as Madras CJ

- **55th Chief Justice:** Justice Dharmadhikari was sworn in by Governor R.N. Ravi on March 6, 2026, at the Lok Bhavan in Chennai. He succeeds Justice Manindra Mohan Shrivastava, who retired on March 5 after reaching the mandatory retirement age of 62.
- **Judicial Trajectory:** His parent High Court is the Madhya Pradesh High Court, where he was first elevated as a judge in 2016. Before his current elevation to Chief Justice, he was serving as a judge of the Kerala High Court, a position he held since April 2025.
- **Legal Background:** Born in Raipur, he practiced law for over 24 years before joining the bench. During his career as an advocate, he notably served as the Standing Counsel for the Union of India for 15 years (2000–2015).

BEL Signs MoU with Bellatrix Aerospace

- **Focus on VLEO Technology:** The collaboration specifically targets the design, development, and manufacturing of satellite platforms for Very Low Earth Orbit (VLEO). Operating at altitudes between 100 and 450 km, these satellites offer higher-resolution imaging and faster communication compared to traditional orbits.
- **Complementary Expertise:** The partnership integrates BEL's decades of experience in mission-critical defense electronics and payloads with Bellatrix Aerospace's innovation in satellite propulsion systems and subsystems (such as their green-chemical propulsion and Hall Effect Thrusters).
- **Strategic & Civilian Applications:** The MoU, exchanged on March 5, 2026, aims to build indigenous end-to-end satellite solutions. This supports India's self-reliance goals for both strategic defense requirements and civilian space missions in an increasingly crowded Low Earth Orbit (LEO) environment.

Pieter Elbers Steps Down as IndiGo CEO

- **Leadership Change:** Pieter Elbers, who joined the airline in 2022, has announced his decision to step down as the CEO of India's largest carrier, IndiGo.
- **Major Milestone:** Under his leadership, IndiGo saw massive international expansion and placed a historic order for 500 Airbus aircraft in 2023.
- **Succession:** The airline is expected to initiate a global search for a successor to maintain its dominant 60%+ market share in the Indian aviation sector.

Dr. Partha Biswas Joins NCSC

- **Constitutional Role:** Dr. Biswas has officially assumed charge as a Member of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC).
- **Advocacy:** His role involves investigating and monitoring matters relating to the safeguards provided for Scheduled Castes in India.

- **Implementation:** He will be key in overseeing the effective implementation of welfare schemes and legal protections for marginalized communities.

Footnotes: NCSC's CEO: Richard Horne, **HQ:** London, **Estd:** 2016

Gujarat Titans Name Vijay Dahiya As Assistant Coach

- **Vast IPL & Coaching Experience:** Dahiya brings a wealth of tactical knowledge, having previously served as an Assistant Coach for Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) and Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), and as a talent scout for Delhi Capitals.
- **Part of a Revamped Support Staff:** His appointment follows the recent addition of Australian legend Matthew Hayden as the Batting Coach. Dahiya will work under Head Coach Ashish Nehra to help the 2022 champions regain their top form.
- **Proven Track Record in Domestic Cricket:** A respected figure in Indian cricket, Dahiya famously coached Delhi to a Ranji Trophy title in the 2007-08 season. His deep understanding of the Indian domestic circuit is expected to be a major asset in managing the team's local talent.

RM Nachammai appointed First Woman Chief of a Functional Nuclear Power Plant

- **Role at Kaiga Generating Station:** She has been appointed as the Chief Superintendent of Units 3 and 4 at the Kaiga Generating Station in Karnataka, effective from March 15, 2026. In this high-stakes role, she oversees the operations, maintenance, and engineering support for the reactor units.
- **Decades of Excellence:** Nachammai brings over 35 years of experience to the position. A 1990 graduate in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from the University of Madras, she joined the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) in 1991, where she famously topped her batch and received the Vikram Sarabhai Award.
- **Breaking the Glass Ceiling:** Her appointment is a significant milestone for gender representation in a specialized, male-dominated field. Out of NPCIL's workforce of roughly 10,000 employees, only about 900 are women; her leadership serves as a powerful symbol of "Nari Shakti" as India aims to reach 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047.

OBITUARY NEWS

Vir Chakra Awardee KG George passed away

- **1965 War Heroism:** He was awarded the Vir Chakra, India's third-highest wartime gallantry award, for his exceptional bravery in the Wagah Sector. Between September 6 and 10, 1965, he repeatedly risked his life under heavy enemy shelling and air strafing to restore vital communication lines.
- **Corps of Signals Veteran:** Born in February 1931, George served in the Indian Army's Corps of Signals. His citation highlights a specific act on the night of September 8, 1965,

where he successfully established a line of communication from Brigade Headquarters to forward battalions during a critical enemy attack.

- **Final Honors:** He passed away on March 7, 2026, due to age-related factors. His funeral is scheduled to be held in Kottayam with full military honors once his family members return from overseas.

Renowned Indologist Hermann Kulke Passes Away

- **Academic Loss:** German historian and Indologist Hermann Kulke, a Padma Shri awardee (2010), passed away, leaving a massive void in the study of Indian history and culture.
- **Specialization:** He was world-renowned for his extensive research on Odisha's history, specifically the Jagannath Temple and the Gajapati kings.
- **Seminal Work:** He is best known for co-authoring the definitive textbook A History of India, which is widely used by students and scholars across the globe.

Renowned Tamil Director Thakkali Srinivasan Dies at the Age of 72

- **Sad Demise:** Veteran Tamil filmmaker Thakkali Srinivasan passed away at the age of 72, marking the end of a notable career in the Tamil film industry.
- **Career Contribution:** He was known for his significant contributions to Tamil cinema as a filmmaker and storyteller, earning respect for his creative work.
- **Industry Impact:** His films and artistic vision played an important role in enriching regional cinema in India.
- **Legacy:** The filmmaker leaves behind a lasting legacy in the Tamil film industry, with colleagues and fans paying tribute to his work and influence.

Veteran Congress Leader & Ex-Union Minister Biren Singh Engti passed away

- **Five-Time Member of Parliament:** Engti was a towering figure in Assam's political landscape, representing the Autonomous District (ST) constituency (Diphu) in the Lok Sabha five times (1977, 1984, 2004, 2009, and 2014). He was widely regarded as the most influential voice for the hill tribes of Karbi Anglong.
- **Service in the Rajiv Gandhi Ministry:** He served as a Union Minister of State between 1986 and 1989 under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. During this tenure, he held key portfolios including Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, as well as Planning and Programme Implementation.
- **Stalwart of Hill Politics:** Beyond the national stage, he played a crucial role in local governance as the Chief Executive Member of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council.