

# THE DAILY GK DOSE

## KOLLI HILLS GETS TAMIL NADU'S FIRST DARK SKY PARK

- **Strategic Location at Ariyur Shola:** The park is situated within the Ariyur Shola Reserve Forest, chosen for its high altitude and exceptionally low levels of artificial light pollution. A 1.5 km radius around the site is strictly maintained as a no-light zone, offering crystal-clear views of the Milky Way, star clusters, and planets like Saturn and Jupiter.
- **High-Tech Infrastructure & Sustainability:** Established at a cost of ₹1 crore, the facility is equipped with three advanced, computerized telescopes (including a Schmidt-Cassegrain model that gathers 820x more light than the human eye). To remain eco-friendly, the entire site is powered by solar energy and operates seasonally from January 15 to June 15 to ensure optimal visibility.
- **Structured Astro-Tourism Model:** Managed by the Forest Department, the park offers three tiers of access: a "Short Stargazing" evening session (₹600), a stay-and-stargaze package at Agaya Gangai eco-huts (₹1,800), and whole-night camps (₹3,000) held during the New Moon phase.

## IIFL HOME FINANCE INKS PACT WITH ADB

- **First-of-its-Kind Funding Structure:** This marks IIFL Home Finance's first syndicated External Commercial Borrowing (ECB). The \$300 million package is split into two halves: \$150 million provided directly by ADB, and \$150 million raised as parallel loans from international partners including MUFG (Japan), Emirates Bank (UAE),

and Sri Lanka's Sampath Bank and Hatton National Bank.

- **Focus on Women Borrowers:** A primary objective of the loan is to empower women in low-income and economically weaker segments. The funds will be specifically used to provide mortgages to women in urban and semi-urban areas, helping bridge the gap in a market where women currently constitute only 13% of homeowners.

**Footnotes:** ADB's President: Masato Kanda, HQ: Philippines, Estd: 1966

## SBI ANNOUNCES EXIT OF NITIN CHUGH AS DEPUTY MD



- **Completion of Contractual Tenure:** Chugh's departure is not a resignation but the result of his three-year contract coming to an end. He originally joined SBI in March 2022 as a high-profile lateral hire from the private sector to spearhead the bank's digital evolution.
  - **Impact on Leadership:** As the former CEO of Ujjivan Small Finance Bank and a veteran of HDFC Bank, Chugh brought private-sector expertise to India's largest public sector lender. His exit leaves a temporary leadership void in the Digital Banking & Transformation wing.
- Footnotes:** SBI's Chairman: C. Sreenivasulu Setty, HQ: Mumbai, Estd: 1955

## IMPORTANT FACTS

### IMPORTANT UNITS

- **Ampere:** Electric Current
- **Ohm:** Electrical Resistance
- **Mho:** Electrical Conductance
- **Calorie:** CGS
- **Coulomb:** Electric Charge

## J&K CLINCHES FIRST RANJITROPHY TITLE 2025-26

- **Maiden Title in Maiden Final:** After 67 years of competing in domestic cricket (since 1959-60), J&K reached their first-ever summit clash and emerged as champions. They became only the 10th team in the 92-year history of the tournament to win the title in their very first final appearance.
- **Victory by First-Innings Lead:** The final ended in a draw, but J&K were crowned winners based on a massive 291-run first-innings lead. They posted a mammoth 584 in their first innings (led by Shubham Pundir's 121) and restricted a star-studded Karnataka side—featuring KL Rahul and Mayank Agarwal.
- **Dominant Individual Performers:** The victory was headlined by Auqib Nabi, who was named Player of the Series for his 60 wickets in the season, including a 5-wicket haul in the final. Additionally, Shubham Pundir earned Player of the Match.

## RAJPAL MEENA APPOINTED AS INSPECTOR GENERAL IN BSF

- **IPS Officer Profile:** Rajpal Meena is a 2007 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer belonging to the Kerala cadre. Prior to this central deputation, he has held several key positions in Kerala, including serving as the DIG & Commissioner of Police for Kozhikode City.
- **Deputation Terms:** His appointment to the BSF is on a central deputation basis for a fixed tenure (typically five years). As an IG-level officer, he will lead a specific frontier or functional wing within the world's largest border-guarding force, overseeing security along India's international borders.
- **Strategic Shift to Central Oversight:** Moving from state policing to a Central Armed Police Force (CAPF), Meena's role will shift from law and order management to national security, counter-infiltration, and border management, particularly along the sensitive borders with Pakistan or Bangladesh.

**Footnotes:** BSF's DG: Praveen Kumar, Estd: 1965

## SHRI B.P. SINGH, TAKES OVER AS DG OF NAVAL ARMAMENT

- **Extensive Career and Expertise:** An officer of the 1994 batch of the Indian Naval Armament Service (INAS), Shri Singh brings over 30 years of experience. His expertise covers the entire lifecycle of naval weaponry, from the procurement

and storage of conventional ammunition to the maintenance of advanced guided weapon systems.

- **Strategic Leadership and Education:** He is a Mechanical Engineering graduate from NIT Patna and an alumnus of the prestigious National Defence College (NDC-60). Before this elevation, he served as the Chief General Manager of the Naval Armament Depot (NAD) in Mumbai, where he led major infrastructure and logistics modernization projects.
- **Succession and Core Mandate:** He succeeds Shri Divakar Jayant, who retired on February 28, 2026. In his new role as DGONA, Shri Singh will be responsible for ensuring the operational readiness and safety of the Indian Navy's vast arsenal, with a heavy focus on indigenization (Aatmanirbhar Bharat) in defense manufacturing.

**Footnotes:** Navy's CNS: Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, HQ: Delhi, Estd: 1950

## VARANASI CREATES GUINNESS RECORD FOR MEGA PLANTATION CAMPAIGN



- **World Record for Speed and Scale:** Varanasi successfully planted 2,51,446 saplings within just one hour in the Sujabad Domari area. This feat comfortably surpassed the previous record held

by China (Henan Provincial Committee), which had planted 1,53,981 saplings in an hour back in 2018.

- **The "Namo Van" Urban Forest:** The drive was part of a larger project to develop a 350-bigha (approx. 220 acres) urban forest named 'Namo Van' on the banks of the Ganga. The area is divided into 60 sectors, each named after a famous ghat of Kashi (such as Dashashwamedh and Manikarnika), creating a "Mini Kashi" of greenery.
- **Miyawaki Technique and Sustainability:** To ensure rapid growth and high density, the Miyawaki method was used, featuring 27 native species including Teak, Peepal, and medicinal plants like Ashwagandha. To ensure survival, the site is equipped with a 10.8 km pipeline network, 10 borewells, and 360 rain gun irrigation systems.

## SIX-TIME MP KP UNNIKRISHNAN PASSED AWAY

- **Six-Term Parliamentary Legacy:** Unnikrishnan held the rare distinction of representing the Vadakara Lok Sabha constituency for six consecutive terms from 1971 to 1996.
- **Hero of the 1990 Gulf Evacuation:** As the Union Minister for Surface Transport and Communications in the V.P. Singh Cabinet (1989-90), he played a legendary role during the Gulf War.
- **A "Congress Socialist" Intellectual:** Originally a journalist and a close associate of V.K. Krishna Menon, Unnikrishnan was a staunch Nehruvian socialist.

## WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?

04.03.2026 / WEDNESDAY

- **World Wildlife Day: 03<sup>rd</sup> March**
- **Theme 2026: Medicinal & Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage & Livelihoods**
- **The UN observance highlights biodiversity conservation, sustainable trade and the vital role of plant species.**