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WEEKLY —
Current
Affairs



NATIONAL NEWS

Bengaluru ranked second-best AI-native cluster in Asia

- **Ranking as Asia's Second-Best AI-Native Cluster:** Bengaluru has been officially ranked as the second-best AI-native startup cluster in Asia, trailing only Beijing. This recognition, featured in the Global Startup Ecosystem Report (GSER) 2026, highlights the city's focus on businesses that integrate artificial intelligence at their very core.
- **Strong Foundation in Research & Funding:** The city accounts for approximately 58% of India's total AI startup funding, demonstrating significant investor confidence. Additionally, Bengaluru has broken into the global top 10 for "R&D Engine" performance, bolstered by its dense network of engineers, researchers, and leading academic institutions.
- **Global Ecosystem Standing:** Beyond its AI-specific achievements, Bengaluru remains a premier global destination for innovation, ranking 15th overall among the world's top startup ecosystems. With an ecosystem value of approximately \$152.8 billion, the city continues to solidify its status as a major player in the global technology economy.

SC Declares Right to Walk on Safe Footpaths a Fundamental Right

- **Constitutional Recognition of Pedestrian Rights:** The Supreme Court has ruled that the right to walk on safe, demarcated footpaths is a fundamental right protected under Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution. The bench emphasized that this right to movement takes legal precedence over the privilege of using motorized vehicles on public roads.
- **Mandatory Duty of Civic Authorities:** The judgment establishes that local bodies—including municipal corporations, panchayats, and urban development authorities—have an enforceable legal duty to construct and maintain safe footpaths. Citizens are now empowered to seek constitutional remedies and compensation if these authorities fail to provide adequate and safe pedestrian infrastructure.
- **Call for Legislative Reform:** Identifying the lack of dedicated laws for walkers as a "civilizational problem," the Court has urged the government to enact a comprehensive statutory framework. It also recommended the establishment of a regulatory body to ensure institutional accountability.

India Ranks 70th In WEF Energy Transition Index 2026

- **Ranking and Improvement:** India advanced two places to reach the 70th rank globally. The WEF highlighted India as one of the "strongest improvers" in the world, noting a 1.9% increase in its overall score, even as global energy transition readiness declined for the first time in over a decade.
- **Key Drivers of Growth:** India's upward trajectory is attributed to substantial gains in infrastructure, equity, sustainability, and financial investment. The report specifically

praised India's infrastructure-led clean-energy strategy, which includes aggressive scaling of renewable capacity, grid expansion, and the development of green hydrogen.

- **Growth in Green Employment:** The report noted a robust surge in the green economy, with the proportion of low-carbon jobs in India increasing by 24% in 2024. Renewable energy employment in the country reached 1.3 million, marking a 25% increase over the previous year, with hydropower emerging as a leading source of these jobs.

Jonathan the Tortoise Becomes the World's Oldest Known Land Animal

- **Named a Guinness World Records Icon:** On June 17, 2026, Guinness World Records officially inducted Jonathan into its "Icons" list. This prestigious recognition celebrates his status as the oldest-known terrestrial animal and the oldest chelonian (a group including turtles and tortoises) ever recorded.
- **A Remarkable 194 Years:** Estimated to have been born around 1832, Jonathan is now approximately 194 years old. To put his longevity in perspective, he was fully mature when he arrived on St. Helena in 1882 and has lived through significant historical milestones, from the Victorian era to the modern digital age, far exceeding the typical 150-year lifespan of his species.
- **Thriving Despite Challenges:** While he has lost his sense of smell and his eyesight due to cataracts, Jonathan remains in good health and high spirits. He continues to live on the grounds of the Governor's residence (Plantation House), where he receives dedicated veterinary care, enjoys a specialized diet, and socializes with other tortoises.

Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited Granted The Navratna Status

- **Prestigious Status Elevation:** Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL) has officially been granted the prestigious Navratna status by the Government of India. Approved by the Ministry of Finance, the oil refining company becomes the 28th Navratna Central Public Sector Enterprise in the country.
- **Enhanced Financial Autonomy:** The new status grants CPCL significantly higher operational and financial independence for its future capital expenditures. The company can now invest up to ₹1,000 crore on a single project without seeking prior government approval.
- **Strategic Market Expansion:** This elite designation allows the public sector undertaking to establish overseas joint ventures and alliances freely. It strongly reinforces the competitive market position of CPCL, which operates as a vital subsidiary of Indian Oil Corporation Limited.

Footnotes: Chennai's Mayor: Priya Rajan, Commissioner: J. Kumaragurubaran

India to Launch Index of Services Production

- **Introduction of a New Macro Indicator:** The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is set to launch the Index of Services Production (ISP) on July 14, 2026, to track short-term changes in the growth of the country's formal services sector. Functioning as the services-sector counterpart to the long-standing Index of Industrial Production (IIP), this new monthly indicator aims to fill a major statistical gap for a sector that contributes over 50% of India's Gross Value Added (GVA).
- **Base Year and Timeline Dynamics:** The index will use 2024–25 as its base year, aligning it with the recently revised consumer price inflation data series. While the trial monthly indices for the fiscal year 2025–26 and April 2026 will debut in mid-July, subsequent regular monthly indices will be published with an approximate 60-day lag on the 29th day of every month.
- **Data Utilization and Sectoral Coverage:** To ensure comprehensive tracking, the ISP will initially cover major industries including banking, insurance, telecom, transport, retail trade, real estate, and hospitality before expanding to health and education later. The underlying framework will break new ground by heavily utilizing aggregated, high-frequency GST transaction data alongside administrative records and specific service surveys to estimate real volume growth.

Northeast's Largest Organic Spice Unit Inaugurated in Meghalaya

- **Inauguration and Infrastructure:** Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated Northeast India's largest organic spice processing plant at Bhoirymbong in Meghalaya's Ri-Bhoi district. Developed with an investment of approximately ₹32 crore by the Eastern Ri-Bhoi Organic Farmer Producer Company, the state-of-the-art facility features modern infrastructure like cold storage, drying units, and pulverizing systems.
- **Capacity and Farmer Benefit:** The plant is equipped to process over 10,000 metric tonnes of high-value local organic spices annually, including ginger, chilli, black pepper, and premium Lakadong turmeric. This massive collective operation is designed to eliminate post-harvest losses and directly benefit around 5,500 local organic farming families across 112 villages.
- **Global Certifications and Market Access:** The facility marks a historic milestone as the first in the region to secure dual organic certifications under both the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) and European Union Organic Standards. These credentials bypass regional middlemen, allowing local farmers to establish direct market linkages and export finished, value-added products directly to premium international buyers.

Ministry Of Minority Affairs Announces Haj Policy 2027

- **Early Launch and Digital Application:** Union Minister Kiren Rijiju announced the early release of the Haj Policy 2027 to ensure meticulous, timely preparations in alignment with Saudi Arabia's strict timelines. Prospective pilgrims can immediately submit their

applications digitally through either the Haj Committee of India portal or the updated Haj Suvidha App to ensure a simpler, more accessible registration process.

- **Quota Allocation and Support Enhancements:** The distribution quota between the Haj Committee of India and private tour operators remains unchanged at a 70:30 ratio, setting aside 1,22,518 seats for the committee out of India's baseline quota of 1,75,025 pilgrims. To elevate the quality of on-ground assistance, the policy improves the deployment ratio of State Haj Inspectors from one inspector for every 150 pilgrims to one for every 135 pilgrims.
- **AI Integration and Stricter Health Checks:** The policy pioneers advanced, multilingual conversational AI assistants to offer round-the-clock support across multiple regional languages for document verification, flight demand modeling, and real-time grievance tracking. Furthermore, medical screenings have been strictly tightened in alignment with Saudi health guidelines to ensure that individuals with severe chronic conditions are not cleared to travel, prioritizing overall pilgrim safety.

CBI Launches Operation Chakra-VI Against Digital Arrest Fraud

- **Scale of Action:** The CBI deployed 60 specialized teams to conduct simultaneous, coordinated raids at more than 80 locations stretching across 16 states and Union Territories. Affected regions include Delhi, Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Telangana, and Assam.
- **Primary Target:** The operation targeted an expansive cyber-fraud infrastructure tied to more than 200 cases of digital arrest fraud affecting victims both within India and internationally

Footnotes: CBI's Director: Praveen Sood(IPS), HQ: New Delhi ,Estd:1963 through Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946

MoCA & Delhi International Airport Launch 'Air Suvidha 2.0' portal

- In June 2026, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) jointly launched 'AIR SUVIDHA 2.0', an upgraded contactless Passenger Health Self-Declaration (PHSD) portal, to strengthen public health surveillance at points of entry.

About Air Suvidha 2.0 Portal:

- **Developed by:** The portal was developed in collaboration with the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW).
- **Self Declaration:** Through this portal, the international arriving passengers are required to submit an online health Self-Declaration Form (SDF) covering 21-day travel history, exposure history and any related symptoms, before immigration clearance.
- **Timeline:** Passengers can complete the SDF up to 24 hours in advance before arrival to India and have been advised to fill the form before or during web check-in.

- **Integrated Multi-Agencies:** The portal provides real-time data sharing with multiple agencies that include: Airport Health Officers (APHOs), Bureau of Immigration (BoI), Integrated Disease Surveillance Program (IDSP) and State Surveillance Officers.

India launches world's first nuclear process heat-based hydrogen production facility

- **Location:** Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR), Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu
- **Developers:** The technology was developed indigenously by the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Mumbai
- This innovation strengthens India's move toward a hydrogen economy, improving energy security and supporting the goal of Net Zero emissions by 2070.
- **Footnotes:**

Hydrogen (H): lightest, Clean fuel, colorless, odorless and highly flammable.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah to launch Bharat Taxi in Gujarat

- The Ministry of Cooperation has rolled out Bharat Taxi, billed as India's first driver-owned cooperative ride-hailing service, with operations live in parts of Gujarat (Ahmedabad and Surat) and the National Capital Region.
- Bharat Taxi is the working incarnation of the Sahkar Taxi idea that Amit Shah first announced in the Lok Sabha in March 2025. Its central promise is zero commission on rides, with earnings credited directly to drivers, positioning the cooperative model as an alternative to commission-charging aggregators like Ola, Uber and Rapido. The launch operationalises the 'Sahkar se Samridhi' (prosperity through cooperation) vision in the gig and platform economy.
- Bharat Taxi is registered under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002 and was established on 6 June, 2025. The platform operates on a zero-commission model, ensuring that the maximum benefit from the income generated through services reaches the Saarthis directly. In addition, Saarthis are also provided benefits of insurance, loans, pension and various government social security schemes.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India Becomes World's Top Ship Recycling Nation in 2025

- **Significant Global Market Share Growth:** India increased its share of global ship recycling to 35.4% in 2025, rising from 30.1% in the previous year. The total volume of processed ships surged to 2.99 million gross tons, marking a nearly 60% increase over 2024 figures.
- **Commitment to International Standards:** The growth is driven by the strict implementation of the Recycling of Ships Act, 2019, which aligns Indian yards with the Hong Kong International Convention. Financial support has helped 115 facilities modernize their operations to meet these global environmental and safety requirements.

- **Innovative Policy & Future Expansion:** The government introduced a Ship-breaking Credit Note Scheme to incentivize recycling and promote domestic shipbuilding. Additionally, plans are underway to nearly double the capacity of the Alang ship-recycling yard to 9 million light displacement tons to maintain this competitive edge.

VishvasViduSapkal appointed as India's Ambassador to Slovak Republic

- **Career Diplomat:** Shri Sapkal is an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of the 1998 batch. Before this appointment, he was serving as the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Peru (with concurrent accreditation to Bolivia).
- **Extensive Diplomatic Experience:** Throughout his career, he has held various significant roles, including High Commissioner of India to Fiji (and several Pacific island nations) and Consul General of India in St. Petersburg, Russia. He has also served in diverse capacities in countries such as Armenia, Egypt, and the United States.
- **Expertise in Ministry Roles:** Within the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, he has held key positions, including Joint Secretary for various divisions such as BIMSTEC, SAARC, and the Indo-Pacific. He has also been involved in major international engagements, including the India-Africa Forum Summit and the World Hindi Conference.

France to Get First Traditional Hindu Temple with Indian Stones

- **Authentic Traditional Craftsmanship:** The temple is being constructed using hand-carved stones specifically sourced from India and sculpted by master artisans using ancient ShilpaShastra architectural principles. These stones were then transported to France to be assembled, ensuring the structure maintains its traditional design and cultural authenticity.
- **Unique Indo-French Collaboration:** The construction features a remarkable partnership where Indian temple craftsmen work alongside French stonemasons, including experts who contributed to the restoration of the Notre-Dame Cathedral. This cross-cultural effort blends India's ancient spiritual heritage with French engineering and stone-masonry expertise.
- **Cultural Hub for Community:** Beyond serving as a place of worship for the Hindu community, the temple is envisioned as a center for cultural exchange, education, and community engagement. To mark its opening in September 2026, organizers have planned an extensive 15-day inaugural celebration welcoming visitors from across the globe.

Indian Jurist Elected As Judge Of International Tribunal Of The Law Of The Sea

- **Securing a Prestigious Global Mandate:** Dr. Patel was elected during the 36th Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in

New York. He secured a strong mandate, receiving 115 votes from member states to ensure India's continued presence in the Hamburg-based judicial body.

- **A Proven Expert in International Law:** Currently serving as the Vice-Chancellor of Rashtriya Raksha University and a member of the UN International Law Commission, Dr. Patel brings over three decades of legal expertise. His background includes extensive experience in maritime law, international dispute settlement, and public policy, making him a highly qualified candidate for the role.
- **Significance for India's Maritime Interests:** The ITLOS plays a critical role in adjudicating disputes related to maritime boundary delimitation, marine environment protection, and the management of ocean resources.

World's Tallest Lionel Messi Statue Unveiled in Argentina as a Historic Tribute

- **Monumental Tribute:** A massive 26-meter-tall statue of Lionel Messi has been unveiled in the Argentine city of Cutral-Có. This impressive structure serves as a historic tribute to his legendary career and impact on global soccer.
- **Engineering Feat:** Crafted by sculptor Aldo Beroisa, the monument is constructed from 70 tons of steel and iron. It depicts the star kneeling in his national team jersey, clutching the 2022 World Cup trophy in celebration.
- **Global Record:** This new installation officially surpasses the previous 21-meter record held by a statue in Kolkata, India. It is now recognized as the tallest statue dedicated to a professional soccer player in the world.

Prem Chand appointed as India's Ambassador to the Republic of Cabo Verde

- **Official Appointment:** Shri Prem Chand has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Cabo Verde. He is a seasoned diplomat and a 2011-batch Indian Foreign Service officer.
- **Professional Background:** He is currently serving at the Embassy of India in Abu Dhabi. He is expected to take up his new assignment in the very near future.
- **Strategic Strengthening:** This appointment aims to deepen bilateral ties and foster stronger cooperation between India and Cabo Verde. It reflects India's continued commitment to expanding its diplomatic footprint in Africa.

Tushar Mehta reappointed as Solicitor General of India

- **Formal Reappointment:** The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has officially reappointed Tushar Mehta as the Solicitor General of India. This decision grants him a fresh three-year term starting from July 1, 2026.
- **Continued Leadership:** Having served as the Solicitor General since October 2018, this extension ensures stability in the Centre's legal representation. He remains a key figure in defending the government's stance in landmark constitutional and policy-related cases.

- **Broad Legal Extension:** Alongside Mehta, the government has also extended the tenures of five Additional Solicitors General for the Supreme Court. These moves collectively aim to maintain continuity and strength within the Union Government's legal team.

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Muanpui Saiawi accredited as High Commissioner of India to Samoa

- **Dual Diplomatic Responsibilities:** The Ministry of External Affairs announced that Ms. Muanpui Saiawi has been concurrently accredited as the next High Commissioner of India to the Independent State of Samoa. While taking on this new role, she will continue to maintain her primary residence and central base of operations in Wellington.
- **Distinguished Career Background:** As a seasoned diplomat from the 2005 batch of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Saiawi brings extensive multilateral and strategic experience to the Pacific region. Prior to her current postings, she held significant leadership roles, including serving as India's Joint Secretary for Disarmament and International Security Affairs until early 2026.
- **Expanding Pacific Footprint:** This latest appointment closely follows her concurrent accreditation to the Cook Islands in late May 2026, highlighting her central role in India's regional diplomacy. By managing relations with New Zealand, the Cook Islands, and Samoa simultaneously, Saiawi is key to advancing New Delhi's Act East policy and maritime cooperation across the South Pacific.

Bangladesh joins India-led International Big Cat Alliance

- In June 2026, Bangladesh officially joined India's International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) as its 27th member country, aiming to enhance joint conservation strategies, habitat protection, and transboundary wildlife management.
- Bangladesh's accession is expected to strengthen regional cooperation in protecting big cat species, combating wildlife crime, promoting scientific research, and conserving shared ecosystems across national borders.

About Bangladesh's Accession to IBCA:

- **Membership:** Bangladesh joined IBCA after Cabinet approval on May 22, 2026, based on a proposal from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, following India's invitation during diplomatic discussions between Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma and Bangladesh Environment Minister Abdul Awal Mintoo in April 2026.
- **Conservation:** The accession strengthens transboundary conservation of the Bengal tiger and leopard in the Sundarbans, promotes South Asian ecosystem protection, and enhances coordinated monitoring, data sharing, and anti-poaching efforts.

China's LineShine Emerged World's Most Powerful Supercomputer

- In June 2026, the 67th edition of the TOP500 Supercomputer Rankings 2026, a biannual list of the world's most powerful supercomputers, was released at the International Supercomputing (ISC) High Performance 2026 conference in Hamburg, Germany. As per the latest rankings, China's LineShine machine, based at the National Supercomputing Center in Shenzhen, emerged as the world's most powerful supercomputer, replacing the United States of America (USA)'s El Capitan.
- LineShine is nearly 26 times faster than India's most powerful supercomputer 'Shakti Cloud', which secured 32nd spot on the list, with a performance of 84.31 petaflops.
- **Other Top 5:** The USAs' Frontier (3rd) and Aurora (4th), followed by Germany's Jupiter, which ranks 5th.
- **Most Represented Countries:** The USA with 161 systems, topped among the countries with the highest share of systems on the list, followed by Japan (44), Germany (41), China (31), among others.

DEFENCE NEWS

Indian Coast Guard Inducts Indigenous Air Cushion Vehicle in Goa

- **Boost to Indigenous Defence Manufacturing:** The induction of the first indigenous Air Cushion Vehicle (ACV), designated H-561, marks a significant milestone for the "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" (Self-Reliant India) initiative. It is the first hovercraft built by a private Indian shipyard, Chowgule & Company, highlighting the growing sophistication of the nation's maritime industrial base.
- **Enhanced Operational Versatility:** Designed to operate on both land and water, the hovercraft can navigate challenging terrains such as mudflats, marshlands, and shallow coastal waters where conventional vessels cannot reach. This unique capability is critical for coastal surveillance, search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, and disaster relief operations.
- **Strategic Deployment & Future Expansion:** This vessel is the first of six hovercrafts ordered by the Indian Coast Guard under a ₹387.4 crore contract. It will be stationed in Haldia, West Bengal, to strengthen security across eastern India's riverine and deltaic regions.

Indian Coast Guard Inducts First Indigenous Hovercraft H-561

- **Indigenous Manufacturing Milestone:** The H-561 is the first of six Air Cushion Vehicles (ACVs) being constructed by Chowgule & Company Private Limited in Goa. This project is a key outcome of the "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" (Self-Reliant India) and "Make in India" initiatives, demonstrating India's growing capacity to design and manufacture specialized defense platforms domestically.
- **Unique Operational Capabilities:** As an ACV, the H-561 operates on a cushion of pressurized air, allowing it to glide seamlessly over water, mudflats, marshy land, and shallow coastal regions. This multi-terrain mobility is critical for the Indian Coast Guard to conduct surveillance, search-and-rescue, and anti-smuggling operations in difficult, shallow environments where traditional patrol vessels cannot navigate.
- **Performance and Strategic Impact:** During sea trials, the H-561 achieved an impressive speed of 52 knots, exceeding its contractual requirement of 48 knots. The induction of these six hovercraft is expected to significantly enhance the ICG's rapid-response capabilities and maritime domain awareness across India's 7,500 km coastline, particularly in complex riverine and deltaic areas.

BANKING NEWS

UCO Bank appoints Rajendra Kumar Saboo as MD & CEO

- **Temporary Assignment:** Shri Rajendra Kumar Saboo, who serves as an Executive Director of UCO Bank, has been given this additional charge only until August 31, 2026, or until a regular incumbent is appointed, or until further orders are issued, whichever is earliest.
- **Context of the Change:** This appointment follows the vacancy created by the completion of the term of the former MD & CEO, Shri Ashwani Kumar, on May 31, 2026. The order was conveyed by the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.
- **Professional Background:** Shri Saboo is a seasoned career banker who joined UCO Bank as an Executive Director in November 2022. He began his professional journey in 1994 as a Probationary Officer with the erstwhile Oriental Bank of Commerce and brings extensive experience in areas such as treasury, international banking, digital banking, wealth management, and strategic management.

Footnotes: UCO Bank's MD & CEO: Ashwani Kumar, HQ: Kolkata, Estd: 1943

RBI Issues Master Direction on Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) 2026

- **Platform Net Worth:** TReDS operators must maintain a minimum net worth of ₹25 crore (auditor-certified), with existing operators given until March 31, 2028, to comply

- **Simplified Onboarding:** The RBI removed due diligence requirements for MSME sellers, shifting to built-in validation checks that ensure proceeds are credited directly to the seller's bank account.

Footnotes: RBI's Governor: Sanjay Malhotra(IAS), HQ: Mumbai ,Estd:1935

Cross-border Payments Platform Skydo Secures Canada Registration

- **In June 2026,** the cross-border payments platform Skydo, secured an international payment license in Canada, marking the company's first regulatory approval outside India.
- **Monitored by:** The license, granted under Canada's Retail Payment Activities Act (RPAA), and monitored by Bank of Canada.
- **Significance:** The new license will enable the company to facilitate two-day payment flows between India and Canada, supporting local collections and payouts.

About Skydo: Estd: 2022, Skydo is a global B2B cross-border payments platform

SPORTS NEWS

India's Neeraj Chopra finishes fourth at 2026 Doha Diamond League

- **Successful Return to Competition:** Competing for the first time since September 2025, Neeraj Chopra made his comeback following a lengthy recovery from a back injury. He recorded a best throw of 85.69 metres in his third attempt, placing fourth in a highly competitive field.
- **Securing Commonwealth Games Qualification:** Despite missing the podium, Neeraj successfully cleared the Athletics Federation of India's (AFI) qualification standard of 82.61 metres for the upcoming Commonwealth Games. He achieved this mark with his second attempt of 82.77 metres, officially cementing his spot for the event in Glasgow.
- **Performance Context in a Star-Studded Field:** The event was won by Sri Lankan athlete Rumesh Pathirage, who continued his dominant season with a throw of 88.68 metres. Neeraj's fourth-place finish serves as an encouraging season-opener as he continues to regain his rhythm and fitness for major championships later this year.

India Win Women's Relay Gold at Asian Relays Championships

- **Golden Performance:** The Indian quartet, consisting of Srabani Nanda, Sneha S.S., Sudeshna Shivankar, and Tamanna, finished with a time of 43.85 seconds. This performance not only earned them the top spot on the podium—finishing ahead of China (44.09s) and Thailand (44.11s)—but also marked a season-best timing for the team.
- **Successful Campaign:** This victory capped off a strong outing for India at the championships, where the team finished with a total of three medals: one gold (women's 4x100m relay), one silver (mixed 4x400m relay), and one bronze (mixed 4x100m relay).

- **Hosting Future Events:** The 2026 edition served as a crucial international testing ground for Indian athletes as they prepare for a busy upcoming season, including the Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games. Notably, it was announced that India will host the third edition of the Asian Relays Championships in Chandigarh in 2027.

India Wins FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup In Auckland

- **Securing Promotion:** By defeating the hosts, New Zealand, 2-0 in the final, India secured the title and earned a direct promotion back to the prestigious FIH Hockey Pro League for the 2026-27 season. This is a significant comeback, as the team had been relegated to the Nations Cup following the previous Pro League cycle.
- **Clinical Performance in the Final:** The match was decided in the opening quarter, with goals from Navneet Kaur (4th minute) and Sunelita Toppo (15th minute). The Indian team maintained their 2-0 lead through a disciplined defensive display, keeping the New Zealand "Black Sticks" at bay for the remainder of the game.
- **Unbeaten Tournament Run:** India completed a "perfect" tournament, remaining unbeaten throughout the competition. Their path to the trophy included topping their group with wins over the USA, Japan, and Uruguay, followed by a dominant 6-0 victory against Chile in the semi-finals. Notably, Indian forward Deepika finished as the tournament's joint-top scorer, netting six goals.

Neeraj Chopra named Best Male Athlete of the Year 2025

- **Recognition of a Stellar Season:** The award celebrates his remarkable 2025 campaign, which included his historic milestone of breaching the 90-meter mark in javelin. He also achieved prestigious victories at the Paris Diamond League, the Ostrava Golden Spike, and the inaugural Neeraj Chopra Classic in Bengaluru.
- **Inaugural Athletics Federation of India Honour:** This was the first-ever edition of the Indian Athletics Awards, aimed at recognizing top performers, coaches, and contributors to the sport. Neeraj received this prestigious title from Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya during the ceremony held in New Delhi.
- **Emotional Significance for the Athlete:** Neeraj expressed that this award is very close to his heart because he received it in the presence of both veteran and upcoming generations of Indian athletes. During his acceptance speech, he encouraged younger athletes to remain patient and maintain belief in their potential to succeed on the global stage.

Harmanpreet Kaur Becomes First Cricketer Ever to Play 200 T20 Internationals

- **Historic Global Milestone:** Kaur reached this landmark during India's ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 group stage match against South Africa at Old Trafford. She stands alone at the top of the list for most T20I appearances, surpassing all other competitors in both the men's and women's games.

- Commemoration of a Stellar Journey: To celebrate her 17-year international career, she was felicitated in a team huddle by head coach Amol Muzumdar and vice-captain Smriti Mandhana. She was presented with a special jersey and cap embroidered with the number "200" to mark the occasion.
- Full-Circle Moment: The milestone holds special significance as her 200th match took place in England, the same country where she made her T20I debut back in 2009. Having played consistently since the inaugural edition of the tournament, her longevity and influence have been instrumental in the growth of women's cricket globally.

Cristiano Ronaldo Becomes First Player to Score in Six FIFA World Cups

- A Historic Milestone: Cristiano Ronaldo has officially become the first football player to score in six different FIFA World Cup tournaments. He secured this legendary achievement by netting a brace during Portugal's 5-0 victory against Uzbekistan.
- Two Decades of Longevity: His remarkable World Cup scoring streak originally began two decades ago at the 2006 tournament in Germany. Since then, the Portuguese forward has found the back of the net in the 2010, 2014, 2018, 2022, and 2026 editions.
- Surpassing National Records: These historic goals also snapped a 10-match scoring drought for the 41-year-old superstar in major international tournaments. Additionally, the performance lifted his career World Cup tally to 10 goals, surpassing Eusébio to make him Portugal's all-time top scorer in the competition.

CAB appoints Ashok Dinda as Head of Vision 2028 & fast bowling coach

- Dual Leadership Appointment: The Cricket Association of Bengal has officially appointed former Indian fast bowler and state legend Ashok Dinda as the Head of the Vision 2028 programme. Alongside managing the entire project, Dinda will take direct charge as the fast bowling coach, while fellow state veteran Utpal Chatterjee joins him as the spin bowling coach.
- Scope of Vision 2028: Set to launch in July 2026, Vision 2028 is a critical grass-roots and development project designed to scout, promote, and refine cricket talent across West Bengal. To streamline progression, the comprehensive framework will absorb the head coaches and assistant coaches from all of Bengal's men's and women's age-group categories, including the Under-16, Under-19, Under-23, and senior squads.
- Balancing Political Duties: Despite recently being sworn in as a Minister of State in the West Bengal government, Dinda committed to the project after turning down the full-time senior Bengal team coaching offer due to his political schedule. He intends to host focused training camps starting in early July, prioritizing strength, conditioning, and video analysis to correct young bowlers' technical flaws.

India Beat Bangladesh by 5 Wickets in Women's T20 World Cup

- **Semi-Final Race Intact:** The win took India to 6 points from 4 matches (3 wins, 1 loss) in Group A, keeping them in second place. However, because South Africa also won their match against the Netherlands, the race for the second semi-final spot is a tight shootout. India's fate will completely rely on their final group stage match on Sunday against the undefeated tournament leaders, Australia.
- **Shafali Verma's Match-Winning Knock:** Chasing a modest target of 137, opener Shafali Verma set the tone early. She smashed a brilliant 53 off just 34 balls (including 8 fours and a six), bringing up her half-century in just 29 deliveries. Her explosive start in the powerplay ensured India stayed well ahead of the required run rate, earning her the Player of the Match honors.
- **Star Spells: Radha Yadav & Record-Breaking Shree Charani** While Bangladesh managed to stitch together a couple of decent partnerships, the Indian spinners completely dismantled their momentum: Radha Yadav was the pick of the bowlers, turning the tide in the middle overs to finish with crucial figures of 3/28. Shree Charani picked up 2/28, officially making history by taking her tournament tally to 12 wickets—the most ever by an Indian bowler in a single edition of the Women's T20 World Cup.

FIFA suspends All Nepal Football Association over governance violations

- **The Cause:** Ongoing governance disputes and political interference from Nepal's National Sports Council (NSC) and the domestic judiciary, which disrupted ANFA's executive elections and violated Article 14 of the FIFA Statutes requiring members to manage affairs independently.
- **Competition Ban:** Nepal's national football teams and domestic club teams are barred from participating in any international competitions organized by FIFA or the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

Footnotes: FIFA's Founder: Robert Guérin, HQ : Zurich, Switzerland, Estd: 1904

AWARD NEWS

BPCL's Kochi Refinery wins 'Leadership in Future-Ready Refining Award'

- **Focus on Digital and Future-Ready Operations:** BPCL's Kochi Refinery has been actively investing in "future-ready" capabilities by integrating Artificial Intelligence, advanced machine learning, and cloud-native digital solutions. These initiatives aim to transform the complex into an intelligent energy facility capable of navigating a complex and volatile global energy market.
- **Commitment to Sustainability & Energy Transition:** The refinery continues to gain recognition for its dedication to responsible growth and environmental stewardship. By prioritizing energy efficiency, emissions reduction, and large-scale investments in green

hydrogen and compressed biogas (CBG) projects, the facility is aligning itself with India's long-term energy transition goals.

- A Culture of Operational Excellence: Kochi Refinery is currently celebrating its Diamond Jubilee year, marked by a series of awards for operational performance and manufacturing innovation. Its recent successes, including achieving record-breaking crude throughput and major safety milestones.

Footnotes: BPCL's Chairman & MD: Sanjay Khanna, HQ: Mumbai, Estd: 1976

First Indian-Origin Wolf Prize Physics Winner Jainendra Jain

- Recognition of Groundbreaking Research: Professor Jain was honored for his 1989 discovery of "composite fermions," a revolutionary concept that provided a unified explanation for the fractional quantum Hall effect. His theory, which posits that electrons can bind with quantum vortices to form new quasiparticles, transformed the field of condensed matter physics and is now foundational to modern research in topological quantum matter and quantum computing.
- A Historic Milestone: Presented by Israeli President Isaac Herzog at the Knesset in Jerusalem on June 18, 2026, the award marks the first time an Indian-origin scientist has received this honor since the Wolf Prize was established in 1978. Often considered a precursor to the Nobel Prize, the Wolf Prize has a high track record of recognizing laureates who later go on to win the Nobel.
- An Inspiring Personal Journey: Professor Jain's path to global scientific prominence began in a small town in Rajasthan. Despite suffering a severe injury at age 12 that resulted in a lifelong disability, he utilized the Jaipur Foot—a low-cost, iconic Indian prosthetic—to regain his mobility and pursue his education at Maharaja College, IIT Kanpur, and later in the United States.

Warship-maker GRSE conferred 'Navratna' status

- Granting of Enhanced Financial Autonomy: The 'Navratna' status grants the company greater operational flexibility, allowing its board to make significant capital investments of up to ₹1,000 crore without requiring prior government approval. This empowerment will accelerate decision-making for large-scale projects and help the shipyard execute strategic expansion plans more efficiently.
- Recognition of Exceptional Financial Performance: The award follows a period of remarkable growth, with the company's annual revenue rising from ₹1,754 crore in FY22 to ₹7,002 crore in FY26. During this same five-year timeframe, its Profit After Tax (PAT) witnessed a substantial increase of approximately 294%, growing from ₹190 crore to ₹748 crore.
- Support for Strategic Expansion & 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat': As the 29th CPSE to receive this status, GRSE is now better positioned to strengthen its shipbuilding infrastructure through both brownfield and greenfield projects.

NBCC India Wins Kalinga CSR Excellence Award 2025 at EECC 2026

- **Recognition of Social Impact:** The award acknowledges NBCC's dedication to executing high-impact CSR projects that prioritize health, education, and skill development in underserved regions. Their efforts align with national goals to improve the quality of life for marginalized communities through sustainable infrastructure and community outreach.
- **Commitment to Sustainability and Governance:** As a leading Public Sector Undertaking, NBCC has integrated social responsibility into its core business strategy, focusing on environmental sustainability and transparent project implementation. This award serves as a testament to their professional approach in balancing infrastructure growth with meaningful social contribution.
- **Honour at a Prestigious Forum:** The award was conferred at a major industry event, celebrating organizations that have demonstrated leadership and innovation in their CSR portfolios. By consistently meeting and exceeding mandatory CSR spending benchmarks, NBCC has set a benchmark for other CPSEs in driving social change.

Former India Cricket Captain Rohit Sharma conferred with Padma Shri

- **Prestigious Recognition:** Former Indian cricket captain Rohit Sharma was officially conferred with the Padma Shri award. President Droupadi Murmu presented this distinguished honour at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.
- **Celebrating Sporting Legacy:** The award recognizes his exceptional contributions to Indian cricket throughout his long and decorated career. It celebrates his status as an iconic player and a highly successful leader for the national team.
- **Highlighting Major Achievements:** This accolade follows his monumental success in leading India to the 2024 ICC T20 World Cup and the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy titles. These victories cemented his legacy as one of the most impactful figures in the history of the sport.

Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited Granted The Navratna Status

- **Prestigious Status Elevation:** Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL) has officially been granted the prestigious Navratna status by the Government of India. Approved by the Ministry of Finance, the oil refining company becomes the 28th Navratna Central Public Sector Enterprise in the country.
- **Enhanced Financial Autonomy:** The new status grants CPCL significantly higher operational and financial independence for its future capital expenditures. The company can now invest up to ₹1,000 crore on a single project without seeking prior government approval.

- **Strategic Market Expansion:** This elite designation allows the public sector undertaking to establish overseas joint ventures and alliances freely. It strongly reinforces the competitive market position of CPCL, which operates as a vital subsidiary of Indian Oil Corporation Limited.

Footnotes: Chennai's Mayor: PriyaRajan, Commissioner: J. Kumaragurubaran

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Parul Chaudhary honored with Best Female Athlete of Year award

- **Inaugural Award Ceremony:** Long-distance running star Parul Chaudhary was named the Best Female Athlete of the Year at the inaugural edition of the Indian Athletics Awards held in New Delhi on June 20, 2026. Instituted by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) and presented by Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, the historic event celebrated top performances alongside Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra, who claimed the men's counterpart.
- **Recognition of Global Excellence:** The award serves as a powerful recognition of Chaudhary's exceptional international consistency and achievements during the stellar 2025 season. As India's premier distance runner, she won historic gold medals in both the 3000m steeplechase and the 5000m events at the Asian Athletics Championships.
- **Financial Reward and Statistical Legacy:** Alongside the prestigious trophy, Chaudhary was awarded a cash prize of ₹10 lakh by the federation to support her future training endeavors. The distinction highlights her standing as a pioneer in Indian track and field, where she continues to hold multiple national records in long-distance categories.

IOA President P.T. Usha conferred with Lifetime Achievement Award

- **Inaugural Award Recognition:** Legendary sprinter and Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President P.T. Usha was conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award at the inaugural Indian Athletics Awards held in New Delhi on June 20, 2026. Conceptualized by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI), this new platform was launched to honor the vital

contributions of athletes, coaches, and mentors toward India's growing global success in track and field.

- **Shared Honors and Surprised Reaction:** Usha shared the prestigious lifetime honor alongside three other prominent Indian sporting icons: Gurbachan Singh Randhawa, Bahadur Singh Chauhan, and Anju Bobby George. Upon receiving the trophy, Usha expressed pleasant surprise and lauded the AFI's initiative, noting that it is rare in India to be recognized with such an award without formally applying for it.
- **Celebration of an Unmatched Legacy:** Often referred to as the "Queen of Indian Track and Field," the award celebrates Usha's historic career, which includes winning 11 Asian Games medals and becoming the first Indian woman to reach an Olympic track final. The mega-event brought together multiple generations of sports stars, serving as both a celebration of the sport's rapid rise and an inspiration for emerging athletic talent.

BCA President Harsh Vardhan honoured with Global Prestige Award

- **The Core Vision:** Vardhan was recognized for his strategic contributions toward Viksit Bharat 2047, a national initiative aiming to transform India into a fully developed nation by the centenary of its independence.
- **Event Theme:** The ceremony was held under the banner "Visionaries of Change: Charting the Course to Viksit Bharat 2047.". It celebrated global and Indian changemakers driving advancements in innovation, leadership, and public development
- **Historical Leadership:** Elected unopposed in September 2025 at the age of 24, Harsh Vardhan is the youngest President in the history of the Bihar Cricket Association.

World Champion Viswanathan Anand Conferred SJFI Gold Medal

- In June 2026, Viswanathan Anand, India's first Chess Grandmaster (GM) and Deputy President of the International Chess Federation (FIDE), was conferred the Sports Journalists' Federation of India (SJFI) Gold Medal for his exceptional contribution to Indian chess and outstanding achievements in the sport.
- Viswanathan Anand received the SJFI Gold Medal from former India captain Krishnamachari Srikkanth at the Madras Cricket Club (MCC), Chennai, in a ceremony organised by the SJFI and Tamil Nadu Sports Journalists Association (TNSJA).
- **About SJFI Gold Medal:**
- **Overview:** Instituted in 2019, the SJFI Gold Medal honours sportspersons for their outstanding contributions to the long-term growth and development of their respective sports.
- **Recognition:** Viswanathan Anand became the 6th recipient of the SJFI Gold Medal, joining sporting legends Sunil Gavaskar, Vijay Amritraj, Prakash Padukone, P. T. Usha, and Milkha Singh (posthumous).

MOU NEWS

NHAI Signs MoU with NCAER to Establish Centre for Economics of Transportation

- **Strategic Research Alliance:** The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER). This milestone partnership will establish the country's first permanent, independent research center dedicated to transportation economics.
- **Core Objectives and Scope:** The new center will focus on providing data-driven, actionable insights to support long-term highway planning and investment decisions. It will conduct specialized research across critical areas like freight logistics, toll policies, asset monetization, and road safety.
- **Long-Term Funding and Governance:** NHAI has officially committed to supporting the establishment and operational funding of this institution for a baseline period of ten years. The facility's research priorities and outputs will be closely monitored by a dedicated advisory committee and an NHAI steering committee.

APPOINTMENT & PERSON IN NEWS

Vivek Aggarwal appointed as Vice President of the FATF

- **First-Ever Representation for India:** This marks the first time in history that India has been elected to the Vice-Presidency of the FATF. The appointment is seen as a major diplomatic milestone, reflecting international trust in India's global leadership.
- **Term of Service & Responsibilities:** Mr. Aggarwal will serve a one-year term, officially assuming the role from July 2026 to June 2027. He will work closely with the FATF President to steer the organization's agenda and uphold its global mandate.
- **Professional Background & Expertise:** Currently serving as the Secretary to the Ministry of Culture, he is a 1994-batch IAS officer with extensive experience in financial regulation. He previously led India's delegation to the FATF and served as the Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND).

Footnotes: FATF's President: Elisa de AndaMadrazo, HQ: Paris, Estd: 1989

DFS appoints Hitesh Rameshchandra Joshi as CMD of GIC Re

- **Formal Elevation to Leadership:** The Department of Financial Services (DFS) has officially appointed Hitesh Rameshchandra Joshi as the Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD) of the General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re).
- **Tenure & Government Approval:** His appointment was approved by the Central Government via a Ministry of Finance order dated June 15, 2026. He will serve in this leadership role until his superannuation on September 30, 2028, or until further government orders are issued.
- **Professional Background & Expertise:** Mr. Joshi is an insurance industry veteran who previously served as an Executive Director at GIC Re, where he managed diverse portfolios including international operations, finance, and risk management. He holds

postgraduate degrees in Accountancy and Financial Management and is a Fellow of the Insurance Institute of India.

Dr. Saibal Chattopadhyay appointed as Chairperson of NSC

- **Strategic Leadership Appointment:** The ACC officially appointed Dr. Saibal Chattopadhyay as the Chairperson of the National Statistical Commission (NSC) on June 18, 2026. He succeeds Rajeeva Laxman Karandikar and will lead the apex body responsible for overseeing India's core statistical activities.
- **Academic & Professional Pedigree:** Dr. Chattopadhyay is a distinguished academic and the former Director of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Calcutta. He holds advanced degrees in Statistics, including a Ph.D. and MS from the University of Connecticut, providing him with the deep technical expertise required to lead the nation's statistical governance.
- **Commission's Mandate and Composition:** The NSC acts as the nodal body for evolving statistical priorities, setting quality standards, and ensuring coordination between various government agencies and states. Alongside Dr. Chattopadhyay, the government has also appointed three new part-time members—Prof. Shubhabrata Das, Satyendra Bahadur Singh, and Dr. Madhavan Mukund—to strengthen the commission's operational capacity.

Footnotes: NSC's Chairman: Saibal Chattopadhyay, HQ: New Delhi, Estd: 2006

Anand Jain appointed As The New DGP Of Ladakh

- **Transition from J & K:** Anand Jain, a 1999-batch AGMUT cadre IPS officer, was transferred to Ladakh from his previous role as Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) for the Armed Police in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Filling a Leadership Vacancy:** The position had been held as an additional charge by K.K. Sharma following the transfer of the former DGP, Mukesh Singh, to Manipur earlier this year. The appointment of a full-time DGP is expected to bring greater stability and dedicated focus to the police administration in the Union Territory.
- **Focus on Regional Security:** As DGP, Jain will be responsible for overseeing the overall law and order, security coordination, and policing strategy across Ladakh. His tenure begins at a significant time for the region, which has been seeing a heightened focus on border security management and rapid infrastructure development.

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Tushar Mehta reappointed as Solicitor General of India

- **Formal Reappointment:** The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has officially reappointed Tushar Mehta as the Solicitor General of India. This decision grants him a fresh three-year term starting from July 1, 2026.
- **Continued Leadership:** Having served as the Solicitor General since October 2018, this extension ensures stability in the Centre's legal representation. He remains a key figure in defending the government's stance in landmark constitutional and policy-related cases.
- **Broad Legal Extension:** Alongside Mehta, the government has also extended the tenures of five Additional Solicitors General for the Supreme Court. These moves collectively aim to maintain continuity and strength within the Union Government's legal team.

Dr R Dhinakaran appointed ADGP Armed Police in Tamil Nadu

- **New Executive Appointment:** Dr. R. Dhinakaran has been officially appointed as the Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) for the Armed Police wing in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The state government issued the orders as part of a wider, senior-level administrative reshuffle in the police department.
- **A Decorated Career Profile:** He is a highly experienced 1998-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre. He holds a PhD in agriculture and has previously received both the Chief Minister's and the President's police medals for his dedicated service.
- **Strategic Wing Responsibility:** In his new role, he will assume full command over the state's armed police wing and oversee its operational preparedness. This essential unit is responsible for managing major security deployments, protecting sensitive installations, and handling armed interventions.

Meta appointed Kunal Shah as Global head of WhatsApp

- **Leadership Transition and Strategy:** Meta has appointed CRED founder Kunal Shah as the new global head of WhatsApp, succeeding long-time chief Will Cathcart. Shah will step down from his operational role as CEO of CRED to bring a founder's mentality and a fresh global perspective to the world's largest messaging platform.

- **Massive Financial Tie-in:** Alongside this high-profile appointment, Meta is making a major \$900 million (approximately ₹8,550 crore) investment into Shah's fintech startup, CRED. This deal values the Bengaluru-based company at \$4.5 billion, securing Meta a minority stake without granting them access to CRED's user data.
- **Focus on Market Monetization:** This historic move signals Meta's deepening commitment to India, which represents WhatsApp's largest global market with over 500 million users. Leveraging Shah's extensive background in consumer anthropology and fintech, Meta aims to transition WhatsApp from a pure messaging platform into a highly monetized engine for commerce, payments, and digital services.

Footnotes: Whatsapp's Previous CEO: Will Cathcart, Launch: 2009

Mahesh Dixit to Succeed Tapan Kumar Deka as Intelligence Bureau Chief

- **A High-Profile Succession:** The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, officially cleared Mahesh Dixit for a fixed two-year tenure starting June 30, 2026. He will succeed Tapan Kumar Deka, a highly regarded 1988-batch officer who became the longest-serving IB chief since 2005 after receiving two consecutive one-year extensions.
- Dixit is a 1993-batch IPS officer from the Andhra Pradesh cadre. Uniquely, he is a qualified medical doctor who transitioned into law enforcement. Before this elevation, he was already serving as the Special Director (the second-highest post in the agency) and brings nearly three decades of dedicated internal intelligence experience to the top job.

Footnotes: IB's Director: Tapan Deka (IPS), HQ: New Delhi , Estd: 1887