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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 19-04-2025

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Bangladesh Becomes The 54th Country To Join NASA's Artemis Accord

Bangladesh has become the second South Asian country, after India, and the 54th in the world to join the Artemis Accord of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the United States.

India joined the Artemis Accords as the 27th country on 21st June 2023.

Artemis is a NASA-led effort to explore the moon, establish a human settlement on the moon and explore the planet Mars and beyond.

The signing ceremony took place on the sidelines of the Bangladesh Investment Summit 2025 at the InterContinental Dhaka Hotel in Dhaka.

It is a non-binding set of principles designed to promote cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of the Moon, Mars, Comets, and Asteroids in the 21st century.

It promotes the peaceful use of outer space in accordance with the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967.

The member countries of the Accord are expected to provide necessary assistance to the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space.

It facilitates the sharing of scientific data with the global community, ensuring that the entire world can benefit from space exploration.

World's 17th Athlete Passport Management Unit set up in India

India has become the 17th country in the world to establish a World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)-accredited Athlete Passport Management Unit.

India joins select countries like Germany, China, the United Kingdom, and the United States to establish the Athlete Passport Management Unit. The Unit is expected to strengthen the fight against the menace of doping in sports.

Doping refers to the use of banned performance-enhancing drugs by athletes to improve their performance in sporting events.

The Athlete Passport Management Unit has been established at the National Doping Testing Laboratory in New Delhi.

It aligns with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) guidelines, thereby strengthening the global anti-doping programme.

WADA introduced the Athlete Biological Passport Operating Guidelines, which became effective on December 1, 2009.

The Athlete Biological Passport monitors selected biological variables of an athlete over time, which indirectly reveal the effects of doping.

The Athlete Biological Passport stores the blood sample of the athlete and a urine sample to detect the steroid profile of an athlete and identify doping.

UNESCO's Memory Of The World Register

The classical ancient Indian texts, Natyashastra and Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, have been inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

The total number of Indian inscriptions inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register now stands at 14.

The addition of the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita and Bharat Muni's Natyashastra to the UNESCO register was announced by the Union Minister for Culture, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, on 18 April 2025.

With the inclusion of 74 new documentaries, the total inscribed documentaries on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register is now 570

Srimad Bhagavad Gita is seen as a collection of ancient Indian intellectual tradition that encompasses the wisdom of Vedic, Buddhist, Jain and Cārvāka philosophical traditions.

Natyashastra, composed by Bharatamuni in the 2nd century B.C, comprises 36,000 verses.

The Natyashasatra, also known as the Gandharva Veda, is a treatise that is considered the essence of Nāṭyaveda — an oral tradition of performing arts.

The primary objective of the Registry is to preserve archives of historical and cultural value, making them accessible to all without any hindrance.

It enhances public awareness of the importance of documentary heritage.

BANKING

ADB Sanctions $85.4 Million Loan For Tripura

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a $85.4 million loan to finance critical industrial infrastructure in the nine industrial estates of Tripura.

The Asian Development Bank Board approved the loan in a meeting in Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines.

The loan is expected to boost the state’s competitiveness in the manufacturing sector, integration into regional and global value chains, and create employment opportunities.

The loan amount will be used to finance the development of critical infrastructure in the nine industrial estates of the state.

It will fund the expansion of transport, electricity, water, and sanitation infrastructure in these nine industrial estates.

Construction of climate-resilient roads, stormwater drainage, culverts, and rainwater harvesting systems will be undertaken.

It will fund the installation of solar power units and the establishment of energy-efficient power distribution systems.

For an eco-friendly transport, the loan will fund the introduction of compressed natural gas buses and electric vehicles, along with charging stations at key industrial estates.

ADB Cuts India's Growth Rate Forecast To 6.7 % In FY 26

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has revised its growth rate forecast for India for fiscal year 2026 to 6.7%.

The ADB has forecasted a growth rate of 6.8% for fiscal year 2026-27.

Reserve Bank of India in its April 2025 Monetary Policy has also reduced the expected growth rate of the Indian economy in 2025-26 to 6.5% from the earlier forecast of 6.7% due to an uncertain global outlook as a result of reciprocal tariffs imposed by the American President Donald Trump on its trading partners including India.

The ADB released its latest forecast on the Indian economy in the April 2025 edition of the Asian Development Outlook report.

According to the ADB report, despite global uncertainty, the Indian economy remains resilient in its growth.

The report has identified several positive factors in the Indian economy that will help sustain India's growth in the near future.

Zaggle Gets National Payments Corporation of India Nod To Offer UPI Services

Zaggle Prepaid Ocean Services Limited has received TPAP (Third-Party Application Provider) approval from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

The approval enables Zaggle to integrate UPI-based payment solutions directly into its platform.

This move allows Zaggle to offer seamless UPI payments to its user base.

Over three million users within Zaggle’s digital ecosystem will benefit from this payment facility.

The development strengthens Zaggle’s position in the spend management and digital payments

The approval supports Zaggle's vision of offering end-to-end fintech solutions across businesses and consumers.

TPAP stands for Third Party Application Provider.

It refers to entities that provide applications or platforms enabling customers and merchants to initiate and receive UPI payments.

TPAPs enhance the UPI experience by offering features like bill payments, mobile recharges, and a user-friendly interface.

Revolut Gets Reserve Bank of India Clearance to Introduce Digital Wallets

UK fintech giant Revolut has received full approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to issue Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) such as digital wallets and prepaid cards integrated with India’s Unified Payments Interface (UPI).

The approval, granted in April 2025, allows Revolut to function as a domestic payment provider, offering both local and cross-border financial services within India’s rapidly growing digital economy.

This development comes less than a year after Revolut secured in-principle approval from the RBI in April 2024.

The license enables Revolut to compete with major players like PhonePe, Google Pay, and Paytm.

With the new mobile wallet, Revolut users will be able to conduct UPI-based transactions, facilitating instant fund transfers across banks, merchants, and peer networks.

In addition to the PPI license, Revolut India already holds a Category-II Authorised Dealer (AD II) license, allowing it to offer multi-currency forex cards and cross-border remittances.

The integration of UPI enhances Revolut’s capacity to deliver real-time payments, bill settlements, and merchant transactions through its app.

Globally, Revolut boasts over 50 million customers across 38 countries and achieved a $45 billion valuation in 2024.

DEFENCE

India-Uzbekistan Joint Military Exercise DUSTLIK-VI Begins

In Pune

The 6th edition of the India-Uzbekistan Joint Military Exercise – DUSTLIK-VI commenced at the Foreign Training Node in Aundh, Pune.

The exercise will continue till April 28 and aims to enhance interoperability and cooperation between the armed forces of the two nations.

The Indian contingent, consisting of 60 personnel, is represented by a battalion of the JAT Regiment along with units from the Indian Air Force.

The Uzbekistan side is represented by personnel from the Uzbekistan Army.

DUSTLIK is an annual military training initiative, held alternately in India and Uzbekistan.

The previous edition was held in the Termez District of Uzbekistan in April 2024.

The 2025 edition focuses on Joint Multi-Domain Sub-Conventional Operations in a semi-urban scenario.

The exercise includes simulation of counter-terrorism missions, territory capture, establishment of a Joint Operations Centre at the battalion level, population control measures, raids, search-and-destroy operations, and coordinated use of air assets.

The drill also features the deployment of drones, counter-UAS systems, logistics support from the Air Force, heliborne operations, and special forces missions.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Justice B.R. Gavai Recommended As Next Chief Justice Of India

The name of Justice Bhushan B.R Gavai has been proposed as the next Chief Justice of India (CJI), with the Supreme Court forwarding the recommendation to the Law Ministry.

The proposal came from the incumbent Chief Justice, Sanjiv Khanna, who is due to retire on May 13.

As per convention, the sitting CJI recommends the senior-most judge in line as their successor.

Earlier, the Law Ministry had formally requested Justice Khanna to name his successor, triggering the process of appointment.

Justice Gavai, if appointed, will become the 52nd Chief Justice of India.

He is likely to take the oath of the top judicial chair on May 14.

However, Justice Gavai will serve as the CJI only for six months, as he is due to retire in November 2025.

Justice Gavai was appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court of India on May 24, 2019.

Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema Wins Presidential Election in Gabon

Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema, Gabon’s interim president, has been elected president with a landslide victory in the country's first election since the 2023

He secured 90.35% of the votes, defeating seven candidates, including former Prime Minister Alain Claude Bilie-By-Nze, who received just 3%.

This marks the end of a 50-year political dynasty led by the Bongo family, which Oligui Nguema overthrew in the 2023 military coup.

Bilie-By-Nze accused Oligui of using state resources for his campaign, a claim the government denies.

Oligui, a former head of the Republican Guard, aims to consolidate power with a new seven-year term.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Heritage Day

Every year April 18th is celebrated as World Heritage Day or International Day for monuments and sites.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites encourages cultural heritage and a range of the world's monuments and heritage sites on this day.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites 1982 suggested that April 18 should be celebrated as World Heritage Day.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in its 22nd general conference in 1983 approved the date.

Since then, the International Council on Monuments and Sites has suggested a theme for the celebrations.

This day is not just about the listed sites but all cultural heritage landscapes of global state and local significance.