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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 15-04-2026

NATIONAL NEWS

India Moving Towards Fully Digital Toll Collection on National Highways

India has initiated the transition towards a fully digital toll collection system across National Highways, enabling payments through FASTag (Electronic Toll Collection System using Radio Frequency Identification Technology) and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) from 11 April 2026, aimed at improving transparency, reducing congestion, and enhancing commuter convenience.

The initiative marks a shift from the hybrid toll payment system (cash and digital) to an exclusively digital toll payment ecosystem, supporting the development of technology-driven transport infrastructure in India.

Under the new system, toll payments at plazas will be processed through: FASTag, and Unified Payments Interface.

Key objectives of the digital-only toll collection system include: faster vehicle movement at toll plazas, reduction in waiting time and traffic congestion, minimisation of cash handling and revenue leakages,

However, the nationwide rollout has been temporarily paused in certain regions due to enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct by the Election Commission of India, which restricts implementation of new policy measures during election periods.

The temporary pause applies to areas including Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam, West Bengal, and the Union Territory of Puducherry, where elections are underway.

The initiative reflects India's broader push towards cashless mobility solutions, transparent toll operations, and efficient highway travel infrastructure.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

First Life-Size Statue of Swami Vivekananda Unveiled in Seattle, United States

In a significant cultural milestone, the first life-size statue of Swami Vivekananda in the United States was unveiled at Westlake Square in Seattle, honouring his legacy as a spiritual leader and

philosopher and strengthening India–United States cultural ties.

The bronze statue was sculpted by Naresh Kumar Kumawat, making Seattle the first city in the United States to host a life-size statue of Swami Vivekananda at a prominent public location visited by large numbers of people daily.

The statue is strategically located near major landmarks including the Amazon Spheres, Seattle Convention Center, and the Seattle Center Monorail, ensuring high visibility among residents and international visitors.

The statue was unveiled by Katie Wilson, Mayor of Seattle, along with Prakash Gupta, Consul General of India in Seattle, in the presence of local leaders, community representatives, and members of the Indian-American diaspora.

The statue was gifted by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) under the Government of India, and the unveiling coincided with the observance of ICCR Day, reinforcing India's cultural diplomacy efforts globally.

The initiative aims to: enhance India–United States cultural engagement, promote Indian philosophy and heritage internationally, and strengthen ties with the Indian diaspora community.

Swami Vivekananda's historic address at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893 introduced Hindu philosophy to the Western world and brought him global recognition.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Karnataka Postal Circle Released Commemorative Stamps

The Department of Posts, Karnataka Postal Circle, released commemorative postage stamps and souvenir sheets in Bengaluru to honour the achievements of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and highlight India's progress from early satellite missions to advanced human spaceflight and space exploration initiatives.

The stamps depict India's journey in space exploration, beginning with the launch of Aryabhata in 1975 and extending to the upcoming Gaganyaan mission, reflecting the country's steady technological advancement in the space sector.

The stamp design also includes references to Jantar Mantar, symbolising India's long-standing heritage in astronomy and scientific inquiry.

The Gaganyaan mission, led by the Indian Space Research Organisation, aims to send Indian astronauts (Gaganyatris) to Low Earth Orbit for a short-duration mission and return them safely to Earth, making India the fourth country after the United States, Russia, and China to independently achieve human spaceflight capability.

The commemorative release also highlighted the Indian Space Research Organisation's plan to establish an Indian Space Station, consisting of 52-tonne modules, with the first module targeted for launch by 2028, to support long-duration space research, strengthen India's orbital infrastructure, and enable future deep-space exploration missions

BANKING

Asian Development Bank Approves $115.8 Million Loan To Narayanganj, Bangladesh

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a $115.8 million loan for the Narayanganj Green and Resilient Urban Development Project in Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC), Bangladesh.

The project aims to upgrade drinking water supply, modernise drainage systems, and expand green public spaces to improve urban sustainability and resilience.

It is expected to benefit at least 400,000 residents, supporting efforts to reduce congestion in Dhaka and strengthen urban governance and service delivery.

A key objective is to reduce non-revenue water (NRW) to below 20% through replacement and expansion of 230 km pipeline network and installation of metered household connections.

The project will adopt digital technologies such as Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) and strengthen online billing and revenue collection systems.

The water supply capacity of NCC will increase from 113 million litres per day (MLD) to 162 MLD.

This will be achieved through new tube wells, rehabilitation of water treatment plants, and upgrades of existing wells.

The project will enhance climate resilience and flood management by increasing the share of surface water to 51%.

It includes development of 22 km of drainage infrastructure using nature-based solutions to improve flood control and groundwater recharge.

The project will also construct inclusive green parks and rehabilitate a playground to improve livability and reduce urban heat effects.

The Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC) will be responsible for the long-term operation and maintenance of all facilities under the project.

CSB Bank Launches Its First Retail Savings Product ‘SMART SAVE ACCOUNT’

CSB Bank Limited, one of India’s oldest private sector banks, launched its first dedicated retail savings product called the ‘SMART SAVE ACCOUNT’, marking a major expansion in retail banking portfolio.

The launch aims to boost bank liquidity and provide automated, customer-centric banking services.

The SMART SAVE ACCOUNT is available in three variants: Savings Account, Current Account, and Non-Resident Ordinary (NRO) Account.

The account is designed for salaried individuals, business professionals, and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), ensuring easy liquidity management without manual intervention.

A key feature is the auto-sweep facility, which automatically transfers excess funds into Fixed Deposits (FDs).

The account offers up to 7% interest on 'Sweep-in FDs' for a 13-month tenure.

It comes with a 'no lock-in' facility, ensuring flexible fund access for customers.

Customers receive a complimentary RuPay Platinum debit card for enhanced banking convenience.

The account provides a maximum net banking transaction limit of ₹10 lakh per day.

It also includes a daily ATM withdrawal limit of ₹75,000.

Customers can avail up to a 30% discount on locker rentals, adding additional value benefits.

PFRDA approves PPFAS Asset Management Company

The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), under the Ministry of Finance (MoF), approved PPFAS Asset Management Company (AMC), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Parag Parikh Financial Advisory Services Limited (PPFAS), to act as a sponsor for a pension fund under the National Pension System (NPS).

This approval marks the entry of PPFAS into India's retirement savings space, enabling it to manage long-term pension assets.

The initiative aims to manage long-term retirement savings of NPS subscribers with a focus on investor protection, disciplined investing, and consistent returns.

A separate pension fund company will be established to manage NPS schemes and invest across Equities (EQ), Government Securities (G-Secs), and Corporate Bonds (CBs).

The operations of the fund will begin after completion of regulatory approvals, procedural requirements, and infrastructure setup.

The National Pension System (NPS) was launched in 2004 for government employees and extended to all citizens in 2009, and is regulated by PFRDA.

NPS allows subscribers to choose and switch fund managers for flexible long-term retirement planning.

DEFENCE

Indian Army Contingent Leaves For India–Uzbekistan Joint

Military Exercise DUSTLIK

The Indian Army contingent has departed for the 7th edition of the India–Uzbekistan joint military exercise DUSTLIK, aimed at strengthening bilateral defence cooperation.

The exercise will be conducted at the Gurumsaray Field Training Area, Namangan, Uzbekistan, from 12 to 25 April 2026.

Exercise DUSTLIK is a yearly joint military exercise, conducted alternatively in India and Uzbekistan.

The previous (6th edition) was held at the Foreign Training Node, Aundh (Pune), India in April 2025.

The Indian Armed Forces contingent (60 personnel) includes 45 personnel from the Indian Army (mainly from a Battalion of the MAHAR Regiment) and 15 personnel from the Indian Air Force.

The Uzbekistan Armed Forces contingent also comprises approximately 60 personnel from the Uzbekistan Army and Air Force.

The aim of Exercise DUSTLIK is to enhance military cooperation and develop combined capabilities for joint operations in semi-mountainous terrain.

The exercise focuses on high physical fitness, joint planning, joint tactical drills, and special arms skills.

It aims to establish a unified operational algorithm between command-and-control structures of both countries for planning and execution of joint operations.

Key operational activities include land navigation, strike missions on enemy bases, and seizure of enemy-held areas.

The exercise includes a 48-hour validation exercise to test tactical drills for joint special operations, focusing on neutralisation of unlawful armed groups.

It enhances interoperability, operational synergy, and joint command-and-control coordination between both contingents.

It also promotes bonhomie, camaraderie, and defence cooperation between the armed forces of India and Uzbekistan.

The first edition of Exercise DUSTLIK was held in November 2019 at Chirchiq Training Area near Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Indian Army Launches Operation Him Setu

The Indian Army Trishakti Corps launched Operation Him Setu to rescue and evacuate stranded tourists in North Sikkim (Lachen region).

The operation was triggered after a major landslide disrupted road connectivity between Lachen and Chungthang, severely affecting regional mobility.

The mission is being carried out under the Eastern Command of the Indian Army in extreme weather conditions with heavy snowfall.

The Army has opened critical passes and alternate routes to support safe evacuation of tourists.

The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is working in close coordination with the Army for road clearance, snow removal, and restoration of connectivity.

The operation is being executed in phases, ensuring systematic and safe evacuation of affected individuals.

So far, 135 tourists have been safely evacuated, along with 32 light vehicles and 10 motorcycles.

SPORTS

Asian Wrestling Championships 2026

India delivered a strong performance at the Asian Wrestling Championships 2026 held in Bishkek, where Sujeet Kalkal and Abhimanyou Mandwal won gold medals in freestyle wrestling, strengthening India's overall medal tally and demonstrating dominance at the continental level.

Sujeet Kalkal won the gold medal in the 65 kilogram freestyle category after defeating Umidjon Jalolov of Uzbekistan by 8–1 in the final.

He became the first Indian wrestler to win the 65 kilogram gold medal since Bajrang Punia in 2019.

He secured his third consecutive gold medal in 2026.

He displayed strong offensive and defensive techniques throughout the competition.

Abhimanyou Mandwal won the gold medal in the 70 kilogram freestyle category after defeating Tulga Ochir of Mongolia by 5–3 in the final.

He defeated an Olympian opponent in the final match.

He demonstrated strong tactical awareness and resilience.

The victory marked a breakthrough moment in his international wrestling career.

With these victories, India secured a total of 14 medals at the Asian Wrestling Championships 2026, including: 2 gold medals, 4 silver medals and 8 bronze medals

The Asian Wrestling Championships is one of the most competitive continental wrestling tournaments and features leading wrestlers from countries such as Iran, Kazakhstan, Japan, Mongolia, and India, reflecting the high level of competition in Asian wrestling

IMPORTANT DAYS

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Jayanti

Every year 14 April is observed as Ambedkar Jayanti across India to commemorate the birth anniversary of R. Ambedkar, the Chief Architect of the Constitution of India and a prominent social reformer, economist, and champion of the rights of socially disadvantaged communities.

B. R. Ambedkar is widely regarded as the principal architect of the Constitution of India.

He served as the first Law and Justice Minister of independent India.

In 1923, he founded the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha to promote education and socio-economic upliftment of marginalized communities.

He belonged to a socially disadvantaged community and faced discrimination during his childhood, which shaped his commitment to social justice and equality.

Despite social barriers, he excelled academically and became a leading intellectual and reformer.

In 1942, he served as a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council during the British period.

After independence, he played a key role in drafting the Constitution of India, ensuring provisions for social justice, equality, and fundamental rights.

He consistently worked for the upliftment of Scheduled Castes and other weaker sections of society throughout his life.

He emphasized that the problems of socially disadvantaged communities cannot be solved through political power alone but require social and educational empowerment.