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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 27-04-2026

NATIONAL NEWS

ASI Begins Major Conservation Work at Konark Sun Temple

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) began a major conservation project at the Konark Sun Temple, a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage Site, to restore the structure and ensure its long-term stability.

The project involves careful removal of sand from the Jagamohan (assembly hall), which had been filled by British engineers between 1901 and 1903 to prevent the structure from collapsing.

The earlier sand-filling measure helped stabilise the monument at the time but resulted in: The Jagamohan remaining sealed and inaccessible, Limite scope for internal structural assessment and Conservation efforts being largely restricted to the exterior portions

Before initiating the operation, ASI conducted scientific assessments, including: Drilling two test holes in December, Analysis of stone and sand samples by Indian Institute of Technology Madras and Confirmation that the sand remained structurally stable, enabling safe commencement of restoration work

The Konark Sun Temple was built in the 13th century by Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga dynasty and is designed in the form of a giant chariot dedicated to the Sun God.

The temple's construction reportedly took around 12 years and involved nearly 1,200 artisans and sculptors, and it is globally renowned for its intricate stone carvings and architectural excellence.

Ninth Edition of India International Water Week 2026 Launched

C. R. Patil, Union Minister of Ministry of Jal Shakti, launched the 9th edition of India International Water Week 2026, India's flagship global water event, at Shram Shakti Bhavan in New Delhi.

India International Water Week 2026 aims to bring together experts, planners, innovators, and stakeholders from across the world to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices in water resource management.

During the launch event:

The official brochure of India International Water Week 2026 was released

The official website portal of India International Water Week 2026 was made live

While addressing the event, the Union Minister highlighted that:

More than 60 lakh artificial recharge and water conservation structures have already been created under national water conservation initiatives

The Government of India has set a target to create one crore such structures by May 2026 to strengthen water security and groundwater recharge efforts.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India Expands Overseas Citizen of India Card Eligibility in Sri Lanka

The Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card scheme has gained prominence in India’s engagement with the Indian-origin community in Sri Lanka.

The Government of India has extended OCI eligibility up to the sixth generation for persons of Indian origin in Sri Lanka, expanding the scope from the earlier fourth generation limit.

The OCI card is a form of long-term residency status granted by India to foreign citizens of Indian origin.

It was introduced in 2005 through amendments to the Citizenship Act to strengthen links with the global Indian diaspora.

The OCI card provides a lifelong, multiple-entry visa facility, allowing holders to travel to India without repeated visa requirements.

During a two-day visit to Sri Lanka, the Vice President of India C.P. Radhakrishnan announced the expansion of OCI eligibility for the Indian community in Sri Lanka.

He met Anura Kumara Dissanayake to discuss bilateral relations, housing projects, and fishermen issues.

The discussions also covered India-supported development projects in Sri Lanka, including the $450 million Cyclone Ditwah aid package.

Both sides emphasized resolving fishermen issues in a humanitarian manner, focusing on the livelihood concerns of coastal communities in both countries.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Pakistan Conducts Successful Test of Homegrown Taimoor Anti-Ship Cruise Missile

The Pakistan Navy successfully conducted a live test-firing of the indigenously developed “Taimoor” Air-Launched Anti-Ship Cruise Missile (ALCM).

The development was announced by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), highlighting a major boost to maritime strike capability.

The missile system was deployed jointly by the Pakistan Navy and Pakistan Air Force (PAF), enabling coordinated air–sea and multi-domain operations.

The test showcased the missile’s ability to detect, track, and neutralise sea-based targets with high precision at extended ranges.

Taimoor Missile Overview: It is an indigenously developed ALCM with anti-ship capability and secondary land-attack capability.

The missile offers precision strike capability up to approximately 600 km, providing a stand-off engagement advantage.

The successful test validated target detection, tracking, and neutralisation efficiency, demonstrating advanced operational capability.

The system significantly enhances naval strike strength, maritime security, deterrence capability, and defence modernisation.

Overall, the development improves battlefield flexibility and strengthens Pakistan’s multi-domain warfare readiness.

China Picks Two Pakistani Astronauts for Training Ahead of Tiangong Space Station Mission

The China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) announced the selection of two Pakistani astronauts, marking a major step in China–Pakistan space cooperation.

The selected candidates are “Muhammad Zeeshan Ali” and “Khurram Daud”, who will undergo advanced astronaut training in China.

This is a significant milestone as it marks the first inclusion of foreign astronauts in China’s human spaceflight programme.

One of the selected candidates is expected to become the first Pakistani astronaut to reach Earth’s orbit and visit the Tiangong Space Station.

The selected astronauts will serve as reserve astronauts and may be chosen as payload specialists for future missions.

Their role will include conducting scientific experiments, technology demonstrations, and space research activities aboard Tiangong missions.

The collaboration strengthens China’s space diplomacy and international outreach while supporting

Pakistan’s entry into human spaceflight.

It enhances Pakistan’s scientific capabilities, technological development, and space research capacity.

The selection follows a February 2025 agreement between China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) and Pakistan’s Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), covering astronaut training, experiments, and joint mission cooperation.

BANKING

BSE Index Services Introduces Housing Finance Sectoral Benchmark

BSE Index Services announced the launch of the BSE Housing Finance Index, a new sectoral benchmark tracking the performance of companies in the housing finance sector.

The index has a base value of 1,000 with 22 June 2015 as the base date.

It will be reconstituted semi-annually (June and December) in line with standard index review practices.

The index is designed to support investment analysis, benchmarking, and financial product development.

BSE Index Services Pvt. Ltd. is a wholly owned subsidiary of BSE Ltd, formerly known as Asia Index Pvt. Ltd.

The index comprises 11 constituents, including LIC Housing Finance, PNB Housing Finance, Sammaan Capital, Home First Finance Company, Bajaj Housing Finance, Aptus Value Housing Finance, Can Fin Homes, Aadhar Housing Finance, AAVAS Financiers, and India Shelter Finance Corporation.

The highest weight (17.16%) is assigned to LIC Housing Finance, while the lowest weight is 3.89%, reflecting sectoral representation.

NBBL Adds Postal Life Insurance to Bharat Connect Insurance Biller Network

NPCI Bharat Bill Pay Limited (NBBL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), onboarded Postal Life Insurance (PLI) as a biller under the insurance category on the Bharat Connect

With this inclusion, the number of insurance billers on the platform has increased to 65, strengthening India’s digital bill payment ecosystem.

The move enables policyholders of Postal Life Insurance (PLI) and Rural Postal Life Insurance (RPLI) to pay renewal premiums through Bharat Connect-enabled digital platforms as well as offline agent

networks.

State Bank of India (SBI), India's largest Public Sector Bank (PSB), acted as the Biller Operating Unit (BOU) to facilitate the onboarding process.

The development allows customers to access recurring insurance premium payment services through multiple digital and assisted channels across India.

Postal Life Insurance (PLI) is operated by India Post, which functions under the Department of Posts (DoP), Ministry of Communications.

Pay Point India Becomes First Private Fintech to Get Reserve Bank of India Centralised Payment System Membership

Pay Point India Network, a leading fintech company, became the first private-sector fintech firm to secure membership in the Centralised Payment System (CPS) operated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

This marks a significant development as it allows a non-bank fintech company direct access to India's core payment infrastructure.

Earlier, access to CPS was limited to banks and select large institutions, including National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and Clearing Corporation of India Limited (CCIL).

With this membership, Pay Point gains direct access to key payment systems such as Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) and National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT).

This eliminates the need for intermediary partner banks, improving operational independence and efficiency.

The company has been assigned its own IFSC code, enabling it to maintain both a current account and settlement account directly with RBI.

Key benefits of direct CPS access include reduced transaction costs, faster fund transfers, enhanced efficiency, and improved data security.

Overall, this development represents a major shift in India's digital payments ecosystem, strengthening fintech participation in core financial infrastructure.

Punjab National Bank Joins Hands with Kiwi to Introduce RuPay Credit Card

Punjab National Bank (PNB) entered into a strategic partnership with fintech firm Kiwi to launch a co-branded RuPay credit card named "PNB Kiwi Credit Card" integrated with Unified Payments Interface (UPI).

The initiative aims to expand formal credit access, promote financial inclusion in semi-urban and rural areas, and strengthen the credit-on-UPI ecosystem.

The partnership targets nearly 180 million customers through a fully digital onboarding process,

enhancing digital credit penetration in India.

The card enables credit-based payments via UPI QR codes, allowing seamless scan-and-pay transactions across millions of merchants without requiring a physical credit card.

Customers will receive cashback benefits ranging from 0.5% to 1.5% on online transactions along with zero joining and annual fees.

The product offers a completely digital and paperless onboarding process, ensuring quick, easy, and accessible credit card issuance.

Overall, the partnership strengthens India's digital payments ecosystem, expands UPI-linked credit adoption, and boosts financial inclusion and cashless economy growth.

DEFENCE

Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh Launches Robotic Orthopaedic System and Maternity Operation Theatre

Rajesh Kumar Singh (Defence Secretary) inaugurated the Robotic Orthopaedic System and Maternity Operation Theatre at the Cantonment General Hospital on 23 April 2026.

The event was attended by Shobha Gupta (Director General, Defence Estates) along with other dignitaries.

The new facilities aim to provide advanced healthcare services to cantonment residents and nearby municipal populations.

The Robotic Orthopaedic System is a major technological upgrade, enabling precision-driven surgeries, reduced recovery time, and improved patient outcomes.

The system enhances the hospital's ability to handle complex orthopaedic procedures with greater accuracy and efficiency.

The Maternity Operation Theatre is designed to deliver safe and comprehensive surgical care for expectant mothers.

The initiative reflects the Government's focus on modernising healthcare infrastructure in cantonment areas and ensuring high-quality medical services.

Planned short-term upgrades (within 3 months) include Dialysis Centre, Central Sterile Services Department (CSSD), ICU upgrades, and laboratory expansion.

Planned long-term developments (within 1 year) include Paediatric ICU, Neonatal ICU, CT Scan, MRI, Cancer Screening Unit, High Dependency Unit, Multispecialty Ward, and Surgical ICU.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

HDFC Life Reappoints Vibha Padalkar as MD and CEO

The Board of Directors of HDFC Life Insurance Company Limited approved the reappointment of Vibha Padalkar as Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for a further five-year term, effective 12 September 2026.

Vibha Padalkar is an experienced insurance sector professional with expertise in finance, risk management, and strategic planning.

She joined HDFC Life in 2008 as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and was later appointed as Executive Director (ED) and CFO in 2012.

She was elevated to the position of MD & CEO in 2018, strengthening the company's leadership structure.

She played a key role in the company's successful public listing in 2017, marking a major industry milestone.

She also led the acquisition of Exide Life Insurance in 2022, the first major merger and acquisition in India's life insurance sector.

She is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (since 1992) and also the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

She has been recognised among the 'Most Powerful Women in Business' for five consecutive years (2021–2025).

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Malaria Day

World Malaria Day is observed annually on April 25 across the world to raise awareness about prevention, control, and elimination of Malaria.

The observance reinforces Global Fund Investment priorities such as: Advancing quality healthcare, Building health system resilience and Supporting global efforts toward ending malaria.

The day highlights that investments in malaria elimination: Save lives, Support economic growth, Strengthen preparedness for future health threats and Contribute to achieving a safer world.

World Malaria Day was first observed in 2008 and evolved from Africa Malaria Day, which had been observed since 2001 by African governments to assess progress in controlling malaria and reducing mortality.

In 2007, during the 60th session of the World Health Assembly, the World Health Organization proposed changing Africa Malaria Day to World Malaria Day to recognise the presence of malaria across countries worldwide and to strengthen global awareness and cooperation in the fight against malaria.

OBITUARY

Ex-Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nadendla Bhaskara Rao

Nadendla Bhaskara Rao, former Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh, passed away at the age of 90 years in Hyderabad,

He was born on 23 June 1935 in Guntur, then part of the Madras Presidency (British India), now in Andhra Pradesh.

He served as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh from 16 August to 16 September 1984 (31 days), marking one of the shortest tenures in the state's history.

He assumed office during the absence of N. T. Rama Rao.

He was elected as an MLA from Vijayawada East in 1978 and served as a minister (1978–1989) under Marri Chenna Reddy and Anjaiah.

He was a co-founder of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in 1982 along with N. T. Rama Rao.

After the TDP's 1983 electoral victory, he served as the Finance Minister of Andhra Pradesh.

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