

THE DAILY GK DOSE

475 YEAR OLD VASAI CATHEDRAL WINS UNESCO AWARD

- **Community-Led Restoration:** Unlike many large-scale projects, this restoration was funded and driven by the local parish community with a modest budget of ₹4.5 crore, proving that local participation is vital for sustainable heritage preservation.
- **Traditional Craftsmanship:** The project was recognized for reviving the 475-year-old Portuguese-era structure (built in 1574) using traditional materials and hand-carved techniques, successfully restoring its spiritual interior without modern cement or bricks.
- **Living Heritage:** UNESCO highlighted the cathedral as a "living place of worship," commending how the restoration balanced historical architectural integrity with its continued role in the daily ritual and communal life of the region.

WAAREE ENERGIES TO ESTABLISH INDIA'S LARGEST BATTERY GIGAFACTORY

- **Massive Scale and Investment:** The project involves a total investment of ₹8,175 crore to build a facility with a production capacity of 16 GWh (Gigawatt-hours), making it the largest of its kind in India.
- **Fully Integrated Value Chain:** Located at Rambilli in the Anakapalli district, the "greenfield" facility will cover the entire battery production cycle—from manufacturing advanced lithium-ion cells to assembling battery packs and large-scale Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

- **Strategic Energy Goals:** The gigafactory is expected to create 3,000 direct jobs and is a major step toward India's "Aatmanirbharta" (self-reliance) in clean energy, aimed at reducing dependence on battery imports for electric vehicles and grid stability.

INDIA & US SIGNED PAX SILICA DECLARATION AT INDIA AI IMPACT SUMMIT



- **Securing the "Silicon Stack":** The declaration establishes a strategic partnership to secure the entire supply chain of future technology—spanning from critical minerals and semiconductors to AI infrastructure.
- **Economic Security as National Security:** A core pillar of the pact is the "Pax Silica" philosophy, which treats technology supply chains as essential to national defense.
- **India as a Global Talent Hub:** The agreement specifically highlights India's role as the provider of the "human layer" in the AI revolution. With Indian engineers already designing 2-nanometer chips, the partnership aims to leverage India's massive pool of skilled professionals to fulfill the global demand for over one million semiconductor experts.

IMPORTANT FACTS

STATES & THEIR NATIONAL PARKS

- *Andhra Pradesh – Sri Papikonda*
- *Arunachal Pradesh – Namdapha, Mouling*
- *Assam – Kaziranga, Manas, Nameri, Orang, Dibru-Saikhowa*
- *Bihar – Valmiki*
- *Goa – Mollem*

ICICI LAUNCHES SWASTHYA PENSION SCHEME BLENDING RETIREMENT

- **Integrated Healthcare Liquidity:** Unlike standard pension plans, this scheme allows subscribers to make multiple withdrawals (up to 25% of their own contributions) for immediate medical needs such as OPD consultations, diagnostics, and pharmacy bills through a partnership with the Apollo 24|7 network.
- **Emergency & Growth Focus:** The plan features an "Emergency Exit" provision allowing up to 100% withdrawal if medical expenses exceed 70% of the corpus. To ensure long-term growth despite these withdrawals, the fund maintains high equity.
- **Regulatory Sandbox Pilot:** Launched as a "Proof of Concept" under the PFRDA Regulatory Sandbox, this scheme is currently a pilot project. It aims to bridge the "missing middle" in health financing for the 40% of Indians.

Footnotes: ICICI's MD & CEO: Sandeep Bakhshi, HQ: Mumbai, Estd: 1955

TENNIS PLAYER TOMAS MARTIN ETCHEVERRY WINS ATP 500 RIO OPEN

- **Maiden ATP Title:** This victory marks Etcheverry's first-ever ATP Tour title. After previously losing three finals on the tour, the 26-year-old eighth seed broke the streak by defeating Chile's Alejandro Tabilo in a grueling three-set battle.
- **A "Marathon" Sunday:** Due to heavy rain disruptions on Saturday, Etcheverry had to display incredible physical endurance by playing both his semi-final and the final on the same day. He spent over six hours on the court across two matches to secure the trophy.
- **Rankings Surge:** Following this win, Etcheverry has vaulted 18 places in the ATP Live Rankings to reach World No. 33, marking a triumphant return to the top 40 for the first time in a year.

RAJAN BAJAJ APPOINTED SLICE SFB'S CEO & MD

- **Fintech-to-Bank Transition:** This appointment formalizes the leadership of one of India's most high-profile mergers between a fintech (Slice) and a traditional lender (North East Small Finance Bank). Under Bajaj, the entity has already opened 4 million savings accounts and reported a net profit of ₹27.97 crore for the first three quarters of FY26.

- **AI-First Banking Strategy:** Bajaj's vision for the bank centers on using Artificial Intelligence to personalize banking at scale. He aims to leverage digital infrastructure to provide high-end financial products—such as daily interest credits and UPI-led bank branches—to underserved segments at a fraction of traditional costs.

Footnotes: Slice SFB's Previous MD & CEO: Satish Kumar Kalra, HQ: Bengaluru, Estd: 2016

HARSHARAN KAUR TREHAN NEW PSPCL DIRECTOR



- **Historic "First" for Punjab:** Trehan has become the first woman technocrat in the history of PSPCL to be appointed to the board-level position of Director. This follows her 2021 milestone where she became the utility's first woman Engineer-in-Chief.
- **Decades of Expertise:** An alumna of Delhi College of Engineering, she brings over 35 years of experience to the role. Her career spans critical sectors including thermal and hydel design, transmission, and regulatory reforms, where she previously refined Punjab's Electricity Supply Code.

- **Two-Year Tenure:** The Punjab Government has appointed her for a fixed term of two years. She succeeds Hira Lal Goyal (who resigned in 2025) and is tasked with strengthening the corporation's commercial performance and improving consumer services across the state.

Footnotes: PSPCL's Previous Chairman & MD: Er. Baldev Singh Sran, HQ: Patiala, Estd: 2010

MUKUL ROY, FORMER UNION RAILWAY MINISTER, PASSED AWAY

- **TMC Co-Founder & "Chanakya":** Roy was a founding member of the All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) in 1998 alongside Mamata Banerjee. Known as the "Chanakya of Bengal politics," he was the party's primary organizational strategist and served as its National General Secretary for nearly two decades, playing a pivotal role in ending the 34-year Left Front rule in 2011.
- **National Leadership:** He held significant positions in the Union Cabinet during the UPA-II government, most notably serving as the Union Minister of Railways (2012). He also served as the Minister of State for Shipping and was a two-time Rajya Sabha MP, acting as the TMC's influential face in New Delhi for many years.
- **Strategic Political Shifts:** His later career was marked by high-profile shifts; he joined the BJP in 2017, helping the party secure a record 18 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls in Bengal.

WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?

23.02.2026 / MONDAY

- **World Peace and Understanding Day: 23rd February**
- **Theme 2026: Supports addressing poverty & exclusion as underlying causes of conflict worldwide**