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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 04-11-2025

NATIONAL NEWS

Lucknow Recognised as UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has officially recognised Lucknow as part of its Creative Cities Network (UCCN) under the “City of Gastronomy” category.

This recognition celebrates the city’s centuries-old culinary heritage, rooted in Awadhi cuisine and the region’s Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb, symbolising the harmonious blend of Hindu and Muslim cultures.

The announcement was made during the 43rd UNESCO General Conference held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

This marks a historic milestone for Lucknow and strengthens India’s cultural diplomacy by placing the city among the world’s leading gastronomic destinations.

The Directorate of Tourism, Government of Uttar Pradesh, prepared the nomination dossier, which was submitted to the Ministry of Culture on 31st January 2025.

India officially nominated Lucknow for the “City of Gastronomy” title on 3rd March 2025.

The dossier showcased the city’s culinary diversity, innovation, and sustainable food traditions, reflecting a joint effort by the state government, local chefs, artisans, and heritage experts to promote Lucknow’s food legacy globally.

Lucknow’s selection is deeply inspired by its royal Awadhi cuisine, known for timeless recipes and refined culinary techniques.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

China Launches Shenzhou-21 Mission Carrying Youngest Astronaut

China successfully launched the Shenzhou-21 spacecraft from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in the Gobi Desert, marking a major milestone in its growing space programme.

The spacecraft was launched aboard a Long March-2F rocket and will dock with the Tiangong Space Station within hours of launch.

The crew members include Commander Zhang Lu, Engineer Wu Fei, and Specialist Zhang Hongzhang, who will stay in orbit for six months to conduct scientific research and maintenance work.

Wu Fei (32 years old) became China's youngest astronaut in space, representing the new generation of space explorers and highlighting China's focus on training young talent for future lunar and planetary missions.

The mission carries four laboratory mice (two male and two female) for China's first in-orbit biological experiment involving rodents, to study microgravity's effects on the body and reproduction of mammals—vital for long-duration space travel.

Astronauts will also perform spacewalks, install anti-debris shields, and engage in science outreach activities to inspire Chinese students.

The mission aligns with President Xi Jinping's "space dream", aimed at making China a global space power and preparing for a crewed Moon mission by 2030.

China has achieved major milestones including the Chang'e-4 lunar far-side landing (2019) and the Mars rover deployment (2021), with the Tiangong Space Station (completed in 2022) serving as a permanent orbital base.

All India Council for Technical Education Partners with IBM

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has partnered with IBM to establish an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Lab at its headquarters.

The initiative aims to provide students and faculty across India's technical education ecosystem with training and exposure in emerging technologies.

The AI Lab will act as a central hub for upskilling in AI, data science, and related domains, focusing on hands-on learning and certification.

The collaboration seeks to equip thousands of students and teachers with practical AI competencies, building a future-ready workforce for India.

BANKING

SEBI Revises Eligibility Norms for Derivatives on Non-Benchmark Indices

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has directed stock exchanges to adopt revised eligibility norms for derivatives on non-benchmark indices (like Bank Nifty, Bankex, and Fin Nifty) to reduce index concentration risk.

The new norms require an index to have at least 14 constituents, with the top stock's weight capped at 20% and the combined weight of the top three stocks capped at 45%.

All constituent stocks must have descending weights, ensuring a balanced representation within the index.

Rebalancing deadlines:

Bankex (BSE) and Fin Nifty (NSE) — by December 31, 2025.

Bank Nifty (NSE) — in phases until March 31, 2026 for smoother fund transition.

Exchanges and clearing corporations must update systems, notify market participants, and amend rules and bye-laws to implement SEBI's new norms effectively.

Finance Minister Inaugurates Newly Constructed CGST Bhawan in Ghaziabad

Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the newly constructed Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Bhawan at Rani Jhansi Marg, Ghaziabad.

The ₹116-crore complex brings together the CGST Ghaziabad Commissionerate, CGST Audit Commissionerate, CGST Appeals Commissionerate, and Pay & Accounts Office under one roof to ensure administrative synergy and operational efficiency.

The new state-of-the-art green building has two basements and seven floors spread across 21 acres, with parking space for nearly 300 vehicles.

It features eco-friendly systems such as solar panels and rainwater harvesting, and has received the GRIHA Five-Star Award for sustainable design.

The building includes GST Sewa Kendra, Taxpayers' Lounge, and Digital Kiosks, reflecting modern, citizen-oriented administration.

The new CGST Bhawan as a symbol of modern India's commitment to good governance, where infrastructure meets innovation and efficiency aligns with empathy.

DEFENCE

Pravaig Unveils 'VEER', India's First All-Electric Military Vehicle for Defence Use

India has taken a major step toward self-reliance in defence technology with the development of the Pravaig VEER EV, an all-electric military vehicle created by Pravaig Dynamics, a Bengaluru-based company.

The Pravaig VEER EV is designed for the Indian Armed Forces and combines stealth capabilities, high terrain mobility, and quick field-repair readiness, making it ideal for modern military

operations.

It is engineered for stealth missions and performs effectively across deserts, mountains, and forests, showcasing its all-terrain capability.

The VEER EV recently won the iDEX (Innovation for Defence Excellence) Award, a recognition for groundbreaking indigenous defence innovation by the Government of India.

The vehicle's successful military trials confirm its readiness for real-world deployment, advancing the goals of Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) by reducing dependence on imported defence equipment.

The VEER EV operates silently with low noise and heat output, enabling covert and undetectable missions in hostile environments.

Its quick field-repair capability allows soldiers to maintain mission continuity even during complex operations.

The vehicle is fully indigenously developed, reflecting a significant role of private firms in military research and development, and supporting the Make in India mission.

The VEER EV enhances tactical superiority by providing a stealthy, fast-deploying electric platform suitable for asymmetric warfare, where speed and surprise are critical.

AWARDS & PRIZES

Sahitya Akademi Releases Hindi Translation of Lithuanian Novel "The Last Day" as "Antim Din"

Sahitya Akademi, under the Ministry of Culture, released the Hindi translation of the acclaimed Lithuanian novel "The Last Day", titled "Antim Din", at Rabindra Bhawan, New Delhi, in collaboration with the Embassy of Lithuania.

The 250-page novel, originally written by Lithuanian-Ukrainian author Jaroslavas Melnikas, has been translated into Hindi by Dr. Poonam Tiwari to make the work accessible to Indian readers.

The release marks a major milestone in Indo-Lithuanian cultural and literary relations, strengthening mutual understanding through global literature.

Jaroslavas Melnikas, known for his existential and philosophical writings, explores themes of human identity, change, and cultural transformation in the novel, prompting deep reflection on life and society.

This Hindi translation represents the first-ever translation of a Lithuanian fiction work into Hindi, marking a significant achievement for both nations in cross-cultural literary collaboration.

The launch event was attended by literary figures, diplomats, and scholars. Sahitya Akademi President Madhav Kaushik described it as a historic occasion for Hindi literature, emphasizing the Akademi's goal to bring world literature closer to Indian readers by overcoming linguistic barriers.

The event underscored the growing cultural partnership between India and Lithuania, highlighting how literature serves as a bridge between nations and fosters creative and intellectual exchange.

Through this initiative, the Sahitya Akademi continues to promote global literary harmony, encouraging translations of international works into Indian languages to inspire readers to explore diverse cultures, perspectives, and shared human experiences.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Financial Advisor of Defence Services

Shri Raj Kumar Arora, a 1990-batch officer of the Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS), assumed charge as Financial Advisor (Defence Services) [FADS] on November 1, 2025.

He has extensive experience in defence acquisition, financial policy, accounting, audit, budgeting, and personnel management.

Before this appointment, he served as the Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA).

He has also held key posts including Additional Secretary, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC); Finance Manager (Air) in the Acquisition Wing, Ministry of Defence; and Director, Ministry of Finance.

Shri Arora also served as Member (Finance) in the erstwhile Ordnance Factory Board and as Integrated Financial Advisor in various Commands and field offices of the Defence Accounts Department.

Dr. Deepak Mittal Assumes Charge as India's Ambassador-Designate to the United Arab Emirates

Dr. Deepak Mittal has assumed charge as Ambassador-Designate of India to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on October 30, 2025.

He is a 1998-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer with over two decades of diplomatic experience across key global postings.

Mittal has served in Indian missions in Egypt, Israel, and Bangladesh, and was also the Consul General of India in Ho Chi Minh City.

He previously served as India's Ambassador to Qatar, where he played a key role in strengthening bilateral relations.

At the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), he has held important positions, including head of the Consular Affairs Division and desk in charge of India's relations with Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran.

Mittal has also served in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) twice — first as Director and later as Additional Secretary, contributing to India's foreign policy and strategic affairs.

Vishvajit Sahay Assumes Charge as Controller General of Defence Accounts

Shri Vishvajit Sahay, a 1990-batch officer of the Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS), assumed charge as the Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) on November 01, 2025.

He brings over three decades of experience in defence finance and public administration.

He has served as Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser in the Department of Science and Technology.

He also held the position of Joint Secretary in the Department of Heavy Industry.

He worked as Finance Manager (Acquisition Wing) in the Ministry of Defence.

Within the Defence Accounts Department, he has served as Principal Controller of Defence Accounts (Pensions), Prayagraj, Joint CGDA, and Special CGDA.

He has represented India at international training forums including Cambridge University, UK, and the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies, Germany.

Chairman of IUCN Species Survival Commission

Vivek Menon, founder of the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), has been elected as the new Chair of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

He is the first Asian ever to hold this prestigious global conservation position.

The announcement was made during the IUCN World Congress held in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

The Species Survival Commission (SSC) is one of IUCN's six expert commissions, responsible for advising on biodiversity and species conservation.

The SSC and its specialist groups maintain the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the world's most authoritative inventory on the extinction risk of species.

SPORTS

India's 90th Chess Grandmaster

16-year-old Ilamparthi AR from Chennai, Tamil Nadu, has become India's 90th Grandmaster (GM) after securing his final GM norm at the Bijeljina Open held in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Born in 2009, Ilamparthi is a student of Velammal School, an institution renowned for nurturing top chess talents such as D. Gukesh and R. Praggnanandhaa.

He trains under Grandmaster Shyam Sundar M, who has played a key role in shaping his career.

First GM norm at the Ha Noi Tournament (Vietnam, December 2023).

Second GM norm at the Singapore International Open (2024).

Crossed 2500 Elo rating during the Rilton Cup (2024-25).

Final GM norm at the Bijeljina Open (Bosnia), completing the requirements for the Grandmaster title, the highest title in chess.

His success showcases Tamil Nadu's strong chess ecosystem, supported by dedicated schools, academies, and mentorship programs that continue to produce world-class players.

In 2022, Dutch Grandmaster Anish Giri donated his Death Match prize money to support Ilamparthi's training, recognising his early potential and talent.

With Ilamparthi's achievement, Tamil Nadu reaffirms its position as the chess powerhouse of India, having produced multiple GMs and international champions who have elevated India's status in the global chess arena.



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