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Current Affairs

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City of Greater Bendigo awarded Gold At
Victorian Tourism Awards



1. City of Greater Bendigo awarded Gold at Victorian Tourism Awards

- **Award Category:** The City won Gold in the prestigious Local Government Award for Tourism at the 2025 Victorian Tourism Awards.
- **Sustained Excellence:** This win underscores the City's consistent leadership in the tourism sector, marking its sixth consecutive year as a finalist and its fourth Gold award in this category over that period.
- **Strategic Success:** The award specifically recognises the City's dedication to high standards in tourism planning, facility provision, strategic marketing, and effective major event management.
- **Collaborative Industry:** The success is attributed to the collaborative effort between the City and local businesses, which saw other Bendigo operators like Bendigo Guided Tours also win Gold in their respective categories.
- **Reputation and Growth:** It reinforces Greater Bendigo's reputation as a leading regional tourist destination in Victoria, which contributes significantly to the region's economy and visitor satisfaction.



2. Jakarta Becomes World's Most Populous City surpassing Tokyo according to UN Report 2025

- **New Rank and Population:** Jakarta, including its surrounding metropolitan region (Jabodetabek), is now ranked No. 1 with an estimated population of approximately 42 million residents.



- **Toppling Tokyo:** Tokyo, which previously held the top spot, has dropped to third place with an estimated population of around 33 million. Dhaka, Bangladesh is ranked second with about 37 million.
- **Revised Methodology:** The main reason for the dramatic change is the UN's updated criteria. The new methodology uses consistent and standardised geospatial and population density criteria to define "urban areas," providing a more accurate measure of cities like Jakarta with extensive urban sprawl.
- **Asia Dominance:** The report highlights the accelerating trend of urbanisation in Asia; nine out of the ten most populous cities in the world are now located on the continent.
- **Urban Challenges:** Jakarta's new status also underscores severe challenges associated with rapid urban growth, including over-congestion, pollution, frequent flooding, and the issue of land subsidence, which was a key factor in Indonesia's decision to relocate its administrative capital to Nusantara.

3. Dr Hifzur Rahman appointed as Ambassador of India to the State of Libya

- **Prior Post:** Dr. Hifzur Rahman was previously serving as the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Chad, which gives him relevant experience in the African continent.
- **Timing of Appointment:** The appointment was announced by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and he is expected to take up the assignment shortly.
- **Restoration of Mission:** This appointment is significant as it comes after India reopened its Embassy in Tripoli in July 2024, more than five years after it was closed due to the worsening security situation in Libya.
- **Strengthening Ties:** His role will focus on strengthening the strong bilateral and economic ties between India and Libya, which historically includes Indian companies (PSUs and private firms) executing major infrastructure projects like hospitals, power plants, and roads in the country.
- **Indian Community Focus:** The Ambassadorship is vital for the safety and welfare of the approximately 3,000 Indian nationals who continue to reside in Libya, requiring consistent diplomatic engagement and consular services.



4. Amresh Prasad appointed as Executive Director at Union Bank of India

- **Effective Date & Tenure:** The appointment, made by the Central Government, became effective on November 24, 2025. His term is set for three years or until his superannuation on October 31, 2028.



- **Previous Role:** Prior to joining Union Bank of India, Shri Prasad was serving as the Chief General Manager (CGM) at Punjab National Bank (PNB).
- **Vast Experience:** He brings a wealth of over 32 years of experience in the banking sector, covering functions from branch operations to senior leadership roles at the Head Office.
- **Key Expertise:** His professional expertise is concentrated in critical areas of banking, including Corporate Credit, Credit Review and Monitoring, and Transaction Monitoring.
- **Significance:** His appointment, alongside others across Public Sector Banks, is part of a larger government effort to strengthen the management, strategic decision-making, and operational capabilities of state-run banks.

5. Giovanna de Sequeira Wins Bronze for India at World Jiu-Jitsu Championship

- **Medal and Category:** Giovanna won the Bronze Medal while competing in the Infant/Girls Gi category for competitors below 28 kg.
- **Event Location:** The prestigious championship was the World Professional Jiu-Jitsu Championship held in Abu Dhabi, which is a major international stage for the sport.
- **Age and Significance:** At just 10 years old, her victory marks a significant milestone for a young Indian athlete in a globally competitive martial art, highlighting her exceptional talent and discipline.
- **Remarkable Comeback:** The win is particularly notable as it came after a determined comeback; Giovanna had undergone knee surgery just five months prior to the competition.
- **Family Legacy:** Giovanna's success is part of a growing martial arts legacy alongside her elder sister, Erica de Sequeira, who also holds an advanced international jiu-jitsu certification, showcasing a promising future for the sisters in the sport.



6. India Wins Two Medals at ITTF World Youth Championships

- **Historic Silver:** The Under-19 Boys' Team clinched the silver medal, marking the first-ever time an Indian boys' team has reached the final of this prestigious World Youth Championship.
- **Bronze by Girls:** The second medal was a Bronze won by the Under-15 Girls' Team, underscoring the growing depth of talent in the younger age groups.



- **Finalists Performance:** The U-19 Boys' team, consisting of players like Ankur Bhattacharjee, Abhinandh Pradhivadhi, and Priyanuj Bhattacharyya, showed exceptional composure to defeat Chinese Taipei 3-2 in a thrilling semi-final before losing 0-3 to a strong Japan in the final.
- **Breakthrough Event:** The two-medal haul, one silver and one bronze (both in the team events), is considered a significant breakthrough and a memorable debut for India at the World Youth Championships, showcasing its emerging status in youth table tennis.
- **Future Promise:** The performance across both the U-19 and U-15 categories is seen as a major indicator of the positive direction and bright future for Indian table tennis, setting a new benchmark for upcoming generations.

7. ITBP DG gets additional charge of DG BSF

- **Officer Details:** The officer entrusted with the dual responsibility is Praveen Kumar, a 1993-batch IPS officer of the West Bengal cadre, who is currently the DG of ITBP.
- **Reason for Additional Charge:** The additional charge was necessitated by the superannuation of the incumbent DG BSF, Daljit Singh Chaudhary, on November 30, 2025.
- **Duration:** Kumar will hold the additional charge of DG BSF from November 30, 2025, until a regular successor is appointed by the government, or until further orders are issued.
- **Strategic Oversight:** This dual charge means Kumar will oversee two of India's major Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), managing both the Indo-China border (ITBP) and the crucial Pakistan and Bangladesh frontiers (BSF).
- **Ensuring Continuity:** The move, approved by the Ministry of Home Affairs, is a standard administrative procedure to ensure there is uninterrupted operational leadership and continuity in command for the BSF during the transition period.



8. Ashish Kundra appointed as the new CS of Ladakh

- **Officer Profile:** Ashish Kundra is a senior IAS officer of the 1996 batch from the AGMUT (Arunachal-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territory) cadre, bringing diverse experience to the role.
- **Date of Charge:** The appointment will take effect from January 1, 2026, succeeding the incumbent CS, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, who is due to retire on December 31, 2025.



- **Previous Role:** Prior to this transfer, Kundra was serving as the Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, demonstrating experience in high-level UT administration.
- **Strategic Context:** He assumes office at a critical time when Ladakh is facing significant developmental challenges and ongoing political movements regarding statehood and inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.
- **Administrative Mandate:** Kundra is expected to focus on crucial areas like administrative reforms, strengthening the region's development model, and effectively monitoring major infrastructure and welfare projects in the Union Territory.

9. Williams Crowned 2025 Tidy Towns Champion

- **State Winner:** Williams, a town in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia, took out the coveted state award, recognising its commitment to building a clean, safe, and vibrant community.
- **Judges' Impression:** The town highly impressed the judges with its strong focus on environmental stewardship and impressive range of community-led initiatives.
- **Key Projects:** Their winning submission highlighted projects such as well-planned bushwalks, riverbank restoration, waterwise planting, and the installation of solar lighting in public spaces, demonstrating a focus on sustainability.
- **Community Spirit:** The award celebrates the strong community spirit and volunteerism in Williams, where residents actively collaborate on regular clean-up and beautification projects.
- **National Nomination:** As the state champion, Williams now qualifies to represent Western Australia at the Keep Australia Beautiful National Tidy Towns Awards, competing against winners from other states and territories.



10. Bharatanatyam Legend Kumari Kamala passed away

- **Icon of Vazhuvoor Style:** Kumari Kamala was one of the foremost exponents of the Vazhuvoor bani (style) of Bharatanatyam, having been trained by the eminent Guru Vazhuvoor Ramaiah Pillai.
- **Child Prodigy and Film Star:** Known initially as 'Baby Kamala', she began her career as a child artist in films in the late 1930s, performing in nearly 100 Tamil, Hindi, Telugu, and Kannada movies, which helped popularise classical dance to a wide audience.



- **Global Ambassador:** She was a true global representative of Indian culture, having been invited to perform for Queen Elizabeth II at her coronation festivities in 1953 and performing extensively in other countries.
- **Major Awards:** Her immense contribution to the performing arts was recognised with several top honours, including the Padma Bhushan (1970) and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1968) in India, as well as the U.S. National Heritage Fellowship.
- **Lasting Legacy:** Her demise marks the loss of one of the last links to the era when the temple dance form of Sadir was revitalised and re-established as the classical art form of Bharatanatyam on the public stage.

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