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# Current Affairs Today — April 14, 2026

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# Current Affairs Today — April 14, 2026

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## TODAY'S HEADLINES — APRIL 14, 2026

Ambedkar Jayanti observed nationwide · Baisakhi and Khalsa Panth founding · RBI holds repo at 5.25% · SC on biometric voter verification · SC on electoral roll disputes (West Bengal) · Australia appoints first female Army Chief · North Korea conducts cruise & anti-ship missile tests · Kali Tiger Reserve in focus.

## BAISAKHI & THE FOUNDING OF THE KHALSA PANTH

April 14, 2026 (Vaisakhi Sankranti at 09:39 AM IST) marks **Baisakhi / Vaisakhi** — the Punjabi harvest festival and the anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh's founding of the **Khalsa Panth** at Anandpur Sahib in **1699**.

### Triple Significance

| DIMENSION        | DETAIL   |
|------------------|--|
| Agricultural     | Rabi (wheat) harvest; start of the new agricultural year in Punjab   |
| Religious (Sikh) | 1699 founding of Khalsa Panth by <b>Guru Gobind Singh</b> , the 10th and last human Sikh Guru                    |
| Solar calendar   | First day of the solar year; parallels Vishu (Kerala), Bihu (Assam), Puthandu (Tamil Nadu), Ugadi (Karnataka/AP) |

### The Khalsa — Key Elements

- **Panj Pyare (Five Beloved Ones):** Daya Singh, Dharam Singh, Himmat Singh, Mohkam Singh, Sahib Singh — initiated through **Amrit Sanchar** (also called **Khande di Pahul**, “rite of the double-edged sword”) at Anandpur Sahib
- **Five Ks (Panj Kakars):** Kesh (uncut hair), Kanga (comb), Kara (steel bangle), Kachera (undergarment), Kirpan (sword)
- **Core values:** Equality, seva (selfless service), courage, community, anti-caste ideals — shared thematically with Ambedkar's constitutional project

**Baisakhi 2026:** Date: **April 14, 2026** · Sankranti: 09:39 AM IST · Marks Khalsa founding (1699) by Guru Gobind Singh at **Anandpur Sahib** · Harvest festival across North India · GS1: Art & Culture.

## RBI MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE — APRIL 2026

The **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)**, chaired by RBI Governor **Sanjay Malhotra**, held the **repo rate at 5.25%** on April 8, 2026, maintaining a **neutral policy stance** amid inflation risks from the West Asia crisis.

### Rates & Stance

| INSTRUMENT                      | RATE                     |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Repo rate                       | <b>5.25%</b> (unchanged) |
| Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) | 5.00%                    |
| MSF & Bank Rate                 | 5.50%                    |
| Stance                          | <b>Neutral</b>           |

### Projections (FY 2026-27)

- **GDP growth:** 6.9%
- **CPI inflation:** 4.6% (Q1: 4.0% · Q2: 4.4% · Q3: 5.2% · Q4: 4.7%)

### Key Risk Flagged

- **West Asia supply chain disruption** (Strait of Hormuz) pushing crude oil prices higher
- Rising input costs for manufacturing and transport; inflation pass-through risk if disruption persists

**MPC April 2026:** Repo rate: **5.25%** · Stance: *Neutral* · Governor: **Sanjay Malhotra** · GDP (FY27): **6.9%** · CPI (FY27): **4.6%** · MPC composition: 6 members (3 RBI + 3 external) under RBI Act Section 45ZB · GS3: Economy/Monetary Policy.

## SUPREME COURT — BIOMETRIC VOTER VERIFICATION PLEA

On **April 13, 2026**, the Supreme Court issued notices to the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** and state governments on a petition seeking **fingerprint and biometric-based voter verification** at polling stations.

### Key Details

- **Petitioner's argument:** Current voter ID system is vulnerable to impersonation; biometric linking would enhance electoral integrity
- **ECI's current position:** Voter list purity is addressed through Form 6/7/8 updates, door-to-door verification, and Special Summary/Special Intensive Revision drives
- **Constitutional basis:** Article 324 (ECI's power to supervise elections); Article 326 (universal adult suffrage)

### The Digital Divide Concern

- **UIDAI/Aadhaar biometric failure rate** at authentication is ~3-6% nationally, higher for manual labourers (fingerprint wear) and the elderly (iris degradation)
- Mandatory biometric voting could disenfranchise these groups — raising Article 14/15 concerns

**Biometric Voter Verification Plea:** Court: **Supreme Court** · Notices issued: **April 13, 2026** · Respondents: **ECI + states** · Constitutional basis: **Articles 324, 326** · Concern: *Digital divide, Aadhaar authentication failure rates* · GS2: *Polity/Elections*.

## SUPREME COURT — ELECTORAL ROLL RIGHTS (WEST BENGAL)

The Supreme Court, in proceedings on April 13-14, 2026, **reaffirmed that Indian-born citizens have a constitutional right to remain on electoral rolls and to vote**, in a matter arising from electoral roll management disputes in West Bengal.

### Key Points

- The Court emphasised that the ECI's **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** process must follow due process and cannot result in arbitrary deletions
- **Legal basis:** Representation of the People Act, 1950 (Section 16 — disqualification from registration in electoral rolls); Rule 21 of Registration of Electors Rules 1960
- Relief: Directed ECI to ensure no eligible voter is excluded without opportunity to be heard

**Electoral Roll Rights:** *Constitutional guarantee: Article 326 (adult suffrage) · Legislative framework: RP Act 1950 (Section 16); Registration of Electors Rules 1960 · ECI's SIR process must follow natural justice · GS2: Polity.*

## AUSTRALIA APPOINTS FIRST FEMALE ARMY CHIEF

**Lieutenant General Susan Coyle** was appointed the first female **Chief of the Australian Army** on April 14, 2026 — a historic milestone in the Army's 125-year institutional history.

### Key Details

- Coyle has served in Iraq, Afghanistan, and East Timor; previously Deputy Chief of Joint Operations
- Appointment follows Australia's 2024 Defence Strategic Review which prioritised gender diversity in command
- Part of a broader global trend — several Western militaries have elevated women to four-star ranks in the past decade

### India Context

- India's first female officer to command an operational army unit: **Colonel Geeta Rana** (2024) — first woman to command an EME unit at a forward location
- India's first woman three-star officer: **Air Marshal Padmavathy Bandopadhyay** (2002) as Director General Medical Services (Air)

**First female Australian Army Chief:** *Appointee: Lt Gen Susan Coyle · Date: April 14, 2026 · 125-year milestone · Australia's 2024 Defence Strategic Review prioritised gender diversity · GS2: IR/Security.*

## NORTH KOREA MISSILE TESTS

North Korea test-fired **cruise missiles and anti-ship weapons from a naval destroyer** in April 2026, signalling continued naval modernisation under Kim Jong-un's "Byungjin" (parallel advancement of economy and nuclear force) strategy.

### Regional Implications

- Tests violate **UNSC Resolutions 1718, 1874, 2087, 2094, 2270** imposing sanctions on DPRK's weapons programmes

- South Korea-Japan-US trilateral response expected via **Camp David Principles (2023)** coordination
- India's stake: Impacts Indo-Pacific maritime security and affects denuclearisation diplomacy

**North Korea Missile Tests:** *Platform: Naval destroyer · Weapons: Cruise + anti-ship · Violates UNSC Resolutions 1718 (2006) onwards · Byungjin doctrine · Camp David Principles (US-Japan-ROK, 2023) · GS2: IR/Security.*

## KALI TIGER RESERVE IN FOCUS

The **Kali Tiger Reserve** (Karnataka) featured in current affairs briefings as India's tiger corridor network gains renewed attention ahead of the 2026 All-India Tiger Estimation cycle.

### Geography & Ecology

- **Location:** Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka (Western Ghats, northern boundary)
- **Notified:** 2007 (merger of Anshi National Park + Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary)
- **Area:** ~1,300 sq km · **Rivers:** Kali, Kaneri, Tattihalla
- **Keystone species:** Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris* — IUCN: Endangered; WPA 1972: Schedule I)
- **Other fauna:** Black panther, Indian bison (gaur), elephant, king cobra

### Tiger Reserves in India (as of 2026)

- **58 notified tiger reserves** under Project Tiger (1973) · Managed by NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority) under Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (amended 2006)

**Kali Tiger Reserve:** *State: Karnataka · Location: Western Ghats (Uttara Kannada) · Notified: 2007 · Area: ~1,300 sq km · Project Tiger (1973) · NTCA under WPA 1972 (amended 2006) · India has 58 tiger reserves (2026) · GS3: Environment.*

## UPSC RELEVANCE

| PAPER             | ANGLE  |
|-------------------|--|
| GS1 — Culture     | Baisakhi; Khalsa Panth founding (1699); Guru Gobind Singh; Panj Pyare; Five Ks   |
| GS2 — Polity      | Biometric voter verification (Articles 324, 326); electoral roll rights; RP Act 1950   |
| GS2 — IR          | Australia first female Army chief; North Korea missile tests; UNSC Resolutions on DPRK   |
| GS3 — Economy     | RBI MPC April 2026 (repo at 5.25%); West Asia crude oil risk   |
| GS3 — Environment | Kali Tiger Reserve; NTCA; Project Tiger; WPA 1972  |
| Prelims           | Repo rate 5.25%; Baisakhi date; Khalsa 1699 at Anandpur Sahib; Kali Tiger Reserve — Karnataka; 58 tiger reserves; MPC composition; UNSC DPRK sanctions |

April 14 · Khalsa Panth founded **1699** at **Anandpur Sahib** by Guru Gobind Singh · Five Ks: Kesh, Kanga, Kara, Kachera, Kirpan.

Repo: **5.25%** · Stance: Neutral · Governor: **Sanjay Malhotra** · GDP FY27: **6.9%** · CPI FY27: **4.6%**.

Articles **324, 326** · RP Act 1950 · Digital divide concern.

**Lt Gen Susan Coyle** — 1st female in 125-year history.

Karnataka · Western Ghats · Notified **2007** · Project Tiger **1973** · NTCA · **58** reserves.

Cruise + anti-ship from destroyer · Violates UNSC Resolutions **1718-onwards**.

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