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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 16-04-2026

NATIONAL NEWS

Ministry of Civil Aviation Approves Warangal and Adilabad Airports in Telangana

The Ministry of Civil Aviation approved the development of two new airports at Warangal and Adilabad in Telangana.

The decision was announced during a special meeting chaired by Rajnath Singh, Union Minister of the Ministry of Defence, held in New Delhi.

The foundation stone for Warangal Airport will be laid at Mamnoor within the next three months

The Ministry of Defence will develop the Adilabad Airport project

The airport will be constructed over 370 acres of land

The Airports Authority of India will build the civilian terminal at Adilabad Airport

Adilabad Airport will serve a dual purpose, supporting civilian flight operations and armed forces training activities

The development of these airports is expected to improve regional connectivity and infrastructure development in Telangana

SARAL AI Platform to Simplify Research Content into 18 Indian Languages

Minister of the Science and Technology Jitendra Singh announced that the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) is developing an AI-powered platform SARAL AI to convert complex research papers and patents into simple, social media-friendly content in 18 Indian languages, aiming to bridge the gap between scientific innovation and the general public.

The platform will convert research papers and patents into short videos, podcasts, posters, and social media content

The platform will also prepare business briefs and presentations for practical and policy-level use

The initiative aims to promote scientific awareness among citizens and enhance public engagement with research

It supports evidence-based decision-making and encourages innovation-driven development

The announcement was made during a review meeting held in New Delhi

ANRF is focusing on mission-mode research programmes and faster translation of research into real-world applications

The foundation is strengthening collaboration between academia, industry, and government

To improve the research ecosystem, nodal officers have been deployed in 250 institutions

Administrative processes related to research support are being simplified

WhatsApp and Arattai channels have been launched for real-time updates to researchers

PM-ECRG Lightning Talk Series has been introduced to enable researchers to present their work in short formats

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Russia Designates Stanford University As 'Undesirable', Putting Students At Legal Risk

Russia has officially designated Stanford University as an "undesirable organisation", making any association illegal for Russian citizens.

The decision was announced by the Russian Ministry of Justice, escalating the crackdown on foreign academic institutions.

Under Russian law, students linked to "undesirable organisations" can face up to 4 years of imprisonment, while organisers or collaborators may face up to 6 years in prison.

The move effectively criminalises academic engagement with Stanford University, one of the world's leading research institutions.

Stanford's Centre for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (CREEES) and CRISP (Crisis Simulation for Peace, Germany) were also added to the "undesirable" list.

Over the past five years, at least 19 Western universities and educational programmes have been declared "undesirable" by Russia.

More than 200 foreign organisations, including Yale University, Amnesty International, and British Council, have been blacklisted under this law.

The classification is based on a 2015 Russian law, used to restrict foreign influence, independent media, and opposition groups.

Earlier, institutions such as Tufts University, UC Berkeley, and George Washington University were also designated as "undesirable organisations".

According to the Liberty Forward advocacy group, around 2,000–3,000 Russians may face legal risks

due to links with such institutions.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

e-NAM Launched In 2016 As A Pan-India E-Trading Platform To Integrate APMC Mandis Under ‘One Nation, One Market’

The National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) was launched in 2016 as a pan-India electronic trading platform integrating APMC mandis to create a “One Nation, One Market” system for agricultural commodities.

It addresses limitations of the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) system by enabling inter-state trade, transparent price discovery, and wider market access for farmers.

The platform provides end-to-end digital services including gate entry, lot creation, quality testing, e-bidding, real-time price tracking, and direct e-payments (UPI, NEFT, RTGS) to farmers’ bank accounts.

The e-NAM network expanded from 1,389 mandis in 2024 to 1,656 mandis by March 2026, covering 23 States and 4 Union Territories, indicating growing market integration.

As of March 2026, the platform has registered over 80 crore farmers, 2.73 lakh traders, and 4,724 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs).

The platform recorded cumulative trade of 13.25 crore metric tonnes with a total value of ₹4.84 lakh crore (2016–March 2026), reflecting increasing scale and participation.

The trade value increased from ₹3.19 lakh crore in 2024 to ₹4.84 lakh crore in 2026, showing deepening market engagement.

By March 2026, around 76 lakh metric tonnes of agricultural produce had been traded in recent periods, indicating strong operational momentum.

The e-NAM app provides free price information for 247 notified commodities, enabling informed and timely decision-making by farmers.

The platform features a multi-layered digital ecosystem including a web portal, mobile app, helpline, human support system, and AI-enabled quality assessment tools.

The e-NAM web portal (gov.in) enables end-to-end digital agricultural marketing, linking mandis into a unified national market.

It supports the complete trade lifecycle, including digital gate entry, unique lot ID tracking, quality assaying, online bidding, and direct payments.

Key digital features include single-window services, real-time price dashboards, 12-language interface, and secondary sale module for resale within the platform.

The inter-state trade facility allows traders to operate across states using a Unified License system.

The government provides financial assistance up to ₹75 lakh per mandi for infrastructure development and digital integration.

BANKING

SEBI Launches Three Information Technology Platforms

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) launched three new Information Technology (IT) platforms to enhance ease of doing business, transparency, and cybersecurity oversight.

The three platforms are SUPCOMS, e-adjudication portal, and Cyber-Sec Audit Compliance (C-SAC), each designed for a specific regulatory function.

SUPCOMS (Single Universal Platform for Communication System) is a unified communication platform that replaces email-based interactions with SEBI.

SUPCOMS ensures centralised communication, audit trails, and strong institutional memory, preventing fragmented and broken communication chains.

The e-adjudication portal digitises quasi-judicial proceedings, allowing entities to access notices, submit replies, and attend hearings online.

This portal improves transparency, efficiency, and digital access to regulatory proceedings.

C-SAC (Cyber-Sec Audit Compliance) is an AI-enabled cybersecurity supervision tool developed by SEBI.

C-SAC analyses cyber audit reports of regulated entities to identify compliance gaps, risk areas, and security vulnerabilities.

It provides data-driven insights, risk scores, and comparative analysis, supporting risk-based supervision.

The platform enhances regulatory efficiency, reduces manual effort, and strengthens cybersecurity governance.

India’s UPI Completes 10 Years Of Transforming Digital Payments

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has completed 10 years of operations, transforming India from a cash-led economy to a real-time digital payment system.

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) launched UPI in 2016, simplifying money movement and digital transactions across India.

UPI replaced complex banking details by eliminating the need for account numbers and IFSC codes, enabling a simple and user-friendly payment interface.

The system has expanded significantly from 216 banks in 2021 to 691 banks by January 2026, forming a unified national payments infrastructure.

In January 2026 alone, UPI processed 21.70 billion transactions, reflecting massive adoption and daily usage across the country.

UPI accounts for 81% of all retail digital transactions in India, making it the dominant digital payment system in the country.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), UPI is the world's largest real-time payment system by transaction volume.

UPI is evolving into a broader financial ecosystem, with features like UPI Lite for small payments and UPI AutoPay for recurring payments such as bills and subscriptions.

Institutions like the IMF and World Bank have recognized UPI for its scale, efficiency, and financial inclusion impact.

UPI has expanded globally and is now linked with countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius, and Qatar.

The system holds around 49% share in global real-time payment transaction volume, highlighting India's leadership in digital payment innovation.

Visa and HDFC Bank Launch FIFA World Cup 2026 Credit Card

Visa and HDFC Bank launched a limited-edition FIFA World Cup 2026 Pixel Credit Card along with a nationwide "Spend & Win" campaign.

The card is a FIFA-themed variant of HDFC's Pixel Play digital credit card, available via the PayZapp app and HDFC Bank website.

The launch event was held in Mumbai, attended by former England footballer Michael Owen.

The card issuance began on 11 April 2026, targeting digital-first and young urban consumers.

The Spend and Win campaign is applicable across HDFC Bank's entire card portfolio, including credit cards, debit cards, business cards, and forex prepaid cards.

Customers can earn rewards through everyday spending, including FIFA World Cup 2026 match packages, official merchandise, staycations, and shopping vouchers.

The campaign aims to make FIFA experiences accessible across income segments, not limited to premium cardholders.

The FIFA World Cup 2026 will be hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

The tournament will feature an expanded 48-team format, making it the largest FIFA World Cup edition to date.

Reliance Jio and Bank of Baroda launch ‘bob World Lite’

Reliance Jio and Bank of Baroda have partnered to launch ‘bob World Lite’, a mobile banking app for feature phone users on JioPhone Prima 4G.

The initiative aims to expand digital banking access beyond smartphones, supporting financial inclusion in India.

It aligns with the goals of the Government of India and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to promote digital payments and inclusive banking services.

The ‘bob World Lite’ app is designed as a lightweight mobile banking solution for affordable feature phones, targeting users in semi-urban and rural areas.

The app is built on a low-bandwidth, lightweight architecture with keypad-based navigation and secure access.

It will be pre-installed on JioPhone Prima 4G devices and accessible directly from the home screen.

Existing users can also download it via the JioStore, ensuring wide accessibility.

The platform is open to Bank of Baroda customers and customers of other banks through a simple self-onboarding process.

The app currently offers UPI-based Scan & Pay, money transfers, bill payments, mobile recharges, and profile management services.

Additional digital banking features will be added in future updates to enhance user experience.

The initiative strengthens digital financial inclusion, rural banking access, and expansion of India’s fintech ecosystem.

Phonepe And SBI Card Launch Co-Branded Credit Card With Zero Joining Fee Offer

PhonePe, in partnership with SBI Card, has launched a co-branded credit card with a limited-time first-year fee waiver to improve accessibility and adoption of digital credit services.

The PhonePe SBI Card is available on both RuPay and Visa networks, targeting digital-first users and integrating seamlessly with the PhonePe app ecosystem.

The card aims to expand credit access, promote digital payments, and enhance customer rewards, especially among PhonePe’s large user base.

The card offers a universal rewards structure, providing 5% rewards on all online purchases regardless of merchant or brand.

Users earn 10% rewards on select PhonePe ecosystem categories, including mobile recharges, utility bill payments, and routine digital transactions.

Additional benefits include rewards on insurance premium payments, helping users save on essential financial expenses.

For offline spending via UPI, the RuPay variant offers 1% rewards on scan-and-pay transactions, making everyday payments more rewarding.

The card includes travel perks such as 4 complimentary domestic airport lounge visits per year without spending requirements.

Users also receive a 2-year Priority Pass membership, enabling access to international airport lounges.

Reward points can be redeemed directly against credit card bills, with 1 point equal to ₹1, increasing liquidity and value redemption flexibility.

The application process is fully digital via the PhonePe app, ensuring a seamless onboarding experience.

SBI Card, launched in October 1998 in New Delhi, is a joint venture between State Bank of India and GE Capital.

DEFENCE

LPG Tanker Jag Vikram Becomes First India-Flagged Vessel To Cross Strait Of Hormuz

The India-flagged LPG tanker Jag Vikram became the first Indian vessel to transit the Strait of Hormuz after the Iran–Israel ceasefire, marking a cautious resumption of maritime movement.

The transit through the Strait of Hormuz is significant as it carries around one-fifth of global oil and gas trade, making it a crucial global energy chokepoint.

Jag Vikram is the 9th Indian vessel to exit the Persian Gulf since early March, while around 15 Indian-flagged ships remain stranded awaiting safe passage.

The tanker is carrying approximately 20,000–20,400 tonnes of LPG and is expected to reach Mumbai, indicating restoration of India’s energy supply routes.

The vessel is owned by the Great Eastern Shipping Company, Mumbai, and has a deadweight capacity of over 26,000 tonnes.

Earlier, around 28 India-flagged vessels were stranded in the region during the West Asia conflict, including ships on both sides of the Strait.

At least 426 tankers, 34 LPG carriers, and 19 LNG vessels remain in the region, highlighting major disruption in global maritime trade.

India is the world’s 3rd largest energy consumer and 4th largest gas user, importing about 88% crude oil, 50% natural gas, and 60% LPG

A major share of imports—about 50% crude oil, 40% gas, and 85–90% LPG—comes from Gulf countries via the Strait of Hormuz.

AWARDS & PRIZES

World Wide Fund for Nature Machchli National Award for Wildlife Conservation

Anita Chaudhary, posted at Shergarh Wildlife Sanctuary, has rescued nearly 500 wild animals since 2021 and taken strong action against poachers, smugglers, and illegal mining activities.

In recognition of her conservation efforts, she was honoured with the World Wide Fund for Nature Machchli National Award by the World Wide Fund for Nature.

Anita Chaudhary, aged 30, has emerged as a symbol of courage and commitment to wildlife conservation

She has rescued more than 500 wild animals, including high-risk species such as crocodiles

She has been serving in Shergarh Wildlife Sanctuary for nearly 10 years

The sanctuary spans about 9,880 hectares and is home to species such as leopards, sloth bears, hyenas, wild boars, chinkaras, and sambar deer

The sanctuary lies between Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, making it ecologically significant

She registered more than 50 First Information Reports against poachers and illegal activities

Her efforts helped reduce illegal mining, hunting, grazing, and forest produce smuggling including tendu leaves

She contributed to creating water sources such as check dams and ponds to prevent animals from leaving the sanctuary

The World Wide Fund for Nature Machchli National Award is named after the famous tigress Machli of Ranthambore National Park

Her work highlights the importance of grassroots-level conservation and has inspired young forest personnel to protect forest ecosystems

SPORTS

Sawan Barwal Breaks India’s 48-Year-Old Marathon National Record

Himachal Pradesh long-distance runner Sawan Barwal broke India’s longest-standing national marathon record at the NN Marathon Rotterdam held in Rotterdam, surpassing the previous record

set by Shivnath Singh in 1978.

This historic achievement ended a 48-year-old national record, marking a major milestone in India's athletics journey and long-distance running history.

Sawan Barwal completed the marathon with a timing of 2:11:58

He broke the previous national record of 2:12:00 set by Shivnath Singh in 1978

The earlier record was the longest-standing national record in Indian athletics

He finished 20th in the elite category at the Rotterdam Marathon

The achievement reflects improved training standards and rising global competitiveness of Indian long-distance runners

The record signals the growing strength of India's long-distance running ecosystem

Sawan Barwal, aged 28, belongs to Joginder Nagar in Himachal Pradesh

He has built his reputation through consistent performances in national and international competitions

His achievement highlights the emergence of a new generation of Indian marathon runners on the global stage

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